

What is a sandwich family?

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Many households today are made up of sandwich families -- a couple that is "sandwiched" between their children and their parents, trying to simultaneously raise young children, take care of aging parents and work full time. This is a difficult situation, especially when you add to it the possibility of chronic conditions, like autism, diabetes and Alzheimer's in children and/or parents.

The Aware Home project integrates industrial design, architecture, psychology, health, engineering, computers and assistive technology to try to [build a home](#) that can actually take care of its inhabitants. An Aware Home could monitor and track children's development for trends in their development and behavior, and it could monitor the breathing of a child with asthma. The house could keep track of children's progress in various therapies with their parents or caregivers. The house itself could actually be a baby monitor; it could go so far as to tell parents who is where at any given moment: for example, who was raiding the fridge when they should have been in bed.

An aware home could be connected to smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and a security system, and could call emergency services if necessary. It could also offer a digital message center to help everyone in the household keep up with each other's schedules. An aware [home](#) could save you time by helping you find your phone, your wallet or your keys. It might even be able to upload, tag and caption your pictures and videos on personal or social-networking Web sites, saving you time that you could spend making memories with your family.

Sandwich families have a lot of challenges ahead of them, many of which could be eased by living in Aware Homes one day.