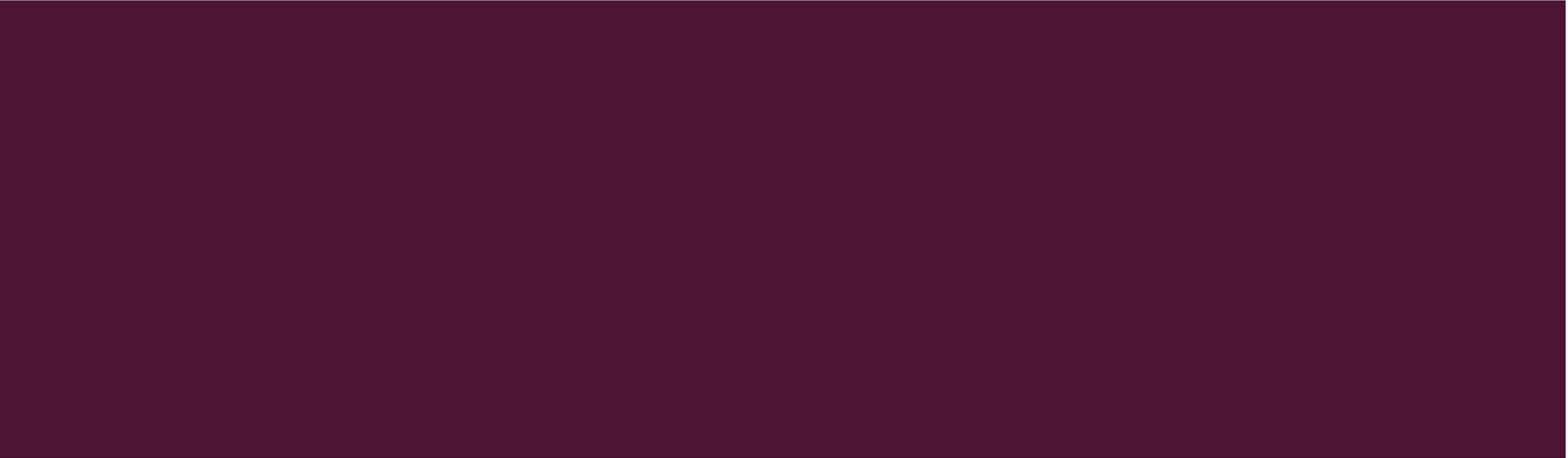




GIVE 'EM A BREAK! DEVELOPING CALMING SPACES IN A SCHOOL-BASED  
SETTING FOR CHILDREN WITH EMOTIONAL-  
BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS

PRESENTED BY: GINA RAINELLI, OTD, OTR/L



# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Understand the difference between sensory processing and self-regulation and how they apply to children with emotional-behavioral disorders (EBD) or mental illness (MI).
- ❖ Identify the role an occupational therapy practitioner has in addressing EBD/MI in a school-based setting.
- ❖ Learn what adversities children face when they have a trauma background or are under constant stress.
- ❖ Formulate ideas of creating a calming space for children with EBD/MI in your workplace.
- ❖ Explain how to obtain funding for a calming space in your workspace.

# PURPOSE

- ❖ Develop a space for children to learn self-regulation skills with an adult 1:1
- ❖ Alternative space to “breakout”
- ❖ Decrease physical holds
- ❖ Create a safe place for students to go before behavior escalates
- ❖ Design a calm environment in the school



# LEVEL IV SCHOOLS IN MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- ❖ Most restrictive setting in the district.
- ❖ No chance for mainstreaming since it is 100% special education
- ❖ All doors locked and students go through metal detectors
- ❖ Typical classroom is 8-10 students with 3 adults
- ❖ 98% free and reduced lunch
- ❖ Most have Emotional-Behavioral Disorder (EBD) as primary disability on IEP
- ❖ <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2014/10/13/yoga-helps-student-behavior-at-river-bend>

# RESIDENTIAL IN MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- ❖ Reside in a private agency but MPS provides the education and related services. Youth counsellors support classroom
- ❖ Students are from all over Minnesota and Wisconsin (mostly)
- ❖ Many students have severe behavior problems and mental illness
- ❖ Some students are there while parental rights are terminated
- ❖ Waiting for family, foster care, or adoptive parents to take them from residential
- ❖ Some students end up in a different residential setting
- ❖ Trauma narrative

# IMPLICATIONS FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

- ❖ Occupational therapy's distinct contribution to the field of mental health is its grounding in occupation (AOTA, 2013b).
- ❖ Occupational therapy practitioners analyze, adapt, and modify tasks and environments to support clients so they can develop and maintain healthy ways of living.
- ❖ The AOTA's *Framework-III* (2014) supports interventions that are occupation-based.
- ❖ The AOTA's *Vision 2025* calls for OT practitioners to be Accessible, Collaborative, Effective, and Leaders (AOTA, 2017).

- 
- ❖ Influenced by the Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO) Model which is occupation based. The goal of the PEO is to improve well-being of a person by having them participate in occupations in their natural environment (Law et al., 1996).
  - ❖ Occupation-based models explain the process of behavior and a child's performance while focusing on the relationship of the person, environment, and occupation (Kreider, Bendixen, Huang, Lim, 2014)
  - ❖ Acquisitional Frame of Reference: (Leubben & Royeen, 2010)
    - Theoretical Base: Behavior is a response to the surrounding environment
    - The environment either reinforces or fails to reinforce the behavior
    - Humans acquire new skills by interaction with their environment

# EVIDENCE-BASED OT INTERVENTION

- ❖ Implementation used by OTs to promote emotional development among children shows positive results (Case-Smith, 2013).
- ❖ Children value and need to engage in structured, occupation-based activities especially if children come from low-income families (Bazyk & Bazyk, 2009).
- ❖ Evidence indicates that learning self-regulation strategies has a positive effect on social behavior and social competence (Arbesman, Bazyk, & Nochajski, 2013).
- ❖ When children are engaged in activities, they are less likely to display maladaptive behaviors (Tokolahi, Em-Chhour, Barkwill, & Stanley, 2013).

# RELATIONSHIPS

- ❖ Parents play a large roll in the early social development of a child (Case-Smith, 2013).
- ❖ As the child grows, relationships/social skills are shaped between parent and child (Case-Smith 2013).
- ❖ Children who experience abuse and neglect may have stunted motor and emotional skills (Case-Smith, 2013).
- ❖ Neuroscientific studies are clear that the quality of relationship that a child has early in development affects the “architecture” of the brain (von Klitsing, Dohnert, Kroll, & Grube, 2015).
- ❖ Children need opportunities to create healthy relationships with adults to meet their needs for connectedness (Bazyk & Bazyk, 2009).

Goalcast

**I tried to kill myself  
with a bottle of pills.**

# TRAUMA

- ❖ The theory of Developmental Repair proposes that children who experience trauma at a young age react to their environment according to the ill-formed relationships they have with adults (Gearity, 2009).
- ❖ The theory shifts the paradigm from the assumption that the child aims to be aggressive/disruptive to seeing the behaviors as the child's effort to cope (Gearity, 2009).
- ❖ A study by Lawlor (2003) demonstrates that children and adult interactions are important factors in being socially occupied.

# WHAT IS TRAUMA?

- ❖ Trauma is an intense and overwhelming experience that involve serious loss, and/or threat or harm to a person's physical and/or emotional well being.
- ❖ Occur at any time in a person's life and may involve a single traumatic event or the trauma may occur over a long period of time or may be re-experienced.
- ❖ Often this trauma overwhelms the coping skills and leads to poor coping strategies that may work short term but can cause serious harm in the long run.



