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There are no announcements for this course.

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Teacher - Introduction

Brain Train

Brain Train is based on the philosophy of boosting the natural development of self-regulation and attention behaviours in children with explicit and specific strategic instruction. The Brain Train curriculum targets building awareness of brain and body functions by engaging children in activities designed to offer practice opportunities in a natural classroom environment. Brain Train is the child component of a carer-training program where carers (parents and teachers) learn parenting strategies designed to boost their thinking skills and parenting/caregiving abilities for everyday situations. Brain Train introduces concepts to the children to support caregivers in making positive changes in the home and school environment.

Each parent's module begins with an overview of what their children will be doing in Brain Train that week. This communicates to caregivers what their children are experiencing and may be trying on their own at home. Brain Train infuses many of the parent strategies into the child curriculum as well to create a cohesive program where children experience and practice new skills in a class setting, and hopefully have these new skills supported at home since parents are learning what the children are practicing each week.

The parent-training program and the Brain Train run weekly for 8 weeks, with a weekly introduction for parents. Parent learning is online. Children participate in the Brain Train for 40-45 minutes each week as part of their kindergarten classroom. Some other activities can be executed throughout the week with all children, besides the specific Brain Train session.

For the Brain Train, there should be one main instructor (who must be a registered teacher) and one or two assistants (who could be also qualified teachers or educators). Some activities are conducted as a class group, some in smaller groups, depending on the assistance available. All teachers/educators are expected to understand the principles underlying each activity to allow for minor modifications based on the child's needs, while also maintaining high fidelity to the original program. There are weekly meetings with the researcher to outline the plan for the week, and the focus points, and answer questions. There are also videos of previous iterations available to view the actual flow of the class and to become familiar with some of the techniques used to help Brain Train children stay on track. Teachers must check each week that all materials are ready and organised before each session.

The core components and supporting activities include:

1. Positive social interaction, communication exercises, and modelling.
2. Self-regulation of attention, emotion exercises, and modelling.
3. Focused attention exercises with modelling: auditory, visual, and kinaesthetic modalities.
4. Dealing with distraction: exercises and modelling.
5. Child metacognition and awareness of attention and emotions.

Something for you to reconnect with what self-regulation is and how you can reflect upon it for your well-being before starting on the Brain Train journey

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Teacher - Curriculum Guidelines

Kindergarten (aligned with the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guide, 2024)	File BT_QKLG_EYLF_alignment_planning_June_2024.pdf could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.
Foundation curriculum (aligned with ACARA v9.0, 2022)	File ACARA mapping BT_550:27:2882.docx could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.

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Teacher - Brain Train Weekly sessions' Plans & Materials

Instructions

File BWPS_Brain Train summary sessions.docx could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.

[Access all materials to print \(inclusive of parent newsletters\).](#)

Some materials and resources will need printing and, if possible, laminating.

Books, scenarios, and final crafts should be adapted to children's needs and interests, as well as local community events and classroom themes.

Sessions	Themes	Notes (crafts can be changed according to needs time of year)
File BT_Session_0_MG_V2.0-1.docx could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.	Introduction	Squishy brains provided by the researcher. File BT_Australian_Adaptation_MG_2024_Activity Icons.pdf could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access. and laminate. Children may help cut them and apply magnetic strips at the back.
File BT_Session_1_MG_V2.0.docx could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.	Brain, Body, Focus	File Making Connections Body to Brain_Student version.pdf could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.to print out.
File BT_Session_2_MG_V2.0.docx could not be included in the	Breath, emotions, oh well (resilience)	Crafts' materials to print out.

ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.		
File BT_Session_3_MG_V2.0.docx could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.	Sharing feelings, resilience, praise, focus	File Thank you for beeing great.pdf could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access. to print out.
File BT_Session_4_MG_V2.0.docx could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.	Distractions (understanding and resisting), emotions	File t-t-22556-make-a-mood-monster-resource-pack_ver_1.pdf could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access. to print out
File BT_Session_5_MG_V2.0.docx could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.	Breath, resilience, distraction, focus	File balloon-counting-to-10-activity-sheet_ver_1.pdf could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access. to print out, another File t-tp-2660564-balloon-colouring-patterns_ver_3.pdf could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.
File BT_Session_6_MG_V2.0.docx could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.	Persistence, focus, visual distractions	File Train Craft 2.docx could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.
File BT_Session_7_MG_V2.0.docx could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.	Praise, focus, auditory distractions, strategy review	Materials to make own bracelets
File BT_Session_8_MG_v2.0.docx could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.	Summary review, Distractions, Praise	Materials to make own crowns (Twinkl)

Posters

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Teacher - Core Components

File Brain_Train_Teacher Training Manual_V2.0 final.docx could not be included in the ePub document. Please see separate zip file for access.

1. Positive social interaction, and communication exercises with modelling.
2. Self-regulation of attention, and emotion exercises with modelling.
3. Focused attention exercises with modelling: auditory, visual, and kinaesthetic modalities.
4. Dealing with distraction: exercises with modelling.
5. Child metacognition/ awareness of attention and emotions.

Strategic Elements

Class Rules Poster – Picture-based rules

Teachers and children create the rules poster together OR use existing classroom expectations.

Teachers must know important rules they want to be included under the 3 main topics in advance. The 3 main topics should be listed on paper: “Safe bodies, safe feelings, safe play”.

Engage the children by asking open questions, ***“What are you not allowed to do with your bodies in school?”***

Use a CAN and CANNOT system.

Always brainstorm items on the “Can’t” first list since children will have fun being silly about things they can’t do. This way the silly ideas will hopefully get out of their system first.

Next, ask children, ***“What are you allowed to do with your bodies at school?”***

Last, be sure to state clear consequences for each “Can’t” and “Can”.

Brain Chart - Visual record of specific praise. Iconic reminder of strategies for children.

Each child gets a brain chart at the start of each session with their name on it.

The icons on the brain chart reflect the new strategies to focus on for that week.

