

100+ Ways to Help Neurodivergent Children Learn

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A Note Before You Begin

A third-grade teacher once described a student she almost gave up on. He could not sit still, interrupted constantly, and seemed to resist every lesson she tried. One afternoon, frustrated and exhausted, she pulled him aside and asked him a simple question: 'What is the one thing in school that makes you feel smart?' He looked up and said, 'When you let me draw the answers.' The next day she handed him a sketchpad. By the end of the year he was her most engaged student.

That teacher did not have a diagnosis, a behavioral plan, or a specialist on speed dial. She had curiosity, flexibility, and the willingness to ask. This guide is built on that same spirit. Every strategy here is tried and true, drawn from three decades of working alongside educators, families, and neurodiverse learners across Brevard County and beyond.

Research shows that a significant percentage of school-age children have learning differences. In response to the needs expressed by teachers for strategies that work with these children, the following tips were compiled for Special Education Teachers — both experienced and newer educators. They are tried and true methods for reaching neurodivergent learners. Neurodivergent children may have difficulty with sustained attention, impulse control, and regulating activity levels. They may appear restless, fidget in their seats, play with objects, or find it hard to connect with peers. Like all children with learning differences, neurodivergent learners do best when their teachers understand their unique needs and work to individualize educational approaches to meet them.

This guide offers coachable suggestions and instructional practices you can use in the classroom, organized around four key pillars:

1. **Individualized Classroom Accommodations**
2. **Specific Behavior Management Strategies**
3. **Individualized Academic Instruction**
4. **Social-Emotional Wellbeing & Self-Concept**

To increase the successful implementation of these suggestions, consider these steps when developing an effective educational program for each student:

- Evaluate the child's individual needs through a multi-disciplinary team framework, including both academic and behavioral assessments and informal classroom observations.
- Select instructional practices that are age-appropriate and gain the cooperation of the child.
- Integrate appropriate practices within an individualized program, weaving them into whole-classroom activities.

Because no two neurodivergent children are alike, no single program, practice, or intervention will be best for all children. Always consult with specialists and colleagues regarding best practice methods.

Understanding the Neurodivergent Learner: A Framework for Educators

Before strategies come understanding. Dr. Ross Greene's landmark research offers teachers a transformative lens: Kids do well if they can. When a child is behaving explosively, refusing tasks, or melting down, it is not because they won't cooperate — it is because, in that moment, they genuinely can't. Something in their neurological wiring makes it difficult. This reframe changes everything about how you respond.

The Lagging Skills Framework

Explosive or dysregulated behavior in neurodiverse children is almost always the result of lagging skills, not bad character. These are the most common lagging skills teachers encounter:

- Flexibility and adaptability when plans change unexpectedly
- Frustration tolerance during difficult or unclear tasks
- In-the-moment problem solving under pressure
- Recognizing how their behavior affects others around them
- Managing transitions between activities or environments
- Handling unpredictability in the school day

The Three-Basket Approach

Greene organizes situations into three 'baskets' that help teachers prioritize where to invest their energy:

Basket A — Non-Negotiable

Safety issues only. Hold firm, stay calm, and do not negotiate. Keep this basket very small.

Basket B — Collaborate

Work with the child to find a solution you both can live with. This is where the most growth happens and where your energy belongs. Ask: 'What's getting in the way for you? Let's figure this out together.'

Basket C — Let It Go

Things that are not worth the battle right now. Strategically dropping low-stakes conflicts preserves your relationship and your energy for what matters.

Apply this before entering any difficult conversation with a neurodiverse student: Ask why before asking what consequence.

Section 1: Academic Instruction (Tips 1-38)

Neurodivergent learners often have difficulty achieving academically in school. Effective teachers constantly monitor the child and adapt individualized instruction to meet their needs.

