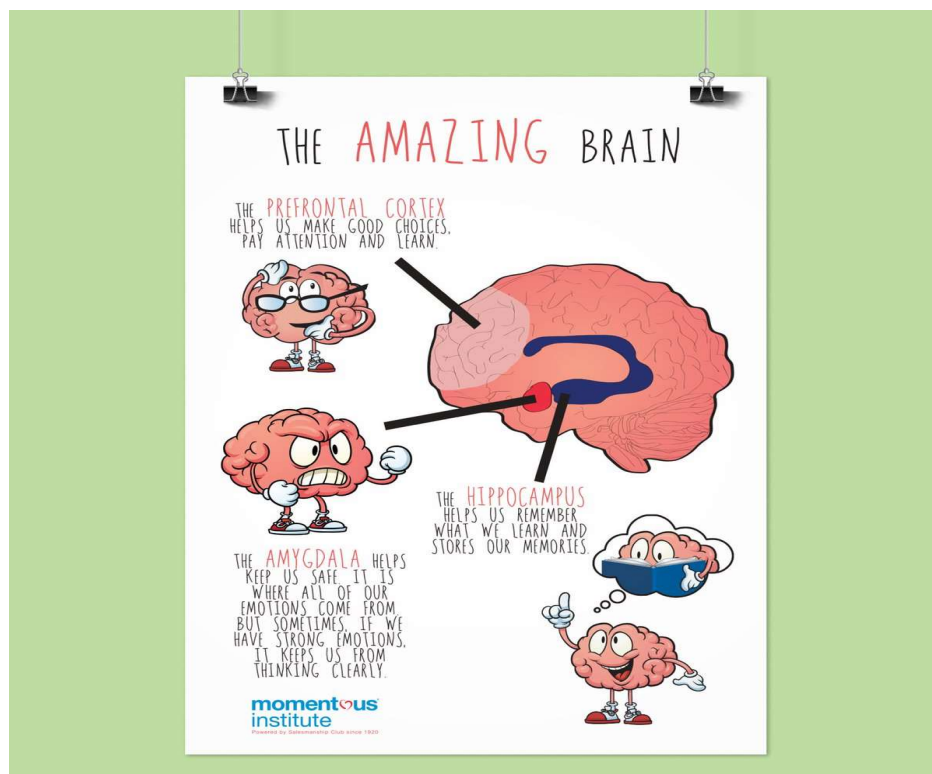




As a parent, understanding the links between the brain and behavior can be enlightening. We can see our children's behavior more objectively when we are able to put it into a biological context. An understanding of your child's developing brain can help to lower your parental frustration and increase the effectiveness of your responses. The **Amygdala, Hippocampus, and Pre-frontal Cortex** are parts of the brain that play a crucial role in understanding your child's behavior.



BIG FEELINGS

The picture below provides a snapshot of how children experience “big feelings”, and which areas of the brain are activated during each stage of behavior.



When children are able to connect their upstairs brain (pre-frontal cortex) with their downstairs brain (amygdala), they are able to regulate their behavior. As their caregiver, you can help them by “downloading your calm” onto them. Their mirror neurons will mimic your reaction to adversity, as well as to their “big feelings”. A combination of making sure you don’t “flip your lid”, understanding brain development, and implementing conscious discipline techniques will help

you child learn to self-regulate.

Conscious Discipline

Conscious Discipline empowers us to be **conscious** of **brain-body states** in ourselves and children. It then provides us with the practical skills we need to manage our thoughts, feeling and actions. With this ability to self-regulate, we are then able to teach children to do the same.

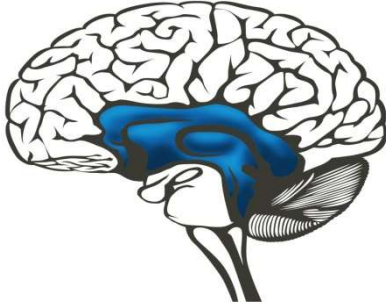


SURVIVAL STATE

BRAIN STEM

The Survival State represents the primal brain (fight or flight) and asks the question, “*Am I safe?*” The only way to soothe the Survival State is through the creation of *Safety*.

In a survival state where we feel triggered by threat, these skills are flight, fight or surrender. We can’t think clearly to add 45 plus 68 when a tiger is chasing us. In the modern world, the tiger may be a disrespectful child, but our brain’s evolutionary skill set is the same: fight, flight or surrender.



Emotional State

LIMBIC SYSTEM

This Brain State represents mid-level functionality and asks the question, “*Am I loved?*” The only way to soothe an upset emotional state is through *Connection*.

Emotional State is our response to upset – and can only be soothed through connection. An upset emotional state is triggered by the world not going our way. It limits our ability to see from another’s point of view. This upset, unconscious state keeps us on autopilot so our words and tone match those of key authority figures from our childhood. We revert to disciplining the same ways we were disciplined, even if we know these behaviors to be ineffective or hurtful.



Executive State

PREFRONTAL LOBES

The Executive State represents the optimal state for problem-solving and learning. This Brain State asks the question, “*What can I learn from this?*”

Conscious Discipline empowers us to be conscious of brain-body states in ourselves and children. It then provides us with the practical skills we need to manage our thoughts, feeling and actions. With this ability to self-regulate, we are able to teach children to do the same. By doing this, we help children who are physically aggressive (survival state) or verbally aggressive (emotional state) become more integrated so they can learn and use problem-solving skills (executive state). When we understand the brain state model, we can clearly see the

importance of building our homes, schools and businesses on the core principles of safety, connection and problem-solving.

