



Introducing...the

BRAIN

THE BRAIN HAS LOTS OF JOBS:

“Have you ever thought about all of the things your brain is in charge of? I mean, your brain is the control center for pretty much everything you think, feel, or do! That’s pretty amazing. Let’s list some things your brain controls.”

YOUR BRAIN IS GROWING AND CHANGING:

“Scientists say that when you do something over and over you create new pathways in your brain. When you were a baby, you couldn’t do much, but now your brain has learned so many things. And, guess what? Your brain is going to keep growing and changing until you’re much older.”

“THINKING” PART:

Remember when we talked about the brain having a lot of different jobs? One part of your brain is in charge of making good decisions, managing your big feelings, thinking things through, and being empathetic. One author calls this your ‘upstairs brain’ – like the upstairs of a house!”

“EMOTIONAL” PART:

“Ok, so there’s another part of the brain. That author calls it the ‘downstairs brain.’ This part is in charge of some really important things like breathing and digesting food, and it also holds a lot of your emotions! So, this is where your big angry or worried feelings come from!”

FLIGHT, FIGHT OR FREEZE:

“Inside this ‘downstairs brain’ is a tiny part who’s job is to react to threats! When it thinks you are in danger it will tell you to do one of three things – run away, fight back, or freeze. Let’s think of some times when these responses would be really helpful.”

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Parenting and the BRAIN

THE BRAIN HAS LOTS OF JOBS: *Keep this in mind when thinking about discipline. Changing your response can change the entire conversation, simply because you've appealed to a different part of the brain.*

THEIR BRAIN IS GROWING AND CHANGING: *You have the opportunity to influence strong, healthy, positive connections in your child's brain by responding from a calm, confident, empathetic stance.*

"THINKING" PART: ("Upstairs Brain") *Remember, this part is very slow to develop. I know you want your kids to have these skills right now. but there's no rushing this process. You can influence good pathways, though!*

"EMOTIONAL" PART: ("Downstairs Brain") *This is the most primitive and reactive part of the brain. This is also the part that's running the show during your child's meltdown about having peas for dinner.*

FLIGHT, FIGHT OR FREEZE: *You have this part in your brain too, it's called the amygdala! Power struggles are often the result of two amygdala's going head-to-head (so to speak).*

SOMETIMES THE BRAIN IS WRONG: *This is true for you as well! Sometimes, your brain will tell you that the situation in front of you requires IMMEDIATE ATTENTION (sibling rivalry, aggressive behavior, etc.) Actually, in most cases, these things are not true emergencies.*

BUILDING A BRIDGE: *If you know your child is responding from the "downstairs brain" it's time to switch tactics and get the "upstairs brain" onboard. You can do this by responding with empathy, getting down to their level, and offering connection.*

CALM BRAINS MAKE GOOD CHOICES: *Instead of focusing on getting your child to calm down, think more about how you can calm your own "upstairs brain." You'll be better able to support, connect and empathize with your child's big feelings.*

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