Also use the brain chart to emphasise the strategy(ies) to focus on for the current activity.

Help children tune in to each strategy by asking them to point to the specific icons on the chart.

At the beginning of the 8 weeks, explicitly state the strategy that will be used. Later scaffold the learning so you ask the child to tell you what behaviour is being practiced.

Promote self-monitoring/ meta-awareness by asking children to think about which strategy they are going to give themselves a stamp for at the end of each activity.

Brain Train – Daily Schedule – Tool to help children know the plan and keep to the plan.

Daily plan is displayed using activity icons on a laminated screen.

Consistent communication of the daily plan each week gives the child a sense of control.

Predictable environments are less stressful. Children will learn what to expect each week.

When a child is distracted by a later activity, point to the iconic plan and remind them, ***“We will do that later, but we’re doing ‘this’ first.”***

Attention Behaviours – Awareness of eyes, ears, body, brain, breath, emotion/attitude.

Emphasise that the brain is a muscle, and we are going to exercise it!

Talk about brain size, basic function, location (general awareness).

Input goes to the brain from eyes/ears, but we each tell our brain what to focus eyes/ears on.

The child is in charge of their brain – therefore in charge of entire self.

Give example of something they recently learned (tie shoes, ride bike, write their names) and point out that they used their brain to learn this, and they can learn anything by using their brain.

Breathe “Bird breath”- Breathe to calm down, breathe to focus, breathe to think.

Activities used for breath awareness: pinwheel, balloons, dancing, and bubbles.

Breathe deeply into the belly. Have the children feel their bellies as they inhale.

Breathe to feed your brain for thinking (like eating to feed your body for moving).

Breathing happens naturally, but we can also control our breath.

Monitor heart and breath before and after songs and dancing.

Point out that a calm body = calm breath; fast body = fast breath.

Continually remind children to take a bird breath before or during activities.

It’s important to include shrugging the shoulders, wiggling toes, raising/shaking hands to engage the whole body as much as possible.

Emotional Awareness – Develop language to facilitate emotional awareness, communication and control.

Introduce emotion poster to discuss common emotions. If you can leave this clearly visible in the BT classroom, better.

Emotion Bingo – focuses on emotions with stories describing emotions.

Emotion Snap – game of emotions where children choose a strategy for situations.

Mimic emotional faces to see what friends look like when they feel specific emotions.
Elicit to notice what their hands and body parts do when they feel different emotions (fists, tight belly, hot, hyper, lips, eyebrow, etc.).

Teachers need to be aware of “Emotional Saturation”, which is when a child is overrun by emotion - happy or sad. At this point children cannot hear or learn. This is when acknowledging emotions and leave children alone in safe space is best.

Focused Attention – Flashlight of Attention, On “Target”.

Practice focusing bodies and eyes by throwing beanbags to targets.

Refer to target as an icon for focusing attention (visual, auditory, physical).

May want to use a flashlight as a tool to describe signal enhancement/distractor suppression.

Signal enhancement = focusing; Distractor suppression = ignoring

This is a great prop to use when introducing activities that will require a lot of focus.

Flashlight can be used to demonstrate that attention gets brighter on objects when your brain focuses on it, while other things around become dimmer when ignored.

Distractions – Child becomes aware of audio/visual distractions and what to do about it.

The ability to ignore distractions in the environment is critical to being able to pay attention. We need to develop this skill explicitly to the best of our ability.

Begin with extreme distractions to demonstrate what a “distraction” feels like.

Puppets introduce distractions while child “focuses” on a physical activity.

Children each have turn to be a distraction to experience both perspectives of a distraction.

Later activities include the children focusing on a mental activity, while others perform distracting physical activity to simulate real-life school setting.

We can also label real-life distractions that arise throughout the session (a child throwing a fit, baby crying in the hall, someone at the door of the classroom).

Oh Well, I can... - Strategy to deal with frustration and move on to “Can do” options.

Help children become aware of anger, sadness, frustration – and what to do about it.

Breathe deeply and shrug while saying aloud, “**Oh Well, I can _____.**”

Emphasise that this is a strategy used to deal with frustration, not to get out of responsibilities.

Children need to practice this strategy when they are not “emotionally saturated”.

Cue, “Oh well...” and more importantly, “I can _____.”

It is really important to instil the concept that we all have options in life and are not stuck with whatever situation happens (good lesson for now and later in life).

Quiet as a Mouse – Tactile/Visual sign to communicate it is time to listen.

Children learn they can teach others to be quiet and pay attention.
This is a strategy for children to be empowered to deal with real-life distractions.
Icons on brain chart to remind/praise children for being quiet and listening.
Prompt children before books or focused listening activities that they can use this strategy.
Can be introduced with a puppet or a poster.

Waiting - Tap your foot, twiddle your thumbs, cross your arms, fold your hands, breathe.

Reinforce explicitly the power of waiting and the effort it takes: while playing games, at the water fountain, waiting for brain stamps, waiting for turns with bubbles and crafts.
Cue children to use their brain to breathe and think about how it feels for their body to be calm while waiting.
Practice during self-control song, by saying all the different situations that they are already good at waiting, or when they can be aware that waiting involved in the present situation.

Dispute Bag – Roll the dice

Hand each child a die and tell them that the higher or lower # gets the desire this time.
Removes adult arbitration over small disagreements, teaches that life is not always fair.
Children can practice numeracy skills in a fun way and help deal with frustrations.

Picture Notes – Use as a picture-based communication tool that supports attention to task.

Visual and tactile cue to create structure with clear communication.
Use when child wants something *NOW* (draw picture and say that is for later).
Create a timeline or structure of events that will be happening soon.
Use when child is having trouble leaving an activity. Draw the item and ask where they want the note to be kept as a reminder to come back to it later.
Draw the picture slowly and use lots of words to describe the steps or situation. Children will actually remember the grammar you use as well as the idea you are explaining.

