

CREATING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION

THROUGH NEURODIVERSITY-AFFIRMING PRACTICES

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INTRODUCTIONS

Please share in the chat what brings you here today:

- ☐ I am here as a parent
- ☐ I am here as an educator
- ☐ I am here as a community member and stakeholder

And what your familiarity is with neurodiversity:

- ☐ This is a new term for me
- ☐ I have heard the term "neurodiversity," but I'm not sure what it means
- ☐ I know and can use the term "neurodiversity"
- ☐ I am familiar with the term "neurodiversity" and its derivatives, such as neurotypical, neurodivergent, neurominority, etc

NEURODIVERSITY

coined in the late 1990s by Judy Singer, an Autistic Australian sociologist

refers to the many variations that naturally exist within human brains; includes both typical and atypical neurologies

NEURODIVERGENT

coined in the early 2000s by
Neurodivergent K of Radical
Neurodivergence Speaking

includes all neurological variations
that diverge from "typical,"
including autism, ADHD, epilepsy,
mental illness, learning disabilities,
and others

NEUROTYPICAL

arose among the Autistic community shortly after "neurodiversity" became a common term

includes those neurologies that fall within the realm of "typical"

A SOCIETY THAT FULLY ACCEPTS, ACCOMMODATES, LOVES,
APPRECIATES, AND CELEBRATES OUR NEURODIVERGENT AND
DISABLED STUDENTS AND LOVED ONES

LET'S BEGIN WITH A BIT OF DATA...

- A 2020 multi-disciplinary, biopsychosocial review estimated 15–20% of the population is Neurodivergent (Doyle 2020)
- Multiple studies show disproportionate rates of Neurodivergence in prison populations (Snowling et al., 2000; Young et al., 2018; Fazel et al., 2008)
- As of 2018, 85% of college-educated autistic adults face unemployment
- There is well-documented evidence that Neurodivergent children have higher rates of co-occurring mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression (Lai et al., 2019; Tannock, 2009; Nalavany et al., 2018)
- Disabled children are more than 3 times more likely to be victims of abuse and neglect (Jones et al., 2012)
- Children begin categorizing visual differences—and forming unconscious biases—in infancy, as young as 3 months of age (Quinn et al., 2015). They show establish social bias by ages 4–5 (Perzyk et al., 2019).

INCLUSION IS THE EXCEPTION
AND NOT THE EXPECTATION.

A large, solid pink circle is centered on a light blue rectangular background. The entire composition is framed by a vibrant rainbow gradient border that transitions from blue at the top and bottom to red at the sides, with green, yellow, and orange in between.

INCLUSIVE
CULTURE
IS...



A Venn diagram consisting of two overlapping circles. The larger circle on the left is pink and contains the text 'INCLUSIVE CULTURE IS...'. The smaller circle on the right is orange and overlaps with the pink circle. The word 'Accessible' is written inside the orange circle. The entire diagram is set against a light blue background, which is itself centered on a multi-colored gradient background.

Accessible

INCLUSIVE
CULTURE
IS...

ACCESSIBLE: UNIVERSALLY DESIGNED TO PROMOTE ACCESS

- Accommodations available for all
- Identify and mitigate common barriers
 - Engagement supports
 - Visual supports
 - Communication equity
 - Sensory supports

Fidget Guidance



I can choose one fidget to use at a time.



The fidget stays with me (in my hands or set down beside me).



I am still listening and engaged when using a fidget.



I follow classroom expectations and teacher directions while using a fidget.



If I need to put the fidget down to complete my work, I can pick it back up whenever I need it.



If a fidget isn't enough to help me engage in learning, I can take a break and return when I am ready.



A Venn diagram with three overlapping circles. A large pink circle is at the bottom. An orange circle is at the top, overlapping the pink one. A teal circle is on the right, overlapping both the pink and orange ones. The text 'Accessible' is in the orange circle, 'Student-Centered' is in the teal circle, and 'INCLUSIVE CULTURE IS...' is in the central intersection of all three circles.

