# Room-by-Room Home Modification Guide

**Create a Sensory-Supportive Environment Using What You Already Have**

**Part of the “Tools for Environment” Collection**

Little Brains & Bodies

# How to Use This Guide

Our home has more influence on our kid's brain and body than we realize. The light, the noise, the textures, the layout — their brain is reading all of it, all day. Small environmental shifts can make a real difference in how settled, organized, and ready to connect they feel.

This is the third piece of the home environment collection. If you've worked through Building Daily Rhythms or the Visual Scaffolds guide, you've already started thinking about your child's patterns. This guide gets into the physical spaces themselves.

You don't need to buy anything or redo anything. Most of what's here uses what you already have, just reconsidered. Start with one room, one change. Watch what happens. Then decide what's next.

Some adjustments will land exactly right. Others won't — or they will for a while and then won't anymore. Brains change. What your child needs in October might be different from what they needed in June. That's normal, and it's also useful information.

You're building a picture of how your child's brain and body move through their environment. That picture gets clearer over time.

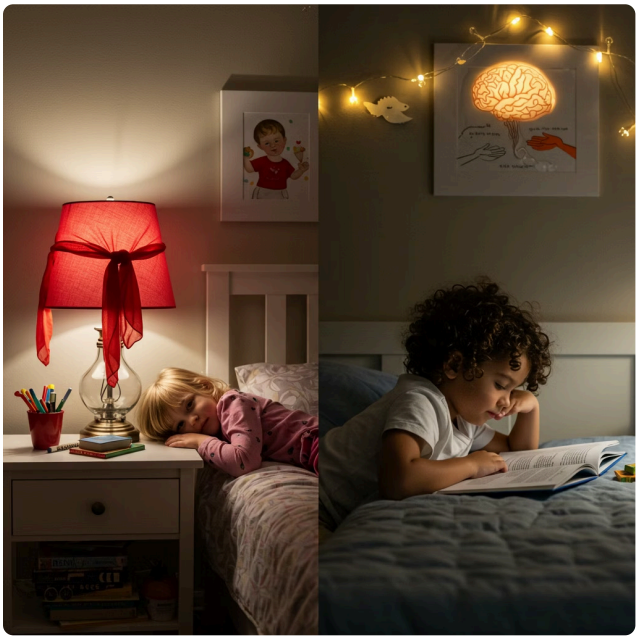
# The Bedroom

## Lighting Modifications

**Some brains need:** Soft, adjustable lighting that supports the nervous system's transition from alert to restful states.

**Using what you have:**

- Lamps instead of overhead lights - Move existing table lamps to bedside tables or floor
- Scarves or colored tissue paper over lampshades - Creates warmer, softer light
- String of holiday lights - Gentle, twinkling light that many nervous systems find soothing
- Flashlight under blankets - Reading light that feels cozy and contained
- Blanket fort with lamp inside - Creates regulated, cave-like lighting



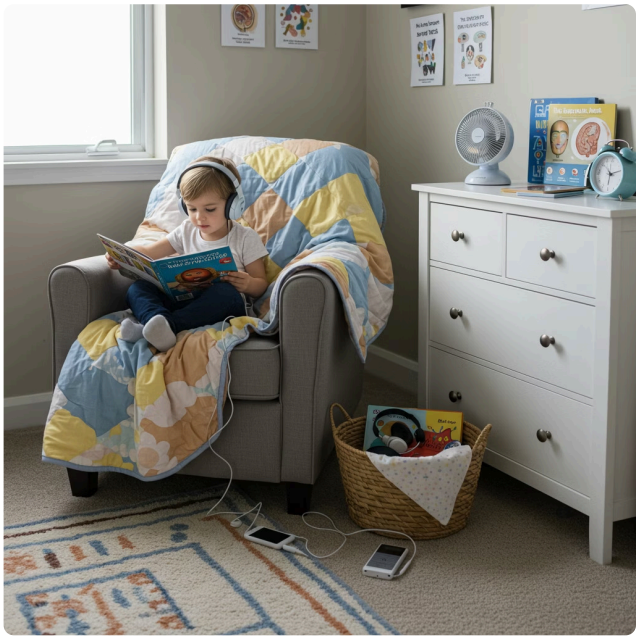
***Brain and body connection:*** *Harsh fluorescent or LED lighting can keep the nervous system in alert mode. Soft, warm lighting signals safety and helps the brain transition toward rest.*

## Sound Environment

**Some brains need**: Sound environments that either provide gentle input or create quiet depending on your child's sensory patterns.

