

The background of the page is a photograph of a family in a kitchen. A woman with blonde hair is standing on the left, looking towards the right. In the foreground, a young boy in a blue shirt is sitting at a table, smiling. A girl is also visible behind him. In the background, a man is standing. The kitchen has wooden cabinets and a white countertop. The overall scene is warm and domestic.

DEMYSTIFYING DESIGN-BUILD

**How to Make the Design-Build Process
Simple and Fun**



What would your dream home look like?

What would it *feel* like?

**What do you need, want, and wish for
in the perfect house?**

It can't be denied—these are fun questions to think about. With Sterling Homes, you can do more than think about your dream home; you can make it a reality.

Maybe you never seriously considered designing and building your own home. Perhaps, like many people, you thought the process would be too stressful or would cost too much. After all, the stakes are high. What if you don't love the way the home comes out? What if you go way over budget? These are some of the fears that keep many people from exploring the idea of building a custom home.

The truth is that the Design-Build process should be **simple and fun**—and it doesn't need to cost more than buying any new construction home. Design-Build is truly unlike any experience you've had before. It's a special, unique time in your life, and with a trusted guide, you can relax and enjoy every moment. After reading this guide, you'll be empowered to move forward with the Design-Build process knowing exactly what to expect.

DEFINING DESIGN-BUILD

YOU have the vision; our job is to help you organize your vision and create that reality.

For Sterling Homes, **Design-Build is a process we use to help you design a home from scratch that's just right for you.** The exact process is unique to everyone.

Designing a home from scratch could mean starting with a blank piece of paper, or it could mean putting together parts of many different plans and ideas. Whatever your process looks like, the goal is to completely capture your dream.

Everyone has a budget; for us, Design-Build guides means **maximizing the impact of your budget** so that you get what you want from your dollars, and nothing you *don't* want. This is your chance to get the house you've always dreamed of for a price that works for you.

The Sterling Homes process for Design-Build is focused on creating the most value for you, while keeping the process as efficient and fun as possible. Your home is "built" completely **on purpose on paper** before we start construction. By creating a full set of plans, specifications, and pricing before the first hammer is ever swung, you can start to think in 3D about a home you've only been able to imagine until now.

When all of the planning is completed ahead of the construction start date, there are no negative consequences to your decisions. You won't be surprised by unexpected costs if you suddenly decide to, for instance, add a three-season porch. With our process, the choice is made before construction begins, and you know exactly how much it will cost. This more efficient process **saves you money and stress** by taking care of the legwork upfront, so you can sit back, relax, and watch your home come together.





IS DESIGN-BUILD RIGHT FOR YOU?

The prospect of designing and building your dream home is exciting—and this guide will show you that it's simpler than you may think! But you may still be wondering whether a Design-Build project is really right for your situation. Remember, Design-Build means creating your dream home from scratch—whatever that looks like to you. Here are a few ways to know that a Design-Build project may be the right fit:

- You have a vision for how you want to live in your home.
- You know what you want, but haven't found it elsewhere.
- You want the best attributes of several of your previous homes.
- You have unique considerations that need to be planned for, from multigenerational living to working from home.
- You have a desire to make your dream a reality.

Design-Build is ideal for people who have an idea of their perfect home. One common misconception is that custom home-building is all about creating over-the-top houses, and is only suitable for people with unlimited money to spend. The fact is, Design-Build is about creating *your* ideal home, and that means the home you want, in the location you want, for the price you want.

GETTING STARTED: MEET, DISCUSS, & SIGN THE AGREEMENT



When you're ready to start the Design-Build process, you'll begin by having a series of candid conversations with your builder.

CONVEY YOUR VISION

You have certain dreams for your new home, but how do you communicate those dreams so that your builder understands? Here are a few tips for getting your vision across.

- Think about your **needs, wants, and wishes**. What are the absolute must-haves, what would be nice to have, and what might be something to add in the future?
- Define your lifestyle; are you active and always on the go, or do you enjoy relaxing at home? Do you entertain often? Do you require first-floor living? Your lifestyle will help determine how your home is designed and built.
- Find inspiration; if you have magazine pages, Pinterest boards, or Houzz albums of home features you like, share them with your builder.

For so long, your dreams about your home have been only in your own imagination. The fun part is sharing those ideas with someone who can turn them into reality. You describe what you want in your new home, and together we go back and forth with ideas and talk pros and cons. The goal? Come up with a plan, and guide you on how to move forward with that plan.

