

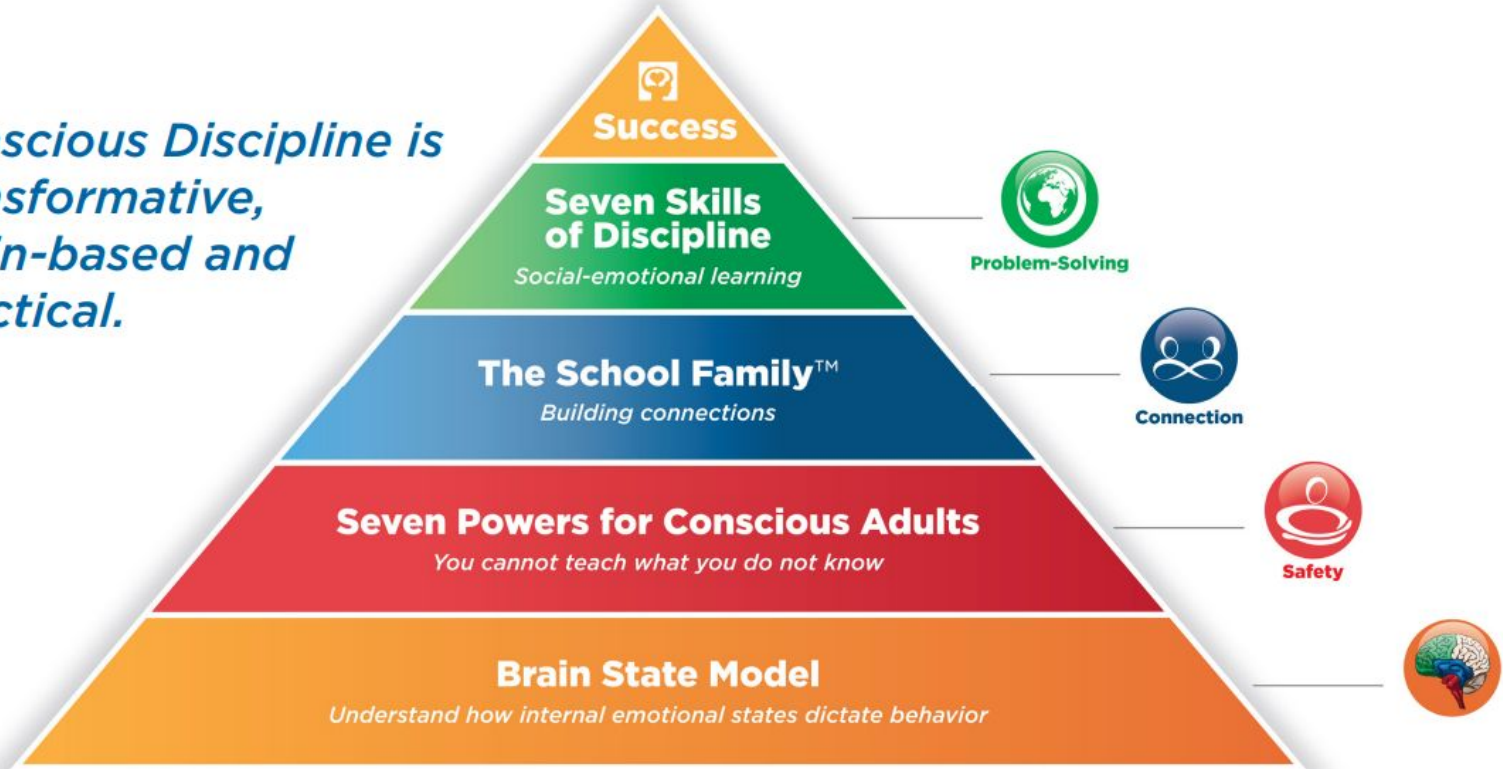
# PARENT EDUCATION NIGHT



## INQUISITIVE MINDS

Natural learning. Education for life.

