

Supporting Neurodiverse Children

CCCNZ Summit 2025 – Kim McCall

Kim McCall

- Pepeha
- I'm a mum to Zera 16 and Zak 15
- I've been teaching for 35 years and am currently teaching students with Special Educational Needs
- I have taught in Early Childhood, Primary, Intermediate, High School and University
- I've taught in New Zealand, Indonesia, USA, Philippines and the UK

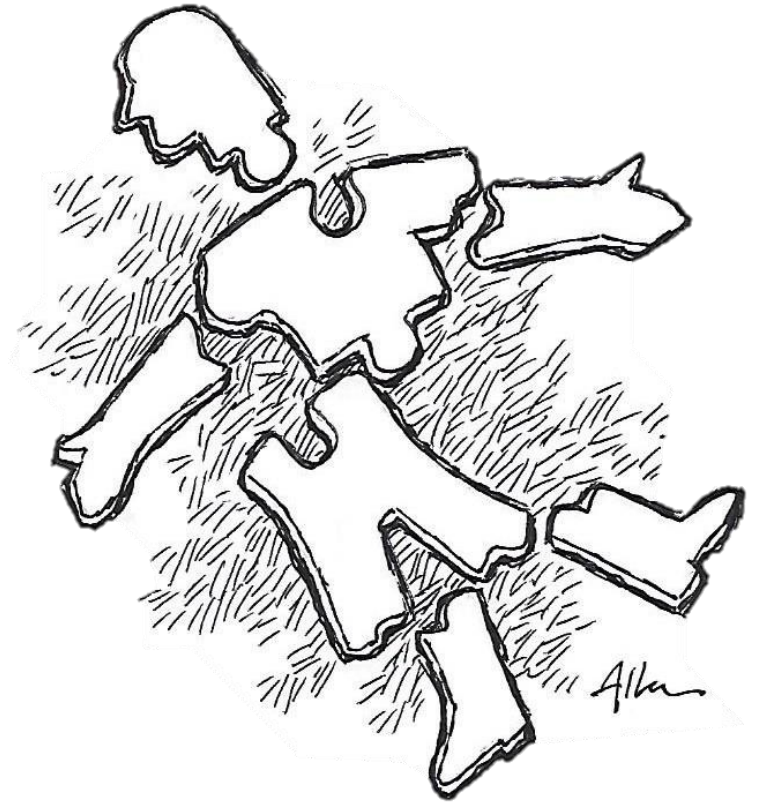


Disclaimer

- Medical versus social model
- Information is generalised and just a snapshot
- Building relationships is the key to making appropriate accommodations
- You will have an opportunity today to experience what each diagnosis may feel like

**Just as a body, though one,
has many parts, but all its
many parts form one body, so
it is with Christ.**

1 Corinthians 12:12



Dyslexia

According to speld.org.nz,

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that makes it far harder to learn to read, write, or do number work.

What does it look like?

When someone looks at a page the words are not spaced correctly.

Some people who have dyslexia see words all crushed together when they try to read.

What does it look like?

Some people who have dyslexia say that the words on a page look shadowed or doubled when they try to read.

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Dyslexia

Characteristics

Difficulty reading black text on a white background.

Copying from a board is challenging.

Slower processing speed.

Poor memory.

Strategies

Change background on the screen.
Copy worksheets onto pastel yellow or pastel blue paper.

Limit writing tasks. Avoid asking them to copy.

Allow extra time to answer questions.

Avoid memorising verses. Allow reading instead.

Dyspraxia

According to speld.org.nz,

Dyspraxia primarily affects motor function, particularly the gaining of new skills and carrying out of those already learned.

What does it look like?

Follow these verbal instructions...

Dyspraxia

Characteristics

Poor visual spatial skills.

Sitting still is challenging.

May appear clumsy and uncoordinated.

Often does not complete tasks.

Following more than one instruction is difficult.

Strategies

Think about the types of games to play and about furniture in transitions.

Alternate sitting and listening with movement breaks.

Actions to songs may look different.

Understand and accept incomplete tasks.

Give one component instructions, include visuals for two or more. Routine and predictability are important.