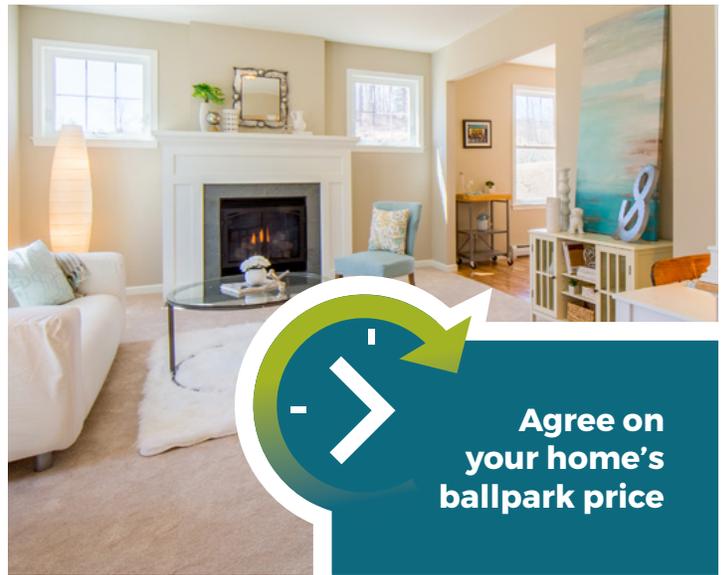
Understanding your vision—and conveying it to your builder—is an important first step. When we know what you want, we can give you a “ballpark price” for how much it will cost to design and built the home you're describing. Then we can validate whether that ballpark price is within your budget.

AGREE ON A BALLPARK PRICE

Next, let's deal with the elephant in the room: cost. While it may not be as much fun as sharing design ideas, budget is an extremely important discussion to have. We need to make sure we're all on the same page about how to create a home that fits your needs and your price range, all while being a home you love.

Remember, Design-Build is about creating your ideal home that fits within your budget. We recently worked with a couple that was interested in building a home in one of our neighborhoods with a \$500,000 dollar budget. They described what they wanted: about 2,000 square feet with a second floor master suite. We were pleased to be able to tell them that similar homes in their neighborhood cost around \$470,000—perfectly within their budget!

Zeroing in on a ballpark price for your home helps you determine whether your vision is feasible within your budget. The ballpark price instills confidence that you can achieve a home you'll love at a price that makes you comfortable.





SIGN THE DESIGN-BUILD AGREEMENT

After these honest discussions, it's time to sign the Design-Build Agreement. The Design-Build document outlines several key pieces of information that will guide the rest of the process:

- **Design Deposit:** You'll pay a \$7,500 design fee when signing the Design-Build Agreement. The design deposit will be credited toward the final purchase price of your home at the time of closing.
- **Contract:** After the design work is complete, you'll sign the construction contract and pay a 5% deposit. This information is detailed in your Design-Build Agreement so you always know the next step.
- **Timeline:** The Agreement specifies a start and end time for Sterling Homes to complete the design and pricing work for your home.
- **Design and Pricing Work:** The Agreement lists each of the items that are included in the design and pricing process, including sketches, floor plans, drawn details of special items, the pricing of agreed upon options and alternative materials and designs.
- **Location:** The Agreement defines where your home will be built, whether that means reserving a Sterling Homes neighborhood lot, or building on your own land.
- **Final Design and Pricing Package:** Included in your packet is the floor plans, a site plan, details of special items, written specifications, and purchase price for the work.

Once the Design-Build Agreement has been signed and the first deposit has been received, the design process is officially underway!