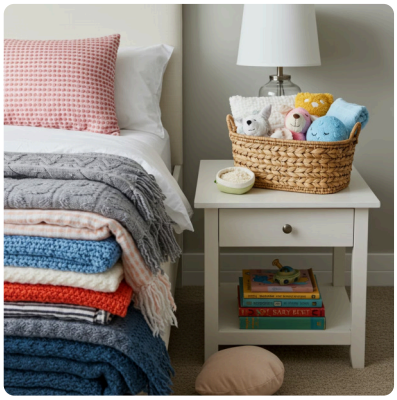
**Using what you have:**

- White noise from household items - Fan, air purifier, humidifier running continuously
- Rhythmic sounds - Metronome app, clock ticking, gentle music playlist on repeat
- Sound dampening with blankets - Hang heavy blankets or comforters on walls to reduce echo
- Quiet zones - Rearrange furniture to create corners blocked from household noise
- Headphones or earplugs - For children who need less auditory input



***Brain and body connection:*** *Some nervous systems organize and calm with gentle, predictable sound. Others need quiet to process the day's sensory experiences.*

# The Bedroom



## Tactile Comfort

**Some brains need**: Variety of textures that provide organizing sensory input or comfort.

**Using what you have:**

- Weighted effect with regular blankets - Layer multiple blankets for deep pressure
- Texture variety - Different pillowcases (satin, flannel, cotton) available for changing needs
- Comfort item station - Basket with stuffed animals, soft blankets, favorite textures
- Sensory bin with rice or beans - Large bowl for hands to play in before sleep
- Body pillow or rolled towels - Creates boundaries and gentle pressure around body

**Your child's bedroom patterns:**

- Most calming lighting setup: _____
- Sound preferences for sleep: _____
- Comfort items that help regulation: _____

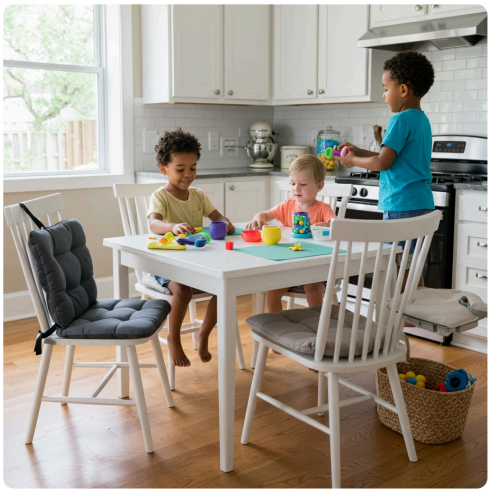
# The Kitchen and Dining Area

## Seating Solutions

**Some brains need:** Seating that provides the right amount of sensory input for focus and comfort during meals.

**Using what you have:**

- Cushions for proprioceptive input - Firm throw pillows on chairs for deep pressure
- Wobble seating - Partially deflated beach ball or exercise ball with towel over it
- Fidget options at table - Stress ball under table, textured placemat, small fidget items in pocket
- Standing eating option - Kitchen counter height with barstool or standing
- Cozy corner eating - Small TV tray or lap desk in quieter area of kitchen



***Brain and body connection**: Some children focus better and regulate better when their proprioceptive system (body awareness) gets organizing input through seating.*

## Sensory-Friendly Food Environment

**What brains need:** Food experiences that honor sensory processing differences and reduce mealtime stress.

**Using what you have:**

- Separate textures - Small bowls or muffin tins to keep foods from touching
- Temperature variety - Options for warm and cool foods at same meal
- Utensil options - Different sized forks, spoons, or fingers for eating
- Lighting adjustments - Dimmer overhead light, use lamps instead during meals
- Background sound management - Turn off TV/music, or add gentle background sound if child prefers

# The Kitchen and Dining Area

## Kitchen Organization for Independence

**Some brains need**: Visual organization and accessibility that supports executive function and reduces morning/snack time stress.