General Instructional Principles

1. Review previous lessons before beginning new content. Remind children of the prior lesson and work through several review examples first.
2. Set clear learning expectations at the start of every lesson. State explicitly what students will learn during each session.
3. Set behavioral expectations alongside academic expectations — explain how students should behave during each type of activity.
4. State all needed materials at the outset rather than leaving children to figure this out on their own.
5. Explain additional resources available — for example, remind students which textbook page to consult when stuck.
6. Use audio-visual materials to present lessons. An overhead projector, digital display, or manipulatives on screen helps visual learners engage.
7. Invite students with a strong understanding to demonstrate their thinking aloud — this models metacognition for the class.
8. Ask probing questions and allow at least 15 seconds for the child to formulate an answer before prompting further. Slower processing time is normal and valid.
9. Perform ongoing evaluation — watch for visual or behavioral signs of frustration or disengagement and respond with additional support.
10. Help students self-correct mistakes by teaching them review habits rather than simply marking answers wrong.
11. Redirect students who lose focus calmly and briefly — a quiet reminder or learning partner check-in works better than public correction.
12. Monitor the noise level throughout and provide gentle corrective feedback as needed.

Transitions

13. Provide advance warning five to ten minutes before a lesson ends. Unpredictability is a primary trigger for neurodivergent learners.
14. Preview the next lesson before transitioning so students can mentally prepare for what is coming.
15. Check completed assignments during transitions to gauge comprehension and inform your next planning session.

Reading Comprehension

16. Establish a daily Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) time. Post the DEAR sign visually rather than announcing it verbally.
17. Use Follow-Along Reading (FAR) — have the child read silently while listening to the teacher or a peer read aloud.
18. Use Partner Reading Activities — pair the child with a stronger reader who takes turns reading and listening.
19. Assign storyboards — ask the child to illustrate the sequence of main events in a story.
20. Schedule storytelling sessions where the child retells a story they have read recently.
21. Use play-acting to allow the child to embody characters from a story they have read.
22. Keep a word bank or personal dictionary of new and challenging vocabulary words.
23. Use board and computer games to reinforce target reading skills and sight vocabulary.
24. Teach mnemonics for phonics and grammar rules that are difficult to remember.
25. Teach word families that illustrate particular phonetic concepts and patterns.

Writing

26. Establish and teach classroom-wide standards for acceptable written work so expectations are

explicit.

27. Teach the student to identify the major parts of a story: plot, characters, setting, conflict, and resolution.

28. Establish a classroom post office where students write, mail, and receive letters — a motivating real-world writing context.

29. Ask the child to close their eyes and visualize a paragraph read aloud before beginning to write.

30. Require proofreading before submission and provide a specific checklist of items to check.

31. Use partner spelling activities, color-coded letters, and manipulative cut-out letters to reinforce spelling.

Handwriting

32. Provide individual chalkboards or whiteboards for low-stakes handwriting practice.

33. Offer special writing paper with vertical lines to help the child learn to space letters and words.

34. Allow dictation — let the student record assignments verbally or dictate to a peer or teacher scribe.

Mathematics

35. Teach pattern recognition in computation — many neurodiverse learners excel at patterns when given the opportunity to see them.

36. Use partner math activities and peer quizzing to reinforce basic computation in a low-pressure way.

37. Provide real-life money skill opportunities — calculating change in the cafeteria, for example.

38. Use manipulatives, number lines, graph paper, and color-coded arithmetic symbols to support visual learners.

Section 2: Sensory Strategies (Tips 39-55)

Many neurodiverse learners — particularly those with autism and sensory processing differences — experience the classroom environment in ways that can be overwhelming, distracting, or physically uncomfortable. A sensory-aware classroom is not a luxury; it is a prerequisite for learning.

Understanding Sensory Needs

Children may be sensory-seeking (craving stimulation) or sensory-avoiding (overwhelmed by stimulation) — and some are both, depending on the sense. Learning which profile fits each child changes how you structure their day.

Environmental Adjustments

39. Use natural or warm lighting wherever possible. Fluorescent lights flicker at a frequency many neurodiverse children find physically distressing.

40. Offer cream-colored or pastel paper instead of bright white to reduce glare, particularly for children with visual sensitivity.

41. Create a designated quiet corner or calm-down space in the classroom — a beanbag, a canopy, or even a simple chair facing away from the class. This is a tool, not a punishment.

42. Be aware of background noise sensitivity. Some children are acutely distracted by hallway sounds, HVAC systems, or ambient classroom noise. Preferential seating or noise-canceling headphones can help.

43. Use soft, classical music during independent work to help sensory-seeking children regulate. Silence is not always the most productive state for neurodiverse learners.

Movement and Regulation Breaks

44. Build movement breaks into the daily schedule, particularly between seated academic tasks. Two to three minutes of intentional movement dramatically improves subsequent focus.