*Conscious Discipline is  
transformative,  
brain-based and  
practical.*



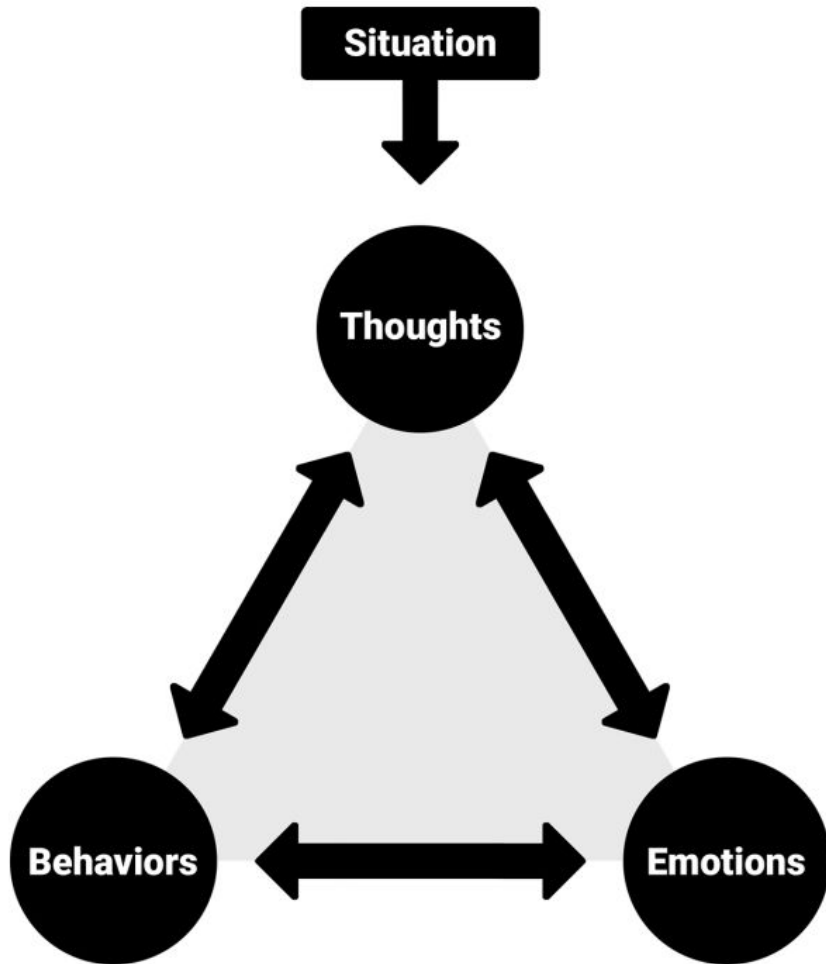
# Understanding Safety, Connection and Problem Solving

*With Becky Bailey*



All behavior is a form of communication. Children's behaviors will reveal their needs if we are willing to listen.





A **situation** is anything that happens in your life, which triggers the cognitive triangle.

**Thoughts** are your interpretations of a situation. For example, if a stranger looks at you with an angry expression, you could think: "Oh no, what did I do wrong?" or "Maybe they are having a bad day."

**Emotions** are feelings, such as happy, sad, angry, or worried. Emotions can have physical components as well as mental, such as low energy when feeling sad, or a stomachache when nervous.

**Behaviors** are your response to a situation. Behaviors include actions such as saying something or doing something (or, choosing not to do something).

# Signs of Survival State

Children who are withdrawing, having big physical meltdowns, exhibiting regressive behaviors (bed wetting, sleeping and eating disturbances), etc., are signaling that they're spending a lot of time experiencing a Survival State. They're asking us to build more safety into their daily routines and procedures. Regular patterns, deep breathing practice and reassuring talk like, "You're safe. Keep breathing. You can handle this. We'll get through this together," become our primary focus.



# Signs of Emotional State

Children who exhibit behaviors including being unusually controlling, short-tempered, argumentative, sassy, etc., are revealing that they're experiencing an Emotional State. They're asking us to connect with them in meaningful ways. Authentic connection that includes eye contact, touch, presence and a playful situation becomes our primary focus if we wish to create optimal brain states. **I Love You Rituals**, contribution, and bonding activities become our focus.

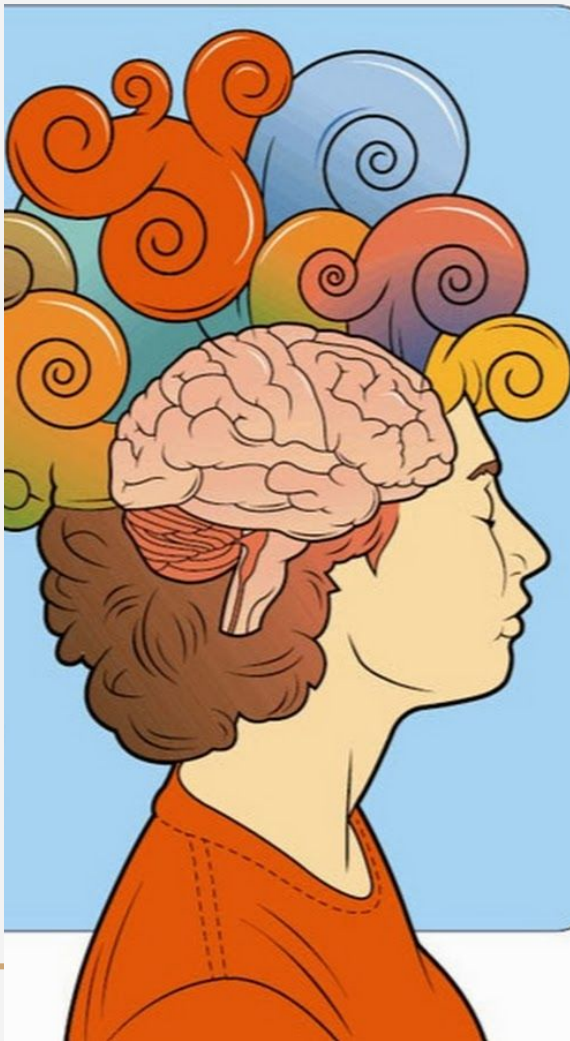


# Signs of Executive State

Children who exhibit helpful behaviors are experiencing an Executive State. These children offer assistance to others, have regulated sleeping and eating patterns, and behave in ways we generally describe as “positive.” Their brains will devour problem solving, conflict resolution, creativity, and learning opportunities because they have access to all the wisdom and tools of a fully integrated brain state.







