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Afrikindness
Conference **org**



**Afrikindness
Parenting &
Inclusion
Conference
Leeds**

*Empowering families.
Building inclusion.
Celebrating culture.*



Afrikindness Parenting & Inclusion Conference

A groundbreaking initiative launched in 2025 to spotlight the challenges, barriers, and strengths within culturally diverse families—especially those raising neurodiverse children.

While the conference places a strong emphasis on supporting neurodiverse families, it is designed for all parents and carers who want to deepen their understanding of parenting in today's multicultural society.

This event offers an inclusive space to explore topics around cultural identity, neurodiversity, safeguarding, education, child development, mental health, behavioural challenges, and access to support services. Through interactive workshops, keynote speakers, and one-on-one advisory sessions, attendees will leave with practical tools, renewed confidence, and a stronger connection to their community.

Whether you're navigating a diagnosis, looking for parenting support, or seeking to better understand your child's needs—this conference is for you.



Welcome Message – APIC2025

At Afrikindness, our mission is rooted in kindness, inclusion, and the belief that every child—regardless of their background, neurotype, or cultural identity—deserves to thrive in a world that understands and embraces them. We believe that inclusion begins at home—with our children, our families, and the communities that surround them. As a charity led by lived experience and driven by compassion, we work alongside families, schools, and communities to challenge exclusion, bridge gaps in understanding, and nurture a world where difference is not just accepted but celebrated.

Parenting in today's world is not easy. Families—especially within Black and ethnically diverse communities—Too often, parents feel isolated, misunderstood, or overwhelmed.

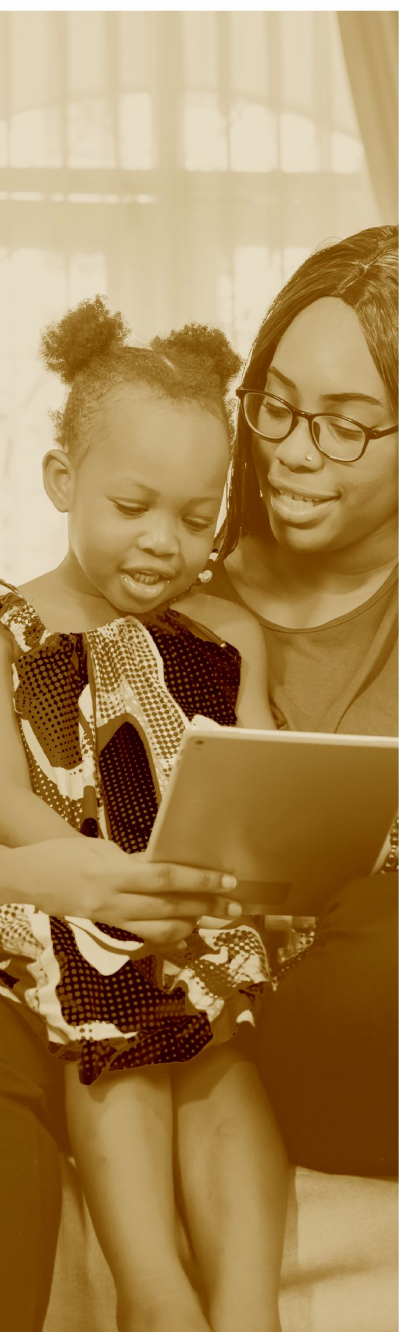
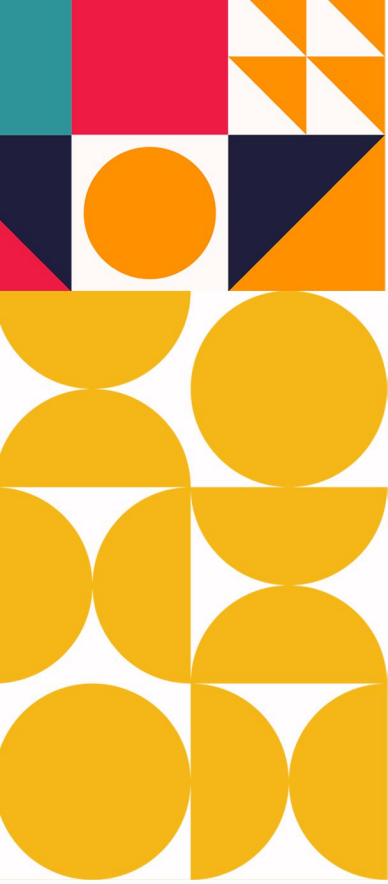
We know that today's parents are navigating a complex world—one where cultural identity, professional systems, and parenting expectations often collide. Parents face unique and layered challenges: navigating cultural expectations, advocating for neurodiverse children in systems that don't always listen, and feeling unheard or unseen in spaces meant to support them.