45. Allow standing desks, wobble stools, or floor seating as flexible options. Not every child learns

best sitting still in a chair.

46. Incorporate brain break activities — jumping jacks, stretching, or a brief walk — before high-demand cognitive tasks.

47. Teach children to recognize when they need a break and to ask for one appropriately. Self-advocacy is a skill that must be taught explicitly.

Fidget Tools and Sensory Supports

48. Provide appropriate fidget tools — stress balls, textured pencil grips, or elastic bands on chair legs — for children who need tactile input to focus. Set clear, consistent guidelines for their use.

49. Allow gum chewing or crunchy snacks during independent work for students with oral sensory needs, where school policy permits.

50. Use weighted lap pads or blankets for children who benefit from deep pressure input to help them regulate.

51. Permit movement seating — cushions or wobble stools — for children who cannot regulate when fully stationary.

Transition and Predictability Supports

52. Post a visual daily schedule in a consistent location. Refer to it explicitly at every transition.

53. Prepare the child ahead of time for any change in schedule, and continue reminding them until the change has occurred. Repetition is not nagging — it is scaffolding.

54. Use a visual timer (such as a Time Timer) so children can see time elapsing, which reduces anxiety about transitions.

55. Create a sensory toolkit collaboratively with each child and their family — a personalized set of tools they can access when overwhelmed.

Section 3: Behavior Management (Tips 56-75)

Neurodivergent learners may benefit from consistent, structured behavior management techniques that help them learn to manage their own behavior effectively. The goal is always self-regulation, not compliance for its own sake.

Understanding the Explosive Moment

When a child reaches the point of meltdown or explosive behavior, their prefrontal cortex — the part of the brain responsible for reasoning and decision-making — has effectively gone offline. This is a neurological event, not a choice. The most important thing a teacher can do during a meltdown is reduce demands, reduce language, and create safety. Reasoning, consequence-giving, and problem-solving must wait until the child is calm.

The Golden Rule of Meltdown Management

Never try to reason with a child in the middle of a meltdown. Use fewer words, a slower voice, and more space. Save the conversation for when they are calm.

Verbal Reinforcement

56. Use verbal praise frequently and specifically. 'Good job' is helpful; 'I noticed how carefully you organized your work today' is transformative.

57. Praise before the child is off task — catch them being good, rather than waiting for a problem to address.

58. Use brief, calm verbal reprimands directed at the behavior, not the child. 'That behavior is not okay' rather than 'You are being disrespectful.'

59. Selectively ignore low-level attention-seeking misbehavior. Consistent attention to minor

behaviors can reinforce them.

Collaborative Problem Solving

60. Solve problems with the child before the crisis hits, not during it. Find a calm moment and use curiosity: 'I've noticed you struggle when we transition to math. Help me understand what's happening for you.'

61. Ask why before assigning a consequence. Understanding the lagging skill behind a behavior leads to lasting change; consequences alone rarely do.

62. Work together to identify behavioral goals the child actually cares about. Cooperative goal-setting produces far higher buy-in.

63. Recognize the pattern in when explosions happen — time of day, subject, social context, sensory environment. Patterns reveal the lagging skill.

Behavioral Prompts and Visual Cues

64. Establish simple, non-intrusive visual cues to remind the child to remain on task — a hand signal, a visual card on the desk, or quiet proximity.

65. Use proximity control — move toward where the child is sitting. Your physical presence often regulates without a word.

66. Use hand signals to communicate privately with the child, avoiding public correction that can trigger shame.

67. Use classroom lights to prompt transitions or signal that the noise level is too high — a non-verbal cue for the whole class.

Structured Behavior Systems

68. Use behavioral contracts developed cooperatively with the child. Goals should be specific, achievable, and meaningful to them.

69. Implement a token economy system to motivate children toward the goals in their behavioral contract. Tangible, visual reward tracking works well for neurodiverse learners.

70. Enlist parent support so that reward systems can be reinforced at home, creating consistency across environments.

71. Avoid shame-based consequences. Label the behavior, never the person.

72. Promote risk-taking by creating a classroom culture where mistakes are part of learning, not cause for embarrassment.

Counseling and Additional Supports

73. Conduct brief, impromptu classroom problem-solving sessions where conflict arises — encouraging children to resolve problems through talk.

