



**CALM, CONNECTED,
CONFIDENT IN OSHC**

Reflection Toolkit



Special thanks to Neurominded



“We envision a country where every individual, across stages of life and diverse settings, is supported in neurodiversity-affirming environments that embrace individuality and set everyone up for success.

Our goal is to equip individuals and teams with the knowledge and skills to create neurodiversity-affirming inclusive spaces where everyone can thrive.

By building confidence and competence, we aim to see all neurodivergent people thriving and reaching their full potential.”

Find out more about Neurominded [here](#).

Neuro-inclusive Vacation Care: Plan ahead, Thrive together!

Inclusion starts with *what we believe*.

It isn't just a checklist or a set of resources, but a belief system, a mindset. It's the lens we use when we think and talk about disability and neurodivergence.

No specific space, strategy or resource will truly work unless it's embedded in a team culture that genuinely values diversity and equality.

Neuro-inclusive programs are built on a *strengths-based approach*, grounded in social and human rights models of disability.

This is how we ensure all children and young people can belong, be supported, and thrive as their authentic selves.

Effective inclusion is much easier to achieve with a *proactive approach*.

When educators work together to plan and prepare flexible programs and spaces in advance, Vacation Care can truly support and embrace all kinds of minds!

Practical Tips for a Calmer, More Connected Vacation Care

01 Know the child behind a profile or diagnosis

Gather meaningful information in advance to set everyone up for success.

Record children's unique strengths, interests, sensory preferences, and triggers.

Ask families "What helps your child feel safe and successful? What already works at school and other settings?"

Use information to plan proactive supports such as visual aids, sensory tools, structured spaces, and interest-based experiences.

Create a quick "About Me" resource

A one-page sheet per child, easily accessible and shared with all staff.

See pages 6-7 to access a sample 'My Profile' from Neurominded.

Example:

My Profile

NAME: _____ Age: _____ Room: _____

Things I love and enjoy		
Toys and items	Actions	People
Activities	Places and areas	Times of the day

Things I am good at

Things that are important to me

Things I don't like or that upset me		
Things that help when I'm upset		
Things you can do to support me		
Toileting	Mealtimes	Rest times/Breaks
Transitions	Group sessions	Social interactions

02 Support communication and independence



Ensure every child has a means to communicate. *Spoken language is **not the only way** for children to express their wants and needs.*

Embed visual supports into daily practice. It's a universal language that benefits all.



Support verbal instructions with visual cues such as *gestures, movement, modelling or drawing.*

Clarify expectations, options and choices in a concrete or visible way, such as *visual timers, colour coding, flow charts or choice boards.*

Support independence and a sense of agency for all children. *Value diverse ways of being, and encourage self-advocacy and respect for diverse preferences and support needs.*

03 Provide predictability and flexibility

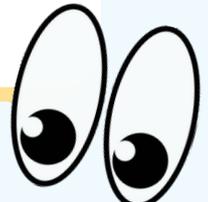
Routines reduce anxiety, but *flexibility keeps it fun* and allows responsiveness.

Provide a *visual holiday program or calendar* for children to refer to, also at home.

Display a daily *visual schedule* with “what’s next” clearly shown, and include options or choices where applicable.

Preview excursions or *prepare children in advance* for outings and visitors using videos, photos, or visual stories.

Reflect on educator expectations. *“Are we holding all children up to neuronormative standards?”*



Keep a few ‘*safe plan B*’ options ready for unexpected shifts or sensory overload.

04 Create sensory-smart environments



Complete an environmental audit to review spaces for sensory elements such as *lighting, echo, clutter, crowdedness, and other possible triggers.*

Provide and introduce sensory tools to all children – normalise the use of ear defenders, fidgets, movement seats, hats or sunglasses, etc. as sensory solutions and self-care practices.



Label stations clearly and make it accessible and meaningful. Offer choice-based regulation that include movement, heavy work, calm relaxation, and creativity.

Model and guide children in using regulation spaces, tools, and experiences such as paced breathing or mindfulness.

Implement regulation stations. Not all regulation looks still and silent. Think beyond a Quiet Corner.

05 Respond helpfully to unexpected behaviours

All behaviour is communication. It's children's bodies and brains telling us there's a mismatch between their needs and the environment; between their current skills & what's expected.

*Be curious and kind.
"Children do well if they can"
– Dr Ross Greene*

*Ask yourself:
What's happening for the child?
What might be standing in their way to do well in this very moment?*

Think inclusion through design – set everyone up for success, e.g., allocate smaller groups for certain activities, quiet starts to big days, or daily heavy work activities for proactive group regulation.

Use visual cues and nonverbal communication when spoken language may feel too overwhelming.

When things escalate, follow Bruce Perry's 3 Rs:

- 1. Regulate** *(calm the body, thinks sensory)*
- 2. Relate** *(validate feelings, connect)*
- 3. Reason** *(offer choices, reflect)*



Final Tip

End each day with quick reflection:

What went well, what have we learned about the children, and what can we do differently tomorrow?

My Profile

NAME: _____ Age: _____ Room: _____

Things I love and enjoy

Toys and items	Actions	People
Activities	Places and areas	Times of the day

Things I am good at

Blank space for writing about things I am good at.

Things that are important to me

Blank space for writing about things that are important to me.

Things I don't like or that upset me

Blank space for writing things that don't like or that upset me.

Things that help when I'm upset

Blank space for writing things that help when I'm upset.

Things you can do to support me

Toileting	Mealtimes	Rest times/Breaks
Transitions	Group sessions	Social interactions