



# Things to Think About!

## Check it Out

By Karen Morgan

### Quick List

Here is a quick checklist of some things to consider and evaluate before beginning your next construction project.

#### CABINETRY

(Height, Space/Approach, Hardware, Accessibility)

#### DOORS

(Size, Swing, Style, Hardware)

#### ELECTRICAL

(Switch & Outlet Heights, Unique Equipment Needs)

#### EXTERIOR

(Ramps, Stairs, Sidewalks)

#### FLOORING

(Traffic/Area Use, Transitions)

#### PLUMBING

(Function, Accessibility)

#### WINDOWS

(Sill Height, Function, Size)

Visit our website at...

[www.snrproject.com](http://www.snrproject.com)

and go to "HOUSING" for a more in-depth discussion on disability housing options.

We also recommend the following...

 **THE CENTER FOR  
UNIVERSAL DESIGN**  
Environments and Products for All People  
[www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/](http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/)

Please feel free to contact us anytime through the following email address...

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## Things to Remember When Building or Remodeling Your Home.

By Karen Morgan

Whether it's a remodeling project or new construction, there are a lot of things commonly forgotten or overlooked when adapting a home for a person with disabilities. The following are just a few of the things to be considered before the construction phase begins.

**1. Turn Around Spaces.** Most designers and codes specify a 5 foot turning radius for persons using wheelchairs or other disability equipment. Is this really adequate for your needs? Many children require custom wheelchair configurations that, when paired with the attending care giver, extend beyond a simple 5 feet. Taking the time to properly measure a true turning space and then incorporating those measurements wherever possible into the structural design and layout of your home will greatly ease transition motions for all persons involved and will also spare your walls and corners from repeated contact with heavy equipment.

**2. Floor surfaces.** Are the materials you have chosen for your floor suitable to the mobility needs of your family member? Has a smooth transition been provided for between varying floor surfaces? Special consideration should be given to floor finishes. Bathroom and shower floors must be of a non-slip material. Carpets with low-pile and high density should be considered for areas where carpeted flooring is more appropriate or preferred over a hard surface material. Take the time to consider how your child's abilities and their equipment will work with the flooring you choose and keep the following factors in mind; durability, uniformity, and stability.

**3. Doorways.** The location of doors, direction of swing, and width of the opening should be arranged in a manner which permits easy approach, operation, and also minimizes maneuvering requirements. Thresholds, divider strips, or raised sliding door tracks should be avoided wherever possible. Every door providing a person with disabilities access to an area should be no less than 3 feet wide. This will provide adequate clearance for both the person and their equipment. Consider the current and future manipulative abilities of the person you are accommodating in order to create the most user-friendly, independence enabling, environment possible.

**4. Plumbing.** A lot of activity goes on around plumbing fixtures. Locating these fixtures at an appropriate height and providing adequate maneuvering space around/between them will greatly aid in the proper and safe care of your child. As with the door hardware, consider the manipulative abilities of your dependant when choosing and placing faucets and water controls. Horizontally mount hand held faucets in the tub and shower instead of vertically so as to offer a greater range of accessibility to the user from a seated position. Look closely at the needs and abilities of all persons who will be using the facilities and make choices that will best suit your family's needs for the long term.

**5. Professional Evaluation.** If you are unsure of what types of changes will need to be made or equipment you will require, an evaluation by a Rehabilitation Specialist trained in Housing Accessibility will be most useful. We recommend you visit the housing section of our website for more detailed information. [www.snrproject.com](http://www.snrproject.com)