

Sensory-Friendly Home Checklist

Room by room. Tick what you have changed, and ignore what does not apply.

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Change the environment before changing the child

It is more effective, it is cheaper, and it does not ask your child to tolerate something they find genuinely difficult.

Bedroom

- ☐ Blackout options for light
- ☐ Consider bulb type — some children see fluorescent flicker
- ☐ Reduce visual clutter, particularly in view from the bed
- ☐ Check bedding textures and seams
- ☐ White noise or quiet, depending on which your child prefers
- ☐ A predictable bedtime sequence, in the same order each night
- ☐ Somewhere to retreat that is not a punishment

Bathroom

- ☐ Hand dryers and extractor fans are common triggers — warn first
- ☐ Water temperature consistency
- ☐ Towel texture
- ☐ Hair washing is a frequent difficulty — a visor or a cup can help
- ☐ Toothbrushing: try a different brush head, a different flavor, or no flavor

Kitchen and mealtimes

- ☐ Reduce background noise during meals
- ☐ Seating with feet supported — a footrest, not dangling
- ☐ Serve foods separated if mixing is a problem
- ☐ New foods on the side of the plate, not on it
- ☐ **Do not force finishing.** Pressure at mealtimes reliably makes eating harder

Living areas

- ☐ One sound source at a time
- ☐ Dimmable or lamp lighting instead of overhead
- ☐ A quiet corner with a way to reduce input
- ☐ Reduce visual clutter in the main space

- ☐ Movement built into the day rather than added as a reward

Getting out of the house

- ☐ Warn before predictable loud events
- ☐ Plan an exit route, and tell your child there is one
- ☐ Headphones available and used by choice, not imposed
- ☐ Quieter times of day where possible
- ☐ **Recovery time afterward, not straight into another demand**

A recovery space

- ☐ Somewhere low-stimulus your child can choose to go
- ☐ Never used as a punishment
- ☐ Available without having to ask
- ☐ Reduced light and sound

What is oversold

Honest about the evidence

Weighted blankets and vests have repeatedly been found to have little or no effect on the outcomes usually claimed for them. Some children find them comfortable, which is a fine reason to own one. Comfort is not the same as a therapeutic effect.

Sensory diets are widely used and have weaker evidence than Ayres Sensory Integration specifically.

Ear defenders help many children access places they otherwise could not. There is also clinical concern that all-day use in quiet environments may increase sensitivity. This is not settled either way — the person wearing them should control when they are used.

This checklist is for general information and is not medical advice, a diagnosis, or a treatment plan. Environmental changes are not therapy and are not a substitute for an evaluation. Reviewed by Dr. Eva Lassey, PT, DPT. © 2026 DrSensory LLC · drsensory.com/guides/sensory-friendly-home