# EXAMPLES OF TRAUMATIC LIFE EXPERIENCES

- ❖ Physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse
- ❖ Neglect or abandonment (food insufficiency, lack of money to meet basic needs, homelessness)
- ❖ Death of a parent or incarceration of parent or guardian
- ❖ Divorce
- ❖ Family life that includes drug addiction, alcoholism
- ❖ Rape
- ❖ Serious medical illness or disease (disabling conditions, loss of function, invasive and distressing procedures)

SAMHSA-HRSA: Center for integrated health solutions (2012)

# IMPACT OF TRAUMA OVER THE LIFESPAN

- ❖ The risk of neurological, biological, psychological and/or social difficulties increase
- ❖ There are changes in brain neurobiology (why sensory may help with trauma)
- ❖ Social, emotional and cognitive impairment
- ❖ Poor coping mechanisms (eating disorders, smoking, substance abuse, self-harm, sexual promiscuity, violence)
- ❖ Severe and persistent behavioral health, physical health and social problems and even early death

SAMHSA-HRSA: Center for integrated health solutions (/2012)

# WHY DO WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND TRAUMA

- ❖ To provide effective services in the child's environment
- ❖ Many problems faced by the children we work with may be related to traumatic life experiences
- ❖ Children may be overly sensitive to certain things that trigger

SAMHSA-HRSA: Center for integrated health solutions (2012)

# SIGNS OF A DISTRESSED PERSON

- ❖ Emotional reactions
- ❖ Physical or somatic reactions
- ❖ Behavioral reactions
- ❖ Cognitive reactions

SAMHSA-HRSA: Center for integrated health solutions (2012)



# TRAUMA

[Trauma handout](#)



# STRESS AND ANXIETY

- ❖ Children with chronic stress due to poverty or abuse develop problematic coping styles. This can lead to atypical patterns of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral coping styles as well as difficulty with self-regulation (Wadsworth, 2015).
- ❖ Developmental Cascade describes the adaptations a child's body needs to go through when in a state of chronic stress (Wadsworth, 2015).
- ❖ Research shows that the brain changes when a child learns a new way to cope with stress. New neural pathways develop preventing further damage (Wadsworth, 2015).



# STRESS AND LEARNING

- ❖ Stress may enhance and promote patterns of self care and self soothing, self-regulation and learning. (“good” stress).
- ❖ If there is too much stress for a person to handle (toxic stress) then self-care, self-regulation and learning are compromised.

# STRESS AND THE BODY

- ❖ Imbalances in the body can result from too much stress.
- ❖ Stress that is not addressed can result in physical pain and can cause changes in the body
- ❖ Psychosomatic changes are not made up. With chronic stress the body experiences distress and limitations



# STRESS AND SAFETY

- ❖ A lot of children do not feel that they are safe at school
- ❖ They may be dealing with:
  - Stress or trauma
  - Difficulty learning
  - Poor social skills
  - Cultural differences or bias
  - Past failures at school

# STRESS AND SAFETY

- ❖ Emotional or social safety: how safe a child feels with others and the environment (Petrenchik & King, 2011).
- ❖ A safe setting provides a child with enough freedom to express thought and feelings without fear of judgement, retaliation, or rejection (Petrenchik & King, 2011).
- ❖ Calm spaces provide a safe are for students to come in order to gain safety and to recognize their own ability to self-regulate, become more self aware, and possible step out of stress body and into comfort zone.



# STRESS AND SELF-AWARENESS (KNOWING MY OWN MIND)

- ❖ For children self-awareness is KNOWING THEIR OWN MIND. This helps with mentalizing
- ❖ Mentalizing is the ability to know their own thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires
- ❖ If a child feels he/she is in danger (stress reaction), knowing is compromised.
- ❖ Too much stress for a child can cause them to lose the sense of “my mind” causing a shut down. Some children will dissociate.

# STRESS AND OCCUPATION-BASED INTERVENTION

- ❖ We are a holistic profession. We are acutely aware of the connection between mind and body. Don't forget the environment too!! (Once again, here is PEO)!!
- ❖ OTs have a foundation in psychology and mental health.
- ❖ OTs use a client-centered approach to occupation-based learning which facilitates meaningful engagement (Kreider, Bendixen, Huang, & Lim, 2014).
- ❖ Every day occupations are a central role in the formation of self-identity (Kreider, Bendixen, Huang, & Lim, 2014).
- ❖ OTs working with children can do this through building relationships and helping a child co-regulate when in a stress state.



# THE KIDS WE LOSE

The Kids We Lose

<http://www.thekidswelose.com/>

# SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTION

- ❖ The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2013) report that each year a total of 13%–20% of American children experience a mental disorder.
- ❖ Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Pub. L. 94-142) was the first federal act to help meet children's mental health needs in school for children with emotional disturbance (Bazyk & Arbesman, 2013).
- ❖ IDEA of 1997 (Pub. L. 105-117) stated that any child with an identifiable disability that impacted learning are eligible for service. This way children with a mental illness receive mental health services through school (Bazyk & Arbesman, 2013).
- ❖ Schools are becoming active partners since it is accepted that mental illness/limited social-emotional skills is a major barrier to learning school (Bazyk & Arbesman, 2013).

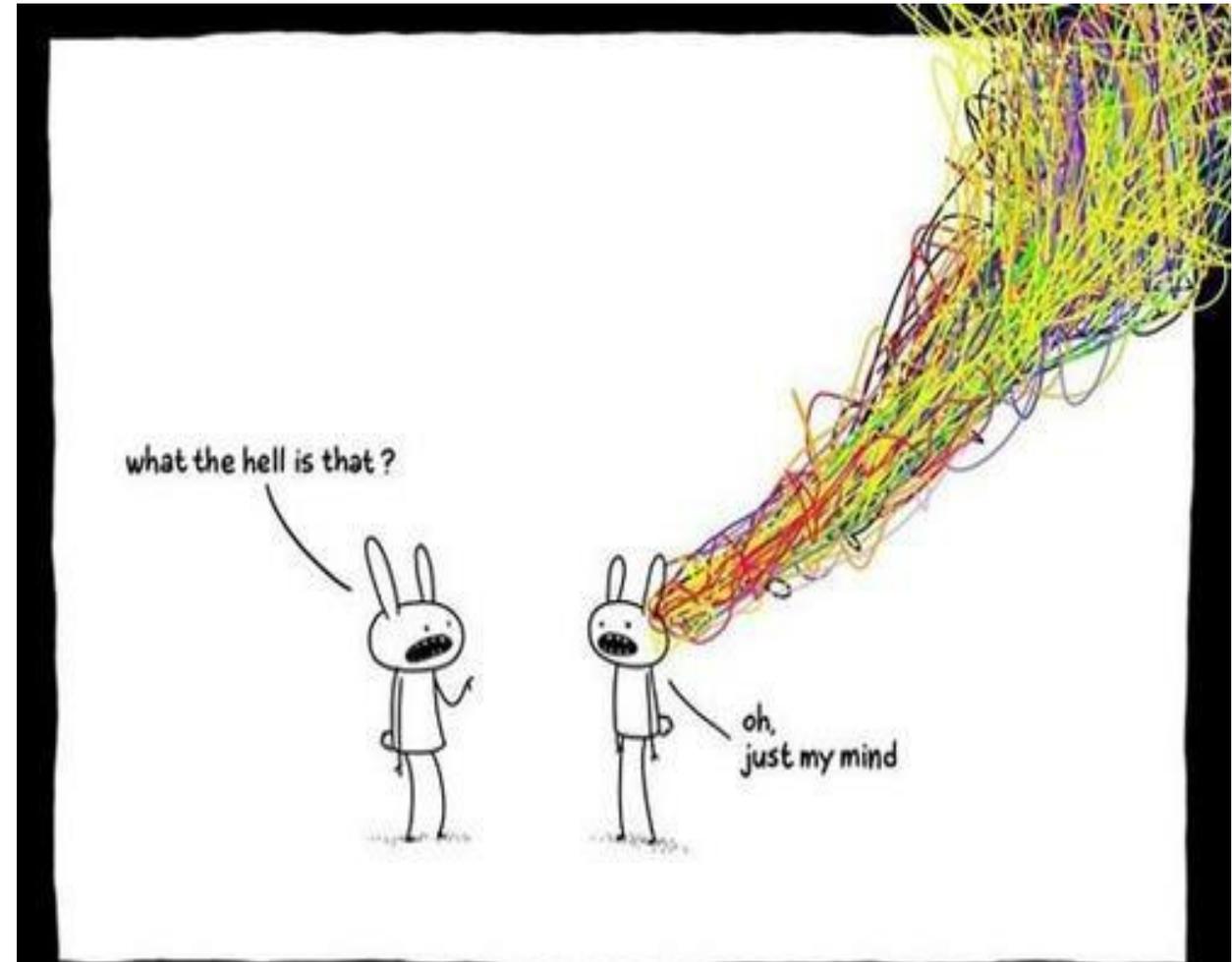
# SCHOOL –BASED MENTAL HEALTH AND OT

- ❖ OT promotes health and participation in everyday occupations in a school –based setting. This includes academic, behavioral, functional, and social aspects in the school day (Clark and Chandler, 2013).
- ❖ Apply a public health approach to school mental health.
  - Tier 1: Universal Mental Health Promotion and Prevention Services (Entire school population)
  - Tier 2: Targeted Mental Health Services (Target identified at-risk students)
  - Tier 3: Individualized Intensive Mental Health Interventions (Identified students whose participation is limited in school)

# SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH AND OT

- ❖ Addressing mental health in schools...the WHO, WHERE, and WHAT
  - WHO? Occupational therapists!! We can serve ALL children. What better was to cover a lot of kids than a calming space.
  - WHERE? Schools!! OTS help children benefit from their education and function in their school environment
  - WHAT? Build positive relationships and help strike a balance between meaningful occupations and health.

