

Quick Glance: Neurodiversity Terms



Neurotypical conforming refers to children who are able to conform to the norms, standards and expectations of “normalcy” to fit in. These children are assumed to represent the “correct” way to think, feel, play, communicate, behave, sense and function (adapted from Wise, 2023).

Neurodivergent refers to those children whose way of being consciously and unconsciously resists conforming to the norms, standards and expectations of “normalcy”. Developmental experiences diverge from neuronormativity meaning they think, feel, play, communicate, behave, sense and function in unique ways. You do not need a diagnosis to identify as neurodivergent.

Emerging Neurodivergent refers to children whose traits and characteristics are in the process of becoming understood. It can also refer to late diagnosed children who are re-discovering their natural selves.

Neurodiverse refers to a collective group of people who may both conform to neurotypicalism or diverge. A single individual cannot be neurodiverse as it refers to a group (unless YOU choose to define yourself this way).

Neurodiversity is the recognition that human differences are inevitable. There is no inherently inferior or superior way of existing. Affirming practice is when we focus on providing the optimal conditions and environment for each and every child to thrive in their own unique way whilst cultivating community and understanding.

The language of neurodiversity is important because it attempts to offer a neutral description of human differences and recognises that not every can or wants to conform to the socially constructed idea of “normal”. There is no pressure for you to have all the language of neurodiversity figured out. Experimenting, engaging with and expanding your socially conscious language is what matters.

