Calming Space Technique

Helpful Tips

The rules of the calming space are up to your discretion to set appropriate expectations. A timer may be helpful (especially in a classroom setting)-be sure to check in with the child to assess their state every few minutes. Also, you may consider a system to monitor how they are feeling before going to the calm space, and afterwards. For example, a colour-coding system; feeling red is overwhelmed/angry, green is calm, and yellow is somewhere in the middle. This helps children to think about why they decided to go to the calm space and encourages self-regulation.

Another valuable exercise to consider when introducing the calming space is to speak with the child about coping skills and creating a plan for what they can do when feeling strong emotions. Using the prompts "When I am feeling (*insert emotion*),I can (*insert coping skill*). For example, "When I am feeling frustrated, I can take 10 deep breaths". Coping strategies can be different for everyone, so encourage the child to think about how they can self-regulate in the best way for themselves.

Instructions

The calming space is highly customizable and can be as simple or complex as desired. Tri-fold presentation boards (link) can easily be moved and add a level of privacy for children. Decorating the inside of the calming space is also your choice, but adding artwork to the inside of the board, pillows, and some sensory toys can be helpful to create that feeling of safety. Be sure to dedicate a specific area to the calming space for consistency (the presentation board helps with this).

Board Inspiration

•Images; nature photos work well, artwork made by the children can also help them feel connected
•Cultural pieces, such as photos, words or letters in your language
•List of coping skills/strategies (refer to exercise above) *
•Emotion charts to help assess how they are feeling *
•Breathing exercise steps *
•Sensory toys are a safe way to stimulate children in a calming way
•Pillows help to let the child relax and unwind
•

Resources marked with * indicate there is a version available on achwm.ca