



## 5 Crucial Steps for Helping Children with Autism Feel Secure at Home

If you are a parent, it's natural to want to provide a safe, warm and loving home for your children. But if you are a parent of a child who is on the autism spectrum, you need to take a few extra steps to keep your child feeling calm and secure in your home. From creating positive sensory experiences to preventing accidents, here are a few ways you can set up a home that best supports your child's safety, comfort and development:

### Keep Lighting Comfortable

There is some debate as to what kind of lighting is best for those with autism. Sensory issues and sensitivities can make lighting a tricky choice when it comes to setting up your home. [Most experts agree](#) that fluorescent lights should be avoided in homes and environments built for those on the spectrum. Flickers and harsh light from these kinds of bulbs can cause eye strain, headaches and cognitive issues in children with autism. The mercury inside these bulbs can also pose [health hazards](#) for everyone and can be difficult to dispose of without harming the environment. Opt for [LED bulbs](#) instead.

### Consider Getting a Therapy Dog

Dogs can be man's best friend. But for children who are on the Autism spectrum, dogs can be so much more than a loving companion. [Autism service dogs](#) can change the lives of people who are on the spectrum. Certified service dogs can help children and adults with everyday tasks such as getting ready for school, alert others to emergencies and provide emotional comfort and stability. For children who find communicating with others a challenge, a dog can serve as an important social bridge, too. There

are tons of reasons to look into adding a service dog to your family's life. Just be sure to follow rules and guidelines to keep people and animals safe.

### **Set Up a Sensory Space**

Sensory development is critical for children, but children on the spectrum can have issues processing sensory information. Creating a [sensory space](#) inside your home will aid the development of sensory processes and help your child feel more safe and comfortable. Make sure your space includes some crash pads, cushion falls and sources of subtle movement such as exercise balls and rocking chairs. Consider setting up a small snuggle space inside the room, to help your child stay calm.

### **Create a Calming Bedroom**

Bedrooms should be a place of calm for children and adults, but [bedroom sanctuaries](#) are especially important for children on the spectrum. Your child's bedroom should be set up in a way that provides a calming sensory experience, so they can feel safe and have fewer issues with sleep. Start with pale, muted shades of paint for walls, bedding and furniture. Keep your child's room free of clutter, as a mess can cause stress for children with autism and choose bedding that is safe and comforting. Some [research suggests](#) that weighted blankets provide some comfort, but they may not make much difference in the quality or duration of your child's sleep.

### **Secure Doors, Windows and Fencing**

Children who are on the spectrum can have a [tendency to wander](#). Since autism can impair the ability to communicate wants and needs, children may dart off on their own and leave their homes. To keep your child safe, make sure all possible exits are secured at all times. You should have locks installed on your windows and doors that are not easy for your child to operate. Lock any gates on outside fences as well. If you have a pool, you should take extra steps to prevent accidents. Consider purchasing a [pool alarm](#) that will alert you as soon as the water is breached.

Children on the spectrum have such a special way of experiencing and exploring the world around them. You can make the experience of home a safe and comforting one by following some simple steps to provide sensory calm and development for your child.

Credit: Jenny Wise, freelance writer

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#### **About the Author:**

Jenny Wise homeschools her four awesome children. As any homeschooling parent knows, every day is an adventure, and Jenny has begun chronicling her experiences at [SpecialHomeEducator.com](#). She hopes to use the site to connect with other homeschoolers and to provide helpful advice to parents who may be considering a home education for their kids.