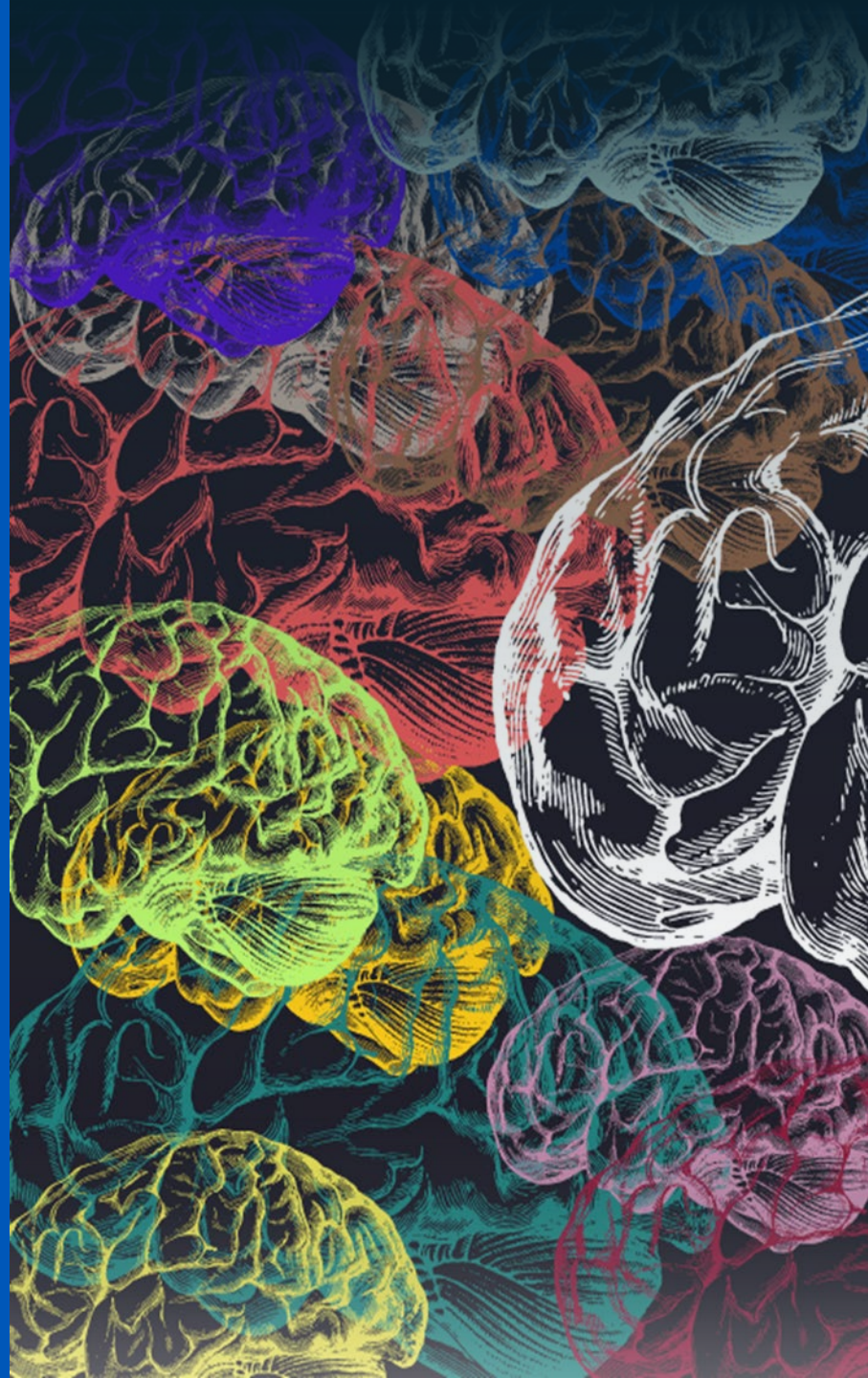


Ready to Learn!

How the School Environment Shapes Student Success

A4LE Southeast Region Conference | April 2, 2026
Greenville, SC





Meet the Team!



Lizzie Scott, M.ED

Business Development
Manager, Southeast,
artcobell



Debbie Wilkinson
AIA, ALEP, LEED AP, FCP

Managing Principal,
West Palm Beach, PBK



Dr. Magda Mostafa,
PhD

Co-Founder,
Principal, Studio•TM,
Autism & Neuro-Inclusive
Architecture



Dr. Marlene Sotelo,
EdD, BCBAD, MT-BC

Executive Director,
Center for Excellence
Els for Autism Foundation

artcobell

PBK

ASPECTSS*
ARCHITECTURE FOR AUTISM

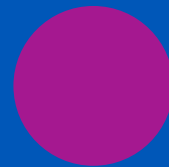

**ERNIE ELS
ELS FOR AUTISM®**

Learning begins before instruction

Regulation → Access → Learning

When environments support the nervous system, students can learn.