**Using what you have:**

- Clear containers - Transfer snacks to see-through containers at child's eye level
- Picture labels - Photos of contents taped to containers or shelves
- Snack station - Designated shelf or basket with approved independent snacks
- Visual schedules - Photos of breakfast routine steps posted in sequence
- Step stool - Easy access to needed items reduces frustration

**Your kitchen/dining patterns:**

- Best seating setup for focus: _____
- Food presentation that reduces stress: _____
- Independence modifications that work: _____

# The Living and Family Room

## Movement Integration

**Some brains need:** Safe spaces for big body movement that supports regulation and attention.

**Using what you have:**

- Couch cushion obstacle course - Arrange for climbing, jumping, crashing safely
- Wall space for exercises - Wall pushes, stretches, handstands with supervision
- Under-coffee-table hideout - Blanket over table creates cozy movement space
- Basket of movement tools - Jump rope, small ball, resistance band, yoga poses cards
- Clear floor space - Move coffee table aside during regulation times

## Quiet Regulation Zones

**Some brains need:** Spaces for sensory breaks, emotional processing, and nervous system reset.

**Using what you have:**

- Reading nook with boundaries - Armchair with side table, lamp, blanket basket
- Under-stairs retreat - Cushions and soft lighting in unused space
- Behind-couch hideaway - Move couch slightly from wall, add cushions and comfort items
- Sensory break basket - Noise-canceling headphones, fidgets, calming music playlist
- Visual boundaries - Room divider screen made from hanging sheets or blankets

## Family Connection Spaces

**Some brains need:** Environments that support different needs without sensory overwhelm.

**Using what you have:**

- Multiple seating options - Some family members need movement, others need stillness
- Lighting variety - Lamps instead of overhead for gentler family time
- Sound management - Lower TV volume, designated quiet conversation areas
- Parallel activity setup - One child can fidget while another reads nearby
- Transition warning systems - Visual timer, gentle music cues for activity changes

**Your living room patterns:**

- Movement activities that help regulation: _____
- Quiet spaces that work best: _____
- Family time modifications: _____

# The Bathroom

## Sensory-Friendly Bathing

**Some brains need:** Bathroom experiences that feel safe and organizing rather than overwhelming.

**Using what you have:**

- Lighting adjustments - Use lamp or battery-operated LED candles instead of bright overhead light
- Sound dampening - Towels on floor and counter to reduce echo
- Water temperature tools - Food thermometer to check comfort level
- Texture variety - Different washcloths, bath toys, or no-tears soap options
- Visual calm - Remove excess items from view, use baskets to organize

## Tooth Brushing & Daily Routines

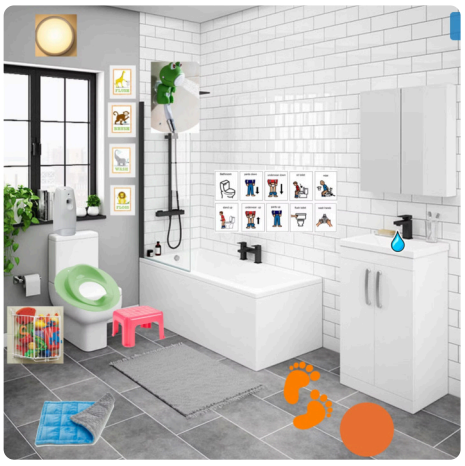
**Some brains need:** Predictable, sensory-friendly approaches to necessary daily tasks.

**Using what you have:**

- Toothbrush options - Electric vs manual, different bristle textures, child chooses
- Toothpaste alternatives - Different flavors, textures, or tooth-brushing wipes
- Visual routine supports - Photos of steps posted at child's eye level
- Sensory warm-up - Face massage with warm washcloth before brushing
- Music timing - Favorite song plays for duration of brushing

**Brain and body connection:**

Bathrooms can be highly sensory environments (water sounds, echoes, bright lights, temperature changes). Small modifications support nervous system regulation.