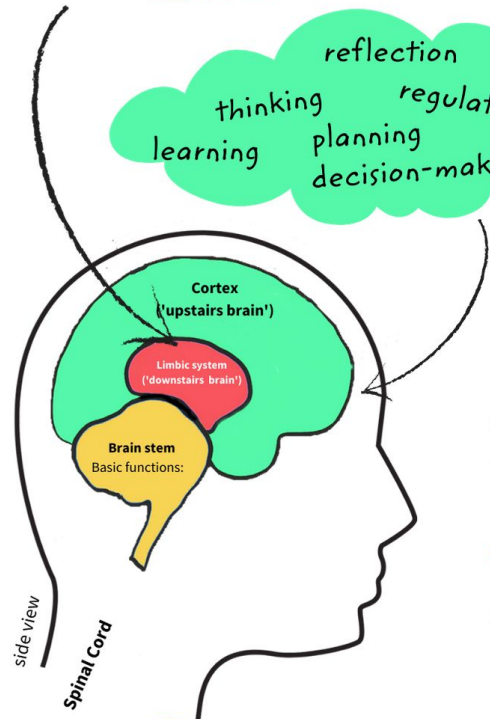
Our job is to help identify children's brain states and help them move through a *Survival State*, through an *Emotional State* and into an *Executive State*.

Children who feel unsafe or disconnected don't have access to their full repertoire of brain functions. Attempts to engage them in using higher-order skills that are offline are likely to result in power struggles or meltdowns, not learning and problem solving. This is why it is essential to assess children's brain states before teaching, learning, problem solving or addressing a power struggle.

Emotions  
Big feelings  
Alarm Fight / Flight

Have a look at the videos on our "It's all about the brain" webpage to find out more about the hand model.

reflection  
regulation  
thinking  
learning  
planning  
decision-making



Breathing safety - e.g. pull heart / your hand away when something is hot

## Upstairs / Downstairs Brain

Think of your brain in two parts; the **upstairs brain** and the **downstairs brain**. The **upstairs brain (cortex)** is the 'smart part' - thinking, planning, learning, decision-making, regulation and reflection.

The **downstairs brain (limbic system and brain stem)** the emotional part - feelings, and our **alarm system** which is meant to keep us safe from danger (like sabre-toothed tigers) by getting us ready to fight or run away.

Most of the time the upstairs and downstairs parts work well together with our 'smart part' keeping a lid on emotional stuff. Sometimes when we experience strong emotions or the alarm system goes off... we can flip our lids. The downstairs brain takes over and thinking / logic go and it's 'react, react, react'.

Sometimes the downstairs brain sets off a **false alarm**. No real danger (like STTs) but that makes us feel under attack; like being asked to tidy your room, speak in public or being told off by a teacher!

## Name it to tame it

**Everyone flips their lids.** We can learn to "name it to tame it" - understand what happens and develop ways to help the 'upstairs brain' to get back in control\*.

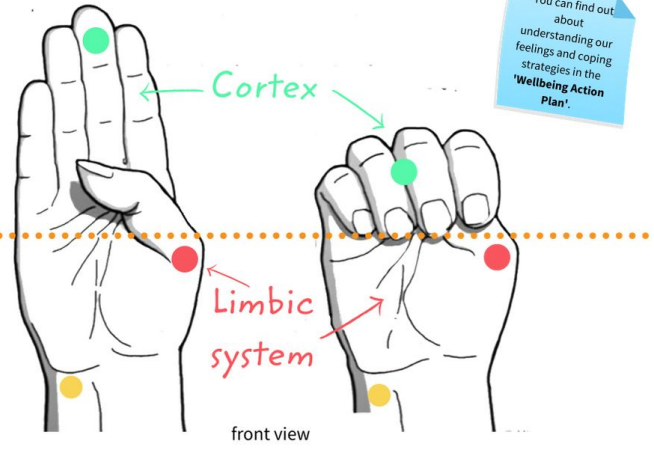
Some people have had a tough time growing up or have had really stressful experiences in their lives (sometimes called 'trauma'). This means that their alarm system can get 'stuck' in the 'on' position and they can 'flip their lid' more quickly. It's not their 'fault' - their experiences have made them more alert and looking for danger. For those people it is often really helpful if they practice 'naming it and taming it' with another person like a trusted adult. This is called **co-regulation**.

\*You can find out about understanding our feelings and coping strategies in the 'Wellbeing Action Plan'.

**Try it.** Hold up your hand. Tuck your thumb (representing the downstairs brain) into your palm. Now wrap your fingers (representing the upstairs brain) over your thumb. This is a model of a brain working in harmony. The upstairs and downstairs are connected and communicating.

When **big emotions** come along the downstairs brain takes over and you 'flip your lid' (fingers up) and the connection is broken. It can be hard to 'control' emotions and make good decisions.

angry  
jealous  
scared  
sad  
anxious



## Hand Model of the Brain - Why we "flip our lid"



**Impulse Control**

**Working Memory**

**Emotional Control / Empathy**

**Attention**



6 - 12 Months

**Planning / Prioritization**

**Flexibility**



12 - 24 Months

**Task Initiation**

**Organization**



Preschool

**Time Management**

**Goal Achievement**

**Metacognition**



Elementary+



A stylized diagram of a human brain in profile, facing right. The brain is divided into three main colored regions: a red region at the base (brainstem), a blue region in the middle (cerebrum), and a green region at the top (cerebrum). The brain is set against a light blue background. The text "Understanding Safety, Connection, and Problem Solving" is centered over the brain.