(Bazyk and Arbesman, 2013)



# SENSORY PROCESSING

Sensory processing (formerly known as sensory integration dysfunction...) refers to the way the nervous system receives messages from the senses and turns them into the appropriate motor and behavioral responses.

# SENSORY PROCESSING

- ❖ Deficits in sensory integration can pose challenges in performing activities of daily living (ADLs), in addition to development, learning, playing, working, socializing, and exhibiting appropriate behavior (Schaff & Smith Roley, 2006).



# SENSORY PROCESSING

- ❖ Sensory processing is a neuroscience-based approach to address occupational performance and participation.
- ❖ All sensation is needed for a child to develop awareness of him/herself as an integrated whole. This helps build the bottom layer on which a child can learn and develop skills (Watling, Koenig, Davies, & Schaaf, 2011).
- ❖ Ineffective sensory processing and behavioral organization means the foundation is not there for an individual to use to build on in order to function (Watling, Koenig, Davies, & Schaaf, 2011).
- ❖ Sensory experiences need to enhance a child's ability to "detect, register, perceive, and respond adaptively to stimuli in an organized and appropriate manner that is reflected in cognitive, motor and emotional responses." (Watling, Koenig, Davies, & Schaaf, 2011).
- ❖ Sensory experiences are used to create the foundation on which successful occupational engagement and functional performance in a child's environment (Watling, Koenig, Davies, & Schaaf, 2011).

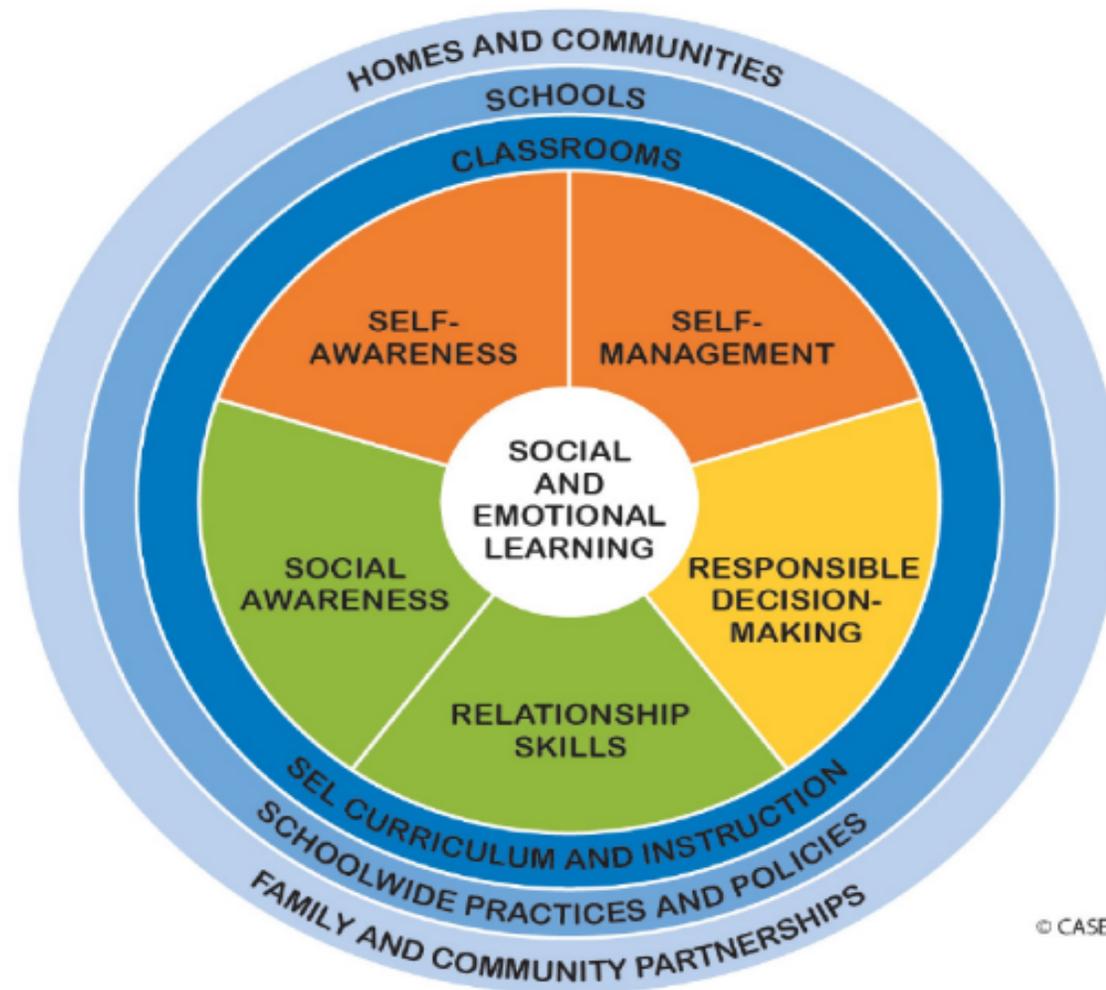
# SELF-REGULATION

- ❖ Self-regulation, or the process of controlling one's emotions and behavior, is critical for school success (Eisenberg, Valiente, & Eggum, 2010).
- ❖ Many children in early elementary school struggle to develop the skills needed to successfully monitor and manage their own behavior and emotions (DuPaul, Weyandt, & Janusis, 2011).
- ❖ Self-regulation involves components of executive functioning (e.g., attention, inhibitory control, problem solving), understanding and interpreting emotional and autonomic states, and controlling responses to those states (Kuypers, 2011).
- ❖ Poor self-regulation can lead to frequent off-task behaviors, aggression, poor academic outcomes, and restricted social participation (Konrad, Fowler, Walker, Test, & Wood, 2007).

# SELF-REGULATION

- ❖ Self-regulation is a complex term that has had multiple meanings over the years.
- ❖ To occupational therapists, the term self-regulation is used more frequently.
- ❖ The scoping review by Martini, Cramm, Egan, & Sikora (2016) highlights the term self-regulation as a relatively new term to OT.
- ❖ Albert Bandura (1977) used a neurobehavioristic approach to behavioral and emotional regulation.
- ❖ The focus of self-regulation morphed from the focus being on arousal, sensory processes, or emotion and behavior.

# CASEL MODEL FOR SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING



# SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

- ❖ SEL is the ability to manage one's emotions and get along with others. SEL plays a large role in a child's ability to succeed in academics and in life (Mindup, 2011)

# 5 KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

<https://www.edutopia.org/video/5-keys-successful-social-and-emotional-learning>

# CALMING SPACES

- ❖ A calming space is a supportive environment for children where they can use self-regulations skills to help manage their behavior.
- ❖ It is designed to help a child when they feel stress and need a break from their current environment.
- ❖ A calm space provides a sanctuary from stress decreasing sensory stimulation and allows time away from others and gives a child a break from interpersonal interactions
- ❖ Provides a safe and comfortable spot to regroup, relax, and practice self-regulation or self-nurturing skills.

