Turnaround Table Guide

Resources needs to be consistent with the approach that your school is taking regarding resources within a bubble of children, this is a useful resource could be adapted to have individual sensory boxes

A Turnaround Table is a collaborative inclusive tool to help children:

- Emotionally regulate
- Engage more in learning and lessons
- Improve relationships
- Empower children to gain mastery over their own emotions and reactions to the world

What does it look like?

A typical Turnaround Table might be a simple table placed at the side of the classroom, with a number of activities and resources that can help children regulate their emotions and re-join the class. It should be attractive, comfortable and all the children in the class should know where it is. Its helpful if Turnaround Tables across school, are easily recognisable for children. This can be done in the form of a consistent sign on the table, colour schemes, or similar resources on the table (differentiated according to age group). For example, having a worry monster (a cuddly toy that children can tell their worries to, or write down their worries and post into its mouth) on each table across school could help children recognise the purpose of the table in each class.

What should go on the Turnaround Table?

Any items that help children to regulate their emotions — whether that is using sensory items, reducing stimulation or just having a safe space for a short time; feel included in the classroom and feel empowered and valued not shamed. It's helpful to ask the class to come up with ideas too.

Ideas for resources

- Sensory toys — e.g. fiddle toys, calming scents, relaxing music (with headphones if necessary), different coloured/textured items.
- Activities that help calm - e.g. instructions for breathing exercises, colouring, mindfulness activities
- Worry box/worry monster — somewhere for a child to sit and write down their worries/anxieties and put in a safe place, ensuring that there is a system in place so that the child knows what will happen to what they have written (e.g. a teacher will read it and respond, or no one will read it)
- Books — on specific subjects that someone may be struggling with, e.g. worry, anger
- Worksheets — to fill in and help children understand what is happening for them
- Sand timers — so that they know how long they have got left on the table in a visual way
- Use of secondary senses - e.g. seat that rocks, swing/hammock, chewing/blowing bubbles, deep pressure such as weighted blanket, list of physical activities e.g. crawling, press ups, jumping on a trampoline, star jumps
- Nature and seasonal items — e.g. plants, acorns, leaves, using the senses, school pets, water
- A covered space - (e.g. underneath the table with a cushion, perhaps covered by a table cloth) - when a child is very dysregulated and feeling unsafe, having that space in the classroom could give them the feeling of physical safety that they need.

Photos thanks To Acres Hill Community Primary School

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Getting the children's views on what they would find useful on the table is key, noting that this may be different for different children. If a child finds a particular item (e.g. a fiddle toy) useful, this can be incorporated into the rest of their day in a structured way

Putting rules around the Turnaround Table
In order for the Turnaround Table to function effectively and
efficiently, it is important that a clear structure is put around it, in terms
of when it is used, by whom and for how long. This will be different depending
on the context of your own class/school, what you want to use the table for and
who you may want to use it for, but some aspects to consider are:

- Who decides who uses the table — is it an adult who tells a child to go and have some time at the table, or can a child request to spend some time at the table (and how will that be achieved — perhaps a card that says 'I need a break')?
- How long is someone allowed to stay at the table — sometimes it is useful to have a visual aid such as an egg timer or countdown clock — or are some of your students aware enough of their own emotional state and readiness to learn that they are able to say when they have had long enough?
- Negotiate some ground rules with the class — e.g. how quiet you have to be, how many times you can go on it in a day, what to do next if it hasn't helped.
- How will you record who is using the table — and review how well it is working for individual children?
- How will you prevent children going there to do their work just because they like being on that table — or worse, showing difficult behaviour in order to go on the table. This could be addressed by restricting each child to a number of turns each day, or for some children that you know struggle to last a whole day/half day/lesson, scheduling in short periods of time on the Turnaround Table.

The most important thing to remember in terms of having rules relating to the table is that they need to be clearly communicated to all (including any staff members who are in the classroom), are consistently followed by all (including any staff members who are in the classroom!) and regularly reviewed.
The more the children can have a voice in forming these rules, the more investment they will have in them and the more likely they will adhere to the boundaries that are agreed on

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Top Tips

- Use change-oriented language — the child is taking a short break to engage in an activity with the aim of regulating their emotions so that they are then ready to return to their learning
- Acknowledge feelings — some children may not have the emotional literacy to recognise how they are feeling, so acknowledging, or naming the feelings for them can help them normalise and understand their emotions
- If a child is resisting going to the Turnaround Table it may be that they have the belief that nothing can help them, or that they do not trust the adult to help them deal with these emotions. They may need short periods of time at the table that are then built up, or adult support at the table if this is feasible. Or the table can come to them using a sensory box
- Some children may need support to understand the purpose of the table and reminders as to how and when to use the table.
- If a child is going to the table a lot, use this as a communication that something is getting in the way of their learning and that they need some extra support. Talking to them and acknowledging their difficulties can go a long way to helping them deal with the issue.
- The table can be used to reduce the intensity of emotions that a child is feeling, or to help them become more alert and focussed.
- If considering Turnaround Tables across the whole school, a trial in one or two classrooms can help develop a strategy for the roll out across all classrooms, and give some positive feedback on effectiveness to help all staff get on board with the concept
- Differentiation according to age, ability of the children in the class and to each child's particular needs can be important — there are no set resources or activities that should be on the table, it will depend on you class/school's individual needs
- Consider a rota system if the table is being consistently used by children so that its use is fairly distributed