# Understanding Safety, Connection, and Problem Solving



## ***SAFETY***

- Stick to a daily **schedule or routine**, even if it's a simple order of events rather than a timed effort.
- **Breathe deeply** to soothe your survival centers so you can remain calm, and coach children to do the same. Reassure, “You’re safe. Keep breathing. You can handle this. We’ll get through this together.”
- **Social stories** provide developmentally appropriate answers to questions about the world around them, reducing anxiety and increasing a felt sense of safety.
- The **Story Hand** I Love You Ritual is excellent for soothing fears, presenting an opportunity for both safety and connection.

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## My Blog

[< All Posts](#)

### Visual Schedules and Routine!

September 12, 2023



## My Night Routine

1. Get up From Nap



2. Get a Snack



3. Play Game



4. Go Outside



5. Sensory Play



6. Do a Chore



7. Dinner



8. Brush Teeth



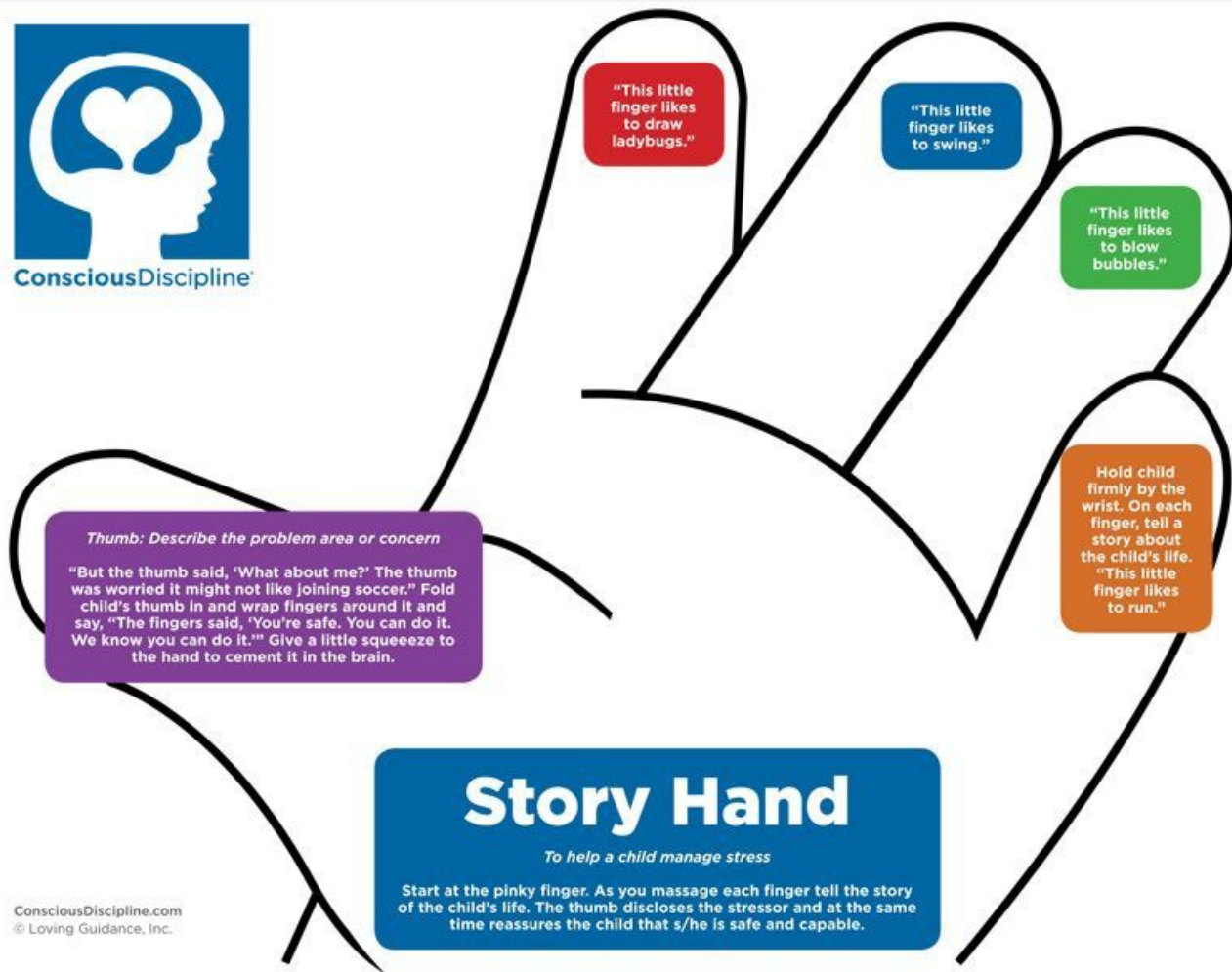
9. Bedtime







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*Thumb: Describe the problem area or concern*

"But the thumb said, 'What about me?' The thumb was worried it might not like joining soccer." Fold child's thumb in and wrap fingers around it and say, "The fingers said, 'You're safe. You can do it. We know you can do it.'" Give a little squeeze to the hand to cement it in the brain.

