

A SPECIAL PLACE FOR ME

A fun, creative craft
project for children
ages 5 and up



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ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

This fun activity supports emotional regulation and encourages imaginative expression in children (and adults and adolescents because it really is a *cool* activity).

Children create a personalised “**safe space**” or “**happy space**” by decorating a box using a variety of art materials. It’s an opportunity for them to explore what safety feels like, and communicate their world in a gentle and playful way.

Therapeutic Benefits

Emotional Awareness

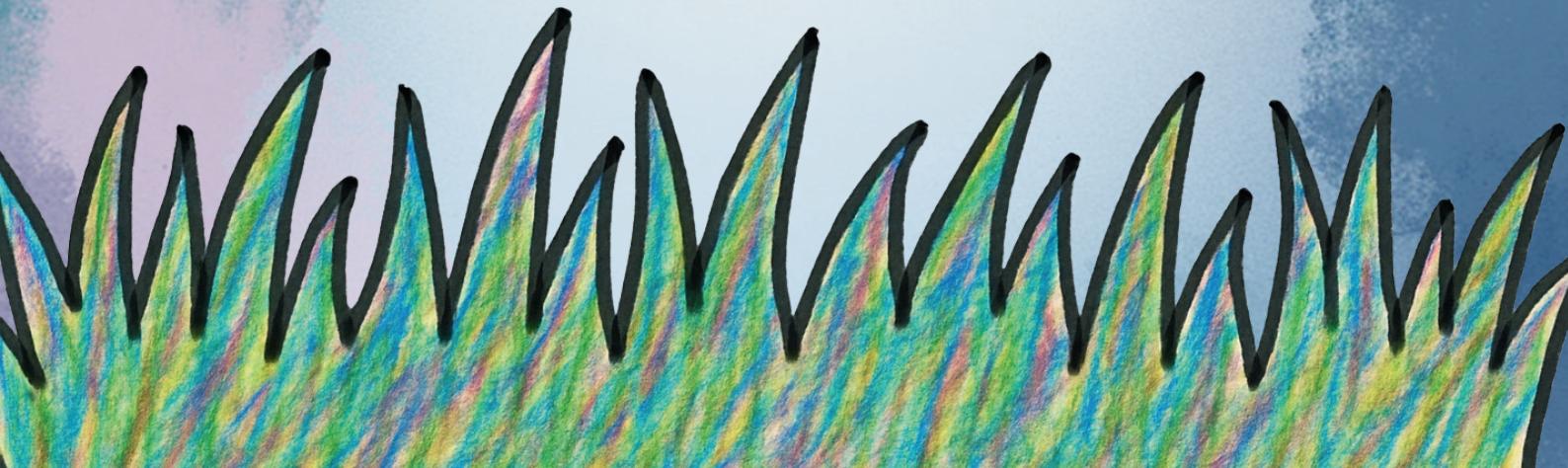
Sensory Regulation

Imaginative Expression

Attachment and Communication

Autonomy and Confidence

Play-based Exploration





MATERIALS LIST



You will need

- Shoebox or similar
- Child-safe scissors
- Glue stick
- Drawing and colouring stationery (pencil crayons, wax crayons, koki pens)
- Thin string/cotton (to hang anything)
- Paper or Cardstock (white). Optional: various colours
- Further options: tissue paper, foil, stickers, leaves, scrap fabric, beads, pipe cleaners.

IMPORTANT

Use what you have at home – no special materials required.



HOW TO TALK ABOUT HAPPY, SAFE SPACES



Begin with a conversation:

Use gentle, open language. Ask questions, avoid supplying answers or making too many suggestions.

Examples:

- When do you feel calm/happy inside?
- If you close your eyes, and think for a bit, what is a happy, safe place where you would like to be.
- What does this place look like, think about the colours, the sound, the sky, the ground, the light, what is around you?
- Think about what makes it safe and happy.





STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

Lay the box on its side. The inside will become the child's own special world.

PREPARE THE BOX

Colour the walls, glue paper, add patterns. Your child may even want to cover the box. A question can be, "Would you like to do anything to the box before you begin?

CHOOSE A SAFE, HAPPY SPACE THEME

PROMPTS YOU CAN GIVE

(if your child is struggling to think of a place on their own)

- Under the Sea
- In a magical forest
- A cosy bedroom
- A fairy garden
- On a cloud
- In a peaceful cave
- In a treehouse
- By the sea
- On a farm
- In a pretend world the child designs



ADD DRAWINGS AND CUTOUTS, DECORATIONS

Use materials available - foil, tissue paper, serviettes, foil, paints, crayons, matchsticks, shells. Your child can perhaps collect any concrete (stones, sticks, leaves) objects prior to beginning.