Accessible

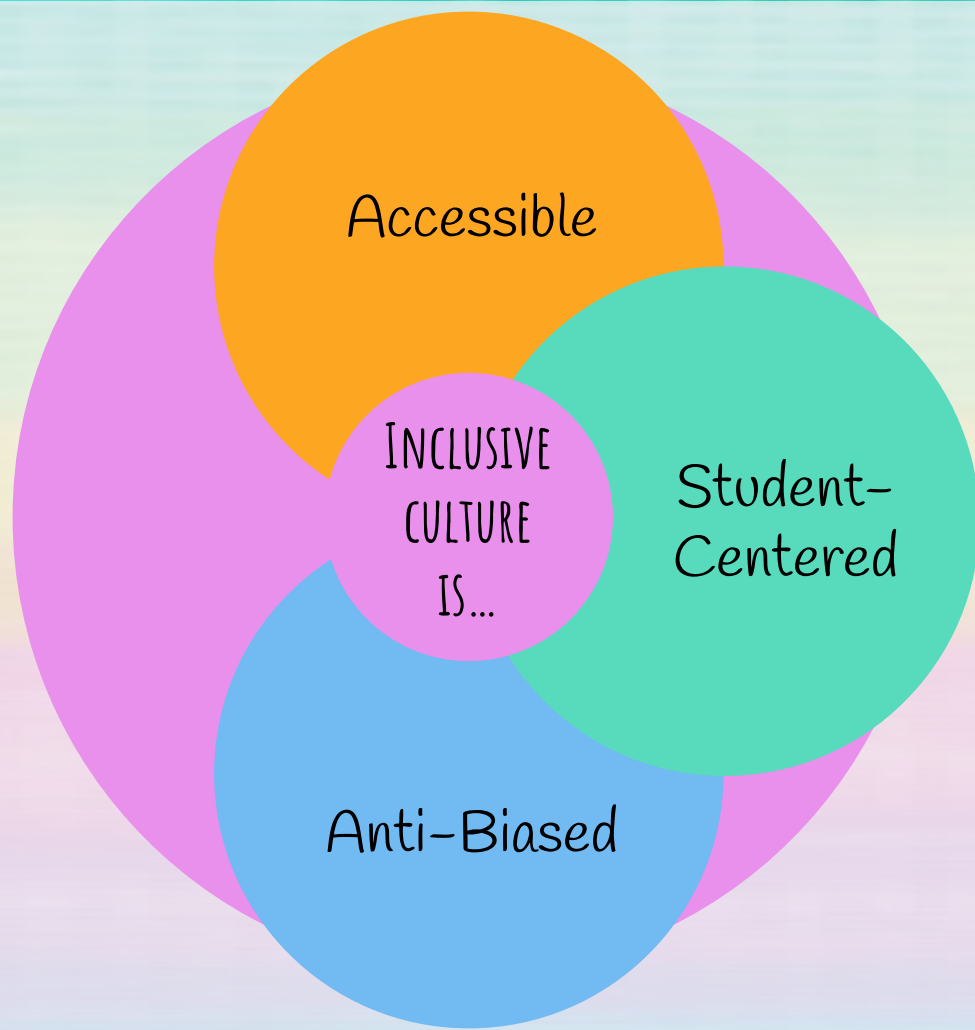
INCLUSIVE
CULTURE
IS...

Student-
Centered

STUDENT-CENTERED: SYSTEMS DESIGNED TO BE PERSONALIZED

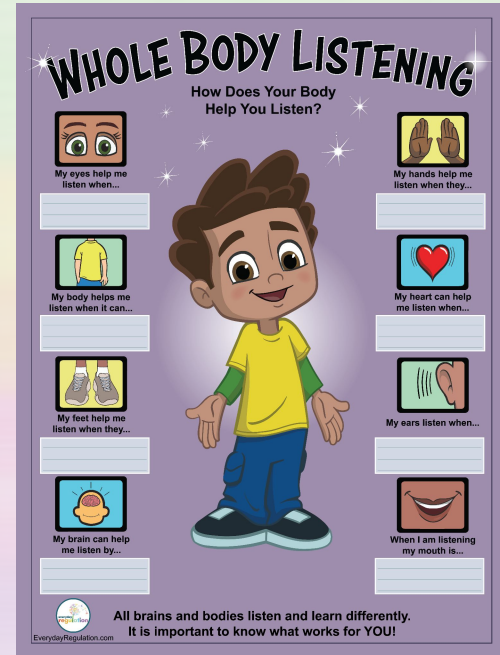
- Capitalize on strengths
- Driven by interests
- Prioritize student autonomy, voice, and choice
- Build intrinsic motivation