"This little finger likes to draw ladybugs."

"This little finger likes to swing."

"This little finger likes to blow bubbles."

Hold child firmly by the wrist. On each finger, tell a story about the child's life. "This little finger likes to run."

## Story Hand

*To help a child manage stress*

Start at the pinky finger. As you massage each finger tell the story of the child's life. The thumb discloses the stressor and at the same time reassures the child that s/he is safe and capable.



## *CONNECTION*

- Seek out and triple or quadruple your normal moments of connection. Authentic connection requires **four components**. Bedtime snuggling, reading together, family walks and gaming together are all helpful activities, but true connection comes when these activities have giggle moments of eye contact, presence and touch embedded within them.
- Use the **Caring Connections Calendar** to incorporate restorative moments of bonding, kindness and joy into each day.

## Connection Requires Four Critical Elements:

### Eye Contact



Get **eye contact** for a brief moment. When two eyes meet, a wireless connection is created between the orbital frontal areas of the prefrontal lobes. From this connection we literally download inner states into one another. The eyes contain nerve projections that lead directly to key brain structures for empathy and matching emotions. As soon as you have eye contact, download. "There you are. You're safe. Breathe with me. You can handle this."

### Presence



**Being present** in the moment means your mind and body are in the same place. Your mind is free of constant chatter. You are still enough to see the beauty in the child. It is about acceptance. We join together and share the same moment. The present moment is where the joy lies. Relax into it. "Mirror neurons ensure the moment someone sees an emotion on your face, they will at once sense the same feeling within themselves." - Daniel Stern

### Touch



**Touch** is the only sense we cannot live without. The skin and brain are made up of the same embryonic tissue. The skin is the outside layer of the brain. Touch creates a hormone that is essential to neural functioning and learning. If we want smart, happy kids then we need to provide more appropriate, caring touch.



















### Playfulness



**Being playful in the context of the situation:** Playfulness helps build bonds and creates a biochemistry in the brain for dopamine. Dopamine says, "Pay attention, stay focused." The dopamine system is strengthened, as are attention span and social development in playful situations.



## CARING CONNECTIONS: Strengthening Relationships by Practicing Kindness, Being Grateful, and Spending Quality Time With Those We LOVE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Do something helpful for a family member or friend.</p> 	<p>Connect with a relative to say hello and chat.</p> 	<p>Count your blessings: List the kind things others have done for you.</p> 	<p>Create and then share a card or a piece of art with someone you love.</p> 	<p>Go outside and find one thing that reminds you of someone. Share what you find and your why.</p>	<p>Create a cell phone / device parking lot so you can enjoy device-free moments together each day.</p>	<p>Find a deck of cards and play a game like Crazy Eights, Spoons or Go Fish.</p> 
<p>Find a joke that you love and share it with 2 other people in person, by phone, or virtually.</p>	<p>Work together to plan a 3-course meal. Write down / draw each part of the meal to share as the menu for the evening.</p>	<p>Go outside and find materials to create a centerpiece for others to enjoy!</p> 	<p>Name 3 things you are grateful for. Draw a picture or write a list of these things and then post in a prominent place.</p>	<p>Work to create 5 "happy cards" for seniors that are in a local nursing home. Drop them off for them to enjoy.</p>	<p>While washing your hands look at yourself in the mirror and tell yourself one thing you like about YOU!</p>	<p>Do one act of kindness to make life easier for someone.</p> 
<p>Thank 3 people you are grateful to and tell them why.</p> 	<p>Smile at the people you are with to brighten their day.</p> 	<p>Learn one new thing today and share what you learned with someone.</p> 	<p>Choose a favorite song(s) and enjoy a spontaneous dance party.</p> 	<p>Get a deck or two of cards and build a home. Talk about what makes a home safe and what connects us to others.</p>	<p>Go outside and enjoy a game of "Red Light, Green Light." Be sure to run, walk, slide, jump and enjoy other creative ways to move.</p>	<p>Design and create a musical instrument. Enjoy a sharing concert.</p> 
<p>Ask someone to do what you LOVE to do today.</p> 	<p>Send a message or letter to someone you cannot be with today.</p> 	<p>Find a favorite book and read it or share it with someone.</p> 	<p>Enjoy a scavenger hunt with someone. Both write lists of 5 things the other person will look for, switch lists and then GO!</p>	<p>Notice 5 things that are beautiful within your world. Share your ideas with someone.</p> 	<p>Learn how to play hopscotch and then PLAY!</p> 	<p>Thank someone and tell them how they make a difference for you.</p> 

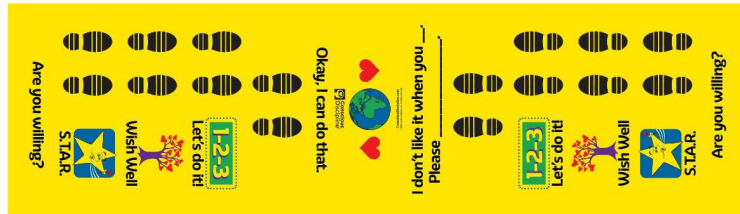
## ***PROBLEM SOLVING***

- Teach conflict resolution with social emotional books and tools like the **Conflict Resolution Time Machine**.
- Model prosocial skills and strategies (taking turns, setting boundaries, etc.) through social stories and brain-scaffolding visuals.



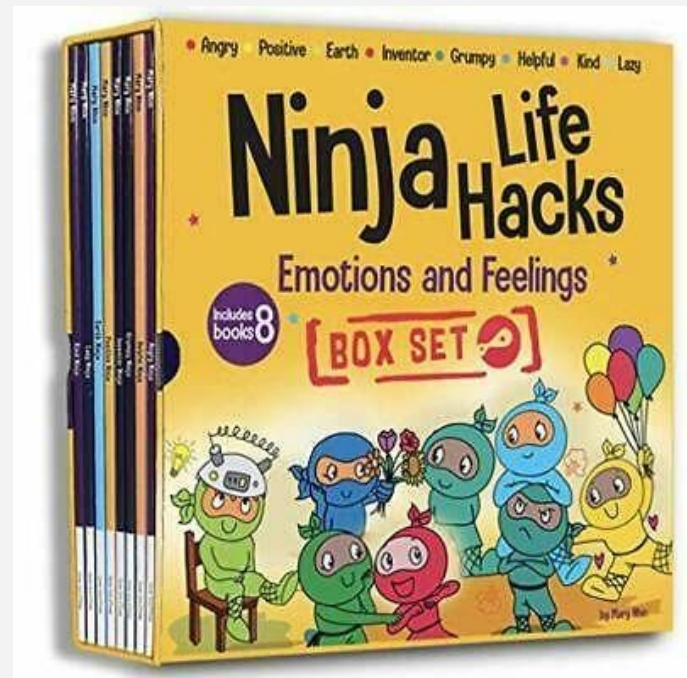
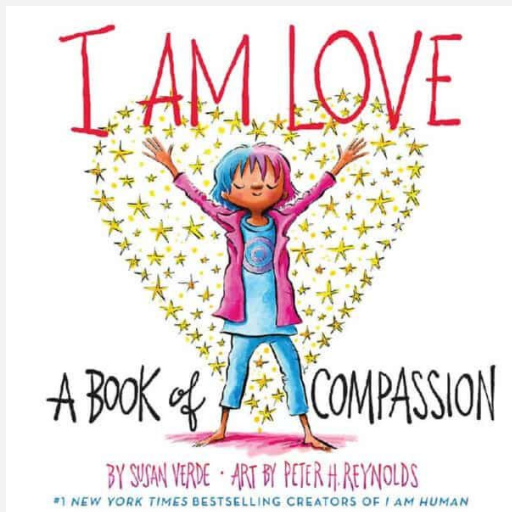
# Conflict Resolution Time Machine

The idea is that when a conflict occurs, we want to immediately pretend to go back in time and learn new skills that change the behavior from hurtful to helpful. There are seven basic steps for the Time Machine:



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# Yoga Whale

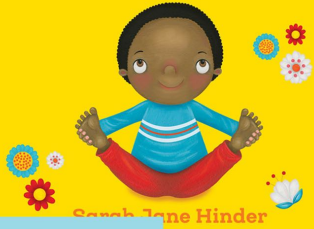
Simple Poses for Little Ones



Sarah Jane Hinder

# Yoga Bear

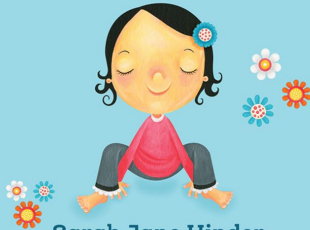
Simple Animal Poses for Little Ones



Sarah Jane Hinder

# Yoga Bug

Simple Poses for Little Ones



Sarah Jane Hinder

# Unicorn Yoga

\*5 fun unicorn yoga poses for kids\*



1. Shine like the **SUN**.

2. Pretend to be a **UNICORN**.



3. Flutter like a **BUTTERFLY**.

4. Blossom like a **FLOWER**.



5. Create a **RAINBOW**.

KIDS YOGA  
STORIES

# ZOO YOGA



I am an elephant.

WIDE-LEGGED STANDING FORWARD BEND



I am a crocodile.

PLANK POSE



I am a bear.

DOWNWARD-FACING DOG POSE



I am a tiger.

CAT POSE



I am a hippo.

CHILD'S POSE





### **Volcano Pose**

Say: "I can calm myself, when angry"

Stand with your feet together, bring your palms together in front of your chest. Inhale slowly and push up your hands, Exhale slowly and extended your arms to the side. Repeat three times.

