

Calm Corners in Classrooms and Homes

While adults often face stress at work, children also experience this same pressure in school and everyday life, which can affect their learning, emotions, and well-being. A study conducted by the National Library of Medicine has shown that - "Stress isn't just an adult problem — even children as young as seven show clear signs of it. A study of over 800 school-aged children in Tabriz revealed that more than half reported experiencing stress symptoms such as worry, rapid heartbeat, fear, sadness, headaches, and tiredness." Thus, creative and modern strategies can help children manage these overwhelming feelings. One effective approach is by creating calm corners, where children can use supportive tools and activities to ease stress and regulate their emotions.

First of all, restricting children and forcing them to sit or stand in a so-called “correct” or “normalized” way can increase discomfort in stressful situations and environments. Therefore, providing adaptable furniture and flexible seating, such as bean bags, gives children a sense of comfort and freedom from strict seating arrangements . In addition, interactive, movable seating options, such as hop-along balls or spinning chairs can allow children to move around and relieve stress. This way, children are not bound by rigid expectations and can position themselves according to their preferences.

Secondly, engaging children's senses can help distract their minds from feelings of distress. Providing sensory tools - such as headphones for music, stress balls, slime, or Rubik's cubes - can occupy the brain, helping the nervous system unwind and calm down. Familiar textures, sounds, or visual images can provide comfort and a sense of safety, redirecting their focus and building coping skills. Additionally, sensory activities also help children who struggle to express their feelings in words, giving them alternative ways to communicate and build

confidence both in the classroom and at home.

Next, creating a peaceful atmosphere through natural scenes, soft colors, gentle patterns, and calming imagery can help children unwind and feel more at ease. Placing calm areas near a window with natural light and an outside view can further enhance their relaxation. According to the American Psychological Association, “Exposure to nature has been linked to a host of benefits, including improved attention and lower stress. Experimental findings show how impressive nature’s healing powers can be—just a few moments of green can perk up a tired brain.” Adding small indoor plants, nature-themed posters, or a quiet water fountain can make the space feel closer to the outdoors. On top of that, incorporating gentle color schemes and subtle visual accents can further enhance the calming effect of the space.

Finally, offering quiet activities allows children to be alone with their thoughts, helping them focus on the present rather than worrying, and giving them space to understand and manage their emotions. Activities such as drawing, painting, origami, or puzzle solving are low-energy activities yet are still effective in reducing physical signs of stress, such as rapid heartbeat or tense muscles. Moreover, finishing a creative task or completing a puzzle gives children a rewarding sense of accomplishment, which builds their confidence and helps reduce anxiety.

By incorporating flexible seating, sensory tools, calming visuals, and quiet activities, calm corners in classrooms and homes can help children manage stress, build coping skills, and create a safe, supportive environment for emotional well-being. These spaces remind children that it’s okay to pause, breathe, and reset when life feels overwhelming. Over time, they learn to understand their emotions better and respond to challenges with greater confidence. Calm corners aren’t just a trend—they’re a meaningful way to nurture emotional health and help children feel seen, supported, and in control of their world.

Ressources:

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