For many families, especially within African and ethnically diverse communities, the journey of parenting is filled with assumptions: assumptions about who we are, how we parent, what our children need, and how they should behave. These assumptions often create barriers to understanding, inclusion, and the right kind of support.

That is why APIC2025 is not just another conference—it's a movement.

APIC2025 is built on the theme **"Beyond Assumption: Rethinking Parenting, Culture and Professional Care."**

Empowering families. Building inclusion. Celebrating culture.



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Welcome Message – APIC2025

This theme is a call to action—a challenge to all of us to move beyond surface-level thinking, stereotypes, and cultural misunderstandings. It invites us to dig deeper, question the status quo, and reimagine how we support families, especially those raising children with additional or complex needs.

This conference is not just a one-day event—it's a safe and vibrant space for **learning, connection, and change**. With a wide range of **drop-in sessions, expert panels, workshops, mental health hubs, and 1-to-1 consultations**, we're creating space for both professionals, leaders and parents to engage meaningfully, ask questions, and leave better equipped to make a difference in their homes, schools, and communities.

We've designed APIC2025 to be **informative, educative, interactive**, and above all, **human**. From expert-led workshops and real-life stories to drop-in wellbeing zones and support consultations, we want every parent, professional, and community leader to leave equipped, empowered, and inspired. There will be spaces to listen, to ask, to reflect—and above all, to be seen.

I warmly invite you—whether you're a parent, a carer, a teacher, a faith leader, or simply someone who cares—to join us. Come as you are. Your voice matters. Your experience matters. Your presence will help shape the future we all hope to see: one where inclusion is not an afterthought, but a way of life.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us.

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**Bunmi
Owolabi**
CEO, Afrikindness



A Message from the Convener

On behalf of Afrikindness, I am delighted to welcome you to our first Parenting and Inclusion Conference. As Convener, it is my immense pleasure to invite you to this vital event, themed **'Beyond Assumptions: Rethinking Parenting, Culture, and Professional Care.'**

We have designed this conference to be a beacon of support and information for families navigating a wide range of parenting issues, including neurodiversity, mental health perceptions, and safeguarding practices. Our goal is to connect families with the essential support and knowledge they need.

This conference is more than just an event; it is a collaborative effort to empower our community. We believe that by connecting families with the right resources, we can foster a more inclusive and understanding environment for every child. We have brought together leading organizations and experts to offer insights and practical guidance.

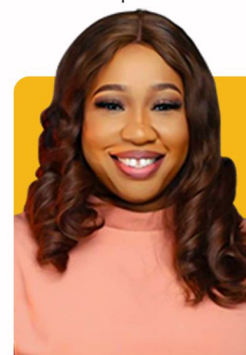
Throughout the day, you will have the chance to explore information stands and attend expert talks on critical subjects like:

- Sensory Needs and Support
- Speech and Language Therapy
- SEND Education (covering everything from EHCPs to transitions)
- Behavioural Challenges
- Well-being and Self-Care for Parents/Guardians

You can also access dedicated 1-to-1 support sessions for personalized advice.