74. Use structured Social Skills classes in small groups of four to six students, using role-play and modeling to practice common social situations.

75. Know when to refer. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), coaching, and family therapy can provide the level of support that classroom strategies alone cannot achieve.

Recommended reading: 1-2-3 Magic by Thomas Phelan | The Explosive Child by Ross Greene

Section 4: Classroom Accommodations (Tips 76-88)

Many neurodivergent learners benefit from accommodations that reduce distractions and optimize the learning environment. These modifications help children stay on task and access instruction more effectively.

Physical Environment

76. Seat the child near the teacher's desk or the front of the room to allow for easy monitoring and quiet reinforcement.

77. Seat the child near a positive peer role model, creating natural opportunities for cooperative

learning.

78. Set a visible egg timer at the start of each lesson so students can independently monitor how much time remains.

79. Use classroom lights to prompt transitions — a non-verbal signal the whole class learns to respond to.

80. Use music to communicate the level of activity appropriate for each part of the day.

Learning Environment

81. Follow up oral directions with individual check-ins for children who need additional support processing auditory information.

82. Provide key directions in writing on the board so the child can refer back without having to ask or interrupt.

83. Highlight key words in worksheet instructions to direct the child's attention to what matters most.

84. Teach the child to use a pointer or bookmark to visually track written words on a page.

85. Use color-coded folders for different subjects to support organizational memory.

86. Teach note-taking and study skills explicitly — these do not develop automatically for many neurodiverse learners.

87. Prepare an uncluttered workspace before beginning any seat-work assignment.

88. Allow the use of learning tools — tape recorders, spell checkers, calculators, and laptops — as legitimate accommodations, not shortcuts.

Section 5: Social-Emotional Wellbeing & Self-Concept (Tips 89-107)

Students with learning differences are especially vulnerable to low self-concept. School experiences play a powerful and long-term role in a child's self-perception. The following strategies are drawn from both research and practice to help neurodiverse learners develop a positive identity as capable, valued learners.

Daily Emotional Check-In Practices

89. Begin each day with a brief morning check-in ritual — a simple visual scale, a color card, or a one-word check-in that gives you insight into each child's emotional state before instruction begins.

90. Use emotion identification charts and feeling vocabulary tools to help children name what they are experiencing before it escalates to behavior.

91. Teach children to recognize their own early warning signs of frustration — a tight chest, a clenched fist, a racing heart — and to pair these signals with a coping strategy.

92. Create a class culture where feelings are acknowledged, not dismissed. 'I can see you're frustrated. Let's figure this out together' is more powerful than 'Calm down.'

Building Positive Self-Concept

93. Catch the child being good and name it specifically. 'You waited your turn for three whole minutes today — that took real self-control.' Specificity makes praise meaningful.

94. Maintain high academic expectations. Research consistently shows that lowering expectations to protect self-esteem actually undermines it in the long run.

95. Help the child identify their strengths explicitly. Neurodiverse learners often have exceptional abilities in specific areas — creativity, pattern recognition, spatial reasoning, empathy. Name these out loud.

96. Remember: the child is more normal than different — and different does not mean defective. Communicate this belief through every interaction.

97. Mark positively — tick the correct answers and the good work before addressing errors. The first

thing a child's eyes go to matters enormously.

Peer Relationships and Anti-Bullying

98. Ensure that peers understand the nature of learning differences in age-appropriate ways, so the neurodiverse child is not mocked or bullied. Neurodiverse learners are disproportionately vulnerable to bullying.

99. Use structured peer buddy systems to build natural social connections for children who struggle with peer interaction.

100. Teach social skills explicitly and in small groups — four to six students — using role-play and scenario practice.

101. Schedule cooperative learning activities that position the neurodiverse child's strengths as an asset to the group.

Family Partnership

102. Arrange frequent parent contact — not just when problems arise. Celebrate successes with families. A positive phone call home changes a child's evening and the next morning's readiness to learn.

103. Be prepared to learn from parents. They are the leading experts on their child. Interest, involve, and collaborate with them as genuine partners.

104. Participate in or recommend parent effectiveness training programs, which research shows produce measurable improvement in children's self-concept when parents are the target of the intervention.

Additional Research-Backed Strategies

105. Use group-counseling structures that create space for neurodiverse learners to process shared experiences with peers.

