THRIVE EMERGE

Parent Reflection Prompts: From Compliance to Collaboration

1. Awareness & Beliefs

- In what ways do I already understand my child's neurodivergent traits (rigidity, sensory needs, executive functioning challenges)? Where do I still feel unsure?
- When my child requires exceptions or flexibility, what emotions does that bring up in me -- fairness, frustration, protectiveness? Why?
- Do I genuinely believe my child is doing the best they can in difficult moments? If not, what stories am I telling myself?

2. Attitudes & Connection

- When my child resists, shuts down, or melts down, what is my first instinctive reaction -- control, curiosity, or compassion?
- How often do I interpret their struggles as nervous system protection versus laziness, manipulation, or defiance?
- What helps me stay calm and connected in tense moments? What triggers make that harder?

3. Communication Shifts

- Do I tend to use compliance-driven language ("just do it," "stop being stubborn"), or collaborative, affirming language ("let's make this doable," "I see this is hard")?
- When I explain changes (like schedule shifts or exceptions to rules), do I give enough context, clarity, and reassurance?
- What is one script or phrase from the "neuroaffirming swaps" list that I could try more consistently this week?

4. Skills & Problem-Solving

- How confident am I in spotting when behavior stems from overwhelm, sensory overload, or executive functioning struggles?
- Do I adapt tasks into smaller steps or try to push through the "whole thing" at once?
- How often do I stop at success instead of piling on more after a small win?

5. Supporting PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance)

- When my child avoids demands, do I see it as nervous-system protection or as refusal?
- How do I currently shrink demands into micro-steps? Where could I try smaller, safer starts?
- What role does autonomy play in our interactions? Do I consistently provide real choices, flexibility, or "skip tokens"?
- When things get stuck, do I use playful resets, sensory supports, or humor -- or do I escalate?

6. Co-Regulation & Boundaries

- Do I co-regulate first (calm myself, lower my voice, soften body language) before solving problems?
- When setting boundaries, do I hold them with calm consistency -- or slip into power struggles?
- How do I repair with my child after conflict?

7. Teamwork & Supports

- How well do I align with my co-parent/partner or other caregivers so that my child experiences consistency?
- Do I actively collaborate with teachers, coaches, or counselors -- or mostly operate in isolation?
- What outside resources (books, trainings, counseling, support groups) have I used, and what could be my next step?

8. Self-Care & Resilience

- How often do I put my own oxygen mask on first (sleep, exercise, calming practices, community)?
- Do I notice when my own stress or burnout is shaping my parenting responses?
- What daily or weekly practices help me recharge so I can show up calmly and consistently for my child?

9. Growth & Next Steps

- If I could change one thing about how I relate to my child, what would it be?
- What is one neuroaffirming habit I can commit to practicing this week?
- What derails me most often and what alternative response could I try instead?
- When I picture my child five years from now, what kind of relationship do I hope we have and what do I need to start doing now to nurture that vision?