# CALMING SPACES

## Calming Space

- ❖ Self-regulation model
- ❖ Emphasis on self-directed calming techniques
- ❖ Child directed
- ❖ Materials can be selected by child (involve in process)
- ❖ Wellness and recovery model
- ❖ May include sensory items

## Sensory Space

- ❖ Professional led (OT Led)
- ❖ Tools are specific to sensory processing and modulation
- ❖ Distinct tools for the senses
- ❖ May include screening or assessment tools
- ❖ Some have comfort room elements

# CALMING SPACES

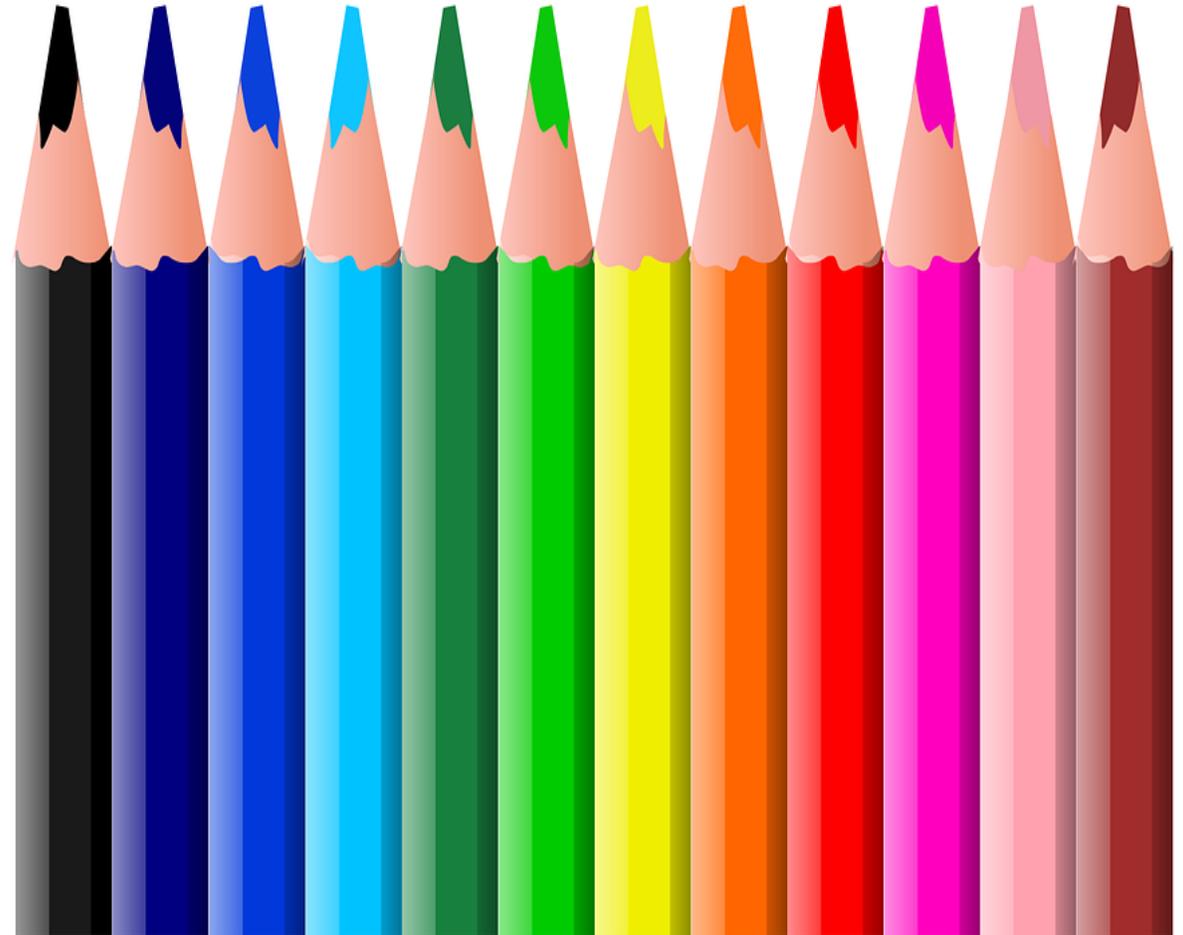
- ❖ Used as part of trauma informed care and as stress relief not only for children but for staff as well
- ❖ One study showed a decrease in assaults between patients and between patients towards staff.
- ❖ Another study showed that calming spaces had a positive effect on the people who used in when feeling stress.
- ❖ The use of a calming space with multi-sensory items showed that the majority of consumers showed a benefit from it's use and reported decreased stress levels.

## ITEMS FOR A CALMING SPACE

- ❖ Kinetic sand
- ❖ Lavender rice
- ❖ Tent or other get away
- ❖ Calm music (classical, Native American flute or drums, nature sounds)
- ❖ Shears for windows
- ❖ Lamps and string lights
- ❖ Student artwork if available
- ❖ Fabric to cover bulletin boards if you have them
- ❖ Fidgets
- ❖ Play-dough
- ❖ Clay
- ❖ Velcro catch
- ❖ Nerf basketball hoop
- ❖ Weighted ball ( I like the bouncy medicine ball)
- ❖ Yoga mats and yoga cards or posters
- ❖ Stuffed animals
- ❖ Fleece blankets
- ❖ Weighed shoulder shrugs
- ❖ Timers

- 
- ❖ Headphones
  - ❖ Balance board
  - ❖ Loveseat or comfy chair
  - ❖ Partition if room can be split
  - ❖ Art supplies (colored pencils, mandalas, color books, crayons, blank paper)
  - ❖ TV and DVD player with looping calm video
  - ❖ Weighted blanket or other items
  - ❖ Pressure vest for trial
  - ❖ Self-care items
  - ❖ TV and DVD player with looping calm video
  - ❖ Weighted blanket or other items
  - ❖ Pressure vest for trial
  - ❖ Self-care items
  - ❖ Big foam pillow (like a crash pad)
  - ❖ Breathing Ball
  - ❖ Diffuser and essential oils
  - ❖ Books

- 
- ❖ Mazes
  - ❖ Bubbles
  - ❖ Puzzles
  - ❖ Table and chairs for art table
  - ❖ Baskets and containers for art supplies, stuffed animals, fidgets, books
  - ❖ Area rug
  - ❖ Glitter bottles



# WHERE TO SHOP

- ❖ Amazon
- ❖ School Specialty
- ❖ Therapy Shoppe
- ❖ Target/Wal-Mart
- ❖ Ikea
- ❖ Michael's
- ❖ JoAnn Fabrics
- ❖ Facebook
- ❖ Thrift shops
- ❖ Craig's List

## SETTING UP A CALMING SPACE

- ❖ Gather a team that is willing to put time into the room (SW, school psych, counsellor, teachers, support staff, engineers, students)
- ❖ Brainstorm purpose, need, and vision for the space
- ❖ Have a space in the school in mind
- ❖ Put together a proposal for principal, administration, or building lead
- ❖ Secure funding
- ❖ Make a list of items desired, cost and where to buy

- 
- ❖ Once items received, meet as a team to determine set-up
  - ❖ Work together to set up room
  - ❖ Collaborate to make rules and guideline for space
  - ❖ LAMINATE EVERYTHING!
  - ❖ Take pictures of the desired organization of the space
  - ❖ Involve students in decoration and name of space (if desired)
  - ❖ Put together staff and student training
  - ❖ Offer a few options for staff training (weekly staff meeting)
  - ❖ Decide how to train students (classrooms or larger groups) and present
  - ❖ Take students and staff to the space to show them around and expectations

- 
- ❖ Offer a few options for staff training (weekly staff meeting)
  - ❖ Decide how to train students (classrooms or larger groups) and present
  - ❖ Have check in/out sheet ready and a place to put them
  - ❖ Take students and staff to the space to show them around and emphasize expectations
  - ❖ Decide who will “turn on/turn off” the space each day
  - ❖ Maintain space and refill areas as needed
  - ❖ Remove any items that are not working or are damaged

# THE COVE

- ❖ The brain child of the wonderful SW and school psychologist (Shout out to Britt Engrav and Emily Gorski)!!
- ❖ Funded by a grant (Assistance League of Minnesota) and Donor's Choose
- ❖ Level IV K-8
- ❖ Help reduce restraints and de-escalate behavior before break-out
- ❖ Safe space for all students
- ❖ Activities to calm students

