



## COZY AREA

Every preschool classroom should consider having a cozy area. A classroom full of young children can be overwhelming for everyone, the children in particular. Create a place where children can relax, calm down and learn to manage their emotions and behavior.

Anger, sadness, loneliness and fear are normal human emotions experienced by even young children. Children lack the life experience and communication skills to understand and regulate emotions on their own. Teachers and parents can help young children understand and master emotions through many strategies. One strategy used by teachers is the "cozy area." The concept consists of a designated area in the classroom where a child can go to calm down, be comforted or problem solve.

### Things You Will Need

- Paper to write the rules on
- Pictures of calm things; feelings photos of children
- Soft items; Pillows; stuffed toys, rug
- Books on feelings and problem solving
- Doodle board



### Instructions for Building a Cozy Area

Choose a corner or area in the classroom that is away from the door and away from the busiest play areas.

Arrange bookshelves and other furniture so that the area is blocked off. (Be sure you can still see the children to supervise them).

Place items in the area that children can use to help calm down while they are in the cozy area. These can be items such as, books about calming down or feelings; puzzles; bubbles; Tucker Turtle; a feelings wheel; or calm pictures. Think about including an erasable "doodle board" so children can draw their feelings. (Make sure you do not have too many things, as this can overwhelm the child).

Cover the floor with comfortable items, such as a soft rug, bean bag chair, pillows and blankets. Arrange some stuffed animals on the blankets to comfort upset children.

Hang pictures on the walls showing different feelings such as mad, sad, happy, or scared. Children may go to the cozy area when they are feeling sad or angry, so hanging pictures of children showing different emotions can be used when you come to talk to the upset child.

Consider having the children help to build the cozy corner. They can make decorations for it and help put the items in the corner.

## Teaching Children How to Use the Cozy Area

1. Decide ahead of time what the purpose of the cozy area is. Some teachers use the cozy area as a place for children to go when they need time alone or to calm down. **It is very important that teachers do not use the Cozy area as a punishment.** Teachers can recommend that a child visit the cozy corner, allow the child to choose.
2. Introduce the cozy area to the children during circle time. Show them the new area and explain that it is a place for a child to go when he or she feels sad, angry or just needs some quiet time. Typically, one child is allowed in the cozy area at a time, sometimes a child may want to invite a friend in.
3. Set up rules for the cozy area with the children. For example, pillows and books stay in the cozy area. Only one child may visit the cozy area at a time. Children in the cozy area should be quiet and not disturb the rest of the classroom. Children decide when they need to go in. Children decide when they are ready to come out.
4. Practice how to best use the cozy area with the children when they are not upset so when they do become upset they will be familiar with it and the rules.
5. Invite children to visit the cozy area when they become upset or over stimulated. Stay close by to offer the child support and comfort, and to help the child re enter the group if needed.
6. At first everyone will want to use the cozy area because it is something new and exciting, do not worry after a while the excitement will die down and they will begin to use it when they really need to.
7. Encourage parents or grandparents to create a cozy area at home by sharing this with them. This will help to reinforce the skills children are learning in your classroom and help parents to partner with you to help their child become successful with their academics.