106. Focus on coping strategies and self-advocacy skills for older students — the ability to articulate one's own needs is a life skill that serves them in every environment after school.

107. Encourage the student to ask questions and teach them how to do so. Curiosity is the bridge between where they are and where they can go.

A Final Word — For You, the Teacher

Teaching neurodiverse children is among the most demanding and most meaningful work in education. You are not just an instructor — you are often the first adult outside of their family to truly see them. That is a profound responsibility, and it takes a toll.

Please seek support through your administration, your colleagues, and your community. Consult with special educators and learning support organizations. Acknowledge what you do not know — it is a sign of expertise, not weakness. And remember: you cannot pour from an empty cup.

The child who is the hardest to reach is usually the one who needs you most. Thank you for showing up for them every day.

A Research Synthesis: Self-Concept and Learning Differences

The desire for a positive self-evaluation affects a person's feelings, actions, and aspirations throughout life. In the course of childhood and adolescence, school experiences play an important role in the development of self-perceptions and can have powerful and long-term effects on a child's self-esteem. Students with learning differences are especially vulnerable to low self-concept.

Research findings have linked learning differences with poor self-concept, and it is clear that these students often experience academic challenges that can drain self-esteem. We do know that students' self-concepts are related to their academic achievement. Students with lower levels of academic achievement tend to have lower self-concepts, while those with more positive self-perceptions tend to do better in school.

Types of Interventions

Researchers have studied classroom interventions designed to improve the self-concepts of neurodivergent learners, characterized by two approaches:

- The self-enhancement approach: designed to change students' self-perceptions through techniques like cognitive therapy, focusing on eliminating self-defeating thoughts and behaviors.
- The skill development approach: based on the assumption that building a child's skill in a particular academic area will improve their self-perceptions and expectations of future academic success.

Key Findings

A meta-analysis of 36 interventions demonstrated that school-based programs can lead to beneficial changes in the self-perceptions of neurodivergent learners, even when interventions lasted less than 12 weeks:

- Both skill development and self-enhancement approaches improved self-concept.
- Group-counseling techniques produced favorable outcomes for students of varying ages.
- Academic interventions were particularly beneficial to middle-school students, especially those emphasizing collaborative work and frequent feedback.
- One effective intervention targeted parents rather than students directly — children of parents who completed a nine-week parent effectiveness-training course showed measurable self-concept improvement.
- Young adolescents appear especially responsive to interventions designed to strengthen self-esteem.

Recommendations

The challenge for all teachers is to help children develop positive images of themselves as competent learners while maintaining high academic standards. Teachers must avoid lowering their academic expectations out of a desire to help students feel good: lowered expectations can, in the long run, subvert the very goal they are trying to achieve.

One way for teachers to have a positive impact on students' self-concept is to incorporate cooperative learning structures in which neurodivergent learners collaborate with peers and receive frequent feedback. Other promising approaches include group-counseling sessions and parent training programs.

Recommended Books for Educators

The following books are essential reading for anyone working with neurodiverse learners. Each one will deepen your understanding and sharpen your practice.

On Neurodiversity & the Brain

The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat — *Oliver Sacks*

A collection of profound case studies about patients with unusual neurological conditions. Sacks writes about his patients not as medical cases but as full human beings. Essential for understanding how differently the brain can experience the world.

NeuroTribes — *Steve Silberman*

A sweeping, compassionate history of autism that reframes neurodiversity as a natural part of human variation. Transformative reading for any educator or advocate.

Thinking in Pictures — *Temple Grandin*

Written by the world's most famous autistic scientist and advocate. Grandin describes how her mind works in vivid detail — essential for understanding the autism experience from the inside.

The Reason I Jump — *Naoki Higashida*

Written by a nonverbal Japanese teenager with autism. Answers the questions neurotypical people always wonder but never know how to ask. Deeply moving and transformative for classroom educators.

On ADHD

Driven to Distraction — *Edward Hallowell & John Ratey*

The classic, warm, and deeply human text on ADHD. Still considered one of the best books on the subject decades after publication.

On Behavior & Classroom Management

The Explosive Child — *Ross Greene*

A revolutionary framework for understanding children who struggle behaviorally. Greene's Collaborative Problem Solving model is essential reading for all teachers of neurodiverse children.

