



Therapy Services

RESOURCE SHEET

Parenting or Connecting with your Neurodivergent Child



Neurodivergent children experience the world in unique, creative, and sometimes challenging ways. When we understand and embrace their differences, we build stronger, more connected relationships.

How Can I Support My Child?

- **Join their world.** Follow your child's lead, engage in their interests, and celebrate their strengths to build trust and connection.
- **Regulate together.** Before correcting behaviour, help your child feel safe and calm using a gentle voice, body language, and presence.
- **Speak simply and clearly.** Use direct language. Break tasks into steps and avoid sarcasm or idioms.
- **Support sensory needs.** Offer tools like headphones, sunglasses, or movement breaks. Allow stimming as a healthy way to self-regulate.
- **Make routines predictable.** Use visual schedules, countdowns, and gentle warnings to ease transitions.
- **Promote choice and voice.** Offer options, respect preferences, and encourage your child to express what works for them.

What Might Neurodivergence Look Like?

- Sensory sensitivities (e.g. sound, light, textures), need for movement or quiet
- Intense interests, repetitive play, or stimming
- Big emotions, meltdowns, or difficulty with transitions or change
- Differences in communication, social interaction, or masking to fit in

These are not problems to fix; they are valid ways your child experiences the world.

Helpful Phrases to Try

- “I see this is really hard for you right now.”
- “Let’s take a break together.”
- “You don’t have to look at me to listen.”
- “I love how your brain works.”
- “What do you need right now?”
- “It’s okay to feel what you’re feeling.”

Tools That Can Help

- **Visual supports** (e.g. charts, timers, social stories)
- **Sensory kits** (fidgets, weighted items, chewable jewellery)
- **Emotion regulation tools** (feelings charts, calm-down spaces, breathing cards)
- **Books and media** that reflect neurodivergent experiences
- **Safe spaces** for downtime, stimming, or retreating when overwhelmed

Remember:

- Your child isn’t being “difficult”, they’re doing their best with the tools they have.
- You don’t need to be perfect, just present, curious, and open to learning.
- Connection is always more powerful than correction.
- You are your child’s safe place, and that matters more than anything.

Helpful Resources

Raising Children Network – Supporting Neurodivergent Kids (raisingchildren.net.au/)

Reframing Autism – Parent Resources (reframingautism.org.au/resources/)

ADHD Foundation Australia – Parenting Support (adhdfoundation.org.au/support)

Yellow Ladybugs – Autistic Girls & Gender Diverse Youth (www.yellowladybugs.com.au)

The A List – Autism-Friendly Services & Activities (alisthub.com.au)

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