My calm steps

My name _____ Date _____

For adults: make this with the student, their family and the school team, and follow the student's IEP or behavior plan. Choose the calm space with the student; it is never locked or forced, and the student chooses whether to go. Use the student's own pictures or symbols and their own way of asking for a break. Change any words. Practice the steps on calm days.

1

picture or symbol

I notice I need a break.

2

picture or symbol

I ask for a break my way.

3

picture or symbol

I can choose my calm space.

4

picture or symbol

I use my calm things.

5

picture or symbol

I come back to my class.

My calm things (in my calm space)

How I ask for a break

My break card, my words, a sign, or my communication device or board. My device or board stays with me.

From the guide "How to help a student calm down in the classroom" on special-learning.com. Sources the guide uses: IRIS Center, Vanderbilt University, "Autism (Part 1): An Overview for Educators: The Learning Environment"; American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (2026), "Back-to-School: Tips for Supporting Students Who Use AAC Devices"; ASHA Practice Portal, "Augmentative and Alternative Communication."