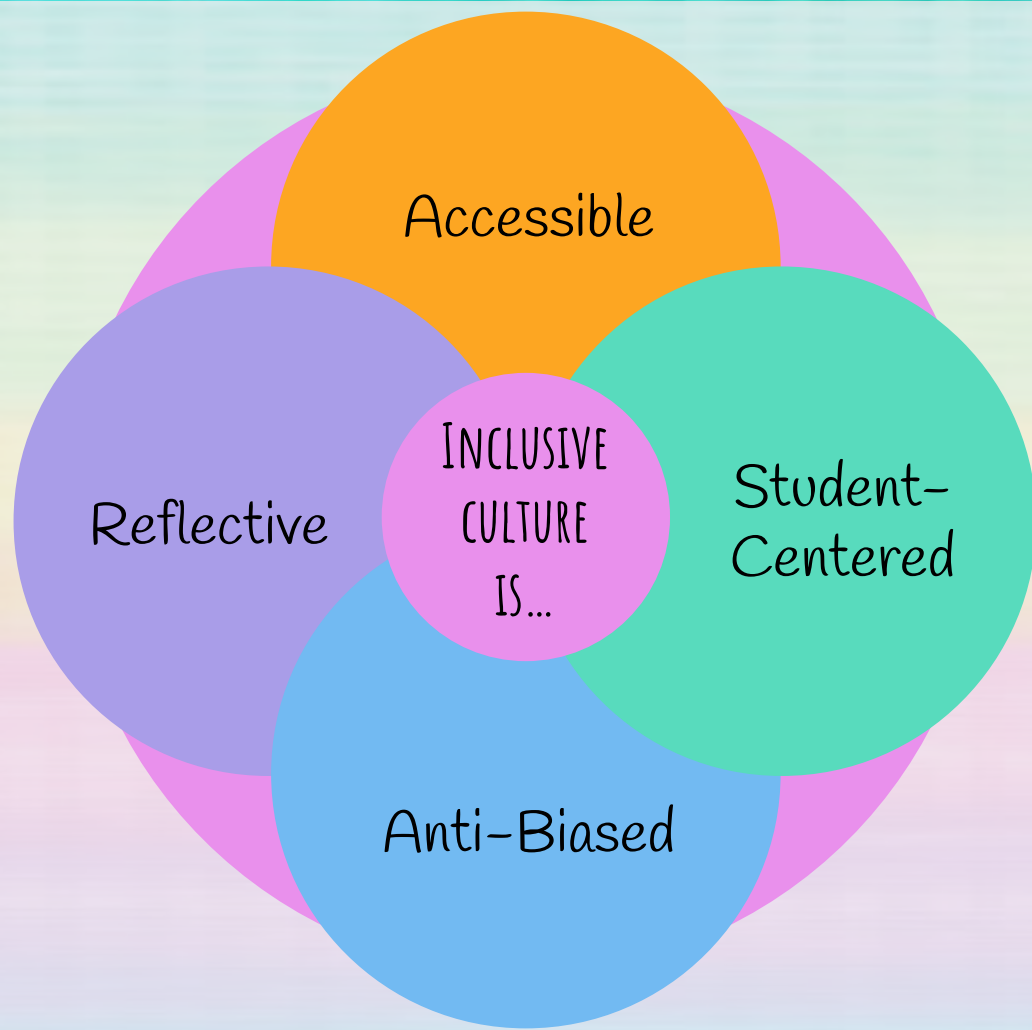




ANTI-BIASED: RECOGNIZING THAT NEURODIVERSITY IS THE RULE

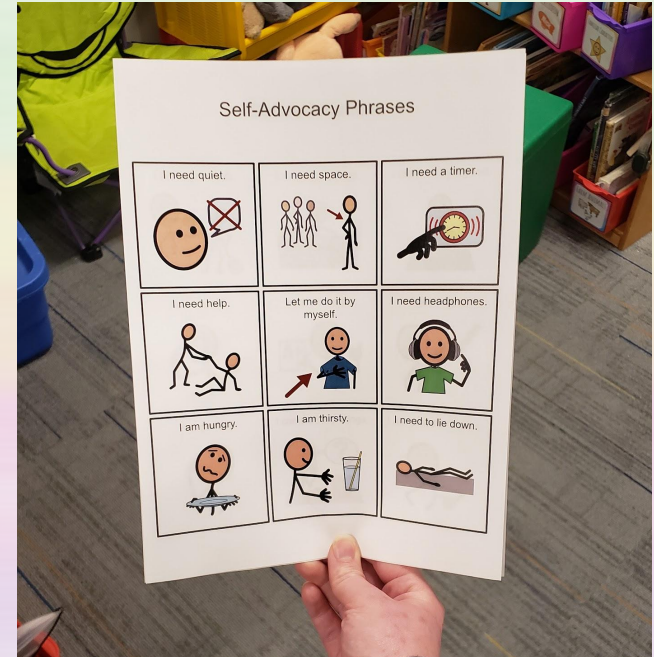
- Acknowledge and affirm neurodiversity
- Build systems with neurodiversity in mind
- Center systems on how to get needs met
- Avoid systems that police people's bodies, tones, or feelings
- Discuss and celebrate differences
- Avoid judgemental language
- Foster Neurodivergent community