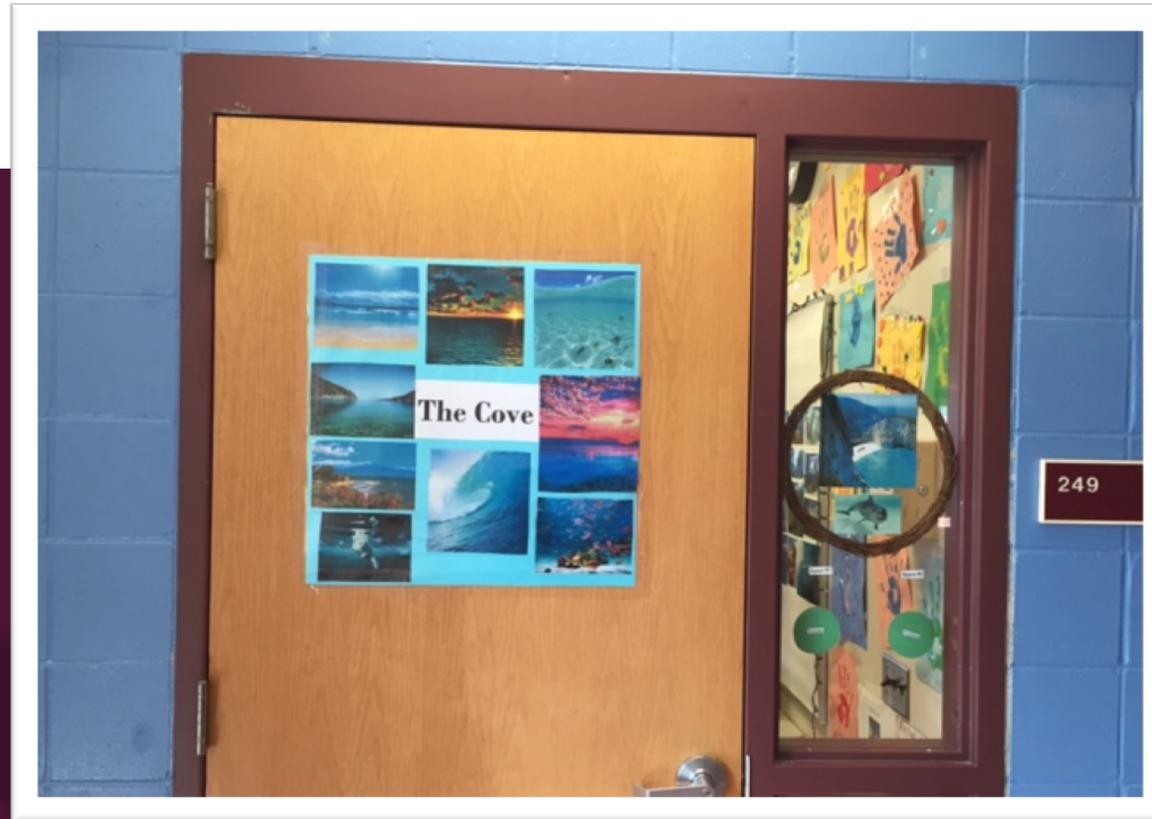
# STAFF TRAINING

- ❖ Carried out by the SW and school psych
- ❖ Weekly staff meeting
- ❖ Staff were taken in and shown around and taught how to use certain items
- ❖ Hand-out given to each staff
- ❖ Each new staff is trained as well and all staff updated a few more times each year (if problems arise)

# STUDENT TRAINING

- ❖ Carried out by the school social worker and psychologist
- ❖ Classroom to classroom education
- ❖ Took all the students to The Cove to explore and ask questions

# THE COVE



## **WHAT IS THE COVE?**

- **A new room at River Bend**
- **A safe place for students to go**
- **A place to take a break**
- **A place to calm down**

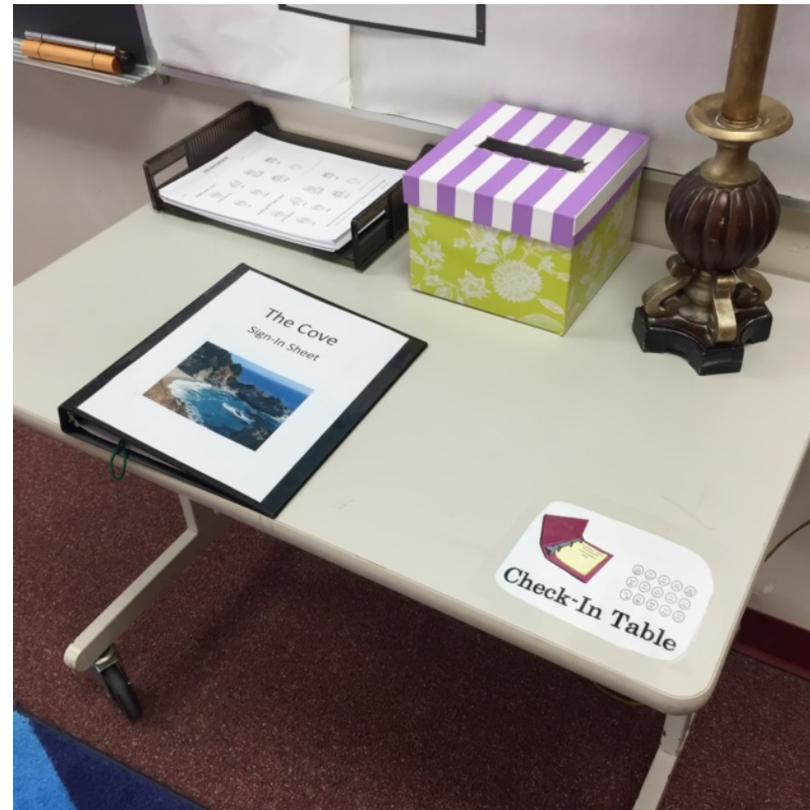
## WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COVE?

In The Cove, I will:

- Be safe with my body.
- Follow staff directions.
- Stay in one area at a time.
- Respect other people in the room.
- Clean up before I leave.

# HOW DO I USE THE COVE?

## I. Go to the Check-In Table



# HOW DO I USE THE COVE?

## 2. Fill out a Check-In Sheet

**THE COVE CHECK-IN**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Right now I feel:**

 Anxious/Worried	 Okay	 Frustrated	 Calm
 Sad	 Happy	 Relaxed	 _____

**Leaving the Cove I feel:**

 Anxious/Worried	 Okay	 Frustrated	 Calm
 Sad	 Happy	 Relaxed	 _____

**Before you leave The Cove, make sure that you cleaned up any areas that you used!**

Did you clean up The Cove?     YES     NO    Staff Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

# HOW DO I USE THE COVE?

**3. Choose  
the area  
where you  
want to  
go.**

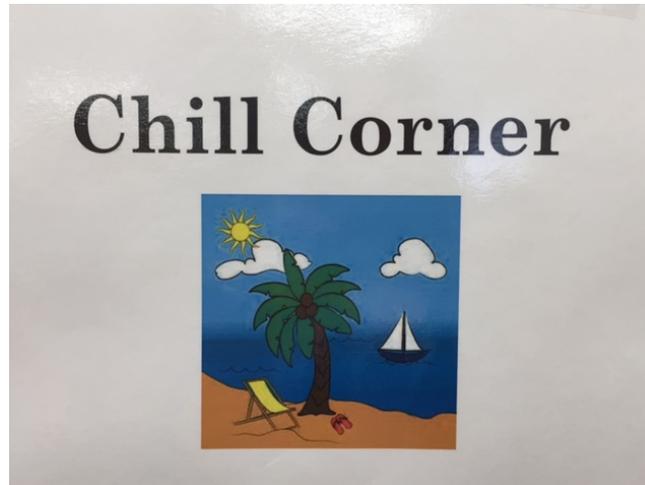


Remember to always  
follow staff directions!

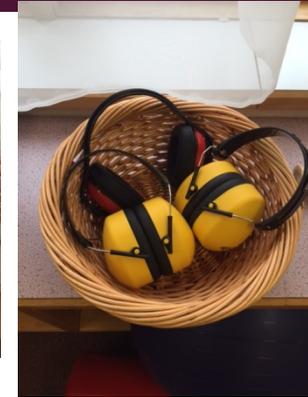
# WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT AREAS IN THE COVE?

