

# S5E14: Parenting Neurodivergent Kids: Prevention for Unique Minds

## Parent Guide – *Different Ways, Different Pace* (Ages 6–9)

This short video helps children understand that:

- Everyone learns in different ways
- Everyone learns at a different pace
- Big feelings are normal
- Asking for help is a smart skill
- School supports (accommodations) are normal and helpful

It is designed to be **positive, non-clinical, and strengths-based**.

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### Goals for Kids

After watching, children should be able to:

- Feel okay about learning differently
  - Respect that classmates may need different supports
  - Use simple words to ask for help
  - Understand that school helpers and tools are normal
  - Feel proud of their own learning style
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### Before You Watch

Keep it simple and relaxed.

You might say:

“This video is about how everyone learns in their own way.”



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## During the Video

Watch together if possible.

Notice moments where your child reacts:

- smiles
- points something out
- asks a question
- looks unsure

Those moments are great openings for conversation later.

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## After You Watch – Discussion Questions

Choose just a few that feel natural.

### About learning styles

- “Which kid was most like you?”
- “Do you like quiet or noise when you work?”
- “Do you like to go fast or take your time?”

### About feelings

- “What do your feelings do when something is hard?”
- “Where do you feel big feelings in your body?”

### About asking for help

- “Who do you ask for help at school?”
- “What could you say if you’re stuck?”

You can practice together:



“I’m stuck.”  
“This is hard.”  
“Can you help me, please?”

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## Talking About School Helpers (Accommodations)

Keep the language simple and positive.

You might say:

“At school, different kids get different helpers. Some kids get extra time. Some get quiet spaces. Some get reminders. That’s just how teachers help everyone learn.”

If your child receives supports, you can add:

“These helpers are tools, like glasses for eyes or training wheels for bikes.”

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## For Parents – The Bigger Picture

This video quietly reinforces the episode’s main message:

Kids thrive when they feel understood, supported, and safe to ask for help.

Children who:

- feel accepted
- know how to ask for support
- experience success in their own way

are more likely to:

- build confidence
- develop healthy coping skills
- stay connected to trusted adults

These are powerful long-term protective factors.

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# Simple At-Home Activities

## 1. Learning Style Chart

Draw three columns:

- “I learn best by...” (seeing / hearing / doing)
- “I like to go...” (fast / slow / in-between)
- “When it’s hard, I can...” (ask for help / take a break / try again)

Let your child fill it out.

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## 2. Practice Asking for Help

Role-play:

You: “You look stuck.”

Child: “Can you help me, please?”

Make it fun and low-pressure.

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## Closing Message for Parents

There is no single right way to learn.

Children don’t need to be fixed. They need to be understood.

When kids are taught that differences are normal and help is allowed, they grow into learners who are confident, resilient, and connected.

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## Parent Guide – *Different Ways, Different Pace* (Ages 10–13)



*(Can be used with or without the video)*

This version is designed for tweens who can reflect on their own learning, emotions, and school experience.

## Goals for Tweens

Children ages 10–13 should come away able to:

- Describe how they learn best
  - Understand that different pace  $\neq$  less capable
  - Identify when they need help
  - Know what school accommodations are and why they exist
  - Feel less shame about struggling
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## How to Start the Conversation

You might say:

“Everyone’s brain works differently. Some people need more time, some need quiet, some need movement. I’m curious what it’s like for you.”

Keep it neutral and curious, not corrective.

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## Discussion Questions

### About learning

- “What helps you focus best?”
- “What makes school harder for you?”
- “Do you feel rushed sometimes?”

### About pace

- “Are there classes where you feel behind? Or ahead?”
- “What do you wish teachers understood better about how you learn?”



## About feelings

- “What do you do when you feel overwhelmed?”
- “Who feels safe to talk to at school?”

## About help

- “What stops you from asking for help sometimes?”
- “What would make it easier?”

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## Explaining School Accommodations

You can say:

“Accommodations aren’t special treatment. They’re tools to make learning fair. Just like some kids wear glasses or need braces.”

Examples to explain:

- extra time on tests
- quiet spaces
- written instructions
- movement breaks
- check-ins with teachers

Ask:

“Do any of these sound like they would help you?”

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## Parent Notes (10–13)

This age group is very sensitive to:

- embarrassment
- comparison
- being seen as “behind”



Reinforce:

- pace is not intelligence
  - effort matters more than speed
  - asking for help is a skill
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## Parent Guide – *Different Ways, Different Pace* (Ages 13+)

*(Designed for teens – no video required)*

This version supports teens who are forming identity, independence, and self-judgment around school and performance.

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### Goals for Teens

Teens should be able to:

- articulate how their brain works
  - understand their own pace
  - separate self-worth from grades
  - recognize that needing help is normal
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### Conversation Starter

You might say:

“I don’t think school always measures intelligence very well. I’m more interested in how your brain actually works.”

Or:

“Everyone learns differently. I want to understand how it works for you.”



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## Discussion Questions

### Learning & pace

- “Where do you feel confident academically?”
- “Where do you feel frustrated?”
- “Do you feel pressure to move faster than you’re comfortable with?”

### Identity & comparison

- “Do you ever feel ‘less than’ because of how you learn?”
- “What do you think your strengths are that school doesn’t always show?”

### Support

- “What helps when things feel overwhelming?”
- “Who at school actually listens?”

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## Working With Your Child’s School (All Ages)

Many children benefit most when **parents lead the conversation with the school**. This removes pressure from kids and ensures support is consistent and appropriate.

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## When to Reach Out

Consider contacting the school if your child:

- regularly feels overwhelmed or anxious about school
- struggles to finish work on time
- has frequent meltdowns or shutdowns after school
- avoids school or complains of headaches/stomachaches
- says they feel “bad at school” or “not smart”



## Who to Contact

Start with one of the following:

- classroom teacher
- school counselor
- learning specialist
- assistant principal or principal

You do not need a diagnosis to begin this conversation.

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## What to Share in the Meeting

Focus on:

- what your child finds hard (transitions, noise, speed, instructions, tests, homework)
- what helps at home (quiet, breaks, visuals, reminders, extra time)
- your goal: helping your child learn without shame or constant stress

You can say:

“My child learns differently and I want to make sure school works for them too.”

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## Supports to Ask About

Schools may offer:

- extra time for assignments or tests
- quiet work spaces
- written or visual instructions
- movement or sensory breaks
- check-ins with a counselor or learning specialist
- reduced workload when appropriate

These may be informal supports, a 504 plan, or an IEP depending on your district.



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## **If You Meet Resistance**

You can say:

“We’re not asking for special treatment. We’re asking for what helps our child access learning.”

You are allowed to advocate.

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## **Closing Thought for Parents**

Children don’t outgrow their learning style.

They learn to understand it.

When parents partner with schools to support how a child’s brain works, kids gain confidence, emotional safety, and a better chance to thrive — academically and personally.