DESIGNING YOUR IDEAL HOME

DEFINE NEEDS, WANTS, AND WISHES

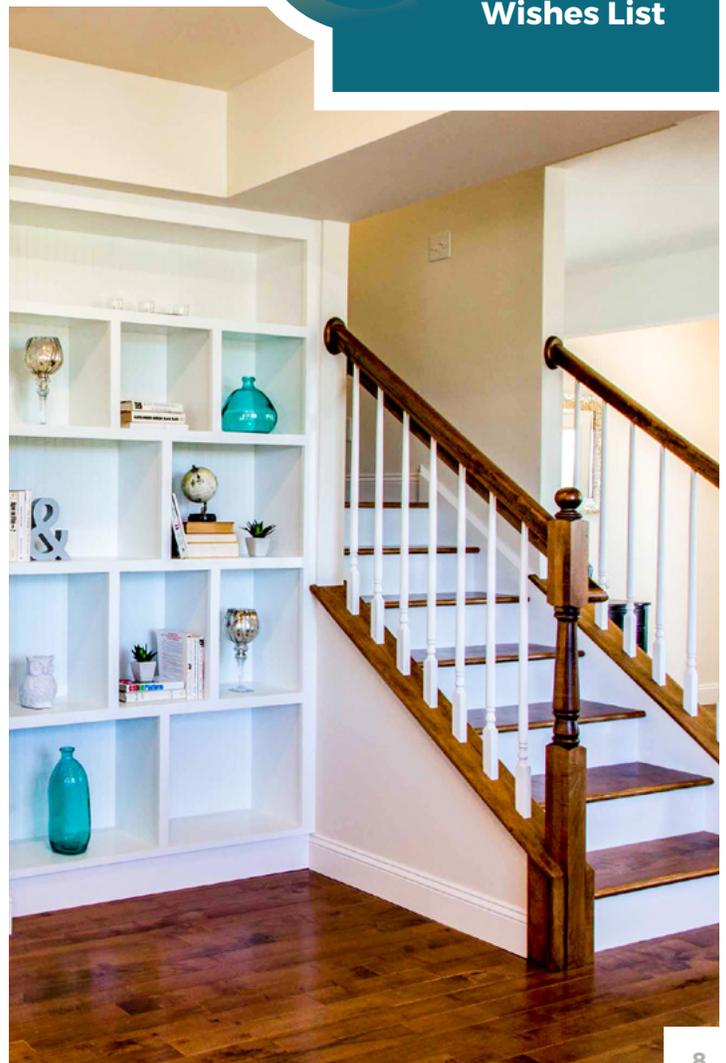
The next step is an in-depth meeting where you convey your Needs, Wants, and Wishes. You may have touched on a few of these items during the initial conversations, but now it's time to lay all the cards out on the table. Some of your dreams are easy to include in the design, and others may be more challenging. No matter how "out there" you may think your ideas are, this conversation isn't about editing or restraining your vision. Now is the time to talk about all of your dreams, and we can help you determine if they're doable.

When designing your home, we take your Needs, Wants, and Wishes list to heart. While you may not be able to have every last item on list, our goal as your design build guide is to maximize the value in your budget as much as we can to give you a home that you love.

Don't worry if you don't have specific plans for every room in your house. It's uncommon that people know exactly what they want and need throughout their entire home. Whether you have many ideas or just a few, we guide you to solutions that will work for you. By simply telling us about your lifestyle and how you want to live in your home, we can help you design a home you'll love.



**Create your
Needs, Wants,
Wishes List**



START WITH THE LAND

Designing a beautiful, functional home doesn't start with the rooms or the features; it starts with the land. We design your home from big to small—from the land all the way down to the toilet paper holders in the bathrooms. The land on which you build will affect every aspect of your home, and getting your home to sit properly on the land is an important part of loving the final result.

Here are some of the factors to consider (with our help) when assessing your land:

- Where will public and private spaces be positioned?
- Where will the sun be at different times of day, and which rooms will it affect?
- Are there any great views to take advantage of?
- Where will the entrances and exits be located?
- What will the yard be like?
- What are the inside and outside connections?

It's important that we apply your Needs, Wants and Wishes list to the land in order to deliver a design that complements how you want to live in your home. Do you want the public space in the back or front of the house? What about the bedrooms? Where do you want your deck to sit relative to other rooms in your home?

To answer these questions, we sketch a "bubble chart" with you to arrange spaces. The bubble chart is a rough drawing that simply helps organize out the flow of your house. We define north, south east, and west on paper and think about how the sun and light will strike your home. Then we draw and label circles that represent the different spaces of your home so that we can be sure we've captured the flow you want before creating a more detailed plan.

Bubble charts are a great way to start the process of planning your home on paper. Once you've told us about the intent for each space and your home as a whole, we take that information and draw your home.



Receive first design package & schedule a review meeting

DESIGN, ADJUST, REPEAT

After our in-depth discussions, we take some time to put together your plans in CAD (computer-aided design) and develop specifications that will be right for you. The goal is to present you with a complete package, including plans, specifications, and pricing.

The very first version of this package takes some time to produce. Sometimes the creative process is quick, and sometimes it takes a bit longer. You conveyed your vision to us—now it's our turn to do the heavy lifting. The first version of your design package can take **up to 2 weeks** to produce.

