

The Neurodivergent Child

Diagnosed, in process, or just starting to notice. Whatever your child's wiring, or yours, you are welcome here.

Strengths and qualities the unique perspectives they bring to family life

- **Deep focus.** A passion held for months or years is how many of our children learn best.
- **Sharp observation.** They notice what others miss, from buzzing lights to shifts in tone.
- **Honesty and fairness.** Clear rules, kept promises, and real justice matter to them.
- **Pattern finding.** Numbers, music, schedules, how people behave.
- **Delight and silliness.** The joke repeated eleven times, the flapping hands when something is properly good.

Worth asking: What is my child brilliant at that nobody has thought to praise them for?

Sensory and social load the school day takes a toll on the nervous system

- **Sensory overload.** Fluorescent lights, loud halls, canteen smells, nowhere quiet.
- **Constant transitions.** Bells, subject switches, changes of plan with no warning.
- **Masking.** Holding it together all day. Meltdowns at home mean home is where they feel safe to let go.
- **Unwritten rules.** Working out hidden social expectations while also doing the work.
- **The long stretch.** The last hour of school, the walk home, when whatever was left has run out.

Behavior is communication. A child who shuts down, runs or melts down is telling us their day cost more than they had to spend.

What helps at home there is a lot we can do

- **A landing strip.** Twenty minutes after school with no questions or homework. Food, quiet, space.
- **Warning before change.** "Ten more minutes, then shoes."
- **One step at a time.** Single instructions instead of three-part requests.
- **Fewer words in hard moments.** Quiet presence and a calm voice beat reasoning.
- **Let the interest run.** Time in a deep interest is often the fastest recovery available.
- **Shared vocabulary.** Color zones on the fridge for the whole family: blue tired, green ready, yellow rising, red overwhelmed.

Worth asking: Which part of the day costs my child the most? What helps them recharge?

Working with the school

- **Send a short email first.** One topic, so the teacher arrives prepared. The gesprek is ten minutes and stays ten minutes.
- **Ask for the IB'er** (intern begeleider) to be involved when support needs coordinating.
- **Explore small tools.** Headphones, a visual schedule, movement breaks, a quiet spot. What is possible depends on the teacher and the school.
- **Ask what is already in place.** Much gets arranged casually, through the app or between teacher and child.

Parent checklist

What my child is brilliant at:

The part of the day that costs them most:

What helps them recharge:

One small thing to try this week:

Something our family needs support with:

Quick tips: give your child control where you can

- Wearing their own choice of clothes.
- Choosing the dinner menu.
- Deciding for themselves whether to attend a party.
- Time in a quiet, safe space.
- Being ahead in some areas and needing extra time in others.
- Having a few calming exercises that are theirs to use.

Pull up a chair. We see you.

Whatever you came with, it's welcome at our table. If things feel like too much, the huisarts or the POH-GGZ is the first call.