**Your bathroom patterns:**

- Sensory modifications that help daily routines: _____
- Lighting/sound adjustments that work: _____

# Homework and Learning Space

## Attention-Supporting Environments

**Some brains need:** Learning spaces that provide the right balance of stimulation and calm for focus.

**Using what you have:**

- Multiple workspace options - Kitchen table, floor with clipboard, standing desk area
- Background stimulation choices - Soft music, white noise, or complete quiet
- Fidget integration - Stress ball, textured desk mat, or fidget tools in reach
- Visual organization - Clear bins for supplies, pictures showing where items belong
- Body position variety - Exercise ball chair, standing option, floor cushions

## Executive Function Support

**Some brains need:** Visual and organizational systems that support planning, memory, and task completion.

**Using what you have:**

- Visual schedules - Photos or drawings of homework routine steps
- Timer systems - Kitchen timer, phone timer, or visual countdown clock
- Task breakdown - Index cards showing one step per card
- Supply organization - Everything needed in one basket or bin
- Progress tracking - Checklist with boxes to mark or visual progress chart

**Your learning space patterns:**

- Best focus environment for my child: _____
- Organization systems that work: _____
- Body position preferences for homework: _____

# Transition spaces

## Supporting nervous system shifts between activities and locations

### Entryway/Mudroom

**Some brains need:** Spaces that support the major nervous system transition from outside world to home safety.

**Using what you have:**

- Sensory reset station - Basket with comfort items, stress balls, familiar textures
- Visual organization - Hooks at child's height, picture labels for belongings
- Shoe transition area - Basket of indoor comfort shoes, rug for foot sensory input
- Mirror for regulation - Child can see their own face, practice deep breathing
- Lighting transition - Lamp or softer lighting than bright overhead

### Hallways & Stairways

**Some brains need:** Safe spaces for movement and regulation between rooms.

**Using what you have:**

- Wall for proprioceptive input - Safe space for wall pushes or stretches
- Sensory break spot - Small cushion or chair for pausing and regulating
- Visual supports - Pictures showing family routines or schedules
- Sound management - Soft rugs to reduce footstep noise
- Movement tools - Basket with jump rope, small ball, or movement cards

**Your transition space patterns:**

- After-school transition needs: _____
- Movement regulation tools: _____

# Quick Modification Ideas

## 1

### No-Cost Modifications

- Rearrange furniture to create cozy corners
- Use existing blankets and pillows for sensory input
- Dim or turn off harsh overhead lighting
- Create quiet zones by facing furniture away from high-traffic areas
- Use baskets and containers you already own for organization

## 2

### Low-Cost Additions (Under $20)

- Battery-operated LED lights for gentle lighting
- Resistance bands for proprioceptive input
- Essential oil diffuser for calming scents
- Thick door mat for tactile input
- Small exercise ball for seating

## 3

### DIY Sensory Tools

- Rice or bean sensory bins in large containers
- Weighted lap pads using small towels and rice in ziplock bags
- Fidget tools from rubber bands, paper clips, stress balls
- Visual schedules using phone photos and poster board
- Calm-down kits in small boxes with comfort items

# Family Customization Worksheet

## My Child's Sensory Patterns:

**Seeks more input:** ☐ Movement ☐ Touch ☐ Sound ☐ Visual

**Needs less input:** ☐ Movement ☐ Touch ☐ Sound ☐ Visual

**Changes based on**: ☐ Time of day ☐ Energy level ☐ Stress level

## Our Home's Current Challenges:

Rooms that feel stressful: _____

Times of day that are difficult: _____

Specific sensory triggers: _____

## Modifications to Try First:

**Room 1:** _____

Modification: _____

**Room 2:** _____

Modification: _____

## What's Working:

Environmental changes that help: _____

Times when the space feels supportive: _____

Modifications my child has requested: _____

# ROOM-BY-ROOM CHECKLIST

**Bedroom:**

- ☐ Lighting
- ☐ Sound
- ☐ Tactile comfort

**Kitchen/Dining:**

- ☐ Seating
- ☐ Food environment
- ☐ Organization

**Living Room:**

- ☐ Movement space ☐ Quiet zones
- ☐ Connection areas

**Bathroom:**

- ☐ Sensory-friendly routines
- ☐ Daily task support

**Learning Spaces:**

- ☐ Attention support
- ☐ Executive function tools

**Transition Areas:**

- ☐ Entry support
- ☐ Movement regulation

***Small environmental shifts, huge regulation impact.***