1. **Chill Corner**
2. **Activity Area**
3. **Art Station**
4. **Reading Area**
5. **Yoga Station**
6. **Self-Care Station**

# THE CHILL CORNER



# ACTIVITY AREA & HELPFUL TOOLS

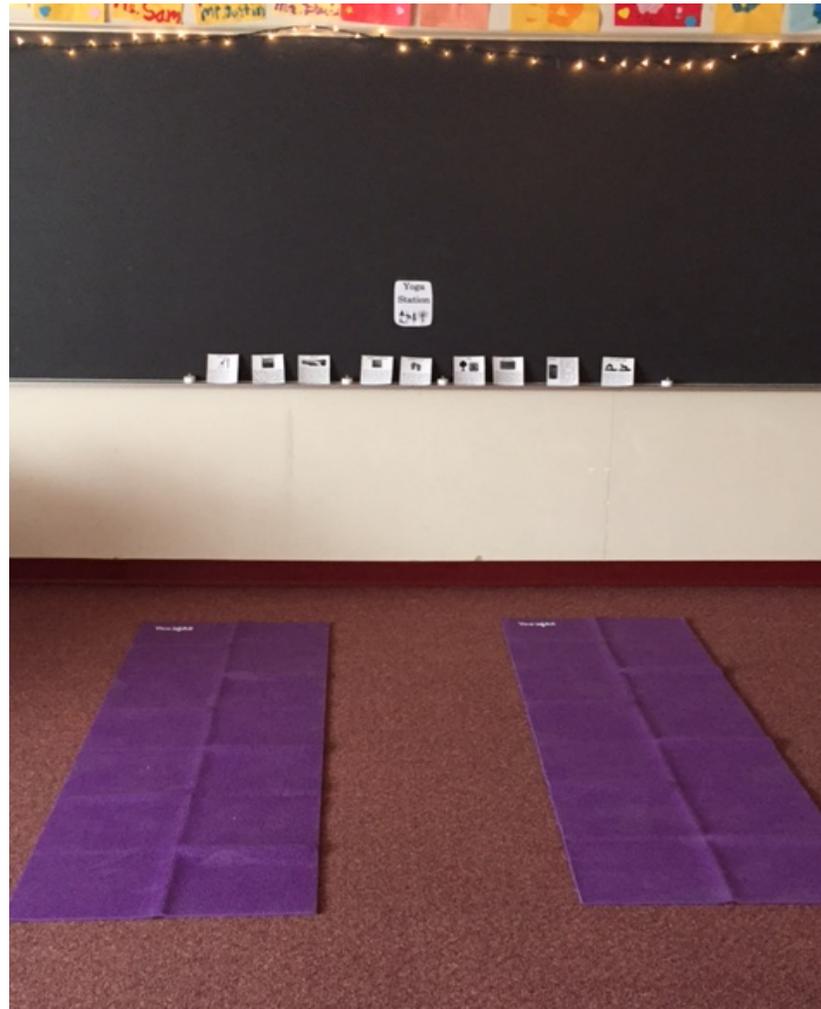
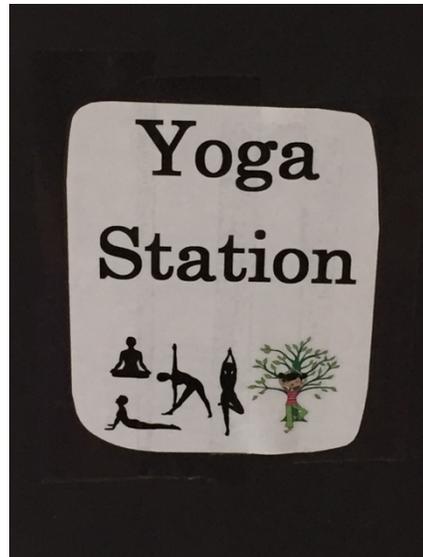


# ART STATION





# YOGA STATION



# SELF-CARE STATION



# HOW DO I USE THE COVE?

4. When your time in The Cove is done, make sure to clean up the areas that you used.



Remember to always follow staff directions!

# HOW DO I USE THE COVE?

5. Complete the bottom part of the Check-In Sheet

THE COVE CHECK-IN

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Right now I feel:

Anxious/Worried	Calm	Happy	Sad

Leaving the Cove I feel:

Anxious/Worried	Calm	Happy	Sad

Before you leave The Cove, make sure that you cleaned up any areas that you used!

Did you clean up The Cove? YES  NO  Halfway

6. Put your sheet in the box.



7. Return to class ready to learn



REMEMBER!

THESE ARE THE EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COVE:

- In The Cove, I will:
- Be safe with my body.
  - Follow staff directions.
  - Stay in one area at a time.
  - Respect other people in the room.
  - Clean up before I leave.



# LESSONS LEARNED

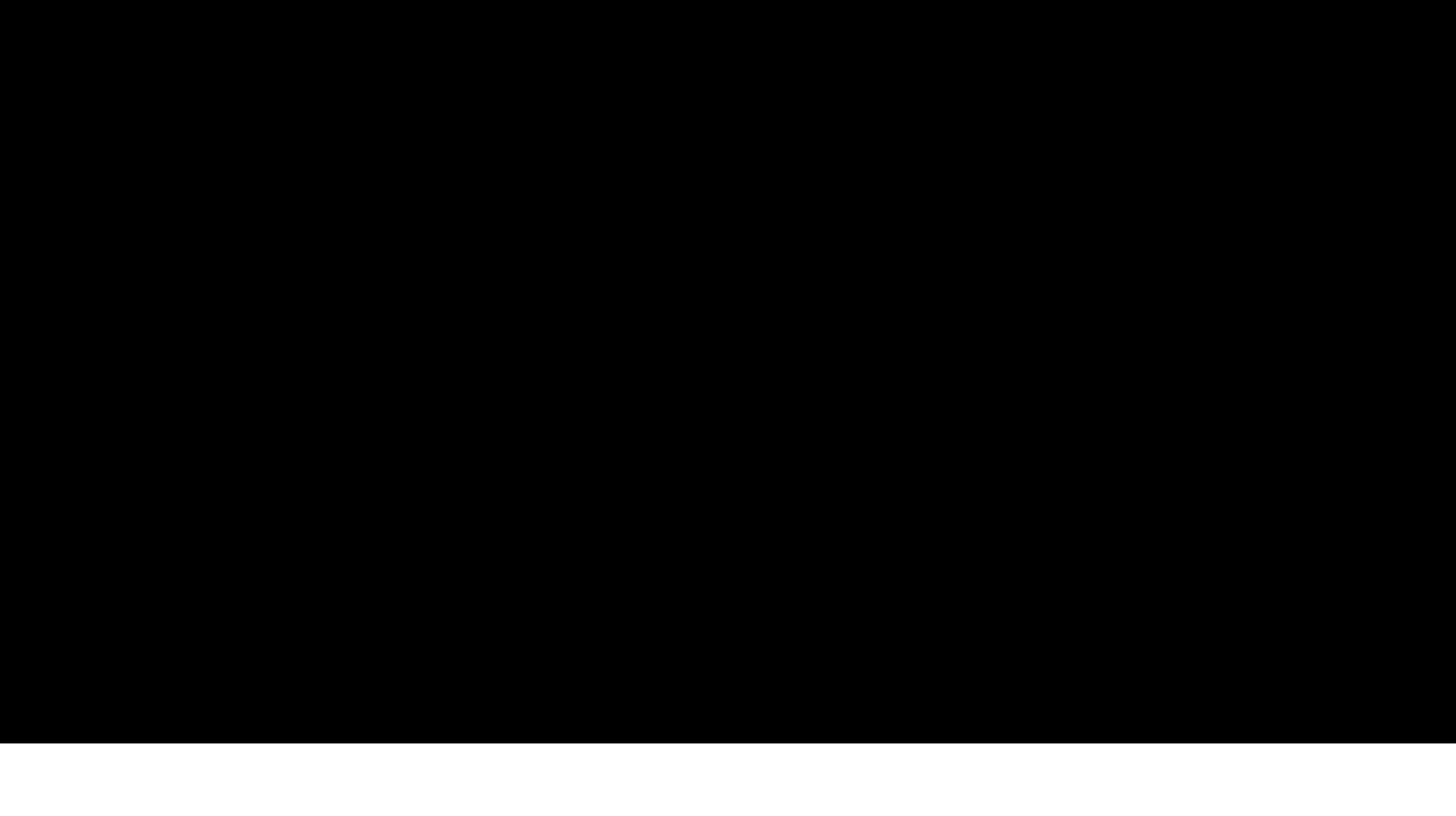
- ❖ Training
- ❖ Retrain all staff and students at start of year
- ❖ Plan for new staff
- ❖ Plan for new students
- ❖ Admin support
- ❖ Maintenance
- ❖ Staff feedback