REFLECTIVE: MODEL AND TEACH REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

- Teach self-reflection
- Encourage self-advocacy
- Integrate regulation instruction and practice
- Empower students with an understanding of their brains
- Driven by student-centered problem-solving

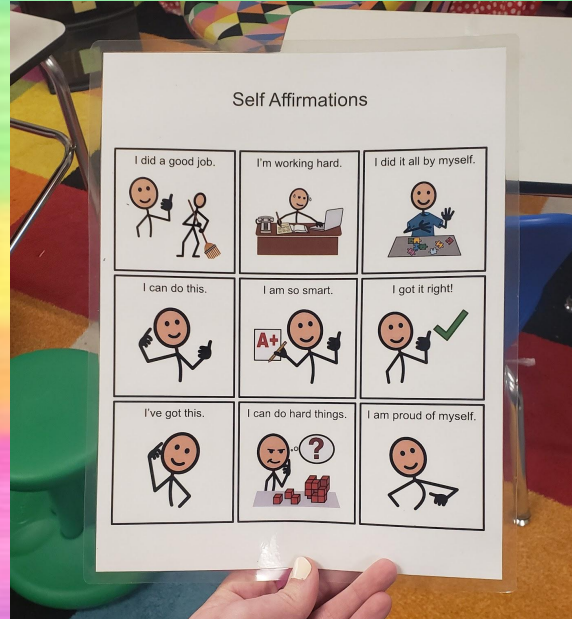
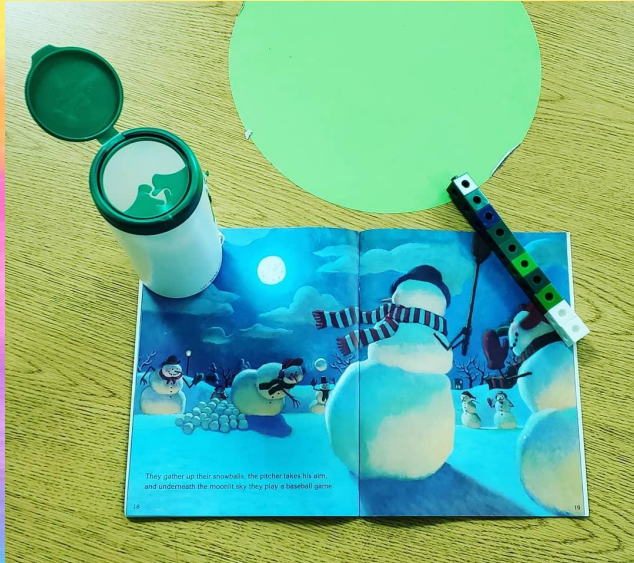


WE MAKE INCLUSION THE EXPECTATION
AND NOT THE EXCEPTION.