Visualisation - Create an expectation by visualising the outcome.

“Before we leave, look at your feet and imagine yourself walking all the way to class.”

State behaviours that you expect to see by essentially telling the children what they will do.

You can also offer a choice about how they see themselves doing the thing that you asked.

Harry and Larry – Puppets teaching inhibitory control and strategies.

Harry and Larry introduce new ideas, review strategies, and play a “Simon Says” like game.

Puppets capture attention to teach/ review strategies from a perspective other than the teacher.

Puppet vignettes are loosely scripted and require teacher dramatisation.

Use social stories from the classroom to share with children and H/L may need help that children need to give.

Cartoon review – Cartoons provide a visual for children to more easily consider a common scenario.

Concrete scenarios of classroom and home environments that depict a scenario that children can think about how they might deal with that particular situation (e.g., someone is not letting them play with them, they accidentally ruin someone’s artefact or craft or Lego, etc).

Used to generalise and review the use of resilience and metacognitive strategies, and also discuss emotions and solutions.

Jobs - Line Leader, Rememberer, Plan Person, Helper, Choice Trains, Sticker Server

The most important job to the children is usually the line leader.

You can always create additional responsibilities for the high-needs children.

Assigning roles assists in inhibitory control – they must maintain their own role.

Allows children a turn in monitoring self and others to maintain job.

Gives children sense of responsibility.

Songs

Many children will be excited to hear that we listen to them on Brain Train.

Stop... I've got Self - Con - Trol: Control of bodies, breath and brain

Main teaching point - there are different speeds which we can move, act and think. The song engages children to listen and react to changing tempo, energy and verbal directions.

You can use a poster: red, yellow, green icons that represent the parts of the self-regulation song.

Discuss different situations in the children's lives when they go fast, slow and stop.

The song provides building blocks for controlling voice volume, carefully riding a bike and introducing specific activities.

Reinforce, "Stop!" with the hand signal. Children can use this signal to communicate with others.

Great song for children to get excess energy out when needed.

You can play music statues too (interrupting the song as it goes, and asking children to stay put in the position they are). This trains their self-control.

Stop and Think: go slow take time to think of self and others.

Use bunny and turtle puppets to act out the song, emphasise gestures.

Decide on gestures for stop, think, how about me.

Children will enjoy singing along the second time as you listen the first day.

After the song, cue taking a breath when thinking in other situations other than Brain Train.

I feel... Because... And...: Communicate emotions and needs

Provides multi-sensory activity for emotional awareness and communication.

Shake head "No", with fists up, shake head "Yes" as talking with hands mimicking two people talking (say loudly over, "fighting is not the solution", instead say "Talk about it.").

Cue listening to the words of the song and point to the poster of, "I feel...Because...And"

Give examples of emotional situations for children and ask how they would feel.

ADAPTATION – More suggestions will be given throughout the BT sessions for more songs and dance activities. Many will also follow children's interests when possible.

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Teacher - Teaching Strategies

Slow Intros – Practice sustained attention

Don't rush the explanation. Keep children engaged and curious before letting them jump into it. This allows them to practice self-regulation while building motivation and understanding for the activity.

Start by showing children the object or activity "Yes, you will get one in a moment." Don't say no.

Demonstrate with no words or few words so they use eyes and brains, not ears.

Ask children to raise their hands if they believe they can do it and choose one child to demonstrate.

Ask other children to observe and point out what the one child is doing well.

Metacognitive Awareness - prompts and questions (avoid closed, empty questions)

Teachers should consider first how they think, learn, and remember. This process will help you understand how to ask good questions.

Consider the entire task: learning opportunities that will happen before, during, and after. What is new knowledge, ***"What did you already know about doing this?"***

"How did you remember that from last week?"

"Great job figuring that out, how did you keep working on that so long?"

"What were you thinking to keep your body so controlled?"

Predictability and Consistency – reduce stress through clear consistent communication.

Always give warnings before transitions, 3-5 minutes before leaving, then again just before leaving

Give a warning before ending Brain Train activities (1 more turn, 2 more throws, etc.) This simply respects the children's process of learning and eases the transition.

Maintain consistent limits while referring to class rules.

Use consistent questions when asking about how children are thinking and feeling.

Bridging - Generalising strategies to the home and classroom

Listen to the children's stories to get to know the children and their families to relate examples to home.

Give examples and ask children for examples from their home environment.

Ask if they have seen these posters or heard the songs with their parents to bridge to home.

Cartoon reviews assist in establishing a common situation to help the children consider how they could respond with a strategy to a specific challenging scenario.

Multi-sensory activities and cues

Activities are categorised as K, V, A, or M (Kinaesthetic, Visual, Auditory, mental/metacognition/memory).

Refer to brain chart and other posters often in hopes that parents have put these posters up at home and children can be reminded about strategies outside of Brain Train.

All lessons are designed to include a variety of multi-sensory activities to keep a balance between physical and mental activities (breathing in, breathing out).

Scaffolding – teacher demonstrates, teacher child share responsibility, and child performs the new skill.

Teacher cues specific strategy or behaviour verbally and visually.

Clearly state the situation, and give options of strategies for the child to choose.

Clearly state the situation, and ask what might be options about how to deal.

Scaffolding is used within an individual activity, as well as across sessions for activities and strategy cueing.

Small Group – (and smaller groups)

Split the group in half to form smaller groups to allow more individualised instruction.

Group by ability/maturation/personality (think ahead to decide who needs to be separated).

While practising distractions, two smaller groups allow one group to focus on an academic activity while the other group creates purposeful distractions.

Communicate with the other teacher by calling out, "We'll be done in a couple of minutes."

Role-Play/ Role Model – more effective than any words or directions you can give.

Teachers or puppets may introduce or demonstrate strategy use.

Children role-play scenarios to kinaesthetically experience and practice.

It will be key to provide cues and instruction as the children role-play.

The child participating, as well as those who might be watching will benefit from both perspectives.

