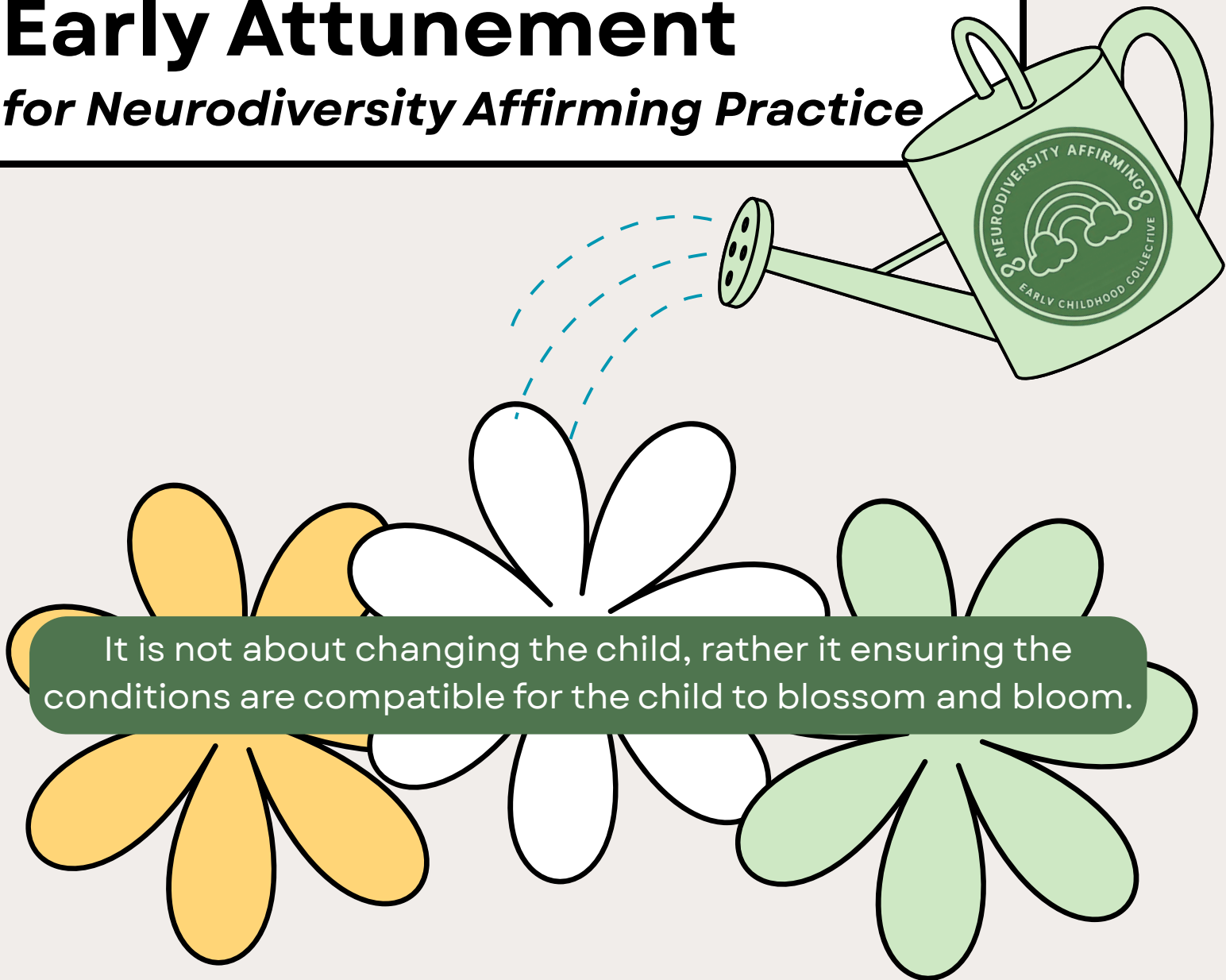


Early Attunement

for Neurodiversity Affirming Practice



It is not about changing the child, rather it ensuring the conditions are compatible for the child to blossom and bloom.

Diverse

Pathways

FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

Early attunement is our capacity to notice and respond to a child’s differences in ways that bring them harmony and ease. It is about embracing what is developmentally meaningful to the child, rather than intervening or interfering in attempts to correct them through traditional early intervention methods.

Tunes into children and families through an “**experience-sensitive**” approach, defined as a humanistic, neurodiversity-affirming model of care that prioritises **lived experience**, **autonomy**, and **dignity** over attempts to eliminate, correct or normalise (McGreevy et al., 2023).

