



# EASEYS for ASN

Encourage And Support Early Years Skills for Additional Support Needs

[Highland Council](#)  
[Pre-school Home](#)  
[Teaching Service](#)

## 'Quiet Time'

### Important first reading from the Scottish Government

Space to Grow - Design guidance for early learning and childcare <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/06/9822/5>

### What do we mean by 'Quiet Time' and why do some children need more than others?

Most young children often need a quiet space to relax. The world around us can be very busy and noisy. Being in a quiet, cosy place can help young children feel more secure, comfortable and better able to cope with the world around them. All they might need is to be on a sofa, their bed, in a cosy book corner or relaxing on someone's knee for a few minutes.

For some children with Additional Support Needs this may not be enough.

The sounds, sights, movement and smells of the world around us can be a significant challenge for some children. Their sensory threshold, or the level of sensory input they can tolerate, may be lower or different to other children. Just going through a typical day at home or in an Early Years and Childcare Setting (ELC) might be very tiring for them.

Simple changes to the environment, new people in the room, things being moved around, changes to the routine they have come to rely on can all cause stress.

Some children manage to cope during their time in an ELC and you may not see signs of stress but they may struggle by the time they get home. Sometimes this can work the other way round and children can struggle in an ELC. When very stressed, children might struggle in both environments.

### What you might see:

When children are overstimulated and their stress levels increase you might notice that they are more emotional and more easily upset. When children have difficulty communicating, their emotional state is likely to be expressed through their behaviour. This can often be challenging for staff, parents and other children to deal with.

Sometimes children try to counteract the effects through activities like, rocking, tapping, clicking or other repetitive behaviours. These noises and movements can sometimes help children feel calmer. You might hear these self-stimulatory behaviours called 'stimming'.

You may see children removing themselves from the group, looking for places to hide or lie down away from obvious stimulation and other children.

### Hints and Tips!



Share this with everyone working with a child and add any strategies you have identified.

Keep it simple – what will work best in the spaces you already have?

Not all children like to be in the dark or an enclosed space!

Sometimes just a quiet space with nothing else in it or access to a favourite toy or activity can be most calming.

Some sensory experiences or too many sensory experiences at once can be overstimulating.

Limiting choices can enhance the calming effects to improve engagement.

Think about the other children; when a child is showing signs of overstimulation or stress remember to reassure other children, 'It's Ok, \_\_\_ just needs some quiet time' and distract them away to something else.

### Quiet Spaces come in all shapes and sizes!





# EASEYS for ASN

Encourage And Support Early Years Skills for Additional Support Needs

[Highland Council](#)  
[Pre-school Home](#)  
[Teaching Service](#)

## 'Quiet Time'

### Points to consider before you implement a new strategy in your learning environment:

Before you begin to put something new in place consider reading around the subject first to help you get a better understanding. (see Links section)

Have you talked to the child's parents or carers to find out what their child finds difficult and what works best for them at home? Have you asked any professionals working with them for advice on what might work best?

Have you made time to observe the child in your setting and see which times of day or activities seem more difficult for them to cope with and what factors may be triggering the behaviours observed? Try filling in an ABC Sheet (A=Before, B=During, C=After) to see if there is a pattern.

Does the child have a preferred space in the setting or at home that they take themselves to when stressed. Consider what it might be about that particular space that attracts them. Can you replicate that in your setting?

How will you introduce and monitor the impact of a new quiet space?

### Where could it be?

You don't need a special room but the chosen space needs to be quieter than the rest of the setting. It is best to avoid locating the quiet space next to busy and distracting areas like the TV, computer, doorways and walls with potentially overstimulating displays.

Providing a quiet space outside can be just as important for some children. Consider creating a den or sheltered area.



### What could it look like?

A large cardboard box, a pop up play tent, a table covered with a tablecloth or blanket, a private corner made with curtains or a piece of furniture, a bed canopy, curtain or material sewn to a hoop hanging from the ceiling are all possibilities. You don't have to think of high-tech or expensive solutions. Work with what's easily available and fits!

### What could you put inside?

Cosy easily washable blankets, cushions or pillows, a 'mermaid' cushion, beanbags or slabs accessorised with the tools which calm the child. Possibilities include battery operated tree or net lights, torches, mirrors, sensory toys, soothing music and their favourite comforter. Less is sometimes more!

### How to use the space?

Allow the child to go into that space whenever they are finding it difficult to cope. Make sure that other children do not try to use the space at the same time. Reassure the others, '\_\_\_\_\_ is having some quiet time just now, you can have it later'. Join the child if they want you there or be close enough to supervise them to ensure safety.

Sometimes you might feel a child needs some quiet time but they don't want to leave their play. It can help to build it into their timetable by using a visual such as 'First/ Then' board. You could use a 'reward' activity to motivate them to go to the space e.g. 'Make a Deal'.

Children don't always recognise their need for quiet time but building it in regularly during a session can help stop their stress levels building up and help them cope with the rest of their day.

Using a quiet space is not isolating or excluding a child with additional support needs. Using it regularly is helping them to stay calm and relaxed so they can cope more easily with some difficult situations. It may also help them to be relaxed enough to socialise, play and learn better with their peers.

### Links:

Richard Hirstwood – Cheap Sensory Ideas <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXsWWtQrGrM>

109 best quiet areas on Pinterest <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/booknblues/quiet-areas-and-cozy-corners/>