### **Eagle Pose**

Say: "I am happy"

Stand with your feet together and bend your knees. Lift one leg and wrap it in front of your standing leg. Cross your arms in front of your chest and place your palms together. Take three deep breaths and repeat with the opposite side

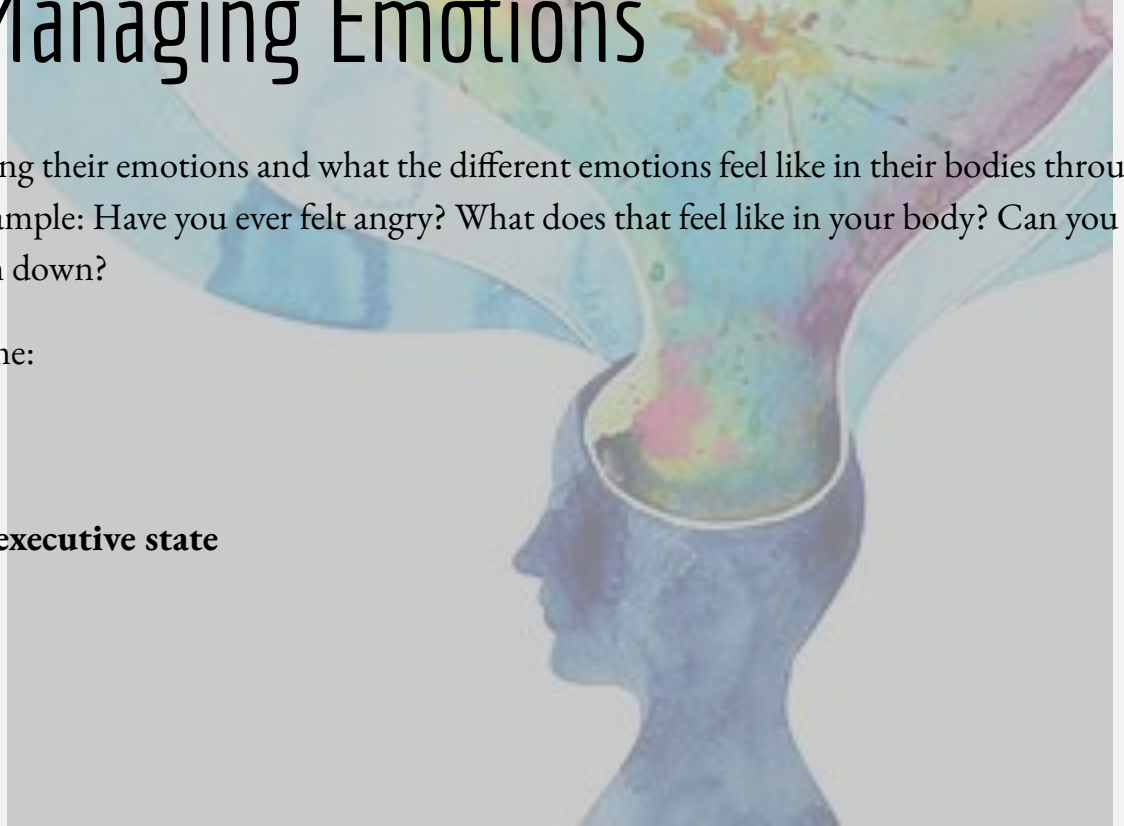


# Identifying and Managing Emotions

We work with your children on identifying their emotions and what the different emotions feel like in their bodies through our social-emotional curriculum. For example: Have you ever felt angry? What does that feel like in your body? Can you feel it in your stomach? What helps you calm down?

Resources for exploring emotions at home:

- **Zones of Regulation**
- **Social-Emotional Story Time**
- **Conversations once child is in executive state**





