

Perinatal and Early Childhood
Mental Health Network
Training and Technical Assistance Center



**The 4 A's of Autism as a Guide for Promoting Success
for Autistic, ADHD, and Otherwise Neurodivergent
Individuals Through the Lifespan**

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Who We Are

The New York City Perinatal and Early Childhood Mental Health Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC), is funded by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH).

TTAC is a partnership between the New York Center for Child Development (NYCCD) and the McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research

- **New York Center for Child Development** has been a major provider of early childhood mental health services in New York with expertise in informing policy and supporting the field of Early Childhood Mental Health through training and direct practice
- **NYU McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research** houses the Community and Managed Care Technical Assistance Centers (CTAC & MCTAC) and the Center for Workforce Excellence (CWE). These TA centers offer clinic, business, and system transformation supports statewide to all behavioral healthcare providers across NYS.

TTAC is tasked with building capacity and competencies of mental health professionals and early childhood professionals in family serving systems to identify and address the social-emotional needs of young children and their families.



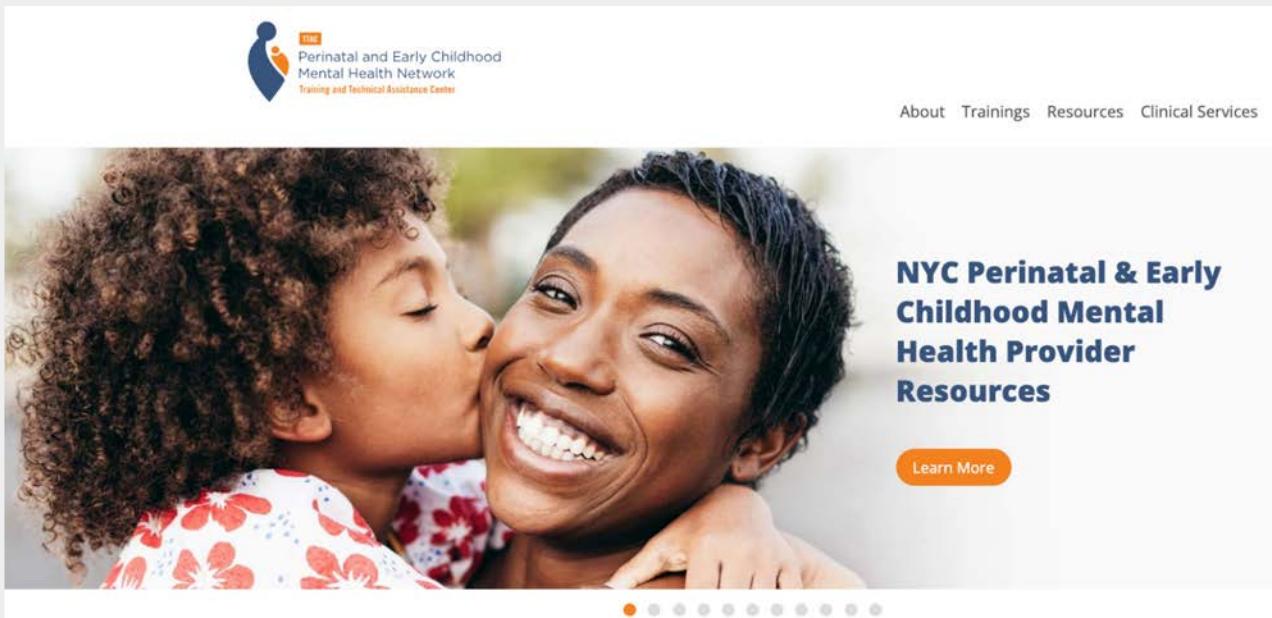
TTAC
Perinatal and Early Childhood
Mental Health Network
Training and Technical Assistance Center

NEW YORK
CENTER FOR CHILD
DEVELOPMENT



McSILVER INSTITUTE
FOR POVERTY POLICY AND RESEARCH
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Visit the TTAC Website



The screenshot shows the TTAC website homepage. At the top left is the TTAC logo: a stylized blue and orange figure. To its right, the text reads "Perinatal and Early Childhood Mental Health Network" and "Training and Technical Assistance Center". The top right navigation bar includes links for "About", "Trainings", "Resources", and "Clinical Services". Below the navigation is a large, warm photograph of a woman with short dark hair smiling broadly while a young girl with curly hair kisses her cheek. To the right of the photo, the text "NYC Perinatal & Early Childhood Mental Health Provider Resources" is displayed in blue, with a "Learn More" button below it. A horizontal navigation bar with several dots is visible at the bottom of the page.

