

The Regulation Station Blueprint

A low-cost plan for creating a regulation space at home, school, work, or community events.

What is a regulation station?

A regulation station is a small, predictable place where someone can lower sensory load, get needed sensory input, move, rest, communicate differently, or recover before returning to whatever comes next.

It is not a punishment space, behavior corner, or place someone has to earn access to. The goal is not to force a person to become quiet or still. The goal is to make regulation easier.

The six-part blueprint

1. Location: a predictable spot that is easy to reach without making someone ask publicly.
2. Body options: at least two ways to sit, stand, lean, lie down, or move.
3. Less input: something that lowers light, sound, visual clutter, or social demand.
4. More input: something for movement, pressure, fidgeting, chewing, or other safe sensory seeking.
5. Communication: an easy way to say "I need space," "I need help," "not yet," or "I am ready."
6. Re-entry: a simple way to return without shame, interrogation, or having to explain the whole experience.

Start with the environment, not the shopping list

Before buying anything, ask what is actually making regulation hard. A quieter corner may help more than a bin full of fidgets. A chair change may help more than a weighted item. A written "you can step out" policy may matter more than any object in the room.

Useful question: What is the person trying to get away from, get more of, or make easier?

Quick start: build one today

- ☐ Pick one location.
- ☐ Add one comfortable body option.
- ☐ Add one "less input" tool.
- ☐ Add one movement or fidget option.
- ☐ Put water nearby if appropriate.
- ☐ Add a simple communication card or sign.
- ☐ Tell people they can use the space before they are in crisis.

Build It for \$0-\$25

A useful regulation station can be mostly made from things you already have.

1. \$0: Repurpose first

Body: existing chair, floor cushion, folded blanket, wall to lean against.

Less input: dimmer corner, turned-off overhead light, cardboard visual shield, quieter nearby area.

More input: scrap paper, rubber band around chair legs, towel to twist, heavy book to carry.

Communication: paper card with "space," "help," "not yet," and "ready."

Storage: shoebox, basket, tote, or drawer.

2. \$5-\$10: Add a few basics

- Foam or reusable earplugs.
- Small notebook + pen.
- Simple fidget or textured object.
- Sleep mask or soft cap for light reduction.
- Printed visual menu in a plastic sleeve.
- Water bottle or snack bin where appropriate.

3. \$10-\$25: Upgrade the highest-impact barrier

- ☐ Over-ear hearing protection or budget headphones.
- ☐ Floor cushion, lap desk, or alternate seating.
- ☐ Small lamp or warm clip light.
- ☐ Resistance band or movement tool.
- ☐ Privacy screen or folding visual barrier.

Rule: Spend money on the barrier you have observed, not on what a regulation station is "supposed" to contain.

4. You do NOT need

- A tent or special furniture.
- A huge sensory-toy collection.
- A timer for every visit.
- A reward chart.
- A diagnosis.
- Permission to have ordinary human needs.

5. My starting budget

I can spend: \$ _____

Things I already have: _____

The one barrier I most want to reduce: _____

The first thing I will try: _____

Match the Need to the Tool

A regulation station works better when tools are grouped by what they do, not just by what they are.

1. I need LESS input

- Earplugs / hearing protection
- Lower lighting
- Sunglasses or hat
- Visual barrier / less clutter
- Reduced conversation
- Quiet seat facing away
- Permission to step away

2. I need communication to be easier

- "I need space" card
- "Not ready to talk" card
- Yes / no / not sure choices
- Pen and paper
- Text or chat option
- Clear "ready to return" signal

3. I need MORE input or movement

- Fidget or putty
- Resistance band
- Rocking / pacing / stretching
- Something safe to carry or push
- Paper to fold or scribble on
- Standing or floor seating

4. I need body comfort or recovery

- Different chair
- Floor cushion
- Blanket
- Footrest
- Water
- Snack if appropriate
- Heat/cold pack if safely available
- Permission to recline when the setting allows

5. I need grounding

- Cool water
- Textured object
- Feet firmly on the floor
- Name a few things in the room
- Familiar scent if safe and wanted
- Short reassuring reminder

6. Remember

No tool is universally regulating. If a tool makes someone more irritated, trapped, dizzy, sleepy, distracted, or overwhelmed, it is not the right tool for that person in that moment.

