

INCLUSION STRATEGIES & TOOLS

CALM DOWN AREA



A calm down area provides a safe space for children to self-regulate.

THIS SPACE SHOULD:

- Be calm and comforting
- Reduce stress and overwhelm
- Not be a punishment or a time out

**Through this process the child engages in calming and relaxing activities
and is able to return to the activity or routine in progress.**

HOW TO:

- Create a calm down area that is to be used by one child at a time.
- Make the area accessible at all times and away from active and noisy play areas
- Include calm activities depending on the child's interests (e.g., fidget toys, photo albums, pictures of emotions, headphones, crayons and paper, quiet music, books, puzzles).
- Use calming techniques.
- Teach and model the use of the calm down area.
- Respond with empathy: "You seem frustrated with this art activity. Would you like to go to the calm down area and try again later?"
- Provide reassurance and, if needed, accompany the child to the calm down area.
- Allow the child to decide when they are feeling ready to return to the activity or routine in progress.
- Provide the child with encouragement when they choose to use the calm down area independently or when suggested.

TIPS:

- Invite the children to name the area (e.g., Chill Out Zone, Cozy Corner, Safe Place).
- Always consider outdoor play, gym, other rooms and field trips. A backpack, a bin, or other containers can be used to ensure accessibility of calming items at all times.
- Decide with the child what possible cues can be used discreetly to help them recognize when the calm down area would be a support to them (e.g., an educator could give a break card to the child, a code word, a gesture)
- When dealing with a challenging emotion, a child could use a different area than the designated one. to self-regulate.