Explore all the provider resources at ttacny.org

A Variety of Features:

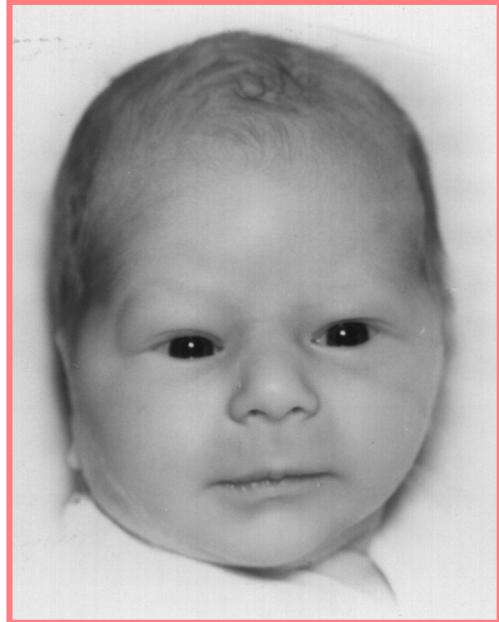
- View upcoming and archived content, trainings, and resources on the **Trainings page**.
 - Access videos, slides, and presenter information
- Contact the TTAC team by clicking on **Ask TTAC** and filling out our **Contact Us form**
- And more!

Have questions or need assistance? Please contact us at ttac.info@nyu.edu and we'll be happy to assist you



04 February 2026

The 4 A's of Autism



B B B B B B

ACTION 

APPRECIATION 

ACCEPTANCE 

AWARENESS 

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Autism Wheel

Differences in...

Communication

Masking

Eye Contact

Posture

Social Interaction

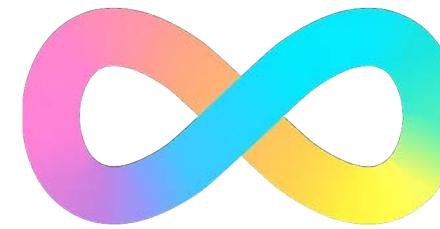
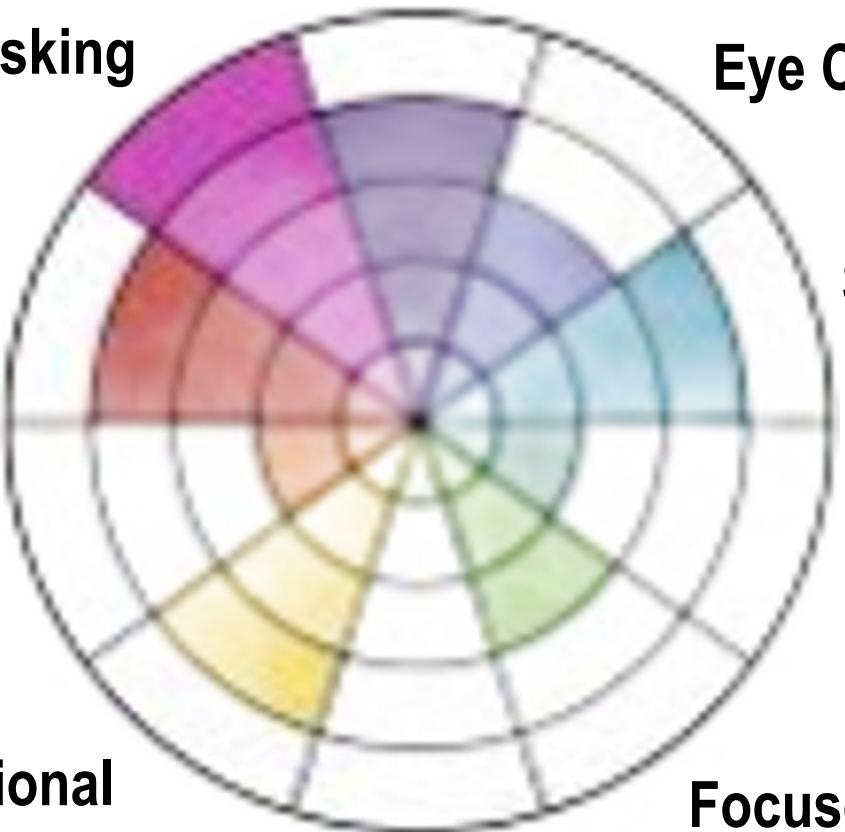
Anxiety

