

Creating a Calm-Down Corner

Purpose: We all have emotions. Sometimes these emotions are manageable and other times we become angry, frustrated, and anxious . We need to teach students what to do when they feel these strong emotions. To do this students need to know how to identify emotions, what/how to use self-calming strategies and students must be able to practice, practice, practice. Using a calming down space allows us to do this.

Example Materials:

- A physical space: Ex. bean bag chair, comfy cushion, table and chair
- Calming images, nature images
- Poster of faces to identify emotions
- List of calm-down strategies and options
- A few sensory items such as: putty, fidget tools, weighted lap pillow, headphones, a word search, where's waldo book. *I like to only keep 5 options at a time, and rotate them throughout the year for students

Establishing a Calm Down Corner How To:

- Decide on an area of your classroom. Consider your line of sight to the area. It is ideal if it can seem private but you also can see what is happening back there.
- Decide what you are going to call it, it should be vertically aligned in your building so that all students will know regardless of who's room they are in what it is called. Some examples, "Chill Zone, Calm Down Corner, Zen Den, Peace Corner, Take A Break Spot, Regulation Station"
- Post Items:
 - Post some relaxing images
 - Post a list of calm-down strategies (i.e deep breathing, using a tool, etc.)
 - Post a list of faces with different emotions
 - Post the procedure

- Add a few sensory items. These items should be calming but not overly exciting. Avoid items like legos that are very exciting.
- Create expectations for the calm down corner as a class.
- Create a poster of strategies for students to use. Use pictures in addition to words (for students who cannot yet read the words.)
- **Model using the area. Have each student practice using the area when they are calm.**
- **Practice, practice, practice while students are calm! **Cannot stress this enough****

Anticipating procedure set up and possible challenges:

- How will students access the calm down corner? What will the procedure look like for students to ask to use it? Will you also have it be teacher prompted? Consider using language like, “It appears that you are feeling angry. Going to the calm down corner may help you.” The calm down corner should never be used as a consequence.
- Consider using a private sign-up sheet at the teacher’s desk- some students may not feel comfortable asking a loud or in front of their peers.
- Consider using a reflection sheet or a processing sheet that students fill out AFTER their time in the calm down corner.
- Consider adding a mood thermometer somewhere in the room or in the calm down corner so students can identify what color/number/feeling they are in.
- Consider adding a time limit- sand timers or light timers are best because they do not distract the rest of the group.