

WHAT IS A CALM DOWN SPACE?

A CALM DOWN SPACE IS A SPECIAL SPACE WHERE CHILDREN CAN TAKE A MOMENT TO DECOMPRESS, TAKE A BREATHER, OR THINK ABOUT MAKING DIFFERENT CHOICES. TYPICALLY, WHEN STUDENTS ARE TALKING, ACTING OUT, BOTHERING OTHERS, UNFOCUSED, UPSET, OR AGITATED, THEY DON'T ALWAYS NEED A CONSEQUENCE, THEY JUST NEED A CHANCE TO RESET AND RETURN.

IT IS IMPORTANT FOR KIDS TO RECOGNIZE EMOTIONS AND OUTCOMES, AND SELF REGULATE THEIR OWN EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIORS. THEY NEED TO REALIZE THAT THEIR BEHAVIOR AFFECTS OTHERS. IT IS POWERFUL WHEN STUDENTS DISCOVER HOW TO MANAGE THEIR OWN BEHAVIOR AND EMOTIONS RATHER THAN HAVING AN ADULT DIRECT IT FOR THEM.



CREATING A CALM DOWN SPACE AT HOME

At Salnave Elementary every classroom utilized a Calm Down Space. All students were taught the "why" and "how" they were to be effectively used. Please note these are just ideas, families can adjust them to fit for their home. Here are some of the basics needed to start a Calm Down Space at home.

SET-UP

Find a designated place within your home; it should be inviting, uncluttered, and clear of their school work area and anything electronic.

WHAT ITEMS YOU CAN HAVE IN THE CALM DOWN SPACE

These are just ideas! You do not have to have all items listed below.

- **Notebook, pencils or crayons** (to journal about feelings)
- **Stress ball or something to squeeze** (stuff animals, pillow, etc.)
- **Sand Timers or any form of a timer** (set time limit on staying in space)
- **Building blocks, Play Dough, etc.** (something they can use to build with)
- **Noise canceling headphones** (sometimes we just need a few minutes of silence)
- **Puzzles** (focus their attention on a different task)
- **Controlled Breathing techniques** (Triangle Breathing, Figure 8 breathing, Balloon Breathing, etc.)
- **Cards/poster that shows different stretching techniques**
- **Emotions Reference poster** (See example that is attached)

INTRODUCING THE SPACE AND CALM DOWN TOOLS

Introduce all of the materials you decided to have in your calm down space. Show your child/children how to use the materials and how they are used to help regulate behaviors and emotions. I always suggest having a time limit on the duration of time they have to spend in the calm down space. *(I have always told students, "If you are using the calm down space correctly, you should only be in there for 5 minutes.")*

STUDENT REFLECTIONS WHILE USING THE CALM DOWN SPACE

How big is your Problem?

- Have them think about the problem they are dealing with.
- Is it Huge?, Medium?, or Small?

What feeling(s) were you experiencing?

When you were having those feelings, how was your body responding?

- Our bodies give us warnings that we are starting to have emotions.
- Examples: increased heart rate, clenched fists, sweating, crying, feeling hot, butterflies in your stomach, etc.

Once you understand your feeling(s) and how your body is responding, what calm down strategy can you use to help you feel better and return to what you need to do?

- Here is where they utilize an activity or item you have placed in the calm down space. (refer back to page one – What items you can have in a calm down space)

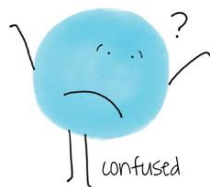
Feelings Chart

Examples

I'm feeling...

 Calm	 Happy	 Silly	 Relaxed
 Nervous	 Annoyed	 Sad	 Shy
 Surprised	 Hungry	 Angry	 Confused
 Sleepy	 Sick	 Hurt	 Hot

how are you feeling?



Breathing Technique Examples