Four Setting Blueprints

1. HOME

Placement: bedroom corner, living-room chair, hallway nook, or portable basket.

Core supplies: blanket/cushion, headphones, water, fidget, low light, notebook.

Make it work: everyone can use it; no one gets followed in to continue an argument; leaving the space does not equal avoiding the issue forever.

2. SCHOOL / CLASSROOM

Placement: edge of room, nearby support room, quiet hallway spot, or portable regulation kit.

Core supplies: alternate seat, headphones/earplugs, visual barrier, fidgets, written instruction copy, break card.

Make it work: students can access it before escalation; the station is not a "bad behavior" consequence; work can be paused or modified when regulation is the actual need.

3. WORKPLACE

Placement: wellness room, unused office, break-room corner, low-traffic seat, or personal desk kit.

Core supplies: headphones, low light, water, seating choice, written task list, do-not-disturb signal.

Make it work: do not require public disclosure; normalize brief regulation breaks; define how urgent messages reach someone who is taking space.

4. COMMUNITY EVENT

Placement: clearly marked quiet room or low-traffic area near the main event, but away from speakers and crowds.

Core supplies: chairs, floor option, water, earplugs, low lighting, simple communication cards, event map.

Make it work: advertise the space before the event; make entry self-directed; do not require explanation; let people leave and re-enter freely.

5. Portable version: the Regulation Station in a Bag

- ☐ Earplugs or headphones
- ☐ Small fidget
- ☐ Index cards / communication cards
- ☐ Notebook + pen
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Sunglasses or hat
- ☐ A small cloth or texture item
- ☐ Printed "what helps me" menu

Rules That Keep It a Regulation Space

1. Access rules

- ☐ People can use the space before they are visibly overwhelmed.
- ☐ Using the station is not a punishment, reward, or privilege.
- ☐ No one has to perform calmness to prove the station "worked."
- ☐ People may stim, move, sit differently, reduce eye contact, or communicate less while regulating.
- ☐ Do not force someone to explain why they need the space in the moment.
- ☐ Do not turn every visit into a debrief.
- ☐ If time limits are necessary for shared-space logistics, explain them in advance and offer another option.
- ☐ Safety rules should be few, concrete, and actually about safety.

2. Simple scripts adults, facilitators, or coworkers can use

Offering: "You can use the regulation space if that would help."

Reducing demands: "You do not have to answer me right now."

Giving choice: "Would you like less noise, movement, water, space, or something else?"

Protecting autonomy: "I will give you space. You can let me know if you want help."

Re-entry: "You can come back when you are ready. We can figure out the next step then."

Afterward: "Did anything in the space help? Is there anything we should change?"

3. Simple sign for the station

REGULATION SPACE

You can use this space to reduce input, move, rest, communicate differently, or take a break.

You do not have to be in crisis to use it.

Please use the tools in ways that are safe for you and the people around you.

You may leave and return when you are ready.

4. When the station is not enough

A regulation space cannot fix an environment that is consistently unsafe, inaccessible, humiliating, physically painful, or far beyond someone's capacity. If the same person needs the station constantly, treat that as information about the larger environment.

Ask: What keeps happening before they need to escape?

Build Your Own Regulation Station

Use this page as the actual planning sheet.

1. Where will it go?

Location: _____

How will people know it exists? _____

Can someone reach it without asking publicly?

- ☐ Yes
☐ Not yet

Barrier already present there: _____

2. What will it offer?

- ☐ Two body/seating options
- ☐ A way to lower sound
- ☐ A way to lower light / visual input
- ☐ A movement or fidget option
- ☐ Body-comfort support
- ☐ Low-language communication
- ☐ Easy leave-and-return option

Three tools I will start with:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. What are the rules?

People can use it when: _____

The only safety limits are: _____

People return by: _____

What I will NOT require: _____

4. Budget + sourcing

Budget: \$ _____

Things I can repurpose: _____

Things I may buy: _____

Highest-priority purchase: _____

5. Test it, then revise it

- ☐ Ask actual users what helps.
- ☐ Notice which tools never get used.
- ☐ Notice which barriers keep sending people to the station.
- ☐ Remove tools that create more overload.
- ☐ Add options based on observed needs.
- ☐ Re-check after one week and one month.

What changed after we tried it?

