



Pathways to Success

Helpful Strategies for Parents and Caregivers of Young Children

How to Create a Calming Space

See also: *How to Use a Calming Space*

When a child is sad, frustrated or mad, they are feeling big emotions. It can be hard for them to:

- talk about how they feel, or tell us what made them upset
- hear our words, and understand what we are saying
- understand what those emotions mean, and understand why their body and brain feel that way
- think of a way to calm their body and their brain
- continue with their play

Sometimes it can be hard to keep the child and their friends safe while they feel those big emotions. We need to help them!

Setting up a calming space is a great way to allow children a safe space to work through their emotions and gives them a place to calm down. When they feel better they can rejoin the group or activity and try again.

What does a calming space look like?

- Soft and inviting (pillows, blankets, stuffies)
- Contains items to assist with calming strategies (examples: feelings books or pictures, calming toys, music with headphones, photos from home, child's water bottle)
- Contains visual aides to help with the use of calming strategies
- Provides privacy for one child at a time, with a caregiver still visible and accessible to the child
- Note: This is not a play area. Create a different area in the room for quiet reading, alone play, puzzles, quiet play, etc.

(see over)



PROVIDENCE

HEALTH • EDUCATION • THERAPY

www.providencechildren.com

Pathways to Success

Helpful Strategies for Parents and Caregivers of Young Children

When should the calming space be used?

- Feeling sad (e.g., missing parents)
- Feeling angry (e.g., a peer is not sharing or taking turns during free play time)
- Feeling frustrated (e.g., during an activity that is difficult for them to do physically or emotionally, such as group craft, circle time or transitions)
- Feeling overly silly or excited (e.g., after being outside, in the gym, etc.)

Keep in mind: This is *not* a time-out or punishment! We want the child to want to go there to feel better. This is a space to calm the child's body and brain, so they can rejoin the group.