LET YOUR CHILD LEAD

Parents and caregivers are the audience to their child's imaginations. What a gift!

- Perhaps ask your child if they would like to do their special place with you in the room such as a home office, the lounge, etc. or whether they would like to sit and work on it alone.
- This would be a fun activity to do with a friend over for a playdate.

Remove all technology. Although some cutouts have been provided, it is preferable not to print out cutouts, let your child try to draw in their own way.

FINAL STEP *Optional

Using clear cellophane paper and cover the front of the box, to keep the world safe, cozy and special.

GUIDE FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Ideally Mom, Dad or Caregiver should –

- Observe with interest
- Celebrate imagination
- Do not try to fix or suggest additions or removals
- Steer clear of observations or “Why” questions
- Accept all creative choices

Your child may be wanting to share their safe/fun space with you so helpful questions from you could be:

- Tell me about this part.”
- “What’s happening here?”
- “I see... here.” (Quite possibly your child will use the opportunity to tell you more.)

DEFINITELY AVOID SAYING

- “This is the wrong colour”
- “You colour better than this”
- “Why don’t you add a tree?”
- “Let me draw that for you”



END OF ACTIVITY REFLECTION *Optional

- What's your favourite part of your place/world?
- How does your body feel when you look at it?
- Who do you imagine might visit here?
- If your safe and happy place could talk, what message would it give you?

Do not interpret the safe space or correct your child's answers or choices. This activity does not replace therapeutic intervention. If there is anything that concerns you, please consult with a professional



KEEPING THE SAFE SPACE BOX

IDEAS

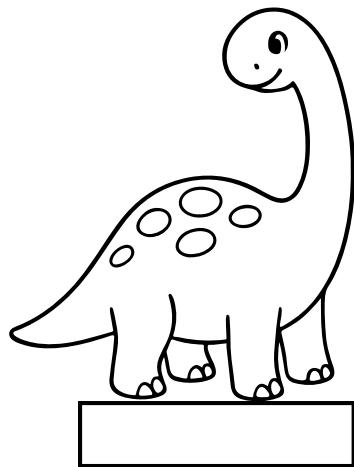
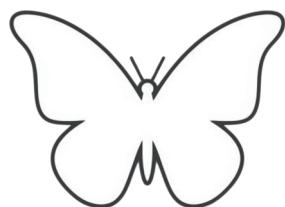
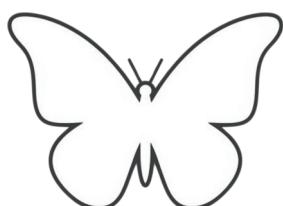
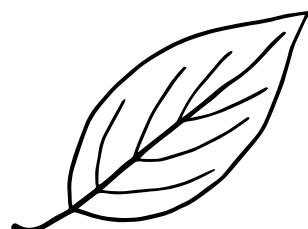
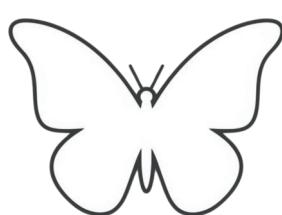
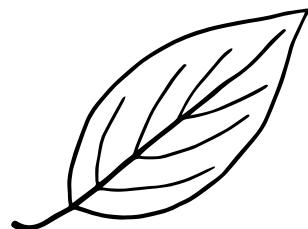
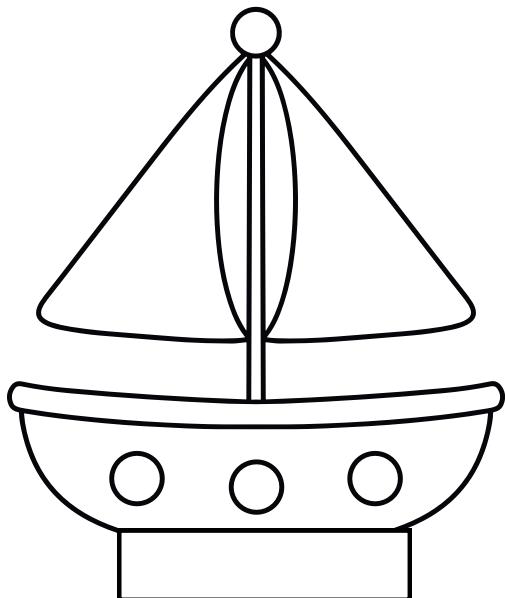
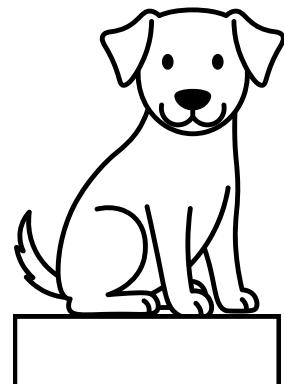
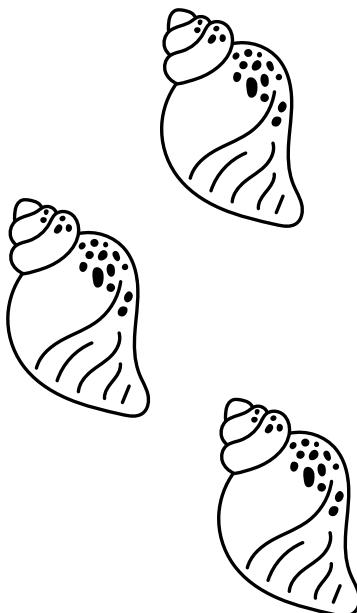
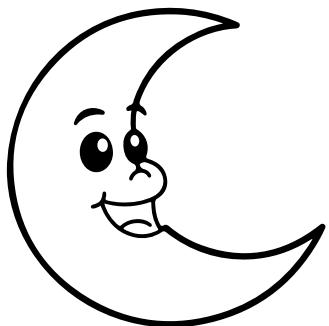
Ask your child where they would like to keep their safe, happy space world.

