

# Calm Down Corner

## Overview

Being able to calm yourself when emotions run high - or self-regulate - is a learned skill. Similar to how a child is taught to tie their shoe once they have the fine motor skills to do so, once a child's brain is developmentally ready to self-regulate, they can learn different strategies and ways that work well for them.

Think about what worked well for you the last time you felt angry, unheard, anxious or any other negative feeling. Did you go outside to get fresh air? Did you practice yoga or meditation? Take 10 deep breaths? Go to your favorite room in your home and read? We all have different coping mechanisms we've learned to use to regulate our emotions and return to a more neutral or positive space. Kids are no different!



One way to help children learn how to self-regulate is by providing them with calm down corners. A calm down corner is a designated space in a home or classroom with the sole intent of being a safe space for a child to go to when they feel their emotions are running too high and they need to regain their emotional and physical control. These spaces are equipped with comforting objects and soothing materials that can promote mindfulness, breathing and reflection.

## Take Action

The overall goal of a calm down corner is to provide the child with a space in which they'll feel safe recognizing and regulating their emotions in a healthy way. These corners don't need to be complicated and don't even require purchasing any new materials or items if you do not want to. Calm down corners can be developed and promoted in a variety of ways and in both home and school settings.

## At Home

- Try designating a corner in a typically quiet room in your home as your child's new calm down corner.
- Fill the space with a soft rug or mat, bean bag chair, or other plush options for sitting or lying down, and with some of your child's favorite books, stuffed animals or quiet toys.
- If your child is older, you can utilize short bookcases to help block the space out to provide your child with some privacy.

## At School

- Find a corner in your classroom that can permanently act as your new calm down corner.
- Designate the space as a special area where your students can spend time on their own when their emotions are running high.
- Like with calm down corners at home, fill the space with soft, plush seating options and options for books, quiet toys, art and journaling supplies, blankets and stuffed animals.

## Social Emotional Health Highlights

Activities such as these help children explore...

**Self-Awareness and Self-Management:** Calm down corners help children to practice identifying feelings and emotions to better manage stress, self-regulate and control their impulses. Having a space designed to support them emotionally and physically helps them feel safe and comfortable, allowing them to let down their guard to process different feelings.

**Relationship Skills:** Learning how to communicate one's feelings and emotions can be difficult, but calming spaces such as this help children practice mindfulness and develop skills they need to identify their emotions and communicate them when necessary. Stronger communication skills help them form stronger relationships with others and develop skills in empathy.

## Tips



Some children find calming music to be helpful in regaining control of their emotions. In classroom settings, try having headphones available so the music doesn't interrupt other students.



Add artwork to your space - some ideas that may work well for your children or students include nature and landscapes, or happy family photos.



Try out a basket with sensory play objects. For many kids, using and exploring sensory play can help them deescalate when they're feeling overstimulated. [Check out our Game On activity all about sensory play for more details.](#)



For calm down corners in the classroom, make sure the space is inclusive and accessible to all your students. Although there may be students that need or want to utilize the space more than others, it's important that all students know they're welcome to use it, as well.



Don't think of it as a "time out" or punishment - there shouldn't be any stigma associated with the calm down corner. Although you may encourage a child to spend some time in the space when you feel they're starting to become distressed, the goal is that eventually the child will recognize when they want to be there and will go there on their own in order to self-regulate and calm down.

For more activities and ideas like this one, be sure to [sign up for our news and updates](#). And if you like what you see, please [donate to support our work](#) creating

more ways to help build a healthier future for kids.

## Resources

[Materials and Resources for Creating Calm Down Corners, Developed and Sold Directly by Teachers \(Teachers Pay Teachers\)](#)

[Why Every Home Needs a Calm-Down Corner \(Aha! Parenting\)](#)

[Examples and Tip Sheets for Creating Calm Down Corners \(Safe Schools NOLA, Tulane University\)](#)

[How Can We Help Kids with Self-Regulation \(Child Mind Institute\)](#)

[How to Create a Calm Down Corner in 5 Easy Steps \(The Art of Education University\)](#)

[imHealthy Mental Health Lessons \(Michael Phelps Foundation\)](#)

### **Mindfulness: Journaling, Breathing and More!**

Practicing mindfulness helps us to reset, refocus and energize for what's ahead!

### **Sensory Play**

Help kids get in touch with their senses by facilitating sensory play using interesting materials to create tactile and visual experiences.

### **Active Sensory Spaces**

### **Yoga for Children**

Use colorful and playful sensory hallways to turn a passive environment into an active one.

It's often assumed that one must already be flexible and physically fit to participate in yoga. One of the many great aspects of yoga is that it can be modified to fit the age, goals and abilities of almost anyone.