

Family Support

How you as a family can build a more neurodiversity-affirming home

The Role of Family:

Family is the first line of support for neurodivergent children. Building a safe and affirming space is extremely valuable for building confidence, self-advocacy, and regulation skills. There are numerous ways that you can build a more affirming space in your home. Some are great for stay-at-home parents or caretakers while others are smaller but meaningful ways you can show up for your child if you are a working parent. Regardless of how much time and energy you start each day with, here are some ways to start making a positive impact in your home environment:

- Practice strength-based language
- Recognize and celebrate daily “wins”
- Create sensory-friendly spaces that match your child’s sensory needs
- Get curious. Observe and ask questions about how situations, environments, and events impact your child on a day-to-day basis

Strength-Based Language:

Strength-based language refers to recognizing natural strengths and highlighting them. It also means finding ways to align current challenges with further supports and getting creative on how to use natural strengths to conquer larger struggles.

Here is an example of strength-based language in practice:

Student struggling with writing about a complex topic for school and feeling defeated.

A parent may ask, “This looks interesting! Could you tell me a bit about what you learned so far?”

Child: “I learned that magma is actually the same thing as lava but we call it magma once it reaches the surface! And we did this really cool activity where I got to watch a little volcano explode and also volcanic rocks are called igneous rocks!”

Parent: “That all sounds really cool! Are you having a hard time writing all the cool things you learned on the paper?”

Child: “Yes. I got stuck because some of the words are big and I don’t know how to spell volcano.”

This interaction shows how a child may struggle with one specific thing, but in the moment it can bubble up into feelings of doubt, frustration, or feeling defeated. This parent shifted the focus to something the child was already able to do and helped build back up the self-confidence they needed to continue. This also allows the student to better identify and self-advocate where they are having a hard time, making it easier for you to provide the support they need.

Sensory-Friendly Spaces:

When designing spaces in your home, consider your child’s sensory needs and find ways to incorporate them.

Some examples:

- Calming corner with soft textures, dim lighting, and quiet
- For sensory-seekers, swings, trampolines, or other movement tools
- For older children, consider a decompression space where they can go unbothered for a agreed upon amount of time when feeling overwhelmed. (Ex. 30 minutes in their room uninterrupted after school to decompress)
- Avoid using strong or irritating scents (candles, air fresheners, etc.)
- Utilize dimmer lighting around the house for children with visual sensory sensitivities

References:

[Sensory Processing Disorder: 50 School Accommodations Ideas](#)

[What is a Strength-Based Approach? \(Incl. Examples & Tools\)](#)

No AI Statement:

This resource was made without the use of AI. All information used to create this guide is from my knowledge and experience in the field of psychology, coaching, education, and the above listed resources.

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