

# Supporting Neurodivergent Kiddos & Their Families

A Provider's quick guide for affirming, regulating, and partnering

## Purpose is to help providers:

- Work from a neurodiversity-affirming lens
- Replace deficit-based framing with strengths-based solutions
- Support regulation and communication
- Increase confidence in everyday interactions



*Neurodivergent kiddos are not broken. Their nervous systems process the world differently, and our role is to support regulation, communication, and participation.*

## What neurodivergence may look like:

- differences in communication
- sensory sensitivities
- regulation variability
- uneven skill profiles
- strengths alongside needs

## What supports neurodivergent kiddos:

- predictable routines
- sensory awareness
- flexible expectations
- relationship-based support
- honoring strengths and preferences

## Co-regulation in practice:

- adult calm matters
- behavior is communication
- regulation comes before instruction
- environment often needs adjusting

## Language shifts Instead of → Try this

- “challenging behavior” → “stress response”
- “noncompliant” → “overloaded”
- “needs fixing” → “needs support”

*When you're unsure remember: difference is not a deficit, regulation comes first, small adjustments matter, you don't need all the answers and you're trying your best.*



**Learn more at:**

[LiveOakMentalWellnessProject.com/  
supporting-children-with-complex-needs](https://LiveOakMentalWellnessProject.com/supporting-children-with-complex-needs)

# Supporting Neurodivergent Kiddos & Their Families

A Provider's quick guide for affirming, regulating, and partnering

## Cool Down in Hot Moments

*Pause. Okay.*

What's happening in my body right now?

Is my chest tight? Is my face hot?

Are my teeth clenched?

Do I feel like I'm about to snap?

That means I'm overwhelmed.

It makes me human.

What just happened?

Was it the noise?

The arguing?

The repetition?

The mess?

The feeling that nothing is working?

Of course I feel this way.

Anyone would.

But before I react, I slow down.

One slow breath in.

One slow breath out.

This child isn't trying to ruin my day.

They're struggling right now.

And if I'm honest... I am too.

**They don't need a perfect adult in this moment.**

**They need a steady one.**

**So I lower my voice.**

**I relax my shoulders.**

**I slow my words.**

"I can see you're having a hard time."

"I'm here."

"Let's figure this out."

If I need a minute, I can take one.

"I need a quick pause so I can help you better."

It's okay to reset.

I can't calm this child if I'm not even a little calm myself.

We'll get through this.

One breath at a time.

