

Building Your SEN-Friendly Home-Ed Day

A practical checklist for parents of neurodiverse learners

1. Space & Sensory Environment

- There is a dedicated learning area — helps neurodiverse learners mentally switch to 'school mode'
- Lighting is controllable — dimmable lamp, reading light, or natural light preferred
- Space is free from visual distractions — a tidy space helps with focus
- Let them sit where they're comfortable — beanbag, floor, sofa, desk, wherever works
- Home learners can wear whatever they're comfortable in. Pjs are a totally acceptable homeschool uniform
- Background noise is managed — instrumental music, white noise or headphones as needed

2. Scent as a Regulation Tool

This one surprises people. Scent is a powerful regulation tool — easy to use, easy to change:

FOR FOCUS & ALERTNESS	FOR CALM & REGULATION
Jasmine · Cinnamon · Citrus	Lavender · Vanilla

3. Movement & Focus

- Remember: learning doesn't require sitting down. Movement IS how many children learn best
- If they need to move, let them — wobble cushion, standing, beanbag, or pacing the room
- Keep fidget tools within reach (putty, Rubik's cube, spinner) — these aren't distractions, they help
- Build in movement breaks — every 15–20 mins for younger or high-energy learners
- Try a timer to build focus stamina. Start at just 5 minutes. You'd be surprised how quickly it grows

4. Calm-Down Corner

Not a naughty corner. Not a consequence. A place to breathe, reset, and come back ready.

- Somewhere slightly apart from the learning area — a beanbag, a corner, a specific cushion
- Stock it with regulation tools: kinetic sand, Lego, colouring, fidget toys, a weighted blanket
- Make sure your child knows this space is always available — no shame, no asking permission
- Use calm, consistent language: 'Would you like some time in your corner?' not 'Go and calm down'

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5. Session Length Guide

Age	Focused Session	Break Needed
5–7	10–15 mins	10 mins
8–10	15–25 mins	10 mins
11–13	25–35 mins	5–10 mins
14+	30–45 mins	5 mins

6. Structure & Visual Support

- A visual timetable helps — knowing what's coming next reduces anxiety for many learners
- An easy-to-read clock nearby takes the guesswork out of 'how much longer?'
- Label supplies by subject so they can set up independently — it gives them ownership
- A simple prep checklist works like packing a school bag — routine without the rush
- Give them a job: Librarian, Whiteboard Wiper, Supply Monitor. Badges optional but highly recommended

7. Green Time / Red Time — Know Your Child's Rhythms

Spend a week just noticing. When are they switched on? When are they really not? Then plan around it.

GREEN TIME — when they're most ready to learn:

RED TIME — when to keep it light or take a break:

They learn best when (circle): led by me / following their interests / left to get on with it

8. Notes & Reflections

What's working (don't forget to notice the good stuff):

One thing to try this week:
