

Environment: Reflective Questions

Below are a set of reflective questions to help you brainstorm ways to better fit your child's needs to suit their environment.

Sight / Visual questions

- Are the colours in the environment low arousal such as cream and pastel shades and not red or vibrant?
- Have you considered if the environment is cluttered with furniture or mess?
- Does the environment have many patterns, shapes and surfaces that may be sensitive to the eye?
- Have you considered curtains, blinds and pictures etc.?
- Does the environment have fluorescent or harsh lighting, rather than more sun light alternatives?
- Have you considered the effect of sunlight from windows or skylights? Where the light is at different times of the day? Reflective surfaces?
- Are there visuals to support with locating items in the house? (i.e. cutlery, food, clothes, etc)

Smell / Olfactory questions

- Have you considered the smells of cleaning materials used?
 - For example: polish, air fresheners, bleach?
- Have you considered the smells in your house?
 - For example: candles, incense, sprays, etc.
- Have you considered the smells of individuals in your house?
 - For example: perfumes, deodorants, dog odour, aftershave, shampoo smell, etc.

Hearing / Auditory questions

- Have you considered the general noise level in the environment?
 - For example: volume level of the TV or radio
- Have you considered hypersensitive hearing and looked at specific noises that may irritate such as clocks ticking, humming from lights, road noises or building/gardening work in the distance?

- Have you considered noise levels at different times of the day? When people are in the environment at the same, mix of sensory needs?
- Have you any specific quiet and louder areas that people can choose from?

Body Awareness / Proprioception questions:

- Have rooms been made easy to navigate?
 - For example: using colours to distinguish floors, walls and furniture, as well as from room to room
- Have you considered various heights that individuals may need to navigate such as steps, stairs and kerbs?
- Have you considered adjustments for those people who have fine motor difficulties?
 - For example: door handles, locks, cutlery, etc.

Balance / Vestibular questions:

- Is the environment geared for people who seek movement?
 - For example: lots of space, soft play, swings, trampoline
- Are there opportunities to move indoors and out?
- Have you considered how restrictions on movement effect individuals?
- Are your routines flexible to provide movement breaks for those who struggle to stay still for a long period of time?

Communication questions (Community based questions)

- Does the environment have clear signs to indicate the use of each room?
- Are there directional signs to each area?
 - For example: toilets, exits, etc.
- Are there photographs used to aid recognition of people (staff/unfamiliar) if needed?
- Do you plan for changes to routines, staff leaving and building work?