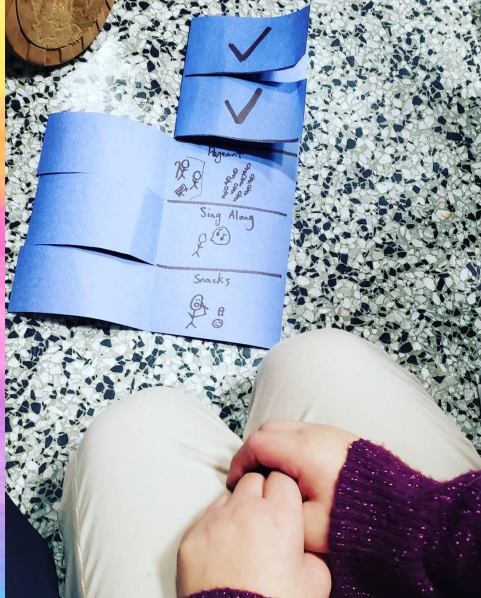
SCHOOL



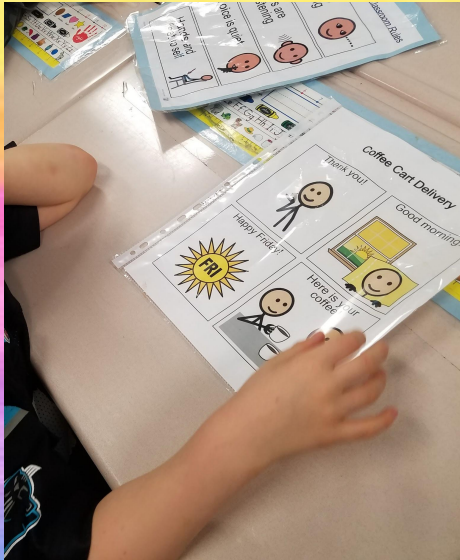
SCHOOL



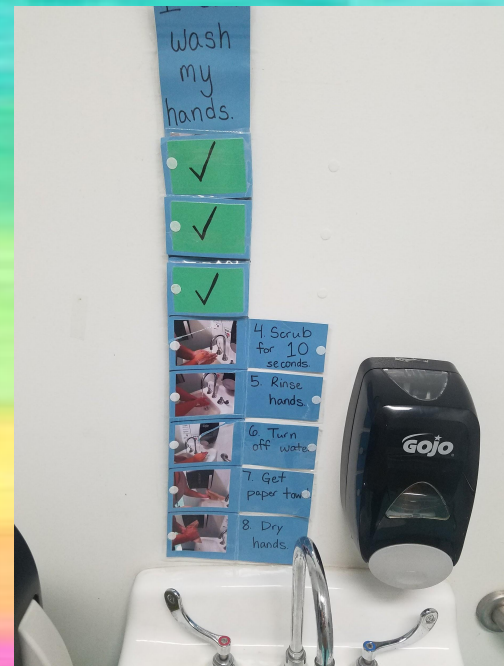
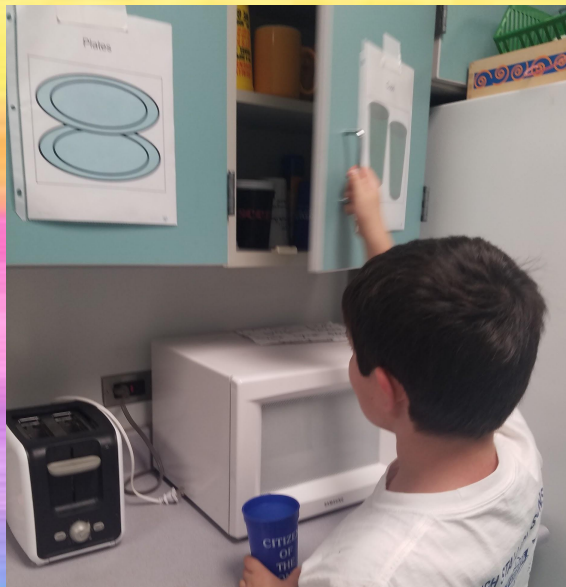
COMMUNITY



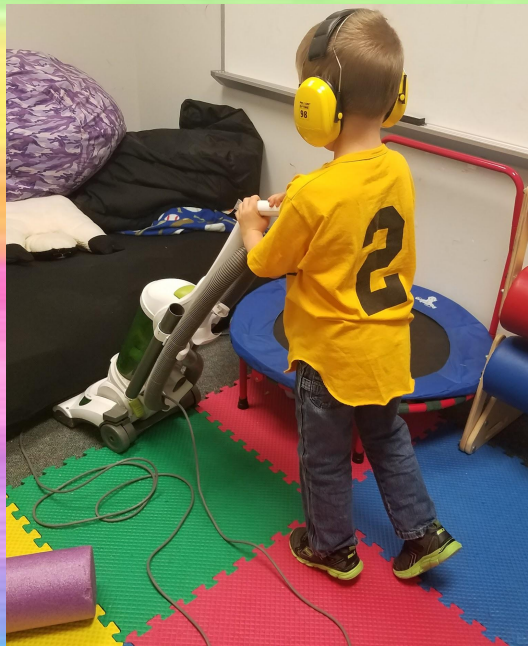
COMMUNITY



HOME



HOME



SHIFTS TO INCLUSIVE CULTURE

- ❑ "Don't stare!" → "Do you have a question?"
- ❑ "This won't work for this kid." → "How can I reduce the barriers they are facing?"
- ❑ "They just don't want to work." → "Why aren't they engaged in this activity?"
- ❑ "Why won't they just finish this task?" → "What is preventing them from completing this task?"
- ❑ "They refuse to follow directions." → "What makes following this specific direction difficult?"
- ❑ "They will never be able to do that independently." → "What supports do they need to experience success?"

QUESTIONS?

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