Intersectionality-informed practice ensures a holistic understanding of identity and experience, recognising how multiple social categories interact rather than viewing them in isolation (Crenshaw, 1989). For example, how does neurodivergence intersect with the child’s racialised identity, or gender.

A commitment is made to the child’s **holistic profile** of **strengths, interests, traits, differences**, and **needs**, ensuring access to sensitively scaffolded supports that build on capacities rather than focusing on deficits.

A network of **allyship** is built through **solidarity** with parents and carers, who are respected as valued partners rather than subjected to surveillance or scrutiny.

There is as much focus on the **quality of life** when providing supporting alongside **affirming** and **developmentally meaningful outcomes**. Children are not subjected to **programmes** or **interventions** that train them out of their inherent traits and characteristics.

Avoids one-size-fits-all approaches that do not account for **developmental variations**. Support is child-led and respects the diverse pathways for early childhood.

Problems are not located within the child, as if they are broken or failing to conform to neuronormative and ableist assumptions. Attunement instead recognises the internal, external, and relational conditions that shape experience.

Wellbeing, well-doing, pleasure, engagement and **joy** are central components of Early attunement planning.

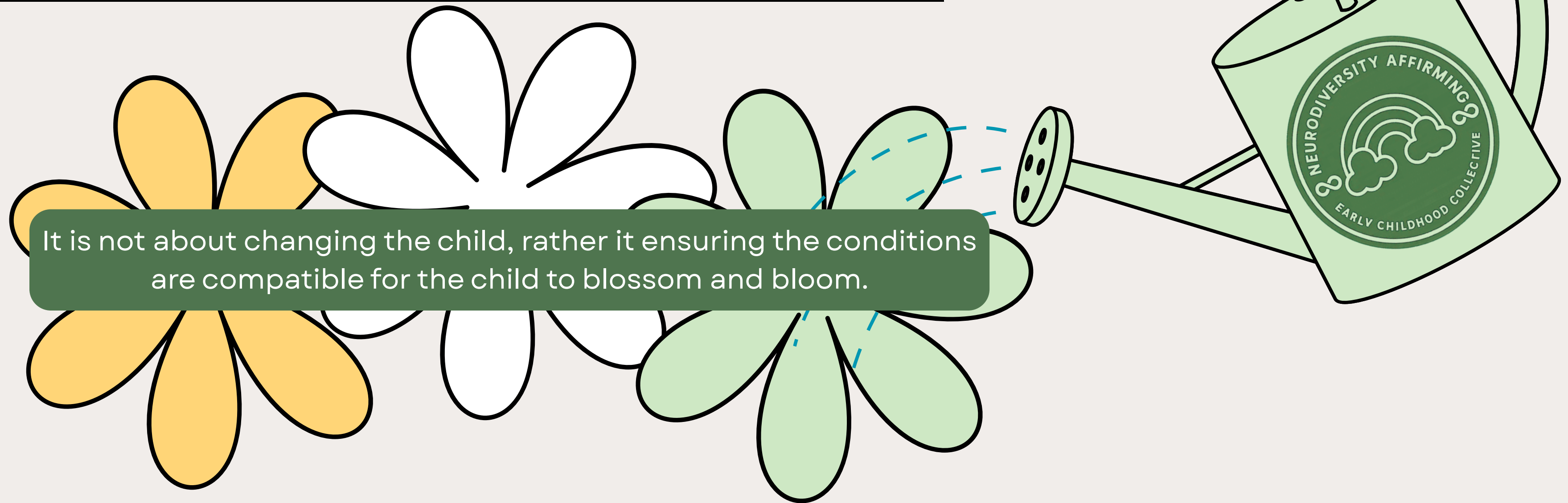
An **ecological approach** to early attunement recognises that support must foster belonging. For example, if a child is non-speaking, this includes teaching peers about non-speaking communication identities.

If support **programmes** are delivered, they are to enrich pedagogy and practice, not to be delivered in isolation or to be focused on normalisation or correction. The evidence base of interventions is explored through an **anti-ableist lens**.

There are times when early intervention is relevant to reduce risks for the child, but neurodivergence or disability must never be assumed to be the risk itself. Early intervention should focus on reducing adverse experiences, and this responsibility belongs to everyone.

Early Attunement

for Neurodiversity Affirming Practice



It is not about changing the child, rather it ensuring the conditions are compatible for the child to blossom and bloom.

Early attunement is our capacity to notice and respond to a child's differences in ways that bring them harmony and ease. It is about embracing what is developmentally meaningful to the child, rather than intervening or interfering in attempts to correct them through traditional early intervention methods.

Diverse

Pathways

FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD