

EXERCISING YOUR CHILD'S WHOLE-BRAIN

Based on the book, *The Whole-Brain Child* by Daniel Siegel, we will discuss the new science about how a child's brain is wired and how it matures. In addition, we will share new discoveries that can assist in daily parenting.

UNDERSTANDING AND PURPOSE

- Parts of the brain
- Connect logical and emotional selves (Left & Right)
- Identify instinctual versus thoughtful (Upper & Lower)
- Making connections
- Intentional discussions

Pruning-Experiences that we have in our lives can improve or harm ongoing development/connection of neurons (this is true for children AND adults)

Overall message we want to send to you as parents of children who are in an active brain development stage is that **YOU CAN AFFECT THEIR EXPERIENCES ON A DAILY BASIS**. What you do now can strongly impact their present and future brain development. The good news is that if you have not been focusing on this....then re-wiring and pruning is in your FAVOR.

YOU CAN CONTROL THE WAY THE RIVER FLOWS.

PARTS OF THE BRAIN

Left Side=Logic, Order, Lists (literal, linguistic and logical (black and white thinking may appear to a parent/teacher as an argumentative child, lying, or oppositional child))

Right Side=Emotions & Nonverbal Cues (facial expressions, eye contact, posture, gesture, tone of voice), experiential and autobiographical (Drama - "I will hate you if you ____")

"Reptile Brain"-act instinctually & make split second survival decisions

"Mammal Brain"-connection and relationships

Other parts deal with memory and making moral & ethical decisions

BALANCE & INTEGRATION

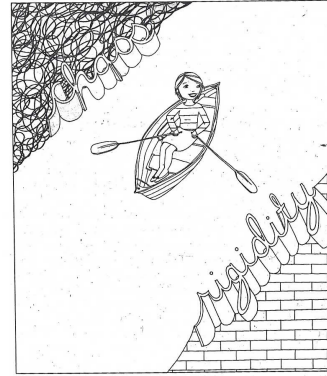
Main goal - compares organs of the body to integration of all parts of the brain

Integration means each part of the brain needs to do its part while also working together as a whole.

- **Horizontally Integrated**: Left & Right brain work together
- Balance between chaos & rigidity - What style is more prevalent in your home? Rigidity - tantrum/Chaos - throws fit/yelling = chaos
- *Experiences help mold our brain*
- *Conversations help open the door to memories from experiences*
- *Be present*

PICTURE OF CHAOS & RIGIDITY

YOU CAN CONTROL THE WAY THE RIVER FLOWS.



WHAT EXPERIENCES ARE YOU OFFERING?

3 ways to wire & rewire brain integration...

Integration means each part of the brain needs to do its part while also working together as a whole.

- Spending time with family, screen time (games, text, TV, Chromebook - you tube, phone)
- Educational activities, sports, music
- Human interaction - family, friends, teachers, peers, face to face communication

AREAS OF CONCERN TO WATCH FOR..... (DIS-INTEGRATION)

1. Being overwhelmed by their emotions on a regular basis
2. Unable to respond to situations in a calm manner
3. Irrational
4. Overreaction to a situation that does not warrant their response (give examples)
5. Tantrums/meltdowns/aggression

COMMAND & DEMAND... .CONNECT & REDIRECT

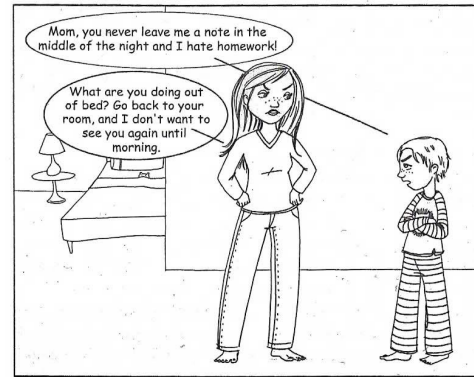
Connect with

Right Brain

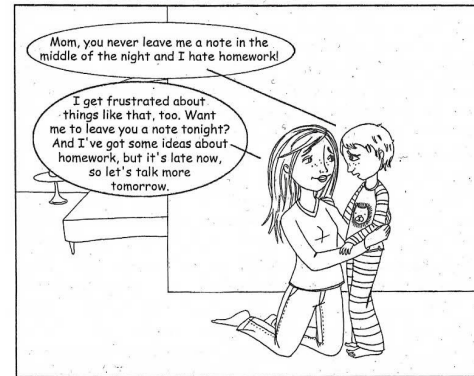
Redirect with

Left Brain

INSTEAD OF COMMAND AND DEMAND...



...TRY CONNECT AND REDIRECT



DISMISS & DENY...

NAME IT TO TAME IT

STRATEGY #2 INSTEAD OF DISMISS AND DENY...



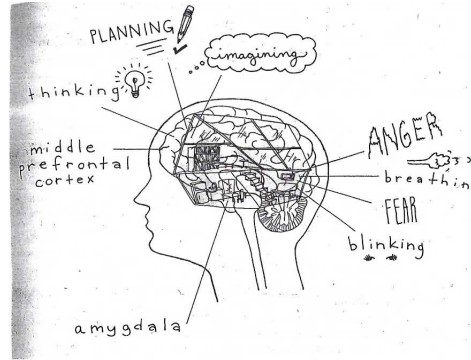
...TRY NAME IT TO TAME IT



UPSTAIRS & DOWNSTAIRS INTEGRATION

- **Vertically Integrated**: Lower parts (instincts) & Upper parts (actions)
- Downstairs(primitive)-Basic functions of breathing, blinking, instincts, reactions, impulses, strong emotions.
 - A child may have impulses of anger, fear, fight or flight
 - Compared to 1st floor of a house, basic needs/necessities-Developed at birth
- Upstairs(sophisticated)-Mental process, thinking, imagining, planning, higher-order-Doesn't fully develop until mid 20's
 - A child may display decision making, empathy, morality, self-understanding, emotion/body control
 - Compared to 2nd floor of house full of windows

UPSTAIRS & DOWNSTAIRS



AREAS OF CONCERN TO WATCH FOR & STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS & CHILDREN

1. Flying off the handle, easily set off, “flipping our lid”—soothe or shift attention, deep breath, count to 10
2. Poor decisions—offer hypothetical questions to practice morals
3. Lack of empathy— use everyday interactions to point out other people’s emotions
4. Lack of self-understanding, ask probing questions to help them look beyond, higher level thinking, journal, draw
5. Conscious Tantrums—set firm boundaries (parenting)
6. Unconscious Tantrums—nurturing and comforting (parenting)

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Memories help form expectations based on previous experiences. Past can shape present and future.

Explicit & Implicit memories

Wiring of neurons, mental molding

Implicit memories—positive & negative (unaware)

- Love, fear, avoidance, sadness
- Children may react without be aware of why they're upset

Teach healthy ways to integrate implicit & explicit memories=self-understanding, self-expression

INTENTIONAL DISCUSSIONS

- Recall, mindfulness, sharing thoughts & feelings
- Have students retell their own stories (Rewind & Remember)
- Discuss experiences your child had after activities

TRYING TO BE PERFECT..



REFERENCE

The Whole-Brain Child by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.