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Creating a “Peace Place” for self-regulation in your classroom[©]

*A step-by-step implementation guide from
Resilient Futures*

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Creating a Peace Place for Self-Regulation

This step-by-step implementation guide outlines the necessary steps, inclusions and important considerations for creating a safe and effective Peace Place for self-regulation in your classroom / school.

Goal: Create a designated safe space where students can go when triggered, aimed at assisting them in developing and applying regulation skills to prepare their minds and bodies for learning, fostering active engagement within the classroom community.

What are the benefits of having a dedicated Peace Place for self-regulation in the classroom?

- Provides a dedicated space for students to regulate their emotions and behaviors.
- Offers a retreat from overwhelming stimuli, promoting safety and security.
- Encourages self-awareness as students learn to recognize their emotional states.
- Empowers students to manage their own emotional responses.
- Supports social-emotional learning by teaching coping strategies and stress management techniques.
- Enhances concentration and focus by allowing students to reset and refocus when feeling distracted or agitated.
- Promotes mindfulness practices, such as deep breathing and visualization, which can reduce anxiety and promote relaxation.
- Encourages empathy and understanding as students learn to respect others' need for self-regulation.
- Contributes to a positive classroom environment by reducing disruptions and conflicts.
- Supports overall well-being by helping students to recharge and restore balance.



Creating a Peace Place for Self-Regulation

Prepare yourself and your students by setting clear expectations, allowing questions and thoughtfully providing answers.

Prior to implementing a Peace Place, teach the WHY and HOW of the space to reduce challenges and misunderstandings.

1. Teach and practice the language that you will use
 - a. Always choose **Restorative language** rather than punitive language
 - i. **Punitive language:** *"Mia, you disrupted the class by complaining out loud several times today."*
 - ii. **Restorative language:** *"Mia, are you feeling frustrated right now? If so, remember that you can always take a break in our Peace Place and use some of the tools we have to help you work through those feelings."*
2. Teach and practice all of the materials that will be used
 - a. If a student suggests a learning tool that isn't appropriate (ie: basketball), talk about why it wouldn't be helpful in a Peace Place.
 - b. Use the language of **"tool or toy"** to help decide.
 - c. Don't include any **"learning tools"** that you wouldn't typically use in your classroom, and explain why you are not using that particular tool.
3. Build off of any existing models already being used by your school/ district
 - a. Zones of Regulation, Feelings Chart
4. Each student is invited to **"practice"** in the Peace Place **PRIOR to launching**.
 - a. This provides an opportunity for **normalizing using the space, removing any stigma** around "bad behavior" or "bad students".
5. Discuss and practice asking to go to the regulation center with agreed-upon signals and/or words.
6. Discuss and practice **HOW to use** each of the materials or practice (ie: breathing exercises).
7. Introduce and practice the timer (learning how long 3 minutes is).
8. Give examples of when to use the Peace Place for self-regulation, and give examples of when using the Peace Place would not be the best option.
9. Practice rejoining the class.

Creating a Peace Place for Self-Regulation

Peace Place Implementation continued

Suggested Materials (*use items that are age-appropriate*)

- Feelings chart, visual aids on the wall, or a small book
- Beanbag or comfy chair
- Blanket or weighted blanket
- Sand Timer
- Fidgets (sensory items, playdoh, pipe cleaners)
- Stuffed animals or soft items
- Coloring – crayons or markers
- Journals or paper for writing
- Headphones / Noise-canceling headphones
- Pictures and explanations of strategies and feelings
 - Escalated students may need pictures vs. words

Naming Your Peace Place

Schools often have their own language for creating a Peace Place (e.g. “Cozy Corner”, “Calming Corner”, or a “Peace Corner”).

Choose a name that resonates with your classroom environment.





Creating a Peace Place for Self-Regulation

Sample Lesson: Purpose of the Peace Place and How to use it

Introduce the Peace Place concept and determine how to create it together:

1. Talk about what the Peace Place is, how/why to use it:
 - a. *“It is a space that is meant to help students when they have big feelings like anger, sad, or lots of excitement that are making it hard to participate in the class. It is meant to help you go back into your learning brain so you can learn and participate in our class.”*
2. Now brainstorm what should be included in the Peace Place. Ensure the discussion is focused on how these decisions support the Peace Place **being welcoming for all students. During this time, create discussion by asking the following questions:**
 - a. *“If the Peace Place is to be a good place to go when you are having big feelings, what things will we want to include in that space (stress ball, stuffed animals, pictures of nature, an hourglass timer, etc.)?”*
 - i. *No matter what age, pass small items around the circle so each child can experience them.*
 - ii. *Which item makes you feel the best?*
 - iii. *Why do you think some of these items would make you feel better?*
 - iv. *Are there any items here that you wouldn't want to touch?*
 - b. *Where should our Peace Place be?*
 - i. Remember the Peace Place should be within clear view of teacher.
 - c. *“How should we decorate it?”*



Creating a Peace Place for Self-Regulation

Sample Lesson: Purpose of the Peace Place and How to use it -*continued*

Use the prior discussion(s) to create a Peace Place explanation:

1. *“Now that everyone has experienced the items and everyone has an idea of what they like the best, what are some of the agreements we can come up with as a class to take care of our Peace Place and use it appropriately?”*
 - a. Students can contribute to these agreements, and you can ask questions to lead students.

Sample Agreements for a Peace Place:

1. The Peace Place is never to be used as a consequence
2. One student at a time
3. Time limit (2-4minutes)
4. Respect the space (define this)
5. Use a silent signal when you need to go to Peace Corner
6. Communicate with the teacher if more time is needed
7. Rejoin the class (explicit state how)

When and how will we know to use the Peace Place?

1. Discuss how we might be feeling and what our bodies might be doing when we could benefit from using the Peace Place. Provide examples.
2. Explain that each student will have an opportunity to explore the Peace Place, regardless if they need it at that time or not.
 - a. It will be an opportunity to experience what it feels like so that if they need it in the future, they will feel comfortable utilizing it.
 - b. Remember that the Peace Place will be a novelty at first.
 - c. The teacher should also practice using the space.
3. Review the **HOW** and **WHY** throughout the school year, not just one time.


Creating a Peace Place for Self-Regulation

Peace Place Implementation continued

Additional considerations:

- A Peace Place is best located in the teacher's view
- If a student is going every day during the same time, use it as a teaching moment, NOT for shaming.
 - *"I notice you go to the regulation center every day during writing. Can we talk about how you feel during writing?"*
 - *Think - What is dysregulating about writing for this child? What support does the child need individually for writing?*
- Do not send students to the Peace Place if they are in peak escalation cycle (this is when the regulation center gets destroyed)

Room 101 Peace Place

1. Sit down and take a calming breath
2. Set the timer for 5 minutes 
3. Choose your calming tool



4. When the timer goes off, take another calming breath
5. Rejoin the classroom 