Use it as a **calming tool** when they feel overwhelmed – you can sit with them, ask them to look at the colours, think how the safe space might smell, if there is any breeze, how many of something, how something feels, where would they be in their safe space when they feel worried.

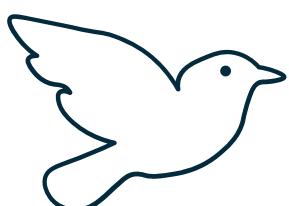
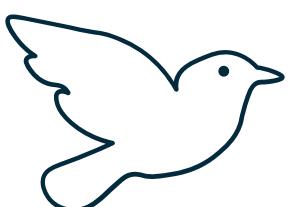
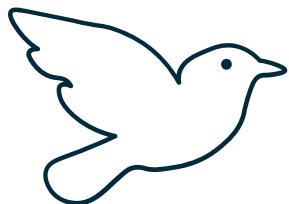
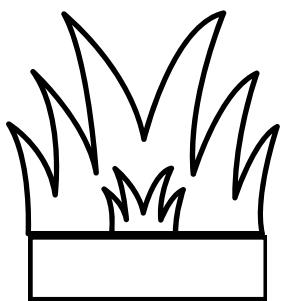
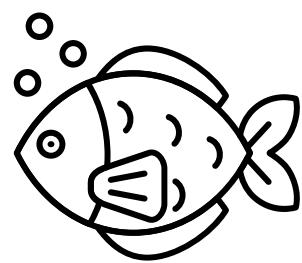
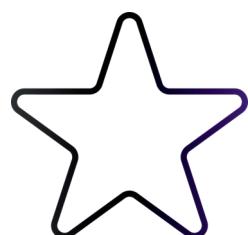
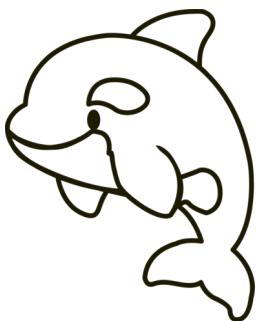
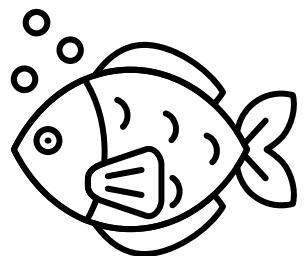
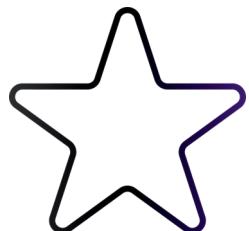
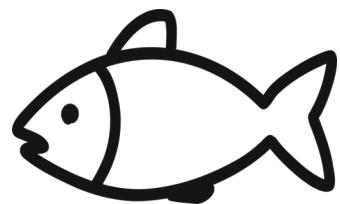
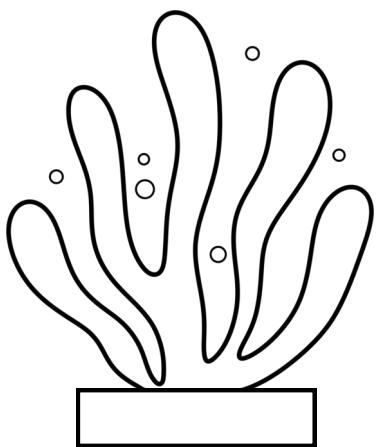


If your child would like the box private, respect that. Don't show it to anyone without asking if it is okay, and ensure your child does not feel pressured to say 'yes'.

CUT-OUTS *Optional



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