Sensory

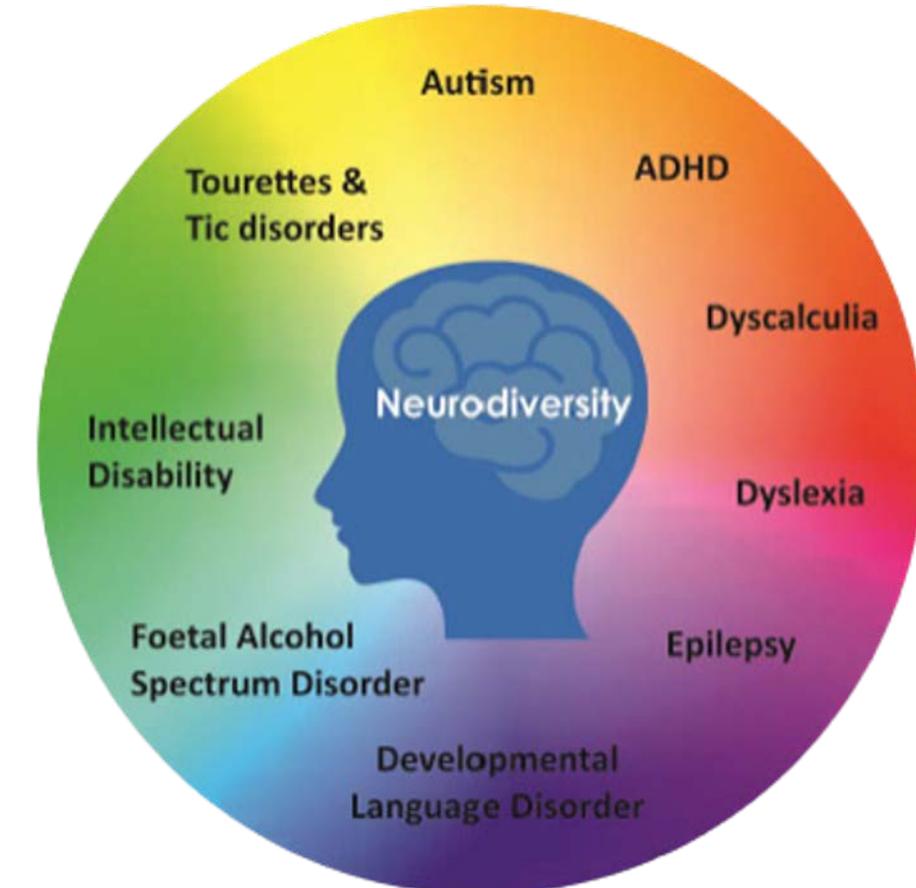
Emotional
Regulation

Focused Interests

Digestion



Neurodivergence



WHAT IS
NEURO diversity?
diverse?
divergent?

NEURO

diversity?

the natural biological difference amongst human minds from neurodivergent to neurotypical individuals

diverse?

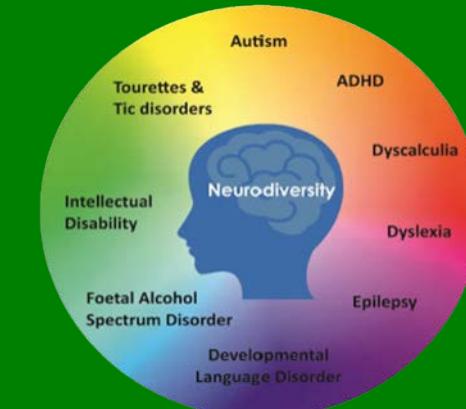
describes a group of individuals representing the spectrum of neurodiversity and neurotypical individuals

divergent?

umbrella term for individuals who have a mind diverging from what is typical.