When your package is about ready, we will schedule a meeting to review the plans together. Before the meeting takes place, we'll send you the package to review in the comfort of your own home. Take some time to look everything over and formulate opinions and questions.



The First Feedback Meeting

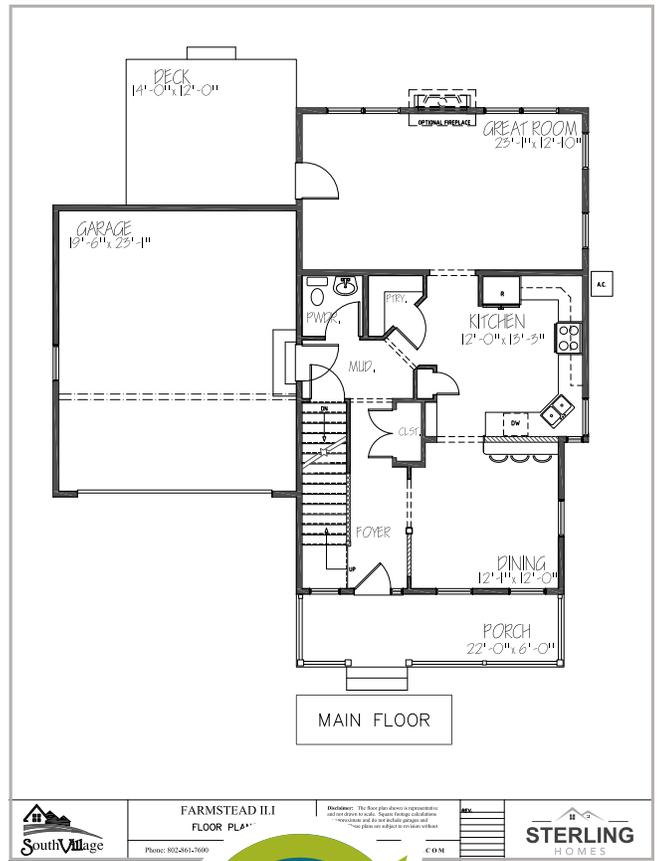
At our meeting (either in-person or digital), we will review your feedback together and talk ideas. You'll certainly have some ideas to share after looking at the first set of plans, specs, and pricing. We'll have ideas, too. Sterling Homes has been designing and building homes for nearly forty years, and we have never perfectly "nailed it" on the first pass. We have even seen the occasional complete re-do. But it's all part of giving you the home you're dreaming of.

This meeting is also your opportunity to ask any questions you may have. Some questions we can answer right away, and some may require us to get back to you. If you have questions like, "How much will it cost to finish the bonus room," "How much to add a screened-in porch," or "how much to tile the shower," we will get you those answers in the form of a Personal Choice List (we'll talk about this later).

Design Cycles and Adjustments

After this meeting, we'll have your feedback and a list of adjustments to make. Together, we complete cycles of designs, iterations and pricing until we're confident we've captured your vision. It typically takes **two to three collaborative iterations** before we have the contract plans, specs, and price. At this point, you have thoroughly shared your vision with us, and we have a firm understanding of what you want and need. The cycle of design, adjust, repeat typically goes quickly, since we started with a solid base of knowledge about what you want in a home.

Remember, you won't adjust the nitty gritty details just yet, such as picking what type of wood you want for your floor or what style of tile you want in your shower. That's coming soon! For now, we design with those items in mind. It's enough to simply know that you want a hardwood floor and tile shower. Our goal throughout the design process is to deliver you a complete base plan, base price, and base spec that is detailed and complete for us to sign a construction contract together.



REVIEW THE FINAL PACKAGE

As your Design-Build Agreement outlines, we'll provide the following at the end of the design process:

- Floor plans
- Site plan
- Details of special items
- Written specifications
- Purchase price for your new home



Your Personal Choice List (PCL)

Throughout the planning process, you may decide to make personal choices about the features of your home. Personal choices could include things such as adding or removing closets, windows, parking areas and more. Personal choice items are elements that will affect construction, electrical, plumbing, or other major areas that are part of the building process. We'll list these on Personal Choice Lists so that you understand how your choices will affect the price of your home. We'll also compile everything together in a **Pricing Summation** so that you always know where you are in your budget and how you got there.

The great benefit of Personal Choice Lists is that we're still planning your home on paper. There are no change orders to deal with, no frustrating pricing or timing issues, and no stress about being able to get what you want. Personal Choice Lists add efficiency and organization to keep the process moving while allowing you to explore all the options, with their costs, that you could want.



