

PEACE CORNERS: SENSORY STRATEGIES FOR SELF-REGULATION TASN AUTISM AND TERTIARY BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS

WHAT ARE PEACE CORNERS?

Peace corners are areas, often placed within a classroom or office, that include sensory activities with which students can practice self-regulation.

WHY SHOULD THEY BE USED WITHIN THE CLASSROOM?

The ability to self-regulate includes practices that allow individuals to calm themselves, process emotions, and maintain attention, among many others. When challenges with self-regulation occur, all areas of an individual's life can be impacted. For children, struggles with relationships and academic engagement may be of particular concern. (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000.) Fortunately, "...activities that provide patterned, repetitive, rhythmic stimulation...are very successful in helping modulate brainstem deregulation" (Perry, 2006).

WHAT MATERIALS DO I NEED?

Materials can vary based on the needs of students and classroom setup. Below are suggestions for materials that can be included within each space, and directions for making these items.

- Beanbag chair (size varies depending on age of students)
- Rug
- Lava lamp
- Calm coloring books and blank paper
 - Crayons or colored pencils
- Books, such as:
 - *I Can Calm* <http://shop.consciousdiscipline.com/products/i-can-calm>
- Handheld sensory toys, such as:
 - Stress balls
 - Squish dinosaur
 - Koosh ball
 - Stuffed animals
 - Breathing buddy (see p.2 for instructions)
 - Hoberman sphere for mindful breathing
- Sensory sweatshirt (see p.3 for instructions)
- Sensory bottles (see p.2-3 for instructions)
 - Wave (Ocean) bottle
 - Butterfly bottle
 - Color swirl glitter bottle
 - Natural rain stick bottle
- Rocker
- Exercise or therapy ball
- Massage ball (porcupine or bumpy ball)
- Stretchy bands
- Theraband tube for foot fidgeting or bouncy bands
- Wiggle seats
- Key rings that include different fabrics, materials, sand paper, etc.

HOW SHOULD I USE THEM?

Students should not be sent to the corner by instructors. Rather, they should be allowed to self-refer to the peace corner and return when they are feeling better regulated and prepared to engage. Teachers generally find that students go to the corner prior to acting out and rarely stay longer than necessary. (Rechtschaffen, 2014.) It may be helpful to provide a brief tutorial on items when they are established within the classroom and provide pictures or descriptions for use; however, creativity is valued and students should be encouraged to use each item as it serves their needs.

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INSTRUCTIONS

Breathing Buddies: <http://www.mindfulschools.org/inspiration/how-to-make-breathing-buddies-with-early-childhood-students/>

WAVE (OCEAN) BOTTLE

Supplies:

- Water bottle
- Water
- Blue food coloring
- Baby oil
- Hot glue

Directions:

- Fill water bottle $\frac{1}{3}$ full of water.
- Add 3-4 drops of blue food coloring to water and put lid on.
- Shake well.
- Fill bottle to the top with oil, leaving an inch at the top empty.
- Put lid on and tilt bottle back and forth. (Do not try to add more food coloring to the bottle at this point. It will not dissolve in the oil.) You can adjust oil or water amounts.
- When satisfied with results, take cap off and dry inside of cap and rim of bottle.
- Put a little hot glue inside the bottle cap rim before screwing on. (E6000 doesn't work due to oil.)

CLEAR GLITTER (BUTTERFLY) BOTTLE

Supplies:

- Water bottle
- Water
- Corn syrup
- Silver glitter
- Shaped confetti (butterflies or other)
- E6000 or hot glue

Directions:

- Fill $\frac{1}{2}$ bottle with corn syrup and $\frac{1}{2}$ with water. Add regular silver glitter and confetti (with butterflies or shapes).
- Screw cap on and shake; adjust amount of glitter or confetti as needed.
- When satisfied with results, take cap off and dry inside of cap and rim of bottle.
- Put a little E6000 or hot glue inside the bottle cap rim before screwing on.

COLOR SWIRL GLITTER BOTTLE

Supplies:

- Water bottle
- Hot water
- Glitter glue
- Extra fine glitter
- E6000 or hot glue

Directions:

- Fill bottle $\frac{3}{4}$ full with HOT tap water.
- Add $\frac{1}{2}$ bottle of glitter glue.
- Close bottle and shake well to dissolve glue.
- Add about $\frac{1}{2}$ of small bottle of extra fine glitter and top off bottle with additional water. Shake. Add more glitter if desired.
- When satisfied with results, take cap off and dry inside of cap and rim of bottle.
- Put a little E6000 or hot glue inside the bottle cap rim before screwing on.

NATURAL RAIN STICK BOTTLE

Supplies:

- Wide mouth water bottle (similar to Vitamin Water bottles)
- Thin sticks
- Acorns (optional)
- Rice
- E6000 or hot glue

Directions:

- Break sticks to fit into the bottle (the more the better). They don't all have to reach the top. Be sure to angle some of them. If you want to add a few acorns, do that as you go. (They won't fit once you add several sticks in the mouth of the bottle.)
- Add 2 inches of rice to the bottle.
- Screw lid on and slowly tip bottle. Adjust rice or sticks as needed to simulate falling rain.
- When satisfied with results, take cap off and dry inside of cap and rim of bottle.
- Put a little E6000 or hot glue inside the bottle cap rim before screwing on.

SENSORY SWEATSHIRT

Supplies:

- Sweatshirt
- Beans
- Puzzle pieces or other small objects (optional)

Directions:

- Sew neck and waist openings of sweatshirt shut.
- Partially fill with beans until desired weight.
- Finishing options:
 - Tie arms of sweatshirt to prevent beans from falling out.
 - Leave arms untied for students to put hands through openings to manipulate beans.
 - Include other items with the beans for students to manipulate. Ex: puzzle pieces for students to find and remove for puzzle completion.

ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM RESOURCES

- Brain Boosters Neurodeck <http://hullservices.ca/articles/brain-booster-activity-cards>
- Doodles, Dances and Ditties: A Somatosensory Handbook <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/25034813-doodles-dances-ditties>

References:

- National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. (2000). In Shonkoff, J. P., and Phillips, D. A. (Ed.). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development* [NAP online version]. Retrieved from <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/9824/from-neurons-to-neighborhoods-the-science-of-early-childhood-development>.
- Perry, B. D. (2006). Applying principles of neurodevelopment to clinical work with maltreated and traumatized children: The neurosequential model of therapeutics. In Webb, N. B. (Eds.), *Working with traumatized youth in child welfare* (pp. 27-52). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Rechtschaffen, D. (2014). *The way of mindful education: Cultivating well-being in teachers and students* [Google Books version]. Retrieved from <https://books.google.com/books?id=6K9bAwAAQBAJ>.

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