

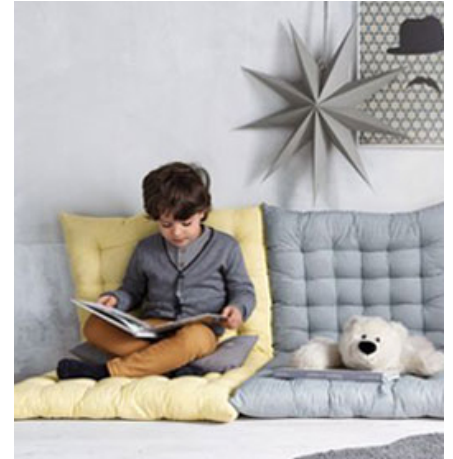
Take Home Tips

Early Learning

Using a Calm Down Area at Home

Your child is not born with the skills to regulate behavior. These skills need to be taught. Like adults, your child may react to stress, frustration, and disappointment by becoming angry, shouting, refusing help, or engaging in other challenging behaviors.

A calm down area (sometimes called a cozy corner) provides a dedicated place for your child to take a break and calm down. This area can be used when your child is feeling anxious, stressed, or overwhelmed. A calm down area gives your child a place to let go of strong emotions and begin to feel calm and ready to engage with others again.



Getting Started

- The calm down area should be quiet, out of the way, and soothing for your child. It does not need to be a large area. It can be a special chair, or a cozy blanket in a corner. Use things that your child already uses to calm down, like stuffed animals, squishy toys, books, or a favorite pillow.
- Explain to your child that this area is not used as a punishment. Show your child how to use the space when to “feel better.” You can also demonstrate some calming strategies, such as deep breathing, laying on the couch, or blowing bubbles.
- Encourage your child to explore the items in the calm down area. This will help your child figure out what items help calm and soothe him or her the best and how to use each item appropriately.
- Guide or remind your child whenever necessary. “You are yelling and throwing things. You seem really angry. I am going to help you go to your calm down spot so you can feel better.”

Tips for Using

- Don’t send your child to the calming area as a “time out,” or punishment. The calm down area should always be presented as a place to go to “feel better”.
- Help your child use this area *before* the meltdown or tantrum occurs. When you see signs of stress or escalating behavior, remind your child of this option.
- Limit distractions. Help siblings and family members understand that this is a private area, and interactions should be avoided.
- Check in when your child becomes calm. Notice how it went and give positive feedback. “I noticed you reading a book in the calm down corner. It looks like reading a book helped you feel better.”
- During the check in, talk about emotions. Help your child identify how he or she was feeling before and after using the calm down area.

Source: ChallengingBehavior.org. Taking a Break: Using a Calm Down Area at Home
Retrieved from: https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Calm-Down-Area_Tipsheet.pdf