Home Plan Approval

Now it's time to review the final plans, specifications, and pricing. The plans you receive represent a home that we know we can deliver based on your vision and our agreed-upon ballpark price. Together, we'll review this package and make certain you're comfortable with every aspect of your home design and its cost.

At this stage, we just want to ensure that the **floor plans** are complete, correct, and exactly what you want. The specifications, on the other hand, are a base we can work with. In order to complete the next step, which is **signing the construction contract**, the specifications do not need to be perfect yet. Why? We're headed into the Options & Selections phase, where you'll select the finishes and elements of your home that truly make it yours. We'll use what we've learned about you to customize your O&S experience to fit your style and lifestyle.

MAKE IT YOURS (OPTIONS & SELECTIONS)

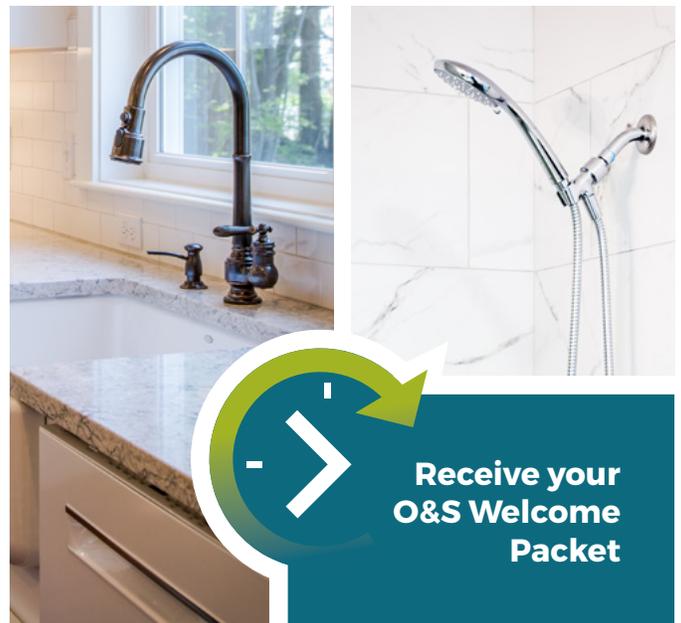
Wow—you've made it! From starting your Design-Build Agreement to signing the construction contract, you're in the home stretch of your work. Now it's time to enter what we call Options and Selections (O&S). Throughout the Design-Build process so far, we've gotten to know a lot about each other. When we get to O&S, you will be truly ready to move forward. You've already made the "big decisions." Now, it's all about the fun details that will make your home unique to you.

During the Options and Selections process, receive expert guidance as you make about the elements of your home in a fun, way. You'll meet your **Selections Manager**, will guide you through this process.

Chances are that you've already covered a lot of ground when you get to this point. The process is tailored to your individual needs depending on how many decisions you've already made—or want to make. For instance, if you're someone who just wants to be shown a few options, we can provide those to you; however, if you prefer to explore every possibility and carefully plan each element, that's fine too. We work closely with you to achieve your design goals while staying within your desired budget.

Here's what the Options and Selections process looks like:

- You'll view many different elements of your new home and make decisions about them.
- Some items you will see in person, such as countertops, cabinets and flooring.
- Other items you may review online, such as plumbing fixtures and lighting.
- The final elements are items you will review at home with tools we will provide, such as interior paint colors, siding colors, and roof shingle colors.



Together, we will schedule a series of O&S meetings to make decisions on the elements above. Coordinating our schedules is often the hardest part of O&S. We get these meetings on the calendar, and plan farther than we may need to. If you finish early, it's easier to cancel a meeting than to try squeezing one in later.

Your construction specifications will be our guide as to what is included in your new home. Throughout the O&S process, there is a chance that you will want to either change or upgrade, or in some cases, choose something less expensive than what is included. Don't worry if you're not an expert on flooring or countertops. Your Selections Manager and our trusted partners will guide you each step of the way.

