



The SNOW Approach:



Responding with Intention to Questions About Neurodiversity and Disability

Support curiosity - Normalize difference - Offer a shared experience - Wonder with them

Kids notice differences—just like us! When children ask questions about difference, we have a choice: we can shut the conversation down or open it up. Instead of pressuring ourselves to "have all the answers," we can embrace these moments as chances to model compassionate curiosity and celebrate what makes us different, using the **S.N.O.W. Approach**, which is grounded in one core message: *Disabilities and neurodivergence—like differences in skin color, body shape and size, gender identity, language, and ethnicity—are normal and important parts of our communities.*

Support curiosity: Acknowledge kids' questions and observations. Before you do, take a moment to check in with how your body and mind are feeling: be mindful of internalized discomfort to ensure your response doesn't discourage noticing or stigmatize talking about disability.

- *"That's a wheelchair, he uses that to move around. Let's see if he wants to play."*
- *"Yes, that kid is wearing ear defenders to protect their ears from loud noises. I like the blue color."*

Normalize difference: Name the differences at play and offer age-appropriate context (see "The Differences Iceberg" for a kid-friendly framework).

- *"Looks like he's having a tough time. Remember the difference iceberg? What we see is just part of what's going on for them. His grown-up can help him figure it out."*
- *"Some people use their voice to talk and others use a tablet. It's cool that there are so many different ways to communicate."*

Offer a shared experience: Cultivate empathy and connection in our kids by helping them identify and reflect on common experiences across difference.

- *"Have you ever had a tough time when you're out at the playground? I have..."*
- *"What do you like to do that makes your body feel good?"*

Wonder with them: We often don't know what's below the surface—and that's okay. Modeling "I wonder" helps kids grow more accustomed to sitting with uncertainty and questioning barriers to access in the world around them.

- *"It seems like the crowds might be overwhelming for some people. I wonder why there's not a sensory-friendly area?"*
- *"I wonder if we can find a different way to play that works for everyone?"*

*This framework is informed by the lived experiences of disability self-advocates.
Accessible here: togetherwebloom.org/resources.*