



BRING MINDUP HOME PRACTICES FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILD

GETTING TO KNOW OUR AMAZING BRAIN



PRACTICES FOR YOU

Develop your own self-awareness:

Notice when you're starting to react to a situation. Stop. Ask yourself, what's the trigger? Make a note of what triggers an amygdala response. Are there patterns?

Recognise your own stress triggers:

Make a list of your top 5 stress triggers. Having an awareness of them is the first step to managing them.

Build your own strategies:

Set some time aside to build up your resources to enable you to be more equipped to deal with stressful situations, e.g. exercise, time with friends, meditation, reading etc.



OUR LANGUAGE CREATES OUR WORLDS

The language we use helps to reinforce our understanding and our thinking. It guides the expectations around our behaviours.

The more we practise using the brain vocabulary the more it becomes part of who we are and what we do.

Try using phrases like these to develop the learning:

“Can you use your prefrontal cortex (wise owl) to work that out?”

“If you calm your amygdala (guard dog), you will be able to think more clearly and then you will remember where you put it! It's in your hippocampus somewhere!”

“Let's do some breathing to calm the amygdala. We both need to settle our amygdala so that we can think clearly.”

MINDFUL MOMENTS OF REFLECTION

Take a moment: Is your child walking into school calm, knowing they are loved with a brain ready for learning? How are you walking into your day?

Journal Jotting: Notice when you're operating from your amygdala. Consider how different your responses are when you're engaging your prefrontal cortex. Visualise a prefrontal cortex response. How is it different?

PRACTICES WITH YOUR CHILD

Explore emotions and feelings to build emotional intelligence:

Discuss feelings with your child. When your child has been overwhelmed with emotions (an amygdala hijack) discuss how they felt and explain what's happening in their brain. When your child is calm, focused, happy or enjoying a quiet moment with you, explore and discuss their emotions and feelings linked to these experiences. This also helps to extend their emotional vocabulary.

Bring emotional understanding alive through books/reading together:

Use opportunities when you're reading books together to consider how characters might be feeling, what emotions they're experiencing. Also, discuss what part of the character's brain might be in control in different parts of the story, consider the choices that they make and how they might reflect on those choices, make changes to situations etc.



Make a calm down glitter bottle:

Use an empty plastic bottle and fill with water. Add a teaspoon of glitter glue and a few teaspoons of biodegradable glitter. Firmly secure the lid. Use the bottle to explain the brain as follows:

Shake the bottle and discuss how hard it is to see clearly through the bottle when the glitter is flying around.

Compare this to when the amygdala is in charge and it's hard to think clearly and make good decisions.

Explain that when the glitter settles it's like the amygdala calming down so clear decisions can be made from the prefrontal cortex.

Memory Games, e.g. Kim's Game:

Place 10 small objects on a tray (ask your child to find them - all part of the fun). Ask your child to use their prefrontal cortex to think about what they can see and store their thoughts in their hippocampus. Remove 1 or 2 objects at a time and ask them to guess which ones have gone.

There are many online memory games too.

<https://www.learninggamesforkids.com/memory-games.html>

Watch the hippocampus at work!

Creative Brains:

Make a brain with the three parts. Be creative, get messy! Try making brain cakes, brain jellies, collages, hats. Have some fun!

FIND OUT MORE

For you

'Ten Mindful Minutes' by Goldie Hawn

'The Whole-Brain Child: Twelve Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind' by Dan Siegel

For younger children

'My First Book About the Brain'

by Patricia J. Wynne

'Your Fantastic Elastic Brain Stretch It, Shape It' by JoAnn Deak

For older children

'Hey Warrior' by Karen Young

'Hey Awesome' by Karen Young