TALKING ABOUT CHILDREN

What do you want people to think about this child?

How do you want people to interact with this child?

Some words create obstacles. Some words create familiarity.

Diagnoses, names of disorders, classifications, focus on behavior or what the child cannot do often create obstacles.

A child’s experience is different than an adult’s experience of the same situation. Children have their own point of view. Invite other people to wonder about this child’s point of view. Invite other people to wonder how they might interact with this child.

Use words that help people relate to the child. Use words that help people relate to the child’s situation. Help people relate to what is ordinary.

Use words and actions that help people notice:

what this child values
this child’s temperament
how this child communicates
how this child has relationships
this child’s sensory sensitivities
what this child often finds soothing
what this child sometimes finds stressful
how this child tries to participate
how this child learns

Invite others to imagine this child’s experience. Experience means what the child is probably seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling and tasting. Experience includes the child’s emotional responses.

How could you talk differently so others will better understand and interact with this child?

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