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Teacher - Emotional Saturation: What it is and How to Manage

Emotional Saturation – being overwhelmed

Be aware when a child has completely turned off, with either high levels of positive or negative emotions. Either way, their amygdala is not working or communicating with their hippocampus: this means they are not able to use reasoning or recall information previous learnt.

As you become familiar with the children, you may be able to catch their energy level early on and help them take Bird breaths get a drink of water or simply take a little break before they erupt.

Again, think of choices to offer: **“2 or 3 breaths?” “Big drink or a few small sips?”**

Don't try to talk, explain or discipline at this point. It's a waste of time. Just wait until they are calm.

When a child (or adult) is overwhelmed (saturated), they are not using their brain to think. It is necessary for the child to have practice with strategies when calm for them to be able to try when they're mad or sad. Children will not learn a strategy while in the throes of a tantrum.

*Also, it is important to be aware of the emotional saturation that you may bring to the class from personal situations. It's effective to model taking a breath or verbalising your emotions.

Strategies:

Specific response/reinforcement (you may have asked for compliance):

“Thanks for doing what I asked. You did a great job picking that up, moving it, and finding a safe place.”

“Thanks for helping. You helped push the cart for 25 steps!”

“Nice job setting the table for morning tea. You put the plates in perfect spots.”

“Thanks for remembering your colouring book.”

Catch the Good (the preferred behaviours, the work ethic behaviours), this can be via praising or just noticing:

“Great job sharing! I saw you take turns and not grabbing.”

“You are doing a great job sitting on your bottom.”

“Even though it is loud, you heard me. What a great listener you are!”

“Thanks for trying that again not giving up. You are a great helper!”

“Your body is calm and under control. Nice job keeping track of your feet/hands/arms.”

“You kept trying trying! You have a great brain!”

“You sure are good at staying focused! Where did you learn how to pay attention like that?!”

“I can’t believe how hard you worked on that! You did a great job solving that problem!”

Avoid Meaningless questions such as:

“Are you ready for morning tea?” (no)

“Do you want to go outside?” (no)

“Do you want to come with me?” (no)

“Should we clean up and go?” (no)

Add choices / options (which you can allow):

“Are you ready to go? ... *revise* ...in 2 minutes or 3 minutes?”

“ Do you want to go to bed?... *revise*...in 5 minutes or 6 minutes?”

And favour clear statements with choices, such as:

It’s time for afternoon tea... you can carry the fruit platter or the jugs of water.

Please wash your hands... you can use the bathroom or the kitchen.

Time to clean up in the classroom... you can help me with the chairs or the desks.

Please get dressed to go home... you can start with your backpack or tidying up the desk.

Please use a low voice in the classroom... you can whisper or talk like a quiet robot.

Please don’t run inside the classroom... you can walk forwards or backwards.

Please don’t jump on the desk or chair... you can jump outside on the trampoline or jump on the floor for a few seconds.

Please get your activity bag... you can pack one book or two.

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Teacher - Challenging Behaviours Strategies

Change behaviours

1. Bring awareness to behaviour.

1. Talk about behaviour, and connect with class rules, use terms such as CAN and CANNOT.
2. Present new behaviour (teacher demo, puppets, child role-play).
3. The child tries new behaviour (child role-play, activity designed for practice with strategy).
4. Praise or notice.

2. Monitor behaviour.

1. The teacher cues a new strategy verbally or visually with a poster or image (stimulus).
2. Children monitor one another (naturally or during role-play).
3. Child monitors self (using a monitor sheet, or other external mediator).
4. Reward behaviour with specific praise (verbal and visual on brain chart).

3. Change behaviour.

1. The child may self-correct during the activity.
2. Pre-correct with teacher cueing or self-cued (think about the task before and choose a strategy).
3. Reward with specific praise and possibly a stamp on their brain sheet.

Behaviour Strategies to Use While Teaching

Lots of choices – Choices empower and give practice in real thinking options.

The choices you offer must be acceptable to you but don't need to be important choices. The more choices that you give to children, the more "sense of control" they will feel.

“We are going to walk down the hall. Do you want to hold this hand or this hand”.
“Time to clean up. Do you want to put this away by yourself, or should I help?”
“Time for lunch. Are you going to sit on the red or green chair?”
“Time to listen. Do you want to sit on your chair or this pillow?”

Clearly define what IS NOT, and what IS an option – And keep it consistent!

These Can't/Cans should be clearly defined on the rules' poster, but new things always come up, so it's good to state expectations with each activity or situation clearly. Phrase clear statements stating what the children CAN do, and choices about HOW to do it.

“Playing with that is not an option now, you can give it to me or put it away by yourself.”

“Running isn't a choice, you can walk on your toes or your heels”

“Eating on the carpet is not an option. You can sit at the table here or there.”

Clear expectations with choices – No Empty or Leading Questions

Do not ask children if they are ready to go, or if they want to do something. This creates power struggles. Be clear about what is to happen, and provide a controlled choice if possible: ***“It's time to go. Do you want to hold my hand or walk by yourself?”***

This is not authoritarian when you include a choice for “HOW” to do it.

Children will appreciate the clarity while also being involved in the process.

Specific praise - point out exactly what they are doing and tell them it's great.

It would be difficult to give too much specific praise. Be authentic and support positive behaviours, especially with children who may typically have a lot of behavioural problems.

“Great job taking a breath to calm yourself.”

“Way to use your brain to think of a solution to share that toy.”

Specific praise communicates desired behaviours to the child.

Specific praise also boosts the child's self-esteem more effectively than general praise.

Praising children who are behaving well keeps other children focused and makes others want to do the desired behaviour and receive positive attention. Otherwise, they will likely act out in hopes of getting negative attention. Negative attention will continue a negative cycle and create more negativity.

Specific noticing – observations that give neutral attention without any judgement

Develop rapport with the quiet, shy or tough kid using observations with no judgment. Start with a smile, but DO NOT praise/judge (that's cool, smart, high, fast, etc.)