# THE OASIS

- ❖ At residential placement
- ❖ Collaboration with the fantastic SW (Konni Welk) and school psychologist (Sandy Tapia)
- ❖ Funded by Donor's Choose, donations, and Catholic Charities (warehouse)
- ❖ A lot of personal time and work put into this room

# STUDENT TRAINING

- ❖ Carried out by school social worker and psychologist
- ❖ Went to classrooms to educate
- ❖ Showed the Oasis Movie and answered questions in group
- ❖ Students were brought to The Oasis either 1:1 or in a pairs
- ❖ Allowed to explore and ask questions
- ❖ Information from The Cove was used to develop staff and student training (collaboration between schools)













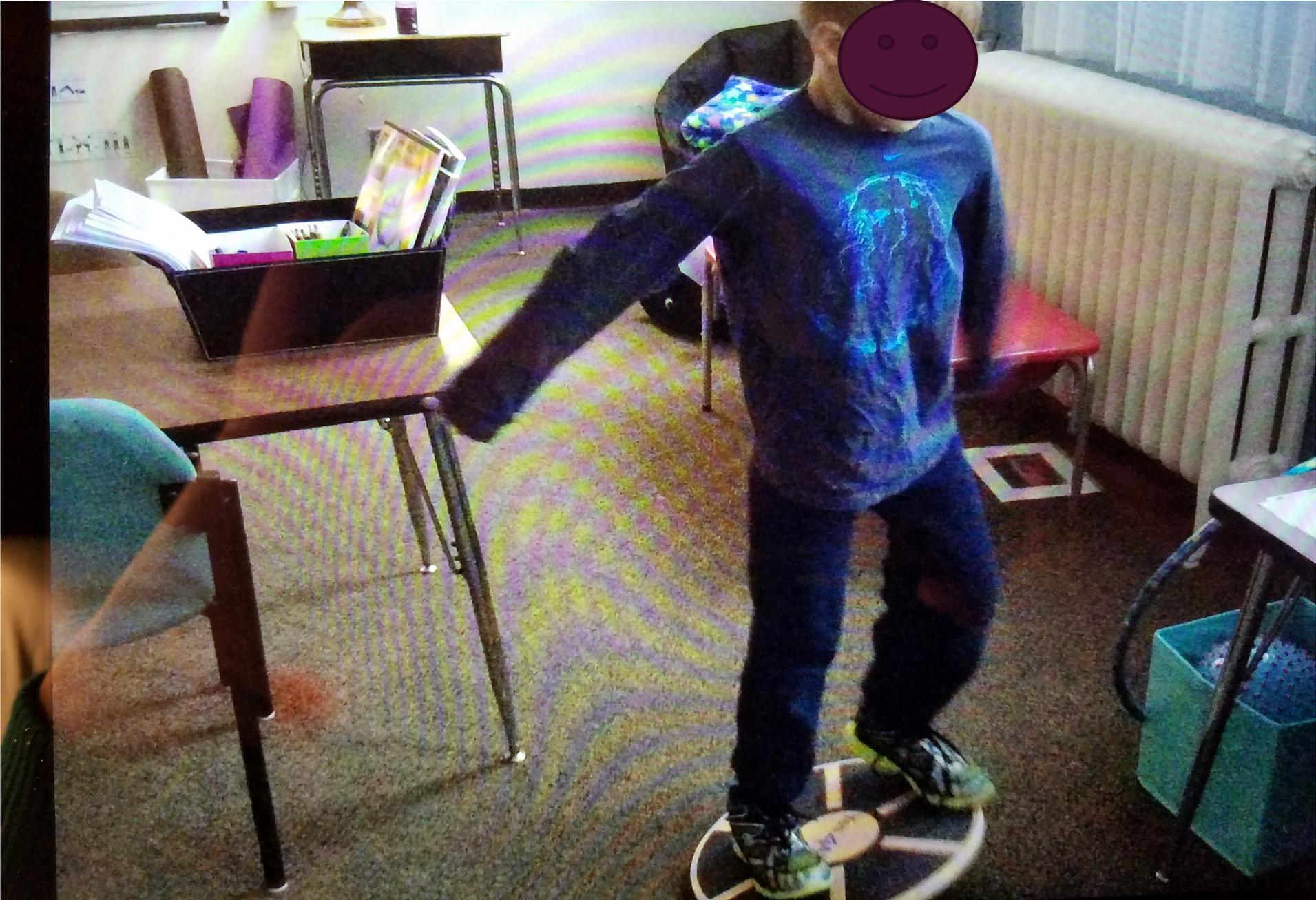
**GROUND RULES**

1. Have your phone on vibrate or silent.
2. Respect each other's space.
3. No alcohol or drugs.
4. Please avoid being a little bit too loud or too quiet. If you are, we will gently remind you.
5. If you are struggling, please let us know. We are here to help.









## WHAT ELSE TO INCORPORATE (THINGS FOR NEXT TIME)

- ❖ Visuals (such as Zones)
- ❖ Reflection worksheet (not just circle emotions)
- ❖ A “standard procedure” for staff and students to follow

# FUNDING

- ❖ Grants (Assistance League of MN)
- ❖ My Great Idea (Money come from MPS District)
- ❖ Donor's Choose
- ❖ Donations from staff and friends

# DONOR'S CHOOSE

- ❖ <https://www.donorschoose.org/>
- ❖ This site is designed for educators to create a project and have it funded by donations from others. When you finish your application, it goes live and people from all over can donate.
- ❖ Sometimes your donations are matched (for your first project you usually get a code for donors to put in for a match).
- ❖ Various corporations (Starbucks, Disney), small businesses, foundations (Bill & Melinda Gates) and individuals (Larry Fitzgerald, Steven Colbert) support Donor's Choose

# HOW TO FILL OUT DONOR'S CHOOSE

The screenshot shows a progress bar at the top with five steps: HI (checked with a green checkmark), WHO (selected), WHAT, WHY, and REVIEW. Below the progress bar is a modal window titled "About your students" with a subtitle: "Tell prospective donors who your students are and why they're special." The main section is titled "Age group" and asks "Which grade level(s) will benefit from this project?" with a "Select all" link. There are two rows of grade level buttons: Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th in the first row, and 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th in the second row. Below these is the instruction "Pick the primary grade levels that will benefit from this project." and four summary buttons: Grades PreK-2, Grades 3-5 (highlighted in blue), Grades 6-8, and Grades 9-12.

HI WHO WHAT WHY REVIEW

?

## About your students

*Tell prospective donors who your students are and why they're special.*

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### Age group

Which grade level(s) will benefit from this project?  
*Select all*

Pre-K Kindergarten 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th

7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

Pick the *primary* grade levels that will benefit from this project.

Grades PreK-2 Grades 3-5 Grades 6-8 Grades 9-12

## Number of students

How many students will benefit from this project this year?

20

## Describe your students

What makes your students special? Specific details about their background, your neighborhood, and your school are all helpful.

★ [See some good examples](#) ★

Our students have experienced severe trauma, abuse or neglect in their young lives. The students we serve are in Kindergarten through 12th grade and are in a residential treatment program. They attend school where they live with education provided by the public school system. Due to their behavior, they require school staff to keep them physically and emotionally safe. Some students are aggressive in their actions and in their words towards other students or staff.

Due to traumatic experiences in their lives, our students require a lot of adult support to learn in a classroom setting. Most of the students have difficulty regulating their emotions. When this

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## Classroom photo

Make sure your photo captures the spirit of your classroom.

*Photo safety guidelines*



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**Save and continue**

HI WHO **WHAT** WHY REVIEW



## Go shopping

*What do you need for your classroom?*

Supplies

Class Trip

Visitor(s)

This is just like online shopping! Click a link to one of the sites below to shop through our vendor directory.

[Where to find commonly requested items](#)



## School Specialty

School supplies, science, art & physical education materials, special needs resources, furniture, and more



## Staples Advantage

Technology, school & office supplies, furniture, snacks, everyday needs and more



## Teachers' School Supply

School supplies, furniture, books, early education resources, interactive technology, recreation, and more



## TIME for Kids

Non-fiction classroom magazines for grades K-6



## Woodwind and Brasswind

Musical instruments and accessories including audio equipment, music software, and more

# Project details

*Make your project stand out from the crowd.*

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## Project title

Make it exciting and Capitalize It Like a Book Title.

★ [See some good examples](#) ★

*2 words minimum*

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## About your project

How will these materials make a difference in your students' learning and improve their school lives?

