



How to Create a Reflection Area in the Classroom



A Reflection Area is a useful strategy to include in your classroom. It can be used to help students de-escalate when they are having a difficult time regulating their emotions or can be used as a place to process an experience they have had. This is an alternative to using time-out, which is often viewed as punitive. Additionally, for students with trauma, who may already have difficulty with impulsive behavior or anger outbursts, the Reflection Area can assist them with regaining their composure and can be an opportunity to problem-solve and identify better choices. The goal of the Reflection area is for the student to return to their classroom routine.

It is important for students to understand the purpose of the Reflection Area, including the rules and expectations for using the area, such as length of time and frequency of use. It is also important for teacher or other classroom staff to follow up with the student as soon as possible, to acknowledge their efforts in self-regulation and choosing to return to their assignment.

The Reflection Area may also be incorporated as a positive reinforcement strategy to minimize inappropriate use.

The following are some suggestions for how to create a Reflection Area in the classroom:

1. Identify an Area (a corner will suffice)

The area should be large enough to accommodate at least one student.

2. Think of a Theme

Be creative and use your imagination. Engage the students in developing and creating the theme, which increases ownership for maintaining the space. Some theme examples include an island, an arctic zone (to cool down), a ship (to travel), or space.

3. Have Fun and Decorate

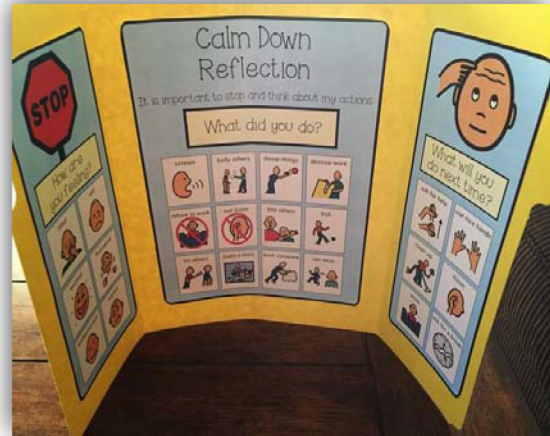
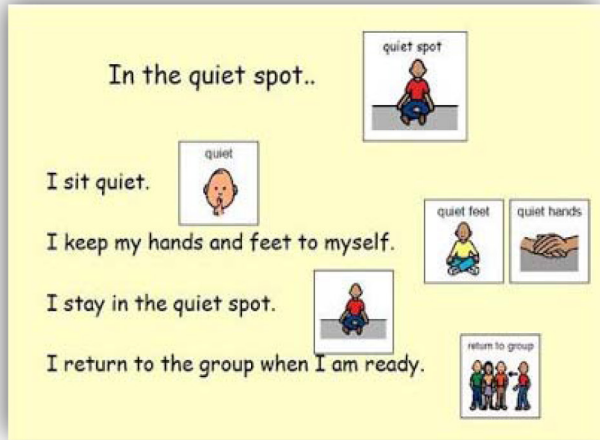
- Decorations: rug, chair, pillows, stuffed animals, small tent
- Tactile items that help self-soothe: stress ball, sand box, playdough, feathers. You can create your own stress ball by putting flour in an

uninflated large balloon, use a funnel to help with placing the flour in the balloon.

- Visuals to promote relaxation via imagery or mindfulness: pictures of nature, make your own lava lamp (put glitter in a plastic bottle water; tip over the bottle and watch the glitter slowly descend), slide show on iPad of calming images, folder with calming pictures
 - Prompts to help with deep breathing: pinwheel, feather, paper bag
- ## 4. Strategies to Help Calm Down
- Have worksheets or posters available in the area that prompt students to practice self-soothing/ problem solving/self-care, such as counting, positive thinking, positive affirmations, a Think Sheet, or Square in the Air sheet.



Reflection Area Examples





Cool Down/Reflection Area In All Classrooms



Check-Ins/Check-Outs

Great opportunity to CHECK-IN with students



Creating Expectations

Creates expectations and space within the classroom for students to self-regulate and rejoin the group



Community Building Activities

Builds community within the classroom to respect and honor one another's emotions and feelings



4:1-Connection Over Correction

Opportunity to connect to students, using the four positive to one correction strategy (4:1)