“You have Batman on your shoes.”

“You both have pink on your shirts.”

“You’re watching the snails.”

“Both of you are working on that puzzle.”

All people love to be noticed, but sometimes it's hard to hear praise. Specific noticing allows a person to feel appreciated by others and make their judgment about how they feel about it.

Some more examples:

“You are stacking blocks. Four of them!”

“You are watching the video. I will be outside for a minute.”

“Your shoes are tied.”

“Oh, you're drinking healthy juice.”

Brain Chart - used as a visual cue to praise and promote positive attention behaviours

Visual reminder for a child of behaviours and strategies to practice/learn.

Visual record of specific praise that they can take home and show their parents.

Reinforces very specific strategies that are important in developing self-regulation.

Positively reinforces positive behaviours.

Reinforce a child's thinking and Agree (when you can) – start with, “YES!”

It may be natural to respond to a child asking for something by first saying “No, not right now.”

Starting by saying “No” can lead to an eminent power struggle that could easily be avoided.

“Yes, you can _____, but first we need to finish this.”

“Yes, you can try that, but first you need to ask Suzy to give it to you when she's done.”

Also, you can surprise them by praising their thinking! This helps to keep them happy.

“Wow, that's a great idea! I wish we could do that, but we are going to...”

“That is an excellent idea, let's think about when we CAN do that.”

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Module 0: Introduction

1. Introduction
2. The origins of PCMC-A
3. Selective attention and school-readiness
4. What's self-regulation and why is it important for school readiness?
5. What's stress got to do with this?
6. How the brain works: amygdala, hippocampus, and prefrontal cortex

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Introduction



Foto: Niklas Björling

The PCMC-A is based on the philosophy of boosting the natural development of self-regulation and attention behaviours in children with explicit and specific strategic instruction.

The children's Brain Train curriculum targets building awareness of brain and body functions by engaging children in activities designed to offer practice opportunities in a natural classroom environment. The carer training program is where carers (parents and teachers) learn strategies designed to boost their thinking skills and parenting/caregiving abilities for everyday situations. The PCMC-A ultimately aims at introducing concepts to the children to support their parents and teachers in making positive changes in the home and school environment.

The parents' training begins with an overview of what their children will be doing in Brain Train that week. This communicates to parents what their children are experiencing and may be trying on their own at home. Brain Train infuses many of the parent strategies into the child curriculum as well to create a cohesive program where children experience and practice new skills in a class setting, and hopefully have these new skills supported at home since parents are learning what the children are practicing each week.

Children's Focus.

Boost Awareness of attention, emotions, and behaviours.

Build knowledge and understanding.

Connect activities to their own body (i.e., what it feels like to listen).

Create strategy and practice skills to boost attention and self-regulation.

Parents' and Teachers' Focus.

Prepare the child for school by helping the child develop learning skills.

Boost Awareness for self and child behaviours.

Boost *Planfulness*: create a strategic approach with step-by-step methods and new tools.

Enhance communication and interactions.

Lower stress, and boost child attention and language.

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The origins of PCMC-A

Canadian Dr. Helen Neville was an internationally renowned neuroscientist passionate about neuroplasticity and making neuroscience accessible to parents and teachers. In creating, designing, and testing the PCMC-A, she worked with over 100 at-risk, low-SES children in Oregon's Head Start early childhood centres and their parents. This program has since been researched in Latin America, Sweden, and France.

Professor Neville found that when both parents and children received training, they improved significantly in their attention, nonverbal IQ scores, associative memory and receptive language skills. Furthermore, their parents reported significantly lower stress levels and improved child behaviour.

"I believe this is going to be one of those ground-breaking discoveries that will lead to all sorts of different discoveries," said Kurt W. Fischer, director of Harvard University's mind, brain, and education program, in a discussion of Neville's work (2013).

"This intervention didn't come out of thin air," Neville said. "It came out of basic research on neural plasticity that we have done in our lab for many decades." Neural plasticity refers to the brain's ability to shape and reshape itself over a lifetime.

"We've studied neural plasticity by looking at deaf people, blind people, children with language impairments, bilinguals and typical people," Neville said. "We've found that some systems of the brain don't show much neural plasticity. Some show a lot but only in a specific period. So we targeted this second kind of system, focusing on selective attention of the developing brain."

To 'meet' Professor Neville and understand a bit more about how attention is key and how Helen was passionate about children's health:

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Selective attention and school-readiness

Using information from research on the neuroplasticity of selective attention and the central role of successful parenting in child development, Professor Neville's Team developed and rigorously assessed this family-based training program designed to improve brain systems for selective attention in preschool children. Considerable evidence documents the central role of selective attention in all aspects of learning and memory, and school readiness in particular. This has led to renewed interest in training aspects of attention to promote academic success. Attention skills are highly malleable, displaying improvements with training and altered sensory experience, especially in the key stages from ages 3 to 5. This raises the hypothesis that training programs that target the neural systems mediating selective attention would be a powerful means for improving other domains of cognition and academic outcomes for children from lower SES backgrounds.

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What's self-regulation and why is it important for school readiness?

Self-regulation is much more than self-control.

The term **self-regulation** is often just used interchangeably with the concept of self-control of own emotions and reactions, but is deeper than that. It is the foundation for general well-being and involves learning. In a nutshell, self-regulation focuses on goals and keeping to them for purposeful solutions, which is, **"the ability to manage your energy states, emotions, behaviours and attention, in ways that are socially acceptable and help achieve positive goals, such as maintaining good relationships, learning and maintaining wellbeing."**

Domain	Ability
Biology – Temperament and arousal, activity or the level of energy	Attain, maintain and change one's level of arousal appropriately for a task or situation
Emotion – Feelings and moods	Monitor, evaluate and modify emotions
<p>Cognitive – The 'executive' functions of the brain.</p> <p>Memory, attention, retain information, problem solving</p>	<p>Display 'effortful' control over negative and less helpful emotions</p> <p>Sustained attention- not easily distracted facilitating children to be able to be involved</p> <p>Attention switching- able to transition between tasks</p> <p>Inhibit impulses</p> <p>Deal with frustration, delay, ignore distractions</p>
Social – The ability to understand social situations and function in them	Assess social cues, development and mastery of socially desirable behaviours, as well as plan, monitor and evaluate progress towards socially constructed goals
Prosocial – Moral, reflective	Development of empathy and values, thinking and planning skills, awareness of learning strengths and weaknesses

(Shanker, 2010)

Self-regulation in children.

