The Evening Decompression Checklist

Simple, Non-Judgemental Steps for After-School Calm

By Agnese | Kind Approach (Health Coach & Former Primary Teacher)

1. The 3:30 pm Decompression Window (Lowering Sensory Input)

• **The Zero-Questions Buffer:** Pause the "How was school?" interrogation for the first 20–30 minutes home. Let their nervous system unpack first.

• **Dim & Soften:** Dim overhead lights and turn off background TV/radio noise as soon as you step inside.

• **Crunchy or Cold Refuel:** Offer a sensory-regulating snack (e.g., apple slices, carrot sticks, cold ice water, or rice cakes) to ground their nervous system through calming chewing pressure.

2. The Dinner & Evening Bridge (Reducing Pressure)

• **Safe Foods First:** Ensure at least 1–2 familiar, reliable "safe foods" are on the plate without pressure to try new items when exhausted.

• **De-prioritise Table Expectations:** On high-fatigue days, allow movement, fidgets, or eating in a quieter spot.

• **Parent Sensory Boundaries:** Put on noise-dampening earplugs (like Loop) or step into the bathroom for 2 minutes to unclench your jaw and reset your own nervous system.

3. Bedtime Wind-Down (Regulating for Sleep)

• **Heavy Work Before Bed:** Try 60 seconds of wall pushes, tight blanket rolls ("burrito wraps"), or deep pressure hugs to trigger calming neurochemicals.

• **Blood Sugar Buffer:** Offer a small protein/fat bedtime snack (e.g., a spoonful of nut butter, warm oat milk, or cheese) to prevent middle-of-the-night adrenaline spikes.

• **Long Exhale Reset:** Practice 3 cycles of "4-count inhale, 6-count exhale" together in the dark.

Need a personalized strategy for your family?

Every neurodivergent family's nervous system profile is unique. Book a free 20-minute Calm & Clarity Call to build realistic routines tailored to your home:

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