

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

NAME IT TO TAME IT

USE LEFT-BRAIN

STORY TELLING

to help them understand
what is upsetting them +
feel more in control

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

ENGAGE, DON'T ENRAGE

In high stress situations:

APPEAL TO THE
UPSTAIRS BRAIN

Keep them thinking and
listening rather than just
reacting

MOVE IT OR LOSE IT

When kids are reactive

ENCOURAGE

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

to shift their emotional
state and reconnect with
their upstairs brain

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

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

EXERCISE MINDSIGHT

GIVE TOOLS +
STRATEGIES TO
CALM THEMSELVES

eg, taking calm breaths,
visualising a calm place

CONNECT THROUGH CONFLICT

USE CONFLICT AS AN
OPPORTUNITY TO
TEACH KIDS

ENJOY EACH OTHER

FAMILY FUN +

ENJOYABLE RITUALS

creates positive
memories