Shonkoff and Phillips (2000) described self-regulation in children as the, “developing the capacity to manage powerful emotions constructively and keep one’s attention focused”. Shanker (2010) described it as “the ability to manage your energy states, emotions, behaviours and attention, in ways that are socially acceptable and help achieve positive goals, such as maintaining good relationships, learning and maintaining wellbeing.”



School readiness: what it looks like.

In children of pre-school age or prep school level, this means being able to do these things in these areas:

Emotionally	Acknowledge carers' preferences. Recognise and apply pro-social behaviour negotiating requests.
--------------------	--

	<p>Start developing empathy for others.</p> <p>Expressing own emotions and express them.</p> <p>Manage emotions.</p>
Cognitively	<p>Focus on a task and ignore irrelevant information and stimuli (e.g., noises)</p> <p>Shift attention between own thoughts and teacher talk.</p> <p>Retain information to use on diverse tasks.</p> <p>Cumulate information and re-use meaningfully.</p> <p>Start to multi-task through scaffolding and modeling.</p>
Behaviourally	<p>Understand the importance of taking turns.</p> <p>Being able to share emotions with others to negotiate better relationships outcomes.</p> <p>Focus in class despite stimuli.</p> <p>Being able to relax and be calm sitting or in a social classroom situation.</p> <p>Avoid lashing out, being able to listen and take turn talking back.</p>

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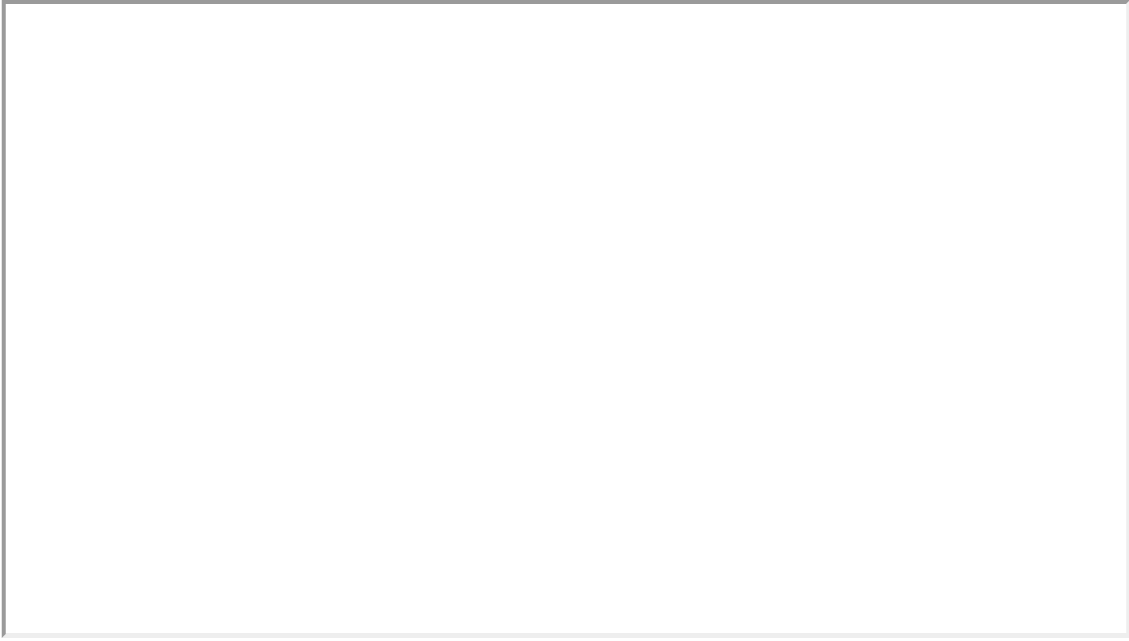
What's stress got to do with this?

"Chronic stress is toxic to the developing brain," Dr Eric Pakulak said, citing years of previous neuroscience research. Dr Pakulak was an original member of Professor Neville's PCMC-A team. He notes that: "The same parts of the brain that are important for learning in early development are the same parts of the brain that help moderate the stress response."

Back in the first PCMC-A classroom, Neville said, improvements were visible. "With the children having changes at home that help their attention -- this is a multiplier. It helps in learning in the classroom, playing games and sports. It helps kids focus. It is rewarding for the kids and the parents. With less stress, the children are better able to focus their attention."

Several studies document that acute and chronic stress adversely affects brain development, particularly the prefrontal cortex and hippocampus, which are central to many aspects of attention, working memory, and executive function. Parent stress levels are also negatively correlated with children's receptive and expressive vocabulary, although this relationship may be mediated by the quality of parent-child interactions and aspects of parent language use with the child.

The home environment contains multiple pathways that may impact children's attention development, perhaps most importantly stress and parent-child interaction patterns.



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How the brain works: amygdala, hippocampus, and prefrontal cortex



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Parents & Teachers - Go-to Self-regulation ideas

1. Self-regulation ideas and links

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Self-regulation ideas and links

Use these ideas and explore these links for some surefire ways to enhance self-regulation as you execute the Brain Train and apply the ideas at school and home.

HEAD-SHOULDER-KNEES-TOES

You can play this any time before classroom learning or before an event that may be quite stressful for your child, or any situation when some emotional resetting and freshening up are needed:

You can make it challenging by asking your child to do the opposite of what you say, e.g.,: "Touch your head"... They are supposed to touch their toes. just 2 minutes of this resets their brain and helps focusing.