★ [See some good examples](#) ★

## Subject areas

Which subjects are the best fit for this project? Choose up to two.

Applied Learning



Health & Sports



History & Civics



Literacy & Language



Math & Science



Music & The Arts



Special Needs



Warmth, Care & Hunger



*You can move on, but you will need to fill out: project title, about your project and subject area before you can submit this project.*

**Save and continue**

# COMPLETED DONOR'S CHOOSE

## Creating a Calm Oasis for Struggling Students

*My students need a calming environment with weighted pads, bean bags, balance board, sand, essential oils, velcro ball catchers and sand.*

### My Students

Our students have experienced severe trauma, abuse or neglect in their young lives. The students we serve are in Kindergarten through 12th grade and are in a residential treatment program. They attend school where they live with education provided by the public school system. Due to their behavior, they require school staff to keep them physically and emotionally safe. Some students are aggressive in their actions and in their words towards other students or staff.



**Ms. Rainelli** 

Grades 3-5  
Minnesota

*Nearly all students from low-income households* 

*Due to traumatic experiences in their lives, our students require a lot of adult support to learn in a classroom setting.*

Most of the students have difficulty regulating their emotions. When this happens, students may act out physically requiring staff assistance to regulate themselves. Overall, our students remain curious and interested in learning and growing in their educational environment.

## My Project

The lives of our students are often chaotic and sometimes emotionally painful. We have a vision to create a calming space for students who need a break from class. When children's behaviors begin to escalate, they can choose to come to a calming oasis right in the school.



13 donors have given to this project.

This project will reach 20 students.

Minneapolis, MN

Grades 3-5

Nearly all students from low-income households

Special Needs

SHARE MS. RAINELLI'S PROJECT



*Our students struggle with self-regulation and need a calming space and tools to help reduce anxiety and improve their ability to regulate themselves.*

When students are given the opportunity to explore with their senses, it opens them up to exploring options to aggressive behavior. The materials will fill different sections of the room. The alternate seating provides a comfortable place to sit and read or talk to an adult. The balance board and the velcro paddles and ball offer a way to get out energy in a safe way. Students will appreciate coming into a space that smells inviting as the diffuser scents the air with essential oils. We want the space to feel like a retreat and the beautiful rug will not only define a space, but fill the room with color. Some children calm when they use their hands. The kinetic sand draws them in to a sensory experience which helps calm the body and mind. Weighted animals can be used as a lap pad or on a student's shoulders or back which provides calming deep pressure. Each item has a purpose and our goal is for students to use them as a means to calm, relax and feel safe.

## Where Your Donation Goes

MATERIALS	COST	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Peaceful Tropical Night Rug - 6' x 9' Rectangle • KAPLAN EARLY LEARNING COMPANY	\$251.56	1	\$251.56
Abilitations 1385376 Weighted Smiling StarFish Pillows (Set of 2) • AMAZON BUSINESS	\$39.74	1	\$39.74
Weighted Lizard • AMAZON BUSINESS	\$36.00	1	\$36.00
Weighted Snake - 3.7lbs • AMAZON BUSINESS	\$36.00	1	\$36.00
Big Joe Bean Bag, 98-Inch, Radiant Orchid • AMAZON BUSINESS	\$29.00	1	\$29.00
Yes4All Db6F Wooden Balance Board • AMAZON BUSINESS	\$26.79	1	\$26.79
Kinetic Sand, 1lb Shimmering Purple Amethyst • AMAZON BUSINESS	\$12.99	2	\$25.98

URPOWER 2nd Version Essential Oil Diffuser,100ml Aroma Essential Oil Cool Mist Humidifier with Adjustable Mist Mode,Waterless Auto Shut-off and 7 Color LED Lights Changing for Home Office Baby • AMAZON BUSINESS	\$17.95	1	\$17.95
Aromatherapy Top 6 Essential Oils - Therapeutic grade - with Lavender, Tea Tree, Eucalyptus, Sweet Orange, Lemongrass & Peppermint - Basic Sampler Gift Set & Premium Kit - 6/10 M - Parent (1 Pack) • AMAZON BUSINESS	\$12.95	1	\$12.95
Ball with Velcro Catchers • AMAZON BUSINESS	\$9.48	1	\$9.48
Sand Molding Toy Activity Set. 24 Piece Small Kids Sand Deluxe Sculpture Lot. Compatible with Kinetic Sand, Brookstone Sand, Moon Sand, Any Molding Sand • AMAZON BUSINESS	\$7.95	1	\$7.95
Materials cost			\$493.40
Vendor shipping charges			\$2.20
State sales tax			\$0.00
3rd party payment processing fee 			\$7.40
Fulfillment labor & materials 			\$30.00
<b>Total project cost </b>			<b>\$533.00</b>

# Project Activity

JAN 30



**Ms. Rainelli** posted an update and shared photos

I want to personally thank you again for all of your donations to The Oasis. After training in all the staff and all the students on this unique opportunity in the school, we hit the ground running. Students are coming in and asking for what they need to regulate themselves which is a huge milestone achieved. Some students just come in for a break from what can be a chaotic environment. Recently, I brought in a 15-year-old girl for a 15 minutes break. Even though we have a lot of resources available in The Oasis, she chose to sit in the Big Joe chair and sit with a weighted star fish on her lap. Both were bought with your donations. She talked to me. She talked to me about what she was working on while in residential treatment, what her hopes and dreams were, and told me about her family. This room is a true oasis for our student and they feel safe there.

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I remember the first time I brought two students into the Oasis. They smiled, and said, "Oh man! This place is awesome!" They ran to each station to check everything out. Even the middle school girls thought it was great. They loved the way the room smelled, which was the diffuser and oils we bought with donations. They gravitated right away to the spaces that had weighted animals and to the art table with mandalas and colored pencils. It was such a gift to see the excitement about this space in their school.

My partners and I are still looking ahead. We want to put in a self-care area for the students where they can have access to good smelling lotions, facial products, hair products, deodorant, and shampoos. Since they are in a residential setting, they don't have access to personal care products that are their own. We want them to take pride in their appearance. We are continuing to evolve the Oasis as students come in. We have added a yoga area and are looking into yoga cards for the students to use. The staff are a huge part of the success of the Oasis and we continue to train them on self-regulation activities they can do with the students in the Oasis.

Again, I thank you for your generous spirit. The Oasis is a special place for our most needy students. They deserve to have a calm space and that is possible because of you.

SEP 11,  
2016



**A donor** from Minnesota gave

All children deserve a safe and encouraging place to learn and grow. Teachers, thank you for all the work you do. Students, keep strong and don't let anything limit your potential:)



**Ms. Rainelli** responded

Thank you so much for donating to our project. Your donation will help us create a calming space for all of our students who struggle with many issues. We appreciate you! Gina

# COMING SOON: CALMING CORNERS, “COVE LITE,” AND PEACE PLACE

- ❖ Calming Corners: In each elementary classroom at Level IV
- ❖ Cove Lite: A branch of the Cove at Level IV
- ❖ Gross motor room at Level IV for DCD and ASD
- ❖ Peace Place: For Level III classrooms

# THINGS TO CONSIDER WITH CALMING SPACES

- ❖ If there is a staff shortage, the students may not get their scheduled times in and they may not get there when they need to
- ❖ Sometimes students are not properly supervised and make a mess that they are not asked to clean up
- ❖ People call it a “Sensory Room” when it is not
- ❖ There is no teaching of a calming skill by staff and students are not learning skills while in the room
- ❖ Students may not leave when time is up
- ❖ Staff use their phones when they could be interacting with students
- ❖ Students don't fill out check in and check out sheets making it hard to determine if the calming room is affective for students

# PEACE CORNER

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ar0GPsEYjqY>

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

Gina Rainelli, OTD, OTR/L

[gin.rain@gmail.com](mailto:gin.rain@gmail.com)

THANK YOU FOR COMING!!

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*Published in collaboration with Washburn Center, this approach is being used in schools as well as mental health settings.*

*The premise aligns with social/emotional learning: children who cannot do school have damaged developmental capacities that must be repaired or remediate for learning to go forward. At the core is the capacity for self regulation.*



## **DEVELOPMENTAL REPAIR: A Training Manual**

*An Intensive Treatment Model for Working with Young Children Who Have Experienced Complex Trauma and Present with Aggressive and Disruptive Symptoms*

**by Anne Gearity, PhD, LICSW**