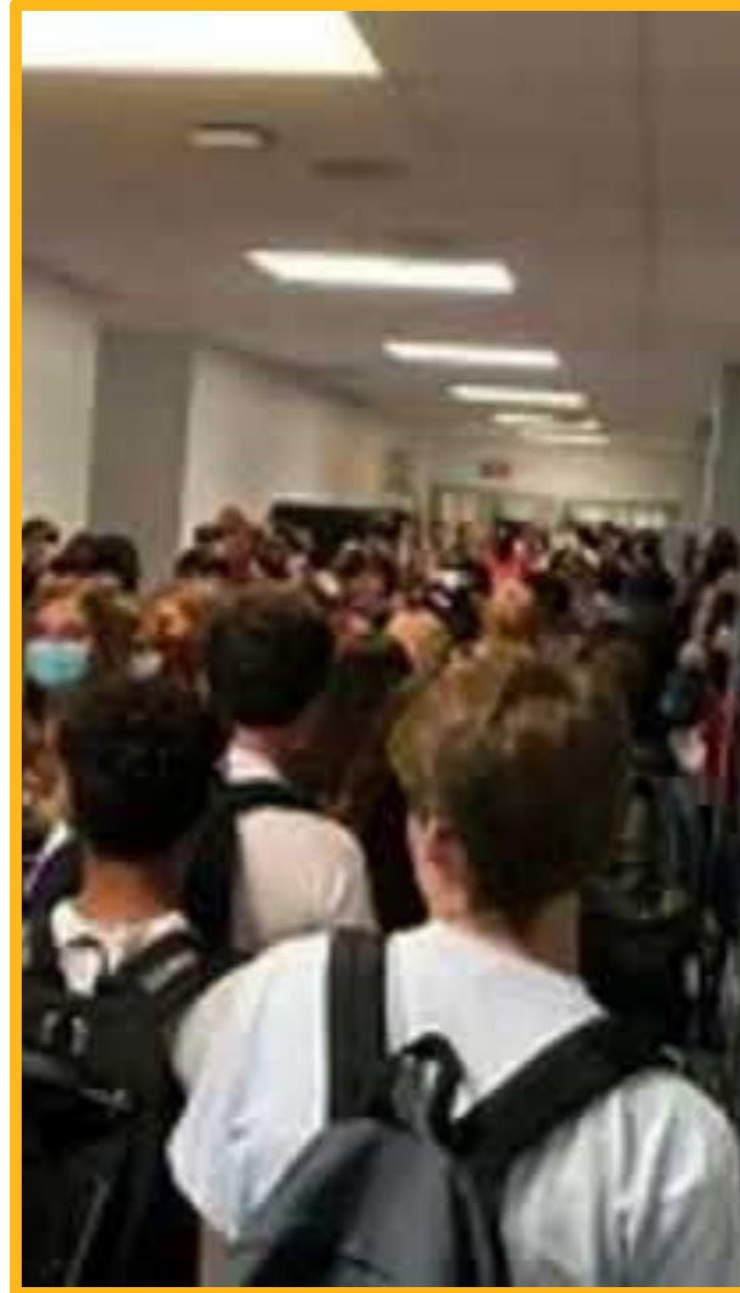
When they don't, no instructional strategy can fully compensate.



Through Their Eyes

Answering from your student's perspective during the video:

- What felt stressful?
- What type of effort did staying regulated require?



Live Interview with:

Dr. Magda Mostafa





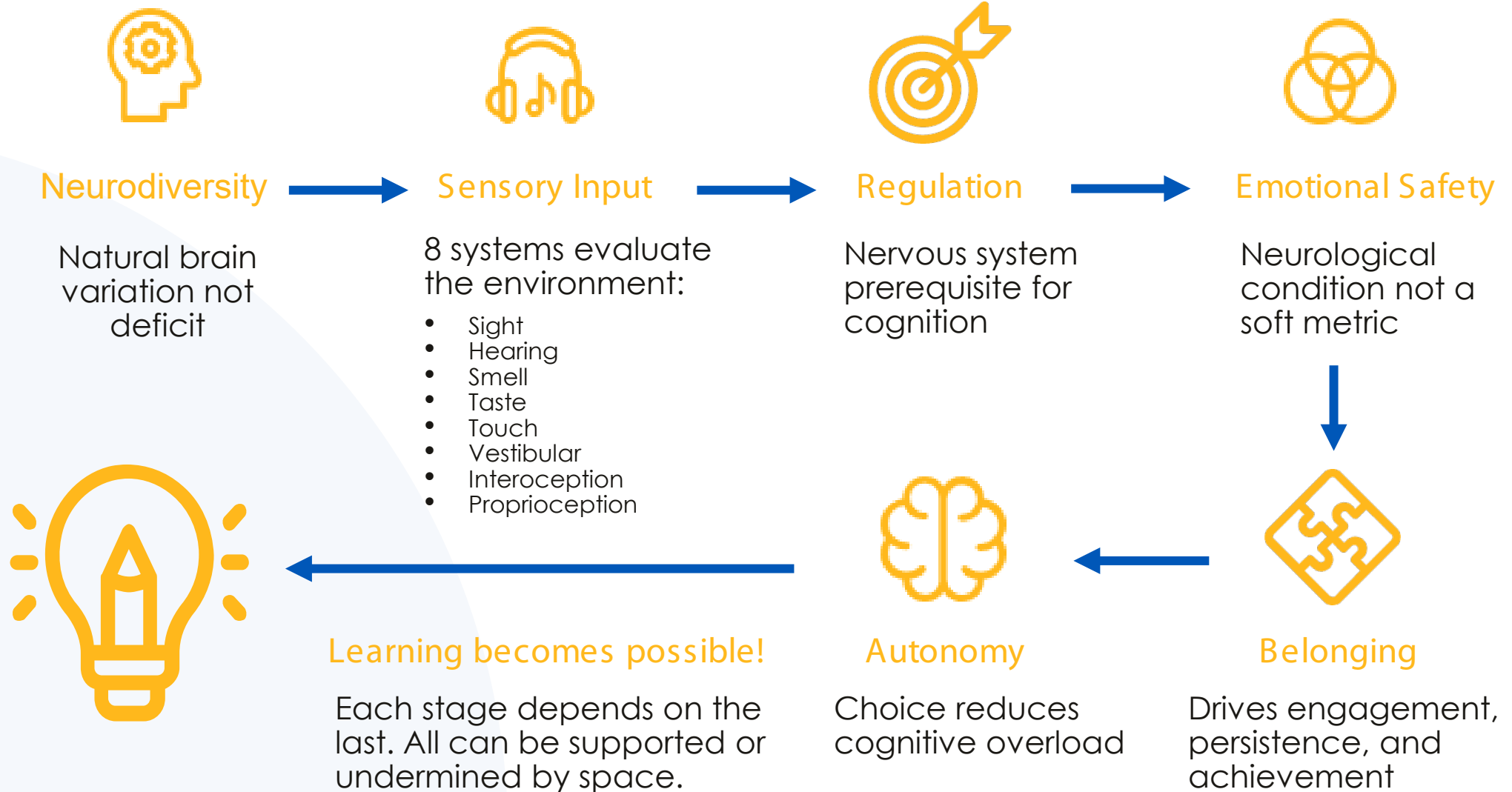
HONOR OUR LEGACY
FUEL OUR FUTURE

Live Interview with:

Dr. Marlene Sotelo



The Neurological Sequence of Learning



What makes Els Center of Excellence Different?

Scaling the Principles





Independence Through Design: Integration with Nature

Sensory Stimulation



Sight: Use a variety of colors, textures, and heights in plants to create visual interest. Soothing colors like blues, purples, and pinks can be incorporated.



Touch: Include plants with soft textures like lamb's ear, ferns, or ornamental grasses. Consider different textures for pathways, such as smooth pebbles or wood chips.



Smell: Plant fragrant herbs like lavender, mint, and rosemary, which can be a calming and pleasant addition.



Sound: Install a water feature like a fountain or a wind chime to create a soothing soundscape.



Taste: Include an edible garden with fruits, vegetables, and herbs that can be tasted.





Social-Emotional: Els is NOT Specialized – It is intentional

ASPECTSS

Paint Color Range

(NCS – natural colour system)



Physical Environment: Transitions, Adjacency, Wayfinding





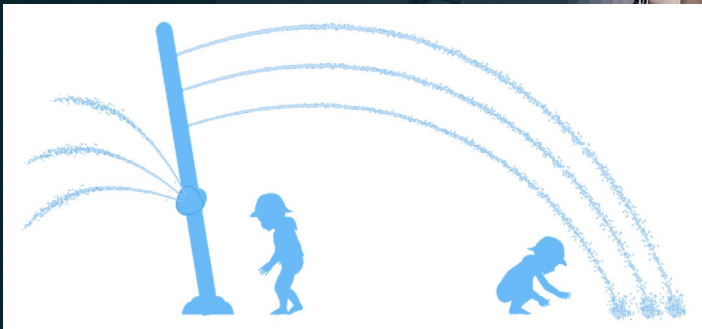
Acoustics / Vibration: Auditory Processing / Sensory Calibration

- Difficulty understanding long sentences
- **Difficulty following instructions**
- Struggles to hear a person speaking to them in a loud room
- May have been taken to a hearing test with suspicion of hearing impairment
- **Usually cannot repeat something back word for word**
- May seem disobedient or have selective hearing
- Struggles to organize words into a clear thought





Environmental Connection: Introduction to Water – Transition Zones



The Why

Final Panel Question – Live Interview



Q&A

Thank you for attending!