This event is a testament to the power of community and collaboration. At Afrikindness, we are thrilled to provide a platform where families can feel heard, informed, and empowered.

Thank you for being part of this significant day. I look forward to a day of learning, connection, and empowerment.



Dr. Suzzie Onyeka Oyakhire

Convener,
Afrikindness
Parenting
and Inclusion
Conference

Empowering families. Building inclusion. Celebrating culture.





Councillor Dan Cohen

131st Lord Mayor of Leeds

We are honoured to welcome His Worshipful,
the 131st Lord Mayor of Leeds, as our keynote speaker for APIC2025.

The Lord Mayor's presence reflects the city's commitment to inclusion,
community empowerment, and shaping a better future for diverse families

Theme:

Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges:

**The Future of Inclusion Through Trust,
Disruption, and Collaboration**

speakers



Councillor Dan Cohen

131st Lord Mayor of Leeds

Councillor Dan Cohen, the 131st Lord Mayor of Leeds, is a solicitor by profession and former Managing Director of Madison Hosiery. With 14 years of council service, he is recognised for his leadership on the Children and Families Scrutiny Board and his dynamic community advocacy.



Pete Hughes

CEO Leeds Autism Services

Pete Hughes, CEO of Leeds Autism Services, began as a Support Worker in 2001 after leaving mental health nursing. With over two decades of experience, he has worked directly with 100+ autistic adults and their families. Passionate about neurodiversity, Pete advocates for equality through public speaking, training, and consultancy, making a lasting impact in autism support and awareness.



Dr Pedi Obani

Parent Team Lead Afrikindness

Dr. Pedi is the Parent Team Lead for Afrikindness' Community Empowerment Programme (ACEP) in Bradford, where she leads parent-led initiatives on safeguarding, governance, and advocacy—extending our reach into communities. An Associate Professor of Law at the University of Bradford, she is also a dedicated parent trainer and advocate. Dr. Pedi will lead the plenary session, guiding a deep dive into community-driven solutions.

speakers



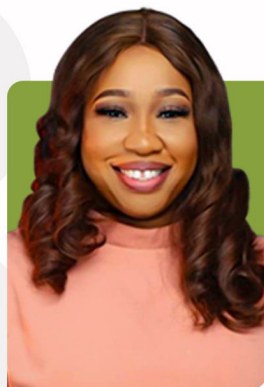
Bunmi Owolabi
CEO
Afrikindness

Bunmi Owolabi is the CEO and Founder of Afrikindness, a Chartered Chemical Engineer and passionate parent advocate. She leads the organisation's Community Empowerment Programme, delivering training across its 7 core modules including safeguarding and Parenting with Purpose. Bunmi holds a Level 2 qualification in Children and Young People's Mental Health and is committed to advancing inclusion, resilience, and wellbeing in diverse communities.



Dr Vivian Okoye
Neurodiversity Lead
Afrikindness

Dr Vivian is the Neurodiversity & inclusion lead at Afrikindness, a passionate advocate for neurodiversity and SEND awareness. She is the Assistant Regional Lead at Nudge Education. She is a certified Neurodiversity & Inclusion Trainer (PPGCert) and a Practitioner working with autistic children. She has led multiple community initiatives supporting parents of neurodiverse children. Dr Vivian will lead the disruptive conversation alongside other speakers



Dr. Suzzie Oyakhire
Neurodiversity Lead
Leeds, Afrikindness

Dr. Suzzie is a senior lecturer at Leeds Beckett University and a qualified solicitor with extensive experience in family support services. She specialises in helping parents navigate educational systems, access vital resources, and empowers families through advocacy and tailored guidance. Dr. Suzzie also serves as the host of the APIC2025 Conference, where she brings her passion for inclusive education and community empowerment to the forefront.

speakers



**Alice
Crawford**

Education
psychologist &
Autism Assessor

Alice is an Educational & Curriculum Specialist for Afrikindness and a Chartered Educational Psychologist with multi academy trust in North East of England. With extensive experience in schools across the UK, she specializes in autism assessment and supporting marginalized children and families. Alice is passionate about using psychology to enhance learning, promote inclusion, and support children's well-being, particularly those with neurodiverse needs. A former teacher & director of learning and support, she is well experienced in local and private schools supporting learning particularly for those marginalized.