1-2-3 Magic — *Thomas Phelan*

A practical, clear behavior management system for children 2–12. Widely used by both educators and parents to reduce conflict and build positive behavior patterns.

The Explosive Child (also see:) Lost at School — *Ross Greene*

A companion to The Explosive Child, specifically written for educators. Provides practical tools for applying Collaborative Problem Solving in school settings.

On Therapy & Human Connection

The Gift of Therapy — *Irvin Yalom*

Wise, honest reflections on what actually helps people heal. Written for therapists but deeply meaningful for any educator who cares about the whole child.

Essential Websites & Online Resources

These websites offer free tools, research, and guidance for educators working with neurodiverse learners:

Neurodiversity & Autism

www.autismcommunitythrift.com The Autism Community Thrift Store — Gift for Educators, Inc. Your local hub for neurodiversity resources, community programs, and the Neurodiversity Teacher Appreciation Kit. 2006 Vernon Place, Downtown Melbourne, FL 32901.

www.autismspeaks.org Autism Speaks — Tools, resources, and research for educators, families, and individuals on the autism spectrum.

www.autismsociety.org Autism Society of America — Advocacy, education, information, and referral services for all affected by autism.

www.autismfl.org Autism Society of Florida — Florida-specific resources, provider directories, and family support.

www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism CDC Autism Resources — Research-based information on autism spectrum disorder for educators and families.

www.therapistndc.org Therapist Neurodiversity Collective — Directory of credentialed, neurodiversity-affirming therapists nationwide.

ADHD & Learning Differences

www.chadd.org CHADD (Children and Adults with ADHD) — The leading national nonprofit for ADHD education, advocacy, and support.

www.understood.org Understood.org — Nonprofit supporting families of children who learn and think differently, including ADHD and dyslexia.

www.additudemag.com ADDitude Magazine — Expert guidance for living and learning with ADHD and related conditions.

www.ldonline.org LD Online — Comprehensive resource on learning disabilities for educators, parents, and students.

For Educators

www.edutopia.org Edutopia — Research-based strategies and classroom inspiration for teachers of all student populations.

www.pbis.org PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports) — Evidence-based framework for whole-school behavior support.

www.iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu IRIS Center — Free, research-based online learning resources for educators serving students with disabilities.

Local Resources: Brevard County, Florida

The following local organizations, schools, and programs serve neurodiverse individuals and their families right here in Brevard County. We encourage educators to connect with these community partners.

Gift for Educators, Inc. | Autism Community Thrift Store

2006 Vernon Place, Downtown Melbourne, FL 32901

(561) 584-1489 | www.autismcommunitythrift.com

Dianne Zaccheo, MSW, LCSW | Family Therapist | Founder & Executive Director

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit with 30 years of expertise in ADHD, autism, and neurodiversity. The Autism Community Thrift Store funds community programs and provides neurodiversity resources for educators, families, and individuals across Brevard County. Home of the Neurodiversity Teacher Appreciation Kit.

Local Schools & Educational Programs

Brevard Public Schools — Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

Provides specialized educational support for students with disabilities across all Brevard County public schools, including autism programs, ADHD support, and the Family Liaison Project connecting families, educators, and services.

www.brevardschools.org

Puzzle Box Academy — Melbourne

A private school for students with autism and special needs, Pre-K through high school. Emphasizes individualized education, evidence-based practices, and early intervention. Three locations across Brevard County.

www.puzzleboxacademy.com

CIP Brevard — College Internship Program, Melbourne

Specializes in empowering young adults (college-age) with autism, ADHD, Asperger's, and learning differences. Provides academic support, life skills coaching, career preparation, and social skills development.

www.cipworldwide.org/cip-brevard

Able Academics

An ABA-based private school in Brevard County offering individualized academic and behavioral programming for students with autism and related exceptionalities.

Anchor Academic Center of Excellence (AACE)

A private school in Merritt Island serving students with learning differences, including autism and ADHD.

3700 N Courtenay Pkwy, Suite 102, Merritt Island, FL 32953

The Behavior Education Center

Located in Brevard County, offers ABA-based clinic and educational services for children with autism and behavioral challenges.