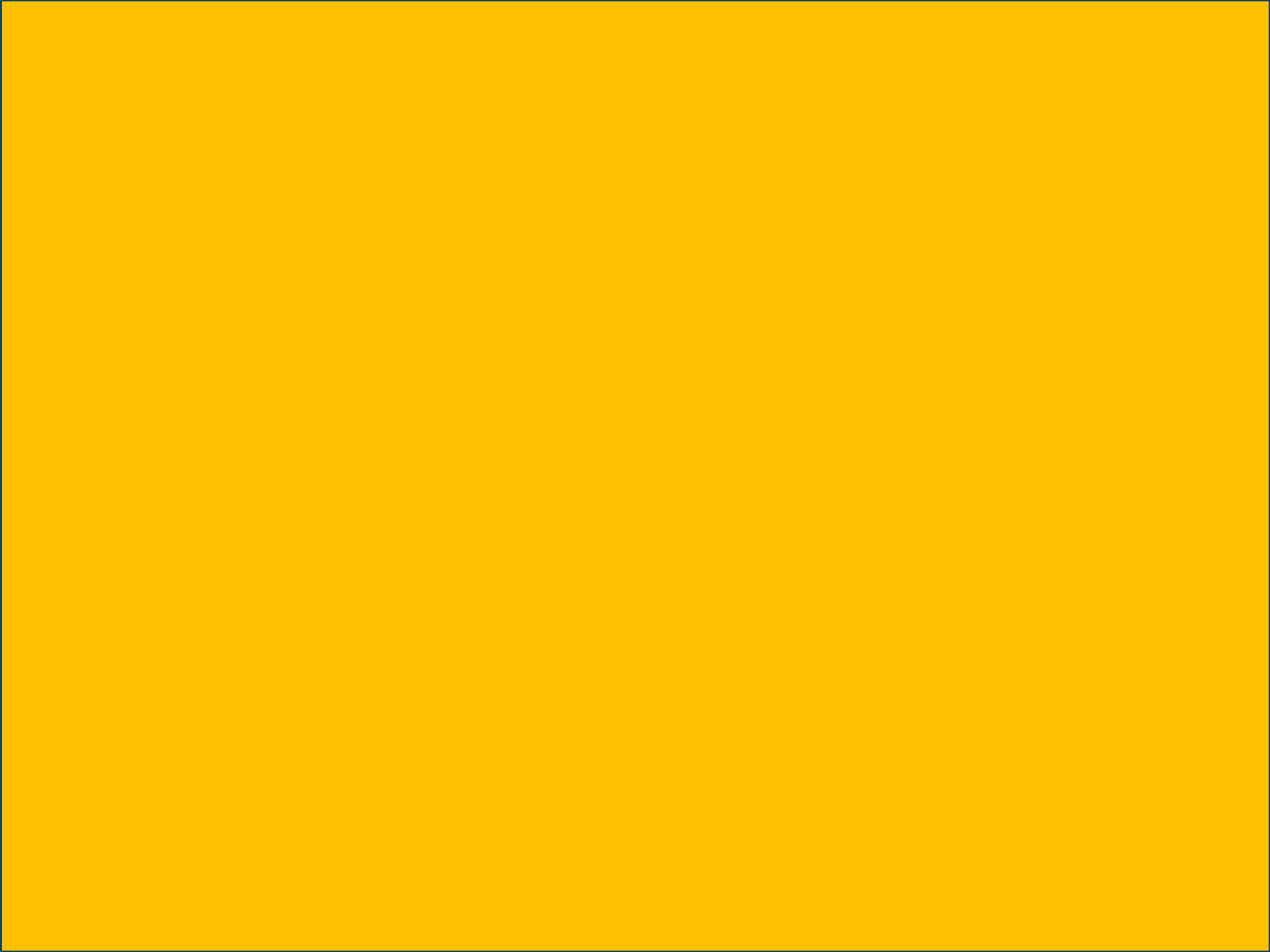
ASD – Autism Spectrum Disorder

According to autismnz.org.nz,

Autism is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects cognitive, sensory and social processing, changing the way people see the world and interact with others.

What does it look like?

- In groups complete the puzzle provided
- The first group to complete the puzzle wins \$20
- Warning: flashing lights, flying objects, loud noise



ASD

Characteristics

Like rules and routines.

Sensory sensitive.

Difficulty listening to others.

Strategies

Have no more than five rules. Where possible stick to same format and structure.

Have a choice of craft resources. Check environment for sensory overload.

Limit 'talking at' time. Ask short answer questions.

ASD

Characteristics

Finds reading social cues challenging.

Can be anxious when made to be part of a group.

Prediction can be challenging.

Strategies

Use clear straight forward language.

Think about groupings, let them know before hand what's going to happen.

Give time warnings before transitions. Use visual aids.

ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

According to adhd.org.nz,

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that impacts the part of the brain that helps us to plan, control impulses and execute tasks.

What does it look like?

- Imagine the world is going to end in one week
- Write a list of things you would do in that week

ADHD

Characteristics

Easily distracted.

Can forget instructions.

Appears to flit from task to task.

Strategies

This doesn't always mean they are not listening.

Give one component instructions or use visual prompts.

Remember they live in a four second world.

ADHD

Characteristics

Can appear fidgety, restless and disengaged.

Finds taking turns difficult.

Can present as less mature than their peers.

Strategies

Give them something to hold, give them a job.

Lessen wait time, take turns with one other.

Consider this when grouping children.

Reframing

- They can't sit still
- So disruptive
- Disregards rule
- Loud
- Can't do anything
- Easily distracted

- Always animated
- Enthusiastic
- An individual, not a follower
- Engaged
- I need to meet your needs
- Aware of everything going on

Conclusion

- Everyone has a role to play in the body of Christ
- Children accept differences and we must do the same
- Building a relationship is key in meeting needs
- Accommodations and reasonable adjustments “what’s good for one is good for all
- Child + Environment = Behaviour
- We cannot change the child but we can change the environment for all to succeed