

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

Jasmine · Cinnamon · Citrus

FOR CALM & REGULATION

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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continued...

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: