

## Calming Spaces in the Classroom: A Practical Checklist for Educators

Calming spaces (also known as calming rooms or regulation corners) are safe areas where students can manage emotions, reduce stress, and refocus. Use this checklist to plan, create, and share your classroom calming space.

### Planning Your Space

- ☐ Choose a quiet area away from busy traffic.
- ☐ Ensure visibility for safety while maintaining student privacy.
- ☐ Decide if it will be a permanent space or a pop-up area.
- ☐ Get input from students, families, and/or staff on what helps them feel calm.
- ☐ Create a list of activities, such as drawing, coloring, doing puzzles, doodling, building blocks, etc.).
- ☐ Create clear classroom expectations for when and how students can use the space.

### Setting Up Your Space

- ☐ Provide soft lighting; for example, lamps, string lights, or natural light.
- ☐ Feature visual of calming space expectations, using images and/or words.
- ☐ Use comfortable seating, such as beanbags, cushions, small chairs, etc.
- ☐ Display visual supports, such as calm-down cards, breathing visuals, and emotions charts.
- ☐ Include sensory tools, like fidgets, stress balls, and noise-canceling headphones.
- ☐ Provide grounding tools; for example, a weighted lap pad, small stuffed animal, or smooth stone.
- ☐ Use calming colors, such as soft blues, greens, and neutrals.
- ☐ Keep the space tidy and predictable.

### Teaching Self-Regulation

- ☐ Model how to use the calming space as well as when and how to return to learning.
- ☐ Encourage students to identify emotions before entering.
- ☐ Provide choices; for example, taking time to quietly reflect, draw, breathe, or read.
- ☐ Reinforce positive use, like “You took a break and came back ready—great job!”
- ☐ Collaborate with support staff to monitor effectiveness.

### Promoting Cultural and Global Awareness

- ☐ Reflect on universal symbols of peace and calm, such as nature, water, and soft music.
- ☐ Incorporate visuals and tools that represent diverse backgrounds.
- ☐ Ensure all students—verbal, nonverbal, and multilingual—can use supports and tools.
- ☐ Avoid religious or culturally specific items unless they fit your community context.

### Maintaining and Evaluating Your Space

- ☐ Rotate materials and supports to keep the space engaging.
- ☐ Replace worn or broken items.
- ☐ Invite student feedback; ask “What helps you calm down?”
- ☐ Document impact on focus, behavior, and classroom climate.