You can sing it and add clapping hands at the end, then make it more challenging, leave a part of the body out, and ask the child to count the rhythm in their mind: Head Shoulders Knees and ,,... mmmmm.....;

Use a puppet to execute the HTKS.

FREEZE games

This helps enhance inhibition and wake up our pre-frontal cortex:

Play music and ask the child to stop when music stops, they have to stand in position for a few seconds.

Do it while singing and when you stop, they all need to stop and freeze in position.

You can do this any time even walking down the hall to assembly, to provide rhythm with clapping and asking to freeze when clapping stops.

Children can lead it in turns.

CARD GAMES

Playing card games of memory or classification in small groups enhances attention and focus on turn taking:

You could gamify this further, the team that uncovers all cards first, wins some right of leadership in class or a special task.

Can be memory or classifying in categories, depending on year level.

SOCIAL STORIES

Encouraging children to share ideas and their own stories can be embedded with social situations that are related to self-control and realistic:

For instance: "Imagine you are going over to your friend's house. You see a delicious chocolate cake just sitting there on the counter. You really WANT to just eat a piece or taste the frosting with your finger. What should you do? How could you use self-control? What could happen if you don't use self-control? These questions are an important foundation to help students understand self-control and why it matters. Let students know they are playing the game in order to practice and strengthen their skills for self-control.

Role Playing is also a powerful way to discuss and share ideas and 'feel' what others may feel.

MUSIC RHYTHM

Research has proven that rhythm and dancing can help regulate our system, check the [RAMSR research and training](#), some simple ideas:

Find an instrumental song with rhythm and create a little (easy!) rhythm of 8 dance using star jumps, walking, on one foot, on another foot, simple repeated movements that change in succession every 8 counts. This helps regulate and calm body down.

Speed up and slow down rhythm and counts depending on children's skills and mood.

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PARENTS - Module 1, Week 1: Using language differently to boost child attention

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4. 1. Fixing MeaningLess questions
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Module 1: Using Language Differently to Boost Child's Attention



Image copyright of the Spoke (ECA), blog: <https://thespoke.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/language-learning-early-learning-settings/>

This week, we will focus on:

Meaningful versus Meaningless language.
Boosting Attention 'Ethic'.
Specific Praise and Specific Noticing.

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1. Meaningful Language

Meaningful Language

What does this mean?

Make your words worth listening to...you are worth your child's attention.
Use your words to focus your child's attention...your words will teach your child to pay attention.

Meaningful Language versus **Meaningless** Language

What are *meaningless* questions?

Questions that you ask when you **aren't asking** for information, also known as 'rhetorical questions'. As a parent, you ask them, but in reality, you expect a resounding yes, or no answer at all.

Classic examples:





by marghig

YES / NO genuine questions

MeaningLess Questions are different than Yes/No questions because with real Y/N questions, you are asking for the child's opinion and you, as a parent, are ready for a yes and no, with no real reservations.

It is fine to use Y/N questions. We use Yes/No questions when we are fine with the child possibly saying "no"...when we do want to know a 'Y' or an 'N'

Don't use Yes/No questions if we don't want to hear a "no". 😊

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1. Meaning-Less Questions

When do they happen?

They happen when you want the child to follow directions or do something specific, but we still think we want to give them some decision-making power.

We use them as we may want our child to feel:

Involved.

Like they have a choice.

Like you are interested in their opinions as people.

Nevertheless, they are not the best option to achieve that.

Why MeaningLess Questions do not train attention or self-confidence:

- MeaningLess Questions make you talk too much (wastes your energy).
 - Child starts to 'tune-out' your words.
 - Maybe that's why they only start listening when you've said something three times (and your volume goes up!)
- MeaningLess Questions give the child the wrong message.



- We end up reversing the child's choice ("Well get ready for bed anyway").
- Tells the child that....
 - They are not good Choice Makers.
 - They are not Good Thinkers.

- MeaningLess Questions do not help you build positive relationships.
- MeaningLess Questions do not help you have positive child interactions.



Copyright Creating Connections (Neville et al., 2013).

Reflecting further

How many times have we used these types of questions and what was our objective?

Let's be honest about it. Do we like people using this style of questions with us?



by marghig

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1. Fixing MeaningLess questions

To avoid or fix the MeaningLess Question, simply.... **add a choice** (right after a MeaningLess Question).

With just adding a simple choice (something that you can let go of), then we achieve all this:

Children feel in control.

They learn to think by making choices.

They learn what options are available for different situations.

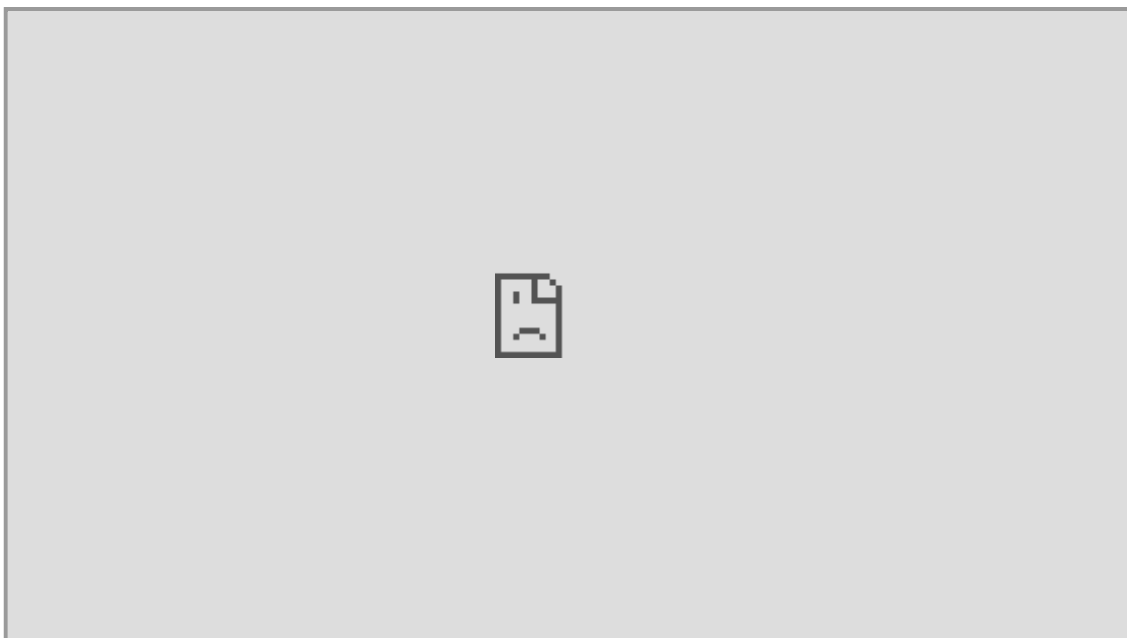
They learn what choices they can make (on their own).

