**Creating a Home Where Your Child Can Thrive with a Disability**

When your child is disabled, whether because of the way they were born or after an accident or injury, you instantly turn from simply a parent to an advocate. It's your job to give your child the best possible start in life, embracing the different abilities so your child can thrive. However, sometimes this is difficult to do in a traditional home layout. If your child, for example, is in a wheelchair, and you have narrow hallways, then getting around your home may be difficult, if not impossible. Home modifications can help you make your home into a place where your child is safe, comfortable and thriving.

**Modifications for Kids in Wheelchairs**

When your child is in a wheelchair, your home becomes a difficult world to navigate. Your goal, as a parent, is to create a safe haven where your child's differences are not highlighted every time he tries to navigate the area. Here are some ways you can improve your home to make it more wheelchair-friendly, so you can truly provide a place where your child can feel "at home."

 **Modifications in the Entrance**

 You need to ensure your child can get into your home without hassle. To accommodate, the ADA recommends:

* Modifying at least one entrance with no steps and a low or flat threshold.
* A minimum of a five-foot-square maneuvering space at the entrance.
* A wheelchair ramp or gently sloping path leading to the home.
* Handrails to make it easier to navigate the entrance.
* Excellent lighting, and consider adding motion sensors to ensure it is always lit.

**Modifications in the Bathroom**

The bathroom can be very difficult to navigate, because they are rarely made large enough to move around with a wheelchair. In addition, your child is going to need to get out of the chair and into the tub from time to time. Consider these modifications:

* Install grab bars near the shower, tub and toilet.
* Choose a roll-in or walk-in shower option to ensure your child can get into the shower.
* Install safe, non-slick seating in the shower or bath.
* Lower the shower controls so the child can reach.
* Ensure ample space around the toilet for toileting needs. Specifically, ensure that the toilet area is 48 by 56 inches with at least 18 inches from the side wall.

**Modifications in the Kitchen**

 Your child isn't going to need to cook, but that doesn't mean that wheelchair-friendly features aren't needed in the kitchen. Consider these changes:

* Have at least one wheelchair-height counter for baking and other kitchen activities.
* Consider adjustable counters that pull out for your child, providing knee space underneath.
* Create a 60-inch turning circle in the kitchen.

**Other Interior Solutions**

 In addition to the entry, kitchen and bath, consider these solutions throughout your home.

* Doorways with 32 inches of clearance
* Hallways with 42-inches of clearance
* Bedroom on the main floor of the home
* Low-pile carpeting or hard flooring
* No area rugs