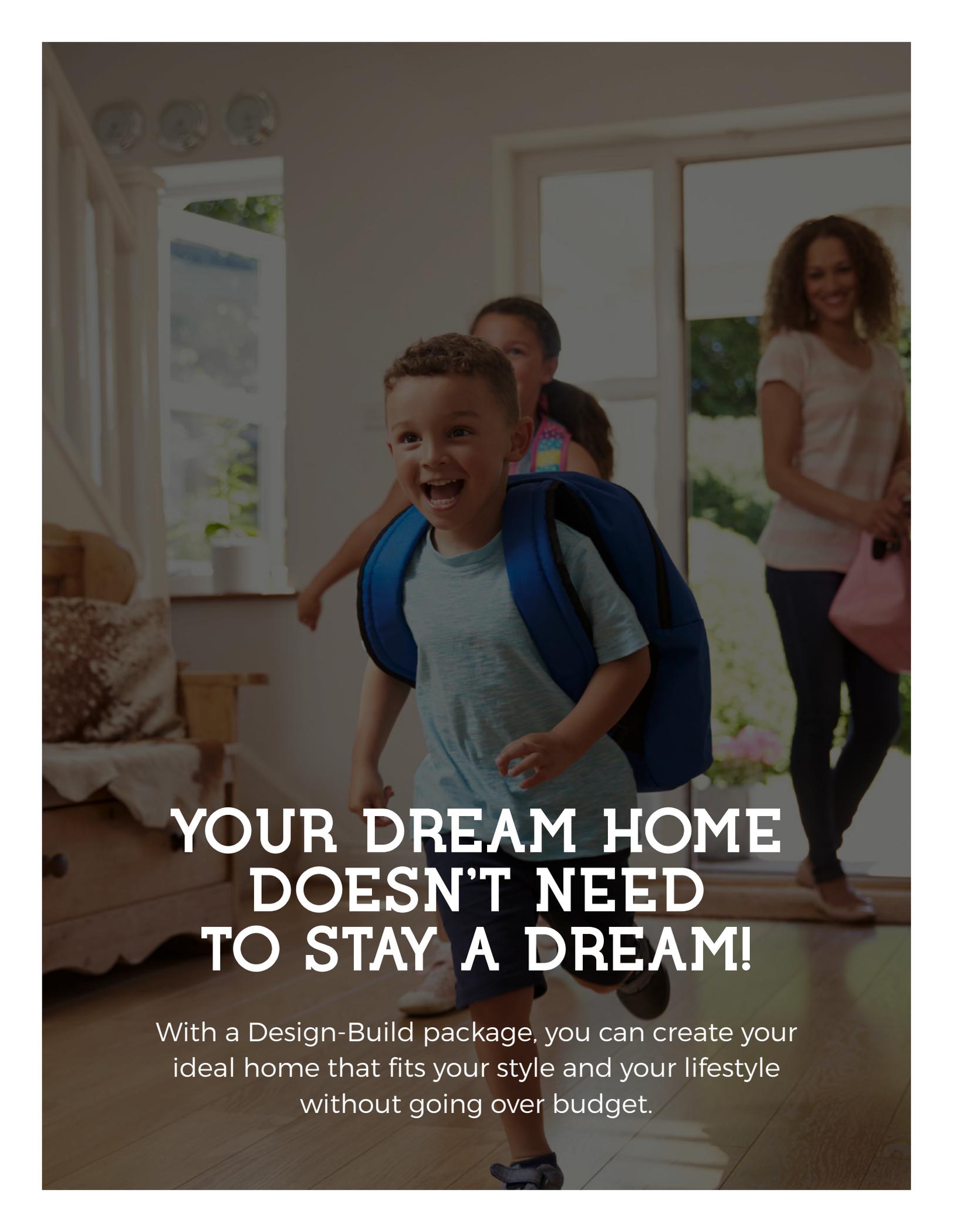
There are many parts and pieces in your home. We have found that putting your focus on a few specific areas (for example, the bathroom and kitchen) rather than every single piece (such as the light switches and doorjamb) brings out the best of the Options and Selections experience and final product.

WATCH YOUR HOME COME TOGETHER

The final result of the design process is a fully planned, specified and priced home plan that fits your lifestyle and desires. Now it's time to relax as we handle each and every detail of your home's construction. All of the legwork is complete, and all of your decisions have been made. Your only job now is to dream about move-in day; we can't wait to hand you the keys!



A graphic overlay on the right side of the page. It features a teal background with two circular icons containing a clock face and a right-pointing arrow. The top icon is labeled "Schedule O&S Meetings" and the bottom icon is labeled "Complete Options & Selections". A small inset image shows a hand holding keys.



YOUR DREAM HOME DOESN'T NEED TO STAY A DREAM!

With a Design-Build package, you can create your ideal home that fits your style and your lifestyle without going over budget.

START THE
Conversation

Are you ready to share your ideas,
hopes and dreams for your new home?

Let us be your guides.



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