We boost children's self-confidence by encouraging them to use their brain.

We boost their self-confidence by encouraging them to listen to your words.

We boost their self-confidence by helping focus their attention.

Check this video in which Professor Neville explains the powerful impact that CHOICES can have on a child's mind.



Make sure the [choices you offer](#) make you happy (you can let go of these 'things').

This means, whatever choice you are giving, no matter what the child chooses, you will be happy with the outcome.

You give them a choice for HOW something happens, not IF it happens.

This creates predictability and reduces chances of stress, child's and your own!

Let's practice.

image.png

Are you going to pick the egg.... with the right or left hand?

image.png

You are going to wash your hands after potty.... with the soap bar or a hand wash?

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1. Boosting Attention with 'Work' Ethic

Working towards an 'attention focus' ethic for our children

Let's reflect: what does **work ethic** mean to you? What do you expect to see in a person you describe as “someone with a good work ethic”?

What do you see that person or yourself doing with the time, energy, and actions concerning having a good work ethic?

Keep trying even though it's challenging.

Good attitude even when it's hard work.

Polite even when you're tired.

Juggling projects, events, appointments, and duties, and reaching out for support when needed.

On-time, punctual, and letting people know when there is an issue with their timing.

Responsible.

Dependable.

Accountable.

Independent.

Resilient.

An age-appropriate version of “child work ethic” = Child Attention

The Number 1 and Best Teachers for your child.... are YOU: As the primary caregiver, you can teach those small steps towards good use of attention (children have short legs)! Through your support and love:

Children will learn how to take control of their attention.

Children will learn how to focus their attention.

Children will learn how to monitor control their behaviours and attention.

We can use adult examples to understand Kindergarten children's Attention and Self-Control.

An age-appropriate version of “child work ethic” = **Child Attention**

1st & Best Teachers: You will teach the small steps (they have short legs)

- Children will learn how to take control over their **attention**
- Children will learn how to **focus** their attention
- Children will learn how to monitor & **control** their **behaviors & emotions**



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1. Work Ethic Discussion

What do you see in a person who is described as having “great work ethic”?

Choose a trait from each category and explain why they are important to you and how they connect to your child's attention:

1) Team player

D Participate in community/system

D Understanding

D Work well with others

D Respectful (voice, property, turns)

D Helpful

D Can lead or follow

2) Focus on task at hand

D Upbeat energy

D Efficient, productive

D Eyes on project/task

D Avoid distractions

3) In-control of themselves & their responsibilities

D On-time

D Predictable interaction style

D Consistent emotional state

D Accountable for action (honesty)

4) Positive

D No complaining (whining, arguing)

D Smiling

D Pleasant

D Can receive criticism

5) Communicative

D "I'm done. Do you need help?"

D "Do you need anything?"

D Set good example

D No hurtful names, gossip.

6) Hard worker

D Willing to try & then try again

D Ask for help when necessary

D Solve their own problems

D Good thinker

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1. How To Manual: Specific Praise and Specific Noticing

Two ways to teach preferred behaviours:

1. **Specific Praise** (specific = exact, particular, detailed, precise, special, definite, without a doubt).
2. **Specific Noticing** (specific = exact, detailed, precise, special, can't-be-argued).

Reasons to use Specific Praise and Noticing:

*Your child is worth your Positive Attention = Catch them in Preferred behaviours and notice them with simple statements.

*Give your child opportunities to Feel Confident = about their Actions and Emotions.

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1. Specific Praise

What is Specific Praise?

Praise that tells the child exactly what is great about their behaviour.

Praise that tells the child exactly how to succeed in their home environment.

Praise that recognises those 'Blings' moments (moments of brilliance) instead of focusing on the 'Dings' moments (less brilliant!!).

Examples of Specific Praises

FAISE THAT TELLS THE CHILD EXACTLY HOW TO MAKE YOU HAPPY.

You did a great job WALKING in the hallway!

Dad noticed that I was WALKING in the hallway! I'll be sure to do that again!

Nice job deciding to put your shoes in the closet.

I get to choose to put my shoes in the closet OR under my bed!



Great job putting the dishes IN the sink!

Oh, Mom wants the dishes IN the sink!

Thanks for remembering to bring in your bike in at night!

OH! Dad likes it when I bring my bike in at night!

'How To'
Manual

**What if your child argues with you when receiving praise:
“You’re doing a great job.” → “No I’m not!”**

Then, try and use these statements:

You are worth noticing.

You are worth my attention.

You are worth my praise.

You light up my world (as you can see from my face 😊).

You are a cool child (as you can hear in my voice).

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1. Specific Noticing

What is Specific Noticing?

Comments that notice your child's actions in simple ways.

Comments that say exactly what you see.

Comments that do not contain any judgment words (i.e., good, great, nice, super).

Comments that give your child emotional control over their feelings.

Comments that rely on your positive VOICE TONE