✦ Neurodivergent Minds

A Home Education Weekly Planner

Energy-led, not school-copied

A structure for the week that works with your child's actual capacity, not a copied school timetable.

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Why not just copy the school day?

A 9-to-3, five-subjects-a-day timetable was built to manage large groups of children moving through a building together: it was never designed around any single child's actual energy and capacity. Copying it at home usually imports the same structural costs (rigid transitions, back-to-back demand) without any of the reasons a school needs that structure in the first place.

This planner uses the Traffic Light Method™, the same energy framework behind Neurodivergent Minds' other guides, to plan the week around real capacity instead.

The Green, Amber, Red planning idea

Instead of assigning subjects to fixed days regardless of how anyone is doing, plan in relation to capacity:

- **Green days (genuine capacity):**
  this is where the more demanding, less-preferred, or newer learning goes, the maths that needs real concentration, the writing task that's been avoided.
- **Amber days (need to adapt):**
  lower-demand work fits better here: review of something already familiar, or interest-led exploration that doesn't require much executive effort to start.
- **Red days (need recovery):**
  rest and recovery take priority. This is not “falling behind,” it's the plan working as intended. A Red day that gets treated as a failure teaches a child to hide their own capacity signals, which undoes the whole point of the method.

The plan isn't broken when a Green day turns into an Amber one partway through. Re-reading the day's actual energy and adjusting is the method working, not the method failing.

Reading the Signals Correctly

The most common misreadings, and how to avoid them

- **Mistaking quiet compliance for Green.**
  A child who goes along with a demanding task without visible protest isn't automatically having a Green day, masking and shutdown can look like calm cooperation from the outside. Watch for the cost showing up later, rather than the absence of resistance now.
- **Mistaking excitement for Green.**
  High energy isn't the same as spare capacity, a child who is wound up, overstimulated, or anxious can look energetic while actually running on very little genuine reserve.
- **Treating one bad morning as a whole Red day.**
  A difficult start doesn't always predict the rest of the day, it's fine to reassess at lunchtime and shift from a planned Amber into a genuine Green afternoon, or the reverse.
- **Waiting for a meltdown before calling it Red.**
  The goal is to read capacity early enough to adjust before a crisis point, not to use a meltdown as the signal that a day should have been planned differently.

When in doubt: if you're genuinely unsure which colour a day is, Amber is almost always the safer default than Green, it costs little to plan for slightly less than a child can actually manage, and a lot to plan for more than they can.

A simple daily shape

Not a fixed timetable

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Rather than fixed subject slots, structure the day in loose blocks that can flex in content but stay predictable in shape:

1. Morning anchor

The same simple, low-demand thing every day (ten minutes of reading together, a short walk). Predictability here does a lot of quiet work for the rest of the day.

2. Core focus block

This is where the energy-matched, harder task goes, sized to the day's actual capacity, not a fixed duration.

3. Flexible / interest block

Child-led exploration, a project, a topic of their own choosing.

4. Outdoor or movement block

Doesn't need to be long, but matters more than it looks on paper.

5. Wind-down

A calm, predictable close to the day, signalling that demands are over.

A Worked Example

What a filled-in week can actually look like

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There's no single correct way to fill this in, but seeing one real example tends to make the blank grid far less intimidating. Here's one plausible week, notes kept deliberately short, exactly as they would be in practice.

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R
Maths: fractions	Writing project	Review maths	Rest day	Topic: volcanoes	Family day	Plan next week
Library trip	Park, bikes	Free drawing	Screen time ok	Short walk	No pressure	Baking together
Reading 20m						

Notice that this week has two Red days and three Amber days against only two Green ones, that's a completely ordinary week, not a sign of a plan that isn't working.

Weekly review, not daily rigidity

Revisit the plan once a week, not once a day. The question isn't “did we follow the plan,” it's “did the plan actually fit this week's energy, and what needs to shift for next week.” A plan that needs adjusting isn't a failed plan, it's information.

Keeping a simple record

A brief weekly log is usually enough: a few bullet points of what was actually covered or explored, not a detailed lesson-by-lesson account. This is mainly for your own confidence and memory (and useful if a local authority makes an informal enquiry), not a demand for exhaustive documentation.

Week 1

A reusable template, print a fresh copy each week

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Mark each day Green, Amber or Red as it happens, then jot what actually fits in the core focus block. It's fine to fill this in a day at a time rather than all at once on a Monday.

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R

This week's one-line reflection:

Week 2

A reusable template, print a fresh copy each week

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Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R

This week's one-line reflection:

Week 3

A reusable template, print a fresh copy each week

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Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R

This week's one-line reflection:

Week 4

A reusable template, print a fresh copy each week

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Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R	G A R

This week's one-line reflection:

A closing note

This planner describes a structure, not a fixed schedule to enforce. The goal is a week that works with your child's real capacity on any given day, not a week that looks impressive on paper but costs more than it's worth to actually run.

Once you've worked through these four weeks, photocopy or print the blank template again for as many further weeks as you need, the structure is designed to be reused indefinitely, not just for a single month.

Where to Get Help, and a Few Safety Notes

This guide is general information, a set of practical ideas and different ways of looking at things. It is not medical, mental health, legal or safeguarding advice, and it cannot replace a professional who knows your child. Every child is different, and what helps one child can be unsuitable for another. If something here does not feel right for your child, trust your own judgement and ask a professional.

If you are worried about your child

- Talk to your GP, or your child's school SENCO or pastoral team. Say what you are seeing and how long it has been going on.
- Waiting lists for children's mental health services (CAMHS) are long in many areas. That is not your fault. Ask what support is available in the meantime, in school and locally.
- If things get worse while you wait, say so again. You have not used up your chance.

If a child says they want to hurt themselves

- Stay calm, listen and take it seriously. Do not promise to keep it secret and do not leave them alone if you think they may act on it. Get help the same day through your GP or NHS 111, or call 999 if they are in immediate danger.

Helplines

In an emergency or if someone is in danger	**999**
NHS 111, for urgent advice	**111**
Childline, for children and young people (free, any time)	**0800 1111**
YoungMinds Parents Helpline (weekdays)	**0808 802 5544**
Samaritans, for anyone (free, any time)	**116 123**
Contact, for families with disabled children (weekdays)	**0808 808 3555**

More helplines and support organisations are at neurodivergentminds.com/help.html. Phone numbers and services change, so please check each organisation's own website for current details.