

Intersectionality

anti-SEND stance

neurodiversity affirming practice

# The iceberg concept

neurodiversity informed pedagogy

neurodiversity informed learning and development

Diverse  
Pathways

FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

## Intersectionality

Recognising that children's experiences of learning, support, and exclusion are **shaped by the interaction of multiple identities**, including disability, race, gender, class, language, and culture. Understanding that inclusion does not just mean SEND.

## Anti-SEND stance

A **critical position** that names the **harm caused by deficit-based SEND systems**, while navigating statutory requirements **without endorsing the assumptions that underpin them**.

## Neurodiversity-affirming practice

Day-to-day actions, strategies, techniques and responses that seek to affirm all children including those with developmental differences and disabilities. Actively seeking to reduce potential harm caused by existing systems and environments. Working collectively with others for long term culture shifts. Tuning into and listening to lived experiences as a measure.

## Neurodiversity-informed pedagogy

A deepened understanding of diverse development including how children learn, play, sense, regulate, move, think and function. Making conscious efforts to understand differences rather than eliminating them and drawing upon a wide range of sources to better understand strengths, differences and needs. Actively shaping and re-shaping teaching, caregiving, environment, routines, rhythms, expectations based on the diversity of need. Rejecting approaches to require educational mono-culture.

## Neurodiversity-informed learning and development

Accessing professional development opportunities that take a meaningful stance on the neurodiversity-paradigm and deepen an early educators understanding of human differences as inevitable and expected.

# Neurodiversity Informed and Affirming Pedagogy and Practice

## in Early Childhood

### Neurodiversity Informed Pedagogy

Neurodiversity-informed pedagogy and practice means taking time to understand neurodiversity as **a theoretical and practical framework and what it tells us about how human differences including those that diverge from typical or “normal”**. It can also act as a starting point for questioning the systems we work within. Many educators feel pressure from processes and pathways that focus on identifying problems in children rather than expanding and **evolving our education and care systems in humanising ways**.

Neurodiversity-informed pedagogy and practice encourages us to pause, **un-learn, re-learn**, reflect and name how systems can disadvantage some children and families more than others.

This includes recognising how factors such as disability, race, class, culture, age and assumptions about what is “normal” can shape children’s experiences, and **whose needs are prioritised** and cared for in the education system.

### Neurodiversity-Affirming Practice

Neurodiversity-affirming pedagogy and practice builds on being neurodiversity-informed. It moves beyond learning about differences, towards **actively influencing early childhood spaces where difference is recognised, supported and valued in everyday practice** as part of your early years eco-system.

Neurodiversity-affirming practice recognises that becoming informed is not an end point, but a **springboard**. Understanding neurodiversity creates the conditions for affirming work to happen. **Affirming practice is not a fixed state or a label to claim, but an ongoing process of learning**, unlearning and rebalancing power in response to children’s lived experiences.

By working in this way, educators can move from recognising difference to **actively creating early childhood environments that are more equitable, responsive and humanising for all children and families**. To do this, early early educators need access to professional development opportunities that are deep and meaningful not procedural.



# Neurodiversity-Informed and Affirming Pedagogy



# Complete your own...



neurodiversity affirming practice

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neurodiversity informed pedagogy

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neurodiversity informed learning and development