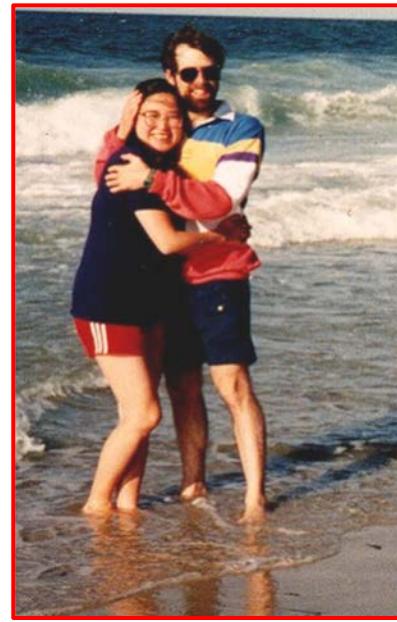
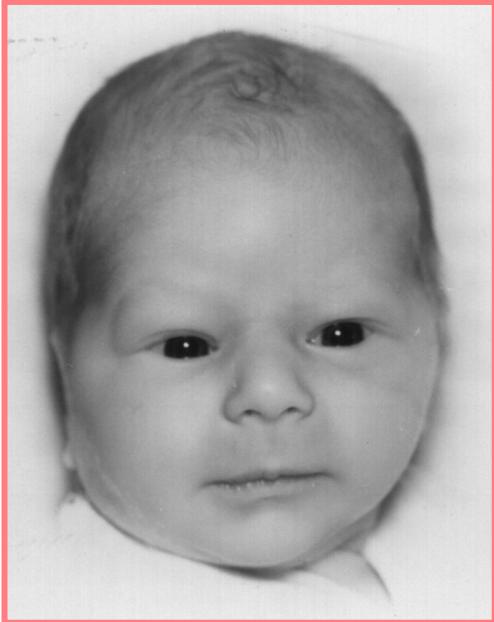
typical?

a mind falling within societal standards of "normal".



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The 4 A's of Autism



B B B B B B B

What Actions will you take to climb the stairs of Awareness, Acceptance, and Appreciation of Autistic and other Neurodivergent people in your lives?

ACTION 

APPRECIATION 

ACCEPTANCE 

AWARENESS 

What is known about parenting by autistic individuals?

Literature Review

- While there is an abundance of research on the experience of parents of autistic children, there is little literature on the experiences of parents who are autistic
- Much of what is available are accounts by autistic parents who were diagnosed later in their lives, often after they have had a child who received an autism diagnosis

Strengths

- Reliance and preference for structure and routines is an asset in raising young children
- Obsessive qualities result in getting all that their children need
- Logic based responses to their children instead of emotional responses
- When the child is autistic, the parent's appreciation and acceptance of neurological differences results in less pressure on the child to be normal or to conform ☺ less stress for the child
- Parents find themselves capable of growth, adaptation, self-awareness, intentional compensation, and parental satisfaction despite the lack of appropriate parenting resources developed specifically for autistic parents

Challenges

- Social skills and social communication – being a parent is an inherently social undertaking
- Sensory experiences – sensory overload from the noise, mess and chaos of children and family life
- Executive functioning
- Emotion regulation and managing stress
- Being flexible
- Mental health
- Social situations and demands
- Advocating for child
- Gendered burden of parenting on women and intersectionality of gender and disability

SOCIAL JUSTICE

- Autistic parents are left out of mainstream parenting support groups, online parenting resources, and even within autism-related services (parenting is rarely mentioned in discussions of independent living)
- Supports for autistic parents are mostly absent from the landscape
- Feel judged or misunderstood by professionals due to ableism or parents' social communication difficulties or both
- Fears of being perceived as incompetent in their parenting role

Recommendations

- Professional education to increase understanding of neurodivergent parents and to reduce judgment and stigma
- Practical help and supports – respite, mentoring, structured coaching, help communicating with children's teachers and health professionals, help with day to day demands like cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping, transportation
- Parenting support – i.e., home visiting programs, playgroups
- Connection to other autistic parents
- Greater representation of autistic parents in mainstream parenting resources to promote knowledge and acceptance of neurodiversity and to debunk discrimination

Resources

- Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network (AWN)
- Cynthia Kim, author of multiple books and articles; Website: Musings of an Aspie
- Grant, L. (2015) From Here to Maternity: Pregnancy and Motherhood on the Autism Spectrum. Jessica Kingsley Publisher
- Pohl, A.L., Crockford, S.K., Blakemore, M., Allison, C., & Baron-Cohen, S. (2020). A comparative study of autistic and non-autistic women's experience of motherhood. *Molecular Autism*, 11, 3 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13229-019-0304-2>

Needs of autistic individuals during pregnancy and childbirth:

- Rogers, C., Lepherd, L., Ganguly, R., & Jacob-Rogers, S. (2017); Perinatal issues for high functioning women with autism spectrum disorder. *Women and Birth: Journal of the Australian College of Midwives*, 30(2), e89-e95.
- Suplee, P., Gardner, M., Bloch, J., & Lecks, K. (2014). Childbearing experiences of women with asperger syndrome. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*, 43(S1), S76.