



Regulation-First Home Audit

A room-by-room checklist for PDA families

A regulation-first home is designed to reduce unnecessary nervous system activation and support your child's regulation throughout the day. This audit helps you assess your home environment across all seven regulation domains. Even small changes can make a significant difference.

Sensory Environment

- ■ Lighting — can bright lights be dimmed or replaced? Natural light preferred.
- ■ Sound — are there rooms with consistent background noise? Can it be reduced?
- ■ Clutter — visual busyness increases anxiety. Is there a calmer visual environment somewhere?
- ■ Temperature — does the child have control over their thermal comfort (blankets, layers)?
- ■ Smells — are there strong smells (cleaning products, cooking) that consistently cause distress?

Movement and Physical Space

- ■ Is there a space for large movement — running, jumping, spinning?
- ■ Is there access to outdoor space (even a small garden or balcony)?
- ■ Is there a weighted blanket or sensory compression tool available?
- ■ Are there fidget or sensory tools accessible in key rooms (living room, bedroom)?

Retreat and Recovery Spaces

- ■ Does the child have a personal space they can retreat to without demands?
- ■ Is that space genuinely free of adult interventions when they're using it?
- ■ Are there sensory comfort items in that space (blankets, soft toys, darkness option)?
- ■ Can the space be accessed without having to pass through high-demand areas?

Demand Reduction in the Environment

- ■ Are visual reminders (chore charts, rules lists) creating ambient demand pressure?
- ■ Are routines structured to give the child genuine choice about order and method?
- ■ Are transitions between spaces managed with advance notice?
- ■ Is there a clear signal (visual, verbal) that certain times are demand-free?

Food and Eating Environment

- ■ Is eating a high-demand, high-pressure event in your home?
- ■ Can food be accessed by the child independently when hungry?



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- ■ Are food textures and preferences accommodated without judgement?
- ■ Is meal time demand pressure reduced (flexible timing, no rules about position or utensils where possible)?

Technology and Screen Access

- ■ Is screen time a constant battleground? If so, is the current approach working?
- ■ Are screens available as a regulation tool (with reasonable parameters rather than rigid rules)?
- ■ Is the child's preferred digital activity respected as a genuine interest?

Sleep Environment

- ■ Is the bedroom genuinely calming and low-demand?
- ■ Are bedtime routines flexible — adapted to the child's needs rather than enforced rigidly?
- ■ Is there blackout capability if needed?
- ■ Is the temperature comfortable and controllable?

Progress over perfection

You don't need to change everything at once. Pick the two or three items from this audit that would have the most immediate impact and start there. Small environmental changes can produce disproportionately large improvements in daily regulation.