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Mini Conference & Exhibition

The themed workshops at the 2025 conference will include:

Parenting in the Modern Era

Exploring Cultural Identity, Safeguarding, Mental Health, Neurodiversity, and Digital Inclusion for the Modern-Day Parent

Sensory Needs and Support

Understand your child's sensory world and learn how to support their needs with confidence

Behavioural Challenges, Well-Being and Self-Care for Parents/Guardians Emotional co-regulation, Teen temperaments, and Self-care for Parents

Speech and Language Therapy

Supportive, therapeutic tools to boost your child's communication and cognitive development

SEND Education (Pre-16 and Post-16)

Navigating SEND education, EHCPs, and smooth transitions from childhood to adulthood

This exciting session will include theme discussions, panel discussions, keynote addresses, interactive workshops, case studies, exhibitions and showcases, Q&A sessions with professionals.

The exhibition will host a wide range of service providers from Leeds, Bradford and beyond, offering guidance, support, and resources for families with young people, and families navigating SEND, neurodiversity and more.

Don't worry if English isn't your first language – we will have interpreters and culturally responsive speakers to support you every step of the way.

- Take a look at the service providers and organisations that will be featured!

- If your organisation would like to exhibit or get involved, please contact OUR Neurodiversity Lead, Leeds, Suzzie Oyakhire at suzzie.oyakhire@afrikindness.org

Let's build a more inclusive future, together.

One-One Drop-in Session

Book Your One-to-One Drop-In Session

As part of the 2025 Parenting & Inclusion Conference, we are offering private, one-to-one drop-in sessions with expert advisors based on the specific themes of the conference.

These 30–45 minute pre-booked sessions are designed to be focused, supportive, and impactful — giving you the opportunity to discuss your individual concerns in a safe and discreet environment.

You will meet privately with an advisor in a dedicated booth to explore tailored guidance, support, or signposting based on your needs. Whether it's questions around parenting challenges, school challenges, children's behaviour, neurodiversity, speech and language, EHCPs, or sensory support, this is your time to be heard.

Please note:

- Sessions require separate registration
- Spaces are limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis
- Completing the registration form helps our team prepare and ensure you receive the right kind of support

Take this opportunity to receive personalised support and walk away empowered with next steps for your child and family.

Community Recognition

Book Your One-to-One Drop-In Session

We are proud to champion inclusivity and representation at Afrikindness Parenting & Inclusion Conference (APIC) 2025.

This year, we are delighted to welcome the involvement of several vibrant communities across African, Asian, Chinese, Faith (Church & Mosque), and other Minority Ethnic groups from across West Yorkshire.

We are especially honoured to be working alongside dedicated community leaders who are helping us create a conference experience that reflects the real voices, lived experiences, and cultural identities of families in our region.

Together, we aim to build bridges, foster understanding, and ensure that no parent is left behind in accessing support and education that truly meets their needs.

Click on each community below to learn more about their involvement in APIC 2025.

Let's celebrate diversity. Let's grow together.

If you are a leader of a Faith (Church/Mosque), African, Asian, Chinese or Other Minority Ethnic community and would like to get involved, please contact us at info@afrikindness.org or call 03301335442

AfrikindnessConference.org

Why Sponsor?

Sponsoring APIC 2025 is your opportunity to champion inclusion, support diverse families, and align your brand with meaningful community impact.

To sponsor this event, please contact us at ceo@afrikindness.org

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Exhibitors



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