



When a child has a disability, the physical environment of the home may need to be modified as the child grows, especially if the child has a physical disability that requires the use of a walker, wheelchair or powerchair. Physical environments in ready-made homes are not always 100% accessible, and they can require modifications to make sure the child can access every part of the house. This can include bathrooms, cupboards, sinks, closets and light switches, among other things. Individuals who are looking into buying or constructing a barrier-free, accessible, or “designed for all” home can, on the other hand, can request specifications to be developed beforehand in accordance with [universal design standards](#) (the highest of accessibility standards), a benefit that retrofitting does not provide.

### Determining the Types of Home Modifications Your Child May Need

To determine what kinds of modifications a specific home needs, parents can contact a physical or occupational therapist to evaluate the home and provide advice regarding how and where to get modification services and training on how to use modified equipment. They can also consult an Adaptive Equipment/Assistive Technology Procurement Specialist (also known as an AT specialist), [universal design](#) specialist, or [U.S Department of Housing and Development agent](#). Certain housing units overseen by HUD (the Department of Housing and Urban Development) are built specifically with certain [accessibility requirements](#) in mind to help make environments more livable. It’s important to note that, if a child is still school-age, consulting with an assistive technology specialist about home modification *may be covered under the child’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP)*.



Modifications can change the physical structure of a home by widening doorways and lowering countertop height, using ramps instead of steps, chair lifts instead of stairs, accessible bathrooms and free-standing showers. Other changes are less extensive and can include grip-friendly doorknobs, switches, non-slip flooring, door push bars, transfer benches, modified shelving, modified faucets, modified wall sockets, and bathroom grab bars.

### Paying for Home Modifications

Home modification can be expensive, but there are certain grants and other resources that may be available to help defray the cost of making a home accessible. [Title I Property Improvement Loans](#) are loans set aside specifically for rehabilitating old properties and improving livability, [Section 203\(k\) Rehabilitation Loans](#) help to finance or refinance home purchases, the [Housing Choice Voucher Program](#) (formerly known as Section 8 Vouchers) provide subsidies for low-income individuals seeking housing, and certain [federal assistance programs](#) may be able to help defray the cost of accessible housing. The goal of the [Home Accessibility Tax Credit](#) (HATC) is to help defray the cost of accessibility renovations by providing a reimbursement of a portion of your tax burden. The United Spinal Association has a [comprehensive accessible home guide](#) parents may find useful. For more information on other funding resources, please see the link list below.

It's also noteworthy that individuals with disabilities have certain legal rights and protections



regarding when and how they can make home modifications, as codified in the Fair Housing Act and other fair housing laws under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

For more information on general housing assistance, please see our page on [Paying for Basic Needs: Housing and Funding Options for Accessible Housing](#).

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### Learn More: Fair Housing Laws

- [Fair Housing Laws](#)
- [A Guide to Disability Rights in Housing](#)
- [What is the Fair Housing Act?](#)

### Learn More: Funding Accessible Housing

- [Making and Paying for Home Modifications \(Includes Financial Assistance Section\)](#)
- [State-by-State Government Grants, Loans, Funding Resources](#)
- [HCBS Waivers for Home Modifications](#)
- [Rebuilding Together](#)
- [Housing Adaptation Grants for People with a Disability](#)
- [Medicaid Waivers for Home Mods](#)

### Learn More (Finding Accessible Housing and Modifications)

- [Accessible Home Improvement of America](#)
- [HomeAbility: Tips, Tricks and Technology for Accessible Home Living](#)
- [Homemods.org: Home Modification Information Clearinghouse](#)
- [Step-by-step Guide to Accessibility Remodeling](#)