

The Whole-Brain Child

A QUICK GUIDE FOR BUSY PARENTS

LEFT BRAIN = LOGICAL PART
RIGHT BRAIN = EMOTIONAL PART

UPSTAIRS BRAIN = SOPHISTICATED, ANALYTICAL
DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN = PRIMITIVE, REACTIVE

CONNECT AND RE-DIRECT

When your child is upset:

1. CONNECT FIRST
RIGHT BRAIN TO
RIGHT BRAIN
eg, loving touch,
empathy, validate their
feelings, listen, reflect
2. REDIRECT WITH
LEFT BRAIN

When they are more
receptive, involve child in
making amends

EXERCISE MINDSIGHT

GIVE TOOLS +
STRATEGIES TO
CALM THEMSELVES
eg, taking calm breaths,
visualising a calm place

NAME IT TO TAME IT

USE LEFT-BRAIN
STORY TELLING
to help them understand
what is upsetting them +
feel more in control

CONNECT THROUGH CONFLICT

USE CONFLICT AS AN
OPPORTUNITY TO
TEACH KIDS

ENJOY EACH OTHER

FAMILY FUN +
ENJOYABLE RITUALS
creates positive
memories

ENGAGE, DON'T ENRAGE

In high stress situations:
APPEAL TO THE
UPSTAIRS BRAIN
Keep them thinking and
listening rather than just
reacting

FEELINGS COME AND GO

LET THE CLOUDS OF
EMOTION ROLL BY
Help children
understand that
negative feelings are
temporary

SIFT

Teach kids to explore
SENSATIONS
IMAGES
FEELINGS
THOUGHTS
inside them to help
them understand and
change their experience

REWIND AND REMEMBER

After a difficult event
USE THE REMOTE OF
THE MIND TO PAUSE,
REWIND AND FAST-
FORWARD
to help them process
what happened

REMEMBER TO REMEMBER

GIVE KIDS PRACTICE
AT REMEMBERING
to help integrate implicit
and explicit memories
e.g. important and
valuable moments of
their lives

USE IT OR LOSE IT

EXERCISE THE
UPSTAIRS BRAIN
eg, give choices, practice
solving problems with
them, practice controlling
emotions, build self-
understanding, consider
other's feelings

MOVE IT OR LOSE IT

When kids are reactive
ENCOURAGE
PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES
to shift their emotional
state and reconnect with
their upstairs brain