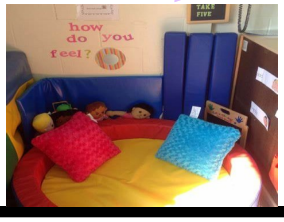
…"bite size" news from your HSB Regional Behavior Specialists

OH, Behave!

Volume 16, Issue 10

April 2023

A Quiet Place for Rough Moments



Tip of the Month:

For best use, **teach** children how to use the cozy corner.

In this video clip, a teacher explains how to use the new "calming area" in their classroom.

Check it out **here**!

One way to help children learn how to self-regulate is by providing them with a safe place to go where they can calm down when they are feeling mad, sad, nervous, or experiencing any big emotion. A calm down corner or cozy corner is a designated area in a classroom with the sole intent of being a safe space for a child to go when he or she needs to regain their emotional and physical control. Learning how to solve problems and self-regulate their emotions are very important life skills. These spaces are equipped with comforting objects and soothing materials that can promote mindfulness, encourage deep breathing and reflection.

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 areas do not need to be complicated and purchasing any new materials or items is not required. What matters most is that you have an area of your classroom specifically where children can learn the skills they need to manage their emotion in safe ways. Ideally, this place should be located away from the loudest areas of your classroom.

Another important thing you should know about the cozy corner or safe space is that it is not for time-out. It is not a place to send young children who are angry or upset to isolate them from others. It should be used as a teaching tool to support the social-emotional needs of the children in your classroom.

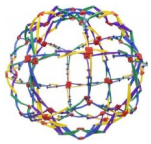
Now that you know the purpose of the cozy corner or safe space, let's look at some of the items you may want to include in your calm down area:

- Books about emotions and feelings
- Calming sensory bottles
- Pinwheels
- Mini Hoberman Sphere (see picture at the end of this article).
- Stress balls
- Stuffed animals
- Feeling and emotion dolls
- Pillows, bean bag chair or other soft seating
- Kid-safe feeling mirror
- Visual supports such as posters, cards and social stories

Some of these items will help make your area feel cozy and inviting, and others are important tools for developing crucial self-regulation skills. Pick and choose the ones that you feel would work best for your classroom and children. Avoid overwhelming a child by having too many items in your calm down corner.

Introduce the calming corner or cozy corner just like you would any other learning center in your classroom. You can start by reading a book about big emotions to your class during your whole group time. Next, show your students some of the tools that are located in this area and model how to use them. Then pass some of the items from the center around and invite your children to touch, feel and explore them. Finally, move on to introducing the expectations for using this space. Ideally, you want to allow one child to use the space at a time. Discuss when the children might want or need to use the space. Be sure and show children what to do in the center while they're there; how to use the materials; and, how to clean up. This doesn't have to be done all in one day. You can spread this process out over several days.

Just remember that building self-regulation skills is difficult for many young children and it won't happen overnight. **Don't give up- you've got this!**



A Hoberman Sphere helps children learn how to breathe deeply and promotes mindfulness.

Connect with us!

Check out Tucker's NC Nest on Pinterest!

Follow OhBehaveTips on twitter!

Join our new online community by clicking here! By joining Social - Emotional Connections, you will have the opportunity to network, post questions, and share resources with other early childhood professionals in NC!

Open our latest public resource, a growing library shelf of virtual binders that include archived issues of the HSB newsletter, *OH, Behave!*, a collection of Disaster Response Resources, and a binder of scripted stories for classroom use! Click here.

Check out our Pinterest Board called "Calming & Relaxation Support" for cozy space ideas, materials, and supports!

Ask The Behavior Specialist!

Question: I recently turned a vacant corner of my classroom into a Calm Down Space. I've added some feeling charts, sensory toys, fidgets, books and soft materials. The problem is, the one child who needs to use the space the most just won't go to it. He has angry outbursts and it takes a long time for him to calm down. I encourage him to go to the Calm Down Space but he refuses to go. He just walks around throwing things to the floor and ruining the classroom.

Answer: You are off to a great start. You have created a safe space in your classroom for children to go to regain control of their emotions. One thing that you can do right away is begin teaching some calming strategies that he can use regardless of where he is (in the classroom) such as breathing exercises or the turtle technique found here https://challengingbehavior.org/docs/TuckerTurtle_Story.pdf.

To encourage more use of your calm down space, make sure that your space is visually appealing and a place that children don't mind visiting, just as you would with any other interest area in your classroom. Talk about the space at large and small group times or as you engage with him at other times throughout the day. Make sure it's POSITIVE talk. Avoid words like 'time-out" or "time away" that suggest isolation; instead, use phrases like "taking a break" or "cooling down" that allow the child the dignity to calm down and return to the classroom activities when they feel able.

You can model using the space yourself. You might announce that your feeling overwhelmed, upset, etc. and will visit the calming space until you are feeling better.

You can also create a scripted story about the calming space or suggest the calming space during story time as you read about an angry or frustrated character.

If you're using a solution kit or solution board for conflict-resolution, be sure to include the Calm Down Space as one of those options too. Remember that we want to catch the smoke before the actual flame. As children begin to develop those big emotions, we validate the emotion, help children to calm down and remind children of the expected behaviors as an effort to head off those big, explosive reactions.

NEW!

Introducing our **Pyramid Fidelity Tip Section** for those of you having the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) or the Teaching Pyramid Infant-Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS) completed in your classroom. This section will help you connect the main topic of each issue with indictors on these scales. These assessments support Pyramid Model practices which promote and support children's social-emotional development.

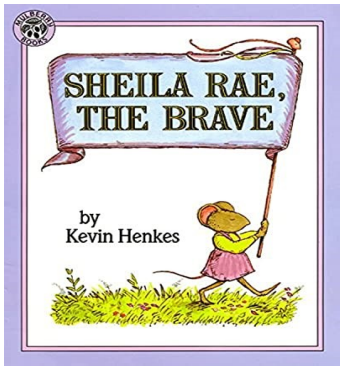
Learning to Manage Emotions

Check out TPOT Item 10 Teaching Children to Express Emotions (TEE). Specifically as it relates to TEE8. Teacher supports an individual child in ways that are different than the supports provided to a group of children.

Check out TPITOS Item 7 Teacher Responds to Children in Distress and Manages Challenging Behaviors (RDC). Specifically, RDC7 which is teacher uses a variety of strategies to console, soothe, or calm children who are in distress and individualizes responses according to children and situations (OBS/INT).

Do you have a question you would like to see answered in our column? Feel free to email it to AskTheBehaviorSpecialist@gmail.com. We will keep your identity private. Your question is probably one someone else needs answering, so ask away! Your time is appreciated!

Social/Emotional Book Nook



Written and illustrated by beloved author Kevin Henkes, this is a book about bravery and sibling appreciation. In this story, Sheila Rae taunts her little sister, Louise, about a lot of things, namely that she is a scaredy-cat! But one day, something happens that makes Sheila Rae wonder if her little sister is really as afraid of everything as she once thought. Readers will be cheering Louise on when she ends up saving the day! A great book for children two to seven years of age.

In each issue you will find a new card to help you build your very own "Calming Choices" Card Set for your classroom.

When I am upset, I can…

SAY, "I CAN DO THIS!"



For durability and repetitive use, print on cardstock paper and laminate.

Refresh Your Mindset on **CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR** by making this your mantra for the month...

"I can set this child up for success!"

Adapted from BROOKES PUBLISHING CO www.brookespublishing.com

For more information about the Healthy Social Behaviors Project, contact your regional Behavior Specialist or:

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