

News and Notes

From Teacher Brianne

Autism is a neurotype, which means it is simply a different way of thinking and experiencing the world and processing those experiences. Just as there is a great range of variation in body size, skin color, hair color/type, voice pitch, personality, etc. among human beings, so there are differences in brains. It is important to understand autism and other neurotypes as differences and not as disorders to be lamented or changed. I have been learning a lot about what that means and have been changing my approach to the work I do with the children I serve.



Coming Up...

- **May 17–19** No school/sessions—Brienne's Personal days
- **May 29** No School/sessions—Memorial Day
- **June 9–22** Riser Meetings for kids going into kindergarten in the fall—will schedule individually with each family
- **June 16** Last day of classes/sessions for preschool students
- **June 22** Last day of school for Everett—progress reports distributed to families on this day

Special Education

Placement decisions: When there are different options for how and where special education services can be provided to a child, the IEP team must discuss the level of need for support the child requires, while keeping in consideration for the need to be included to the greatest extent possible in the general education setting when making that decision. This is a team decision and the parents' voice matter just as much as anyone else on the team. If the school makes a recommendation that you do not agree with, you are able to then seek due process, include mediation to challenge it.

Neurodiversity

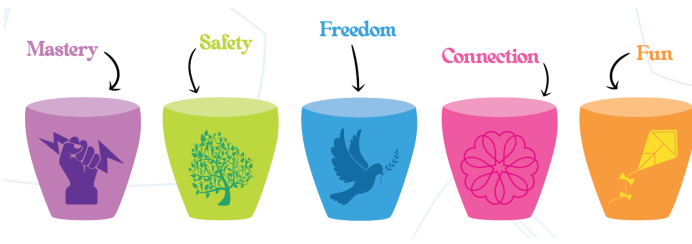
One way that I am evolving my practice with autistic children is by focusing more on self advocacy than on social skills training. Of course it is important to relate with other people to have meaningful and enriching relationships. However, each person has the right to do that in the way that feels the best to them. For example, many autistic advocates have shared how painful or difficult it is for them to make eye contact and how much it diminishes their ability to think due to the anxiety it provokes when they are obligated to maintain eye contact. Insisting on neurotypical social behaviors is called masking and can cause a lot of mental anguish and lead to burnout.

In The Community

The public libraries in our area offer not only story times for children and families, they also host the children's museum for Little Science Labs on a regular basis. They also regularly have high-interest events such as arts and crafts, science themes (insects, fossils, etc.), performances, etc. The Everett Library even has take-home kits for activities. Check out the events page on their websites: [Everett](#), [Sno-Isle](#)

Social Emotional Learning: Individual Needs

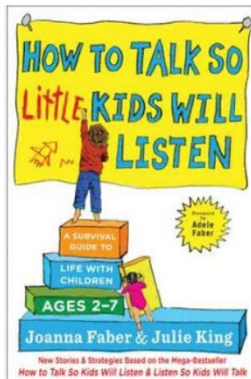
Beyond the basic needs of safety and connection as discussed in the brain model, each child has individual emotional needs based on their unique personality. When those needs are met, there is a greater sense of wellbeing, fulfillment and optimal development. There is an organization called Phoenix cups that describes these needs in a metaphor of cups and how each person has different sizes of cups for their needs of safety, connection, mastery, fun, and freedom. How full or empty each of these



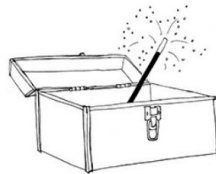
cups are may affect behavior in significant ways. It is important to know yourself as well as your child to be able to identify and fulfill those individual needs. You can learn more watching videos, listening to a podcast, reading a book or taking classes at: [Phoenix Cups](#)

What we worked on

TOOL #4: Give in Fantasy What You Cannot Give in Reality



I acknowledged his feelings by saying, "It's frustrating to have to clean up when you're not finished with what you're building." He just looked at me. So I tried giving him a wish for more time in fantasy. "I wish you had a hundred more hours to play." He responded, "I wish I had a hundred million billion more hours to play!" Then he started putting blocks away.



Coaching Notes

In light of supporting student autonomy and self advocacy, Focus on yes and no, but in reverse. Find more ways to say "Yes!" enthusiastically to their requests and commit to respecting their boundaries when they communicate a "no" to you. Examples:

-**Yes:** If a child asks for a toy at the store, instead of just saying no, you can take a photo of it or add it to the wish list for birthday gifts.

-**No:** Don't force anyone to give physical affection to anyone else for any reason. Always respect bodily autonomy.

Teacher Brianne's Recommendations

Book

Uniquely human by Barry Prizant



Podcast or Blog

[Uniquely human](#)

[Nueroclastic](#)

[ASAN](#)

Social Media

Neurodivergent lou, Nigh functioning Autism, Autistic typing



Instagram