571 Haverty Court, Suite W, Rockledge, FL 32955

Community Organizations & Nonprofits

Brevard Autism Coalition

Creates opportunities for individuals with ASD in Brevard County. Forges alliances among medical professionals, educators, community champions, and parents. Hosts summer camps, fundraisers, and community events.

www.brevardautismcoalition.com

The Parker Foundation — Brevard County

Provides free, year-round inclusive and adaptive sports programs for youth, teens, and young adults of all abilities. Serves families touched by autism and special needs.

www.theparkerfoundation.com

Promise in Brevard

A supportive community providing housing, employment, and social opportunities for adults with disabilities in Brevard County.

Pediatrics in Brevard

Pediatric medical practice with locations across Brevard County offering child behavior resources, ADHD support, and developmental services.

www.pedsinbrevard.com

Child and Family Consultants

Offers psychological and educational assessments, therapy, and behavioral support for children and families in Brevard County.

www.childandfamilyconsultants.com

Nemours Children's Health — Brevard

Provides medical, behavioral, and developmental services for children and families, including ADHD and autism evaluations.

Clinical Support — Brevard County Providers

The following licensed professionals in Brevard County provide psychological evaluation, therapy,

and support for neurodiverse individuals:

- ✓ Stephen Nassar, Clinical Psychologist — Melbourne | 321-751-3636
- ✓ Bonnie Slade, Clinical Psychologist — Palm Bay | 321-729-0870
- ✓ Joel Shuy, Clinical Psychologist — Rockledge | 321-636-6884
- ✓ Parwati C. Maddali, Psychiatrist/Neurologist — Rockledge Psychiatric | 321-631-4222
- ✓ Florida Psychological Specialists — Satellite Beach | www.flpsychspecialists.com
- ✓ Psychology Today Brevard County Directory — www.psychologytoday.com (search Brevard County, FL)

Influential Educators & Thought Leaders in Neurodiversity

These educators, researchers, and advocates have shaped our understanding of neurodivergent learners. Their work directly informs the strategies in this guide.

Temple Grandin, Ph.D. — Professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University and the world's most prominent autistic advocate. Her work has transformed how we understand autism and sensory processing. Author of *Thinking in Pictures* and numerous other landmark texts.

Ross Greene, Ph.D. — Clinical psychologist and author of *The Explosive Child* and *Lost at School*. Creator of the Collaborative Problem Solving model, now used in schools and clinics worldwide. His core belief — 'kids do well if they can' — has revolutionized how educators approach behavioral challenges.

Temple Grandin & Kate Duffy — Co-authors of *Developing Talents: Careers for Individuals with Asperger Syndrome and High-Functioning Autism*. Groundbreaking work on identifying and nurturing strengths in neurodiverse learners.

Rick Lavoie, M.Ed. — Special education expert and creator of the landmark video *F.A.T. City* (Frustration, Anxiety, Tension), which gives educators and parents an immersive experience of what it feels like to have a learning disability. A must-watch for every educator.

Edward Hallowell, M.D. & John Ratey, M.D. — Psychiatrists and co-authors of *Driven to Distraction*, the definitive book on ADHD. Both are themselves diagnosed with ADHD, bringing lived experience to their clinical expertise. Dr. Hallowell founded the Hallowell ADHD Centers.

Paula Kluth, Ph.D. — Author, speaker, and inclusive education consultant. Her work focuses on supporting students with autism in inclusive classroom settings. Author of *'You're Going to Love This Kid!'* — a practical guide for inclusive educators.

Mel Levine, M.D. — Founder of All Kinds of Minds, a nonprofit dedicated to helping students who learn differently. His framework for understanding neurodevelopmental variation has informed special education practice for decades.

Judy Singer — Australian sociologist who coined the term 'neurodiversity' in the late 1990s. Her work established the philosophical foundation for viewing neurological differences as natural human variation rather than deficits requiring correction.

Steve Silberman — Science journalist and author of *NeuroTribes*, which traced the history of autism and the neurodiversity movement. His work has had a profound impact on public understanding of autism spectrum conditions.

Dianne Zaccheo, MSW, LCSW — Family Therapist, Founder and Executive Director of Gift for Educators, Inc. and the Autism Community Thrift Store in Melbourne, Florida. With 30 years of expertise in ADHD, autism, and neurodiversity, Dianne has dedicated her career to equipping educators, supporting families, and championing every neurodiverse learner in Brevard County and beyond. Creator of the Neurodiversity Teacher Appreciation Kit.

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