Executive State is the optimal state for problem-solving and learning. As we learn to regulate and integrate our internal state to be one of relaxed alertness, we are able access our own brilliance. We are empowered to change and make wise choices. An integrated executive state frees us from past conditioning, attunes us to the feelings and experiences of others, enables us to remain focused enough to set and achieve goals, and allows us to consciously respond instead of automatically react to life events.



I Love You Rituals

Cooperation Follows Connection

I Love You Rituals are designed to accomplish four specific goals:

Increases dopamine

Encourages conscious touching

Creates strong bonds

Creates loving rituals

Twinkle Twinkle



Round and Round Goes the Teddy Bear



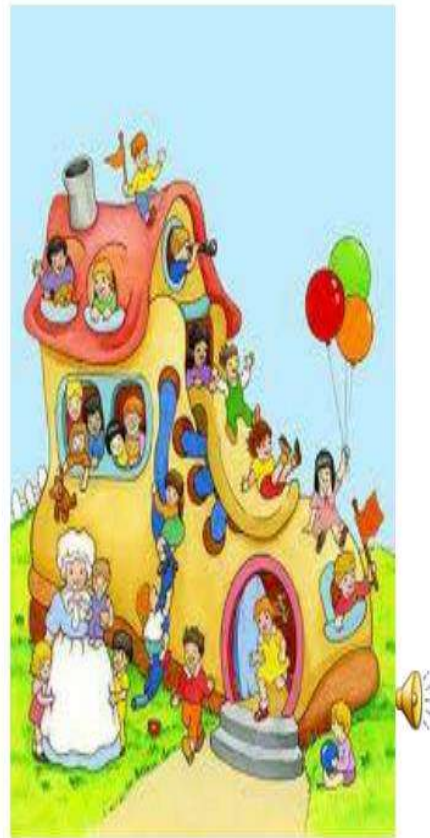
Round and Round Goes Teddy Bear,
One Step,
Two Step,
Tickle You Under There!

Wonderful Woman

I Love You Ritual

A Wonderful Woman Who Lived in a Shoe

A wonderful woman lived in a shoe.
She had so many children
She knew exactly what to do.
She held them,
She rocked them,
And tucked them in bed.
"I love you, I love you,"
Is what she said.



At the start of your child's tantrum **SAY...**

Your (face, arm, hand)
is going like this...

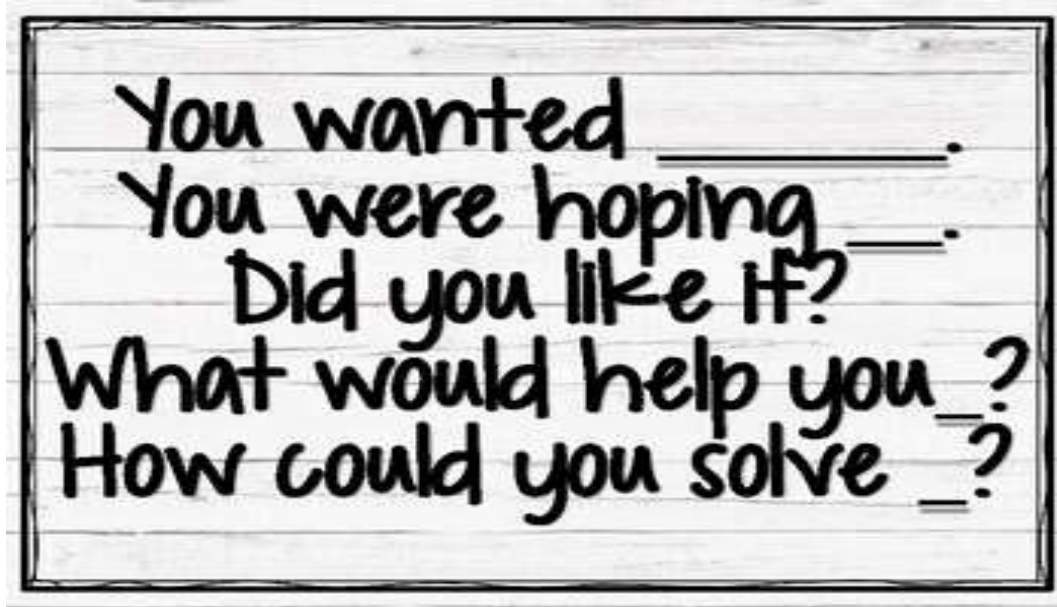
You're safe. Breathe.
You can handle this.

When they look at you finally, **SAY...**

You seem_____.

You have a choice. You
may ___ or ___. What is
best for you?

When they are calm, **SAY...**



Most importantly...

You are learning a special and effective parenting technique in which you are modeling emotional regulation and problem solving skills you desire for them to implement. Make sure you take deep breaths in order to remain calm and avoid “flipping your lid”. When we flip our lid, we have activated the part of the brain that activates when we have a stressful problem to solve. Sometimes the emotional brain and the rational brain are unable to communicate well. The emotions of the midbrain are simply too overwhelming, our fight-or-flight reflex triggers, and we “flip our lids”. If we do so, our children will do the same. Stay calm and breathe deeply.