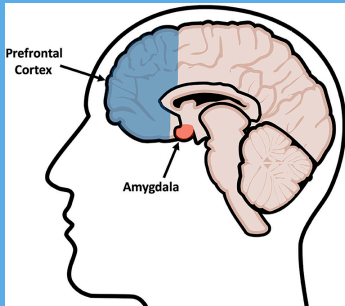


The **FUN**amentals of **NEUROSCIENCE**

The brain-based approach to teaching & parenting



These two parts of the brain are most important when it comes to your child's success in school. Your **pre-frontal cortex** is the wise leader of your brain in charge of higher-level thinking, focus, and attention. Your **amygdala** is your security guard that activates your stress response and regulates emotions.

When we feel threatened our amygdala takes over our brain making it hard for us to make good decisions because the PFC shuts down. Our brain is wired to pay attention to negative situations because it helps us react to danger. When we fail a test or argue with a friend the amygdala sends signals to the rest of our brain & body to prepare for fight, flight or freeze. Once this stress response is activated, the thinking part of the brain shuts down and puts a stop to learning. This survival instinct feels overwhelming in the moment, but there are strategies we teach kids that help us to pause and reflect before “flipping our lid.” These self-regulating skills help to rewire new neural pathways that helps us regain control of our brain which positively impacts your child’s social, emotional, and academic performance.

Strategies for keeping your PFC in control:

- **deep breathing-** close your eyes and try the 5 finger breath, tracing each finger while breathing in as your finger traces up and breathe out as your finger traces down
- **practice mindfulness-** designate a quiet place in your home where your child can relax and calm down with their favorite blanket or stuffie and listen to calming music
- **walking-** spending time outside helps to calm our nervous system & regulates breathing
- **exercise-** moving your body signals to your brain that you are safe and helps release “feel good” chemicals like endorphins, improves sleep, and helps to grow neurons
- **screen time-** limiting screen time before school primes your child's brain for learning by regulating their dopamine levels which helps with focus and impulse control
- **drink water-** staying hydrated is important for your brain to function at its highest potential and helps electrical signals among neurons

Our brain thrives on 3 basic foundations of feeling safe, loved and a sense of belonging. One simple thing you can do to ensure your child feels all 3 is by prioritizing 6 minutes of connection with your child each day. Research shows that spending 3 minutes in the morning and 3 minutes in the evening talking, hugging, reading together or having quality time with your child is the best way to boost their confidence and self-esteem. This special time together releases feel good chemicals that prepare your child’s brain to approach the day with a positive mindset in the morning. Then releases calming chemicals that prepare them to ease into a restful night of sleep as their brain processes all their learning from the day.