# How do you feel?



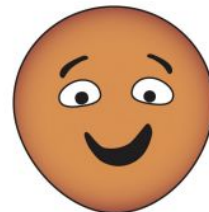
**Angry**



**Scared**



**Sad**



**Happy**



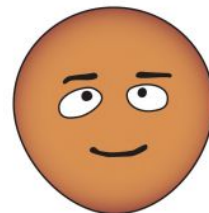
**Frustrated**



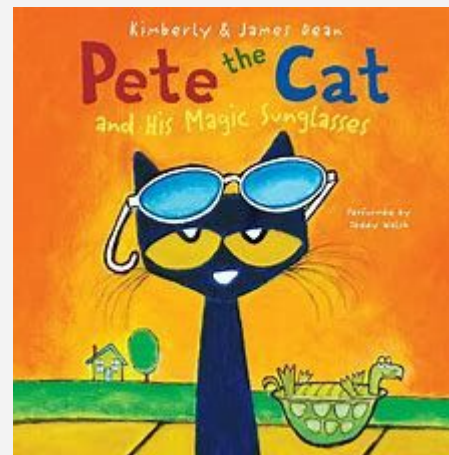
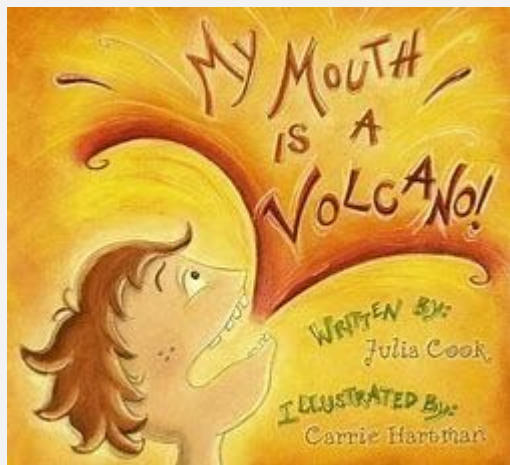
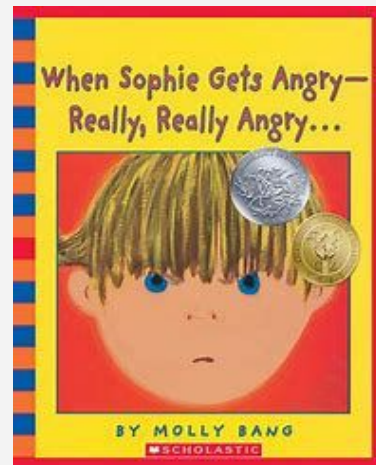
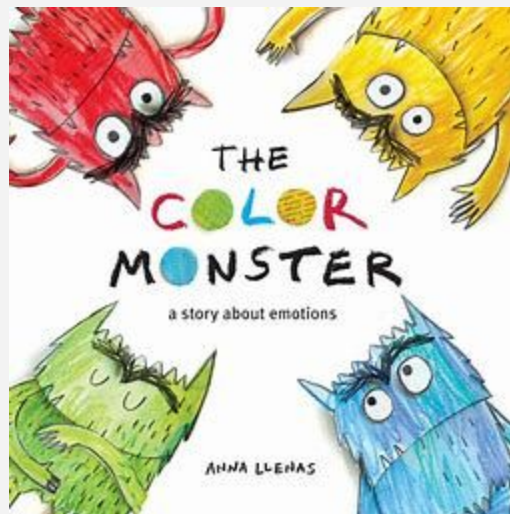
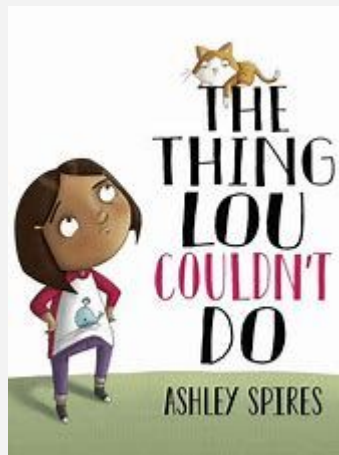
**Anxious**




**Disappointed**



**Calm**



A woman with curly hair is shown from the chest up, meditating with her eyes closed and hands pressed together in a prayer position. She is wearing a light-colored t-shirt. The background is a bright, slightly blurred indoor setting with vertical lines, possibly curtains. The text is overlaid on the image in a black serif font. There are decorative gold-colored L-shaped corner brackets in the top right and bottom left corners of the image area.

Be in touch with and regulate yourself  
throughout the process...

## GROUNDING TECHNIQUES

**Grounding techniques** can help you step away from negative, unwanted, worrisome, or anxious thoughts long enough to refocus on what is happening in the present moment. When your mind is racing, grounding brings you back to the here-and-now and can be very helpful in managing overwhelming feelings of anxiety. Grounding techniques help you focus on what is happening to you physically, either in your body or surroundings, instead of being trapped by the thoughts in your mind.

Grounding provides you with tools to self-regulate in moments of stress and anxiety as a gentle reminder to stay focused and anchored in the present moment, rather than worrying about things that may happen in the future or events that have already happened.

Take time to explore which grounding techniques are most helpful for you. Some people also find that deep breathing, light stretching, walking, exercise, listening to music, interacting with animals, and talking to a loved one can serve as effective grounding techniques.



### 5-4-3-2-1 (5 SENSES)

Sit comfortably, close your eyes and take a few deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. Now open your eyes and look around you. Name out loud:

#### 5 THINGS YOU CAN SEE

*Your hands, a window, the sky, a plant, etc.*

#### 4 THINGS YOU CAN FEEL

*Your feet on the ground, the chair, your clothes, etc.*

#### 3 THINGS YOU CAN HEAR

*The air conditioning, your breath, traffic, birds chirping, etc.*

#### 2 THINGS YOU CAN SMELL

*Coffee, the air, your lunch, etc.*

### GROUNDING CHAIR

Sit in a comfortable chair where your feet can reach the floor. Close your eyes and focus on your breath. Slowly breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Bring your mind and thoughts to your body.

*How does your body feel sitting in the chair? Scoot to the back of the seat, so your lower back is pressing into the back of the chair. Where do you feel the contact between your body and the surface of the chair? What does it feel like?*

*Touch the arms of the chair, the sides of the seat. Notice the texture. Press your arms down the length of the chair arm and notice how your hands hang off the end. If the chair doesn't have arms, notice how your arms hang at your side.*

*Push your feet into the ground imagining*

### OBJECT IN HAND

Find an object with a unique texture or something interesting to look at (a small rock, gem, crystal, key chain, etc.). You may want to keep this object in your pocket or purse.

Hold the object in your hand and bring all your focus to it. Pay attention to how the texture feels in your palm and under your fingers, notice any patterns or color variances, feel the temperature of the object compared to your hand, look at how light reflects on it, and feel how heavy or light it is in your hand.

Try to breathe slowly and deeply in through your nose and out through your mouth as you focus on the object in your hand.

**WHAT QUESTIONS  
DO YOU HAVE?**





**Next Time...**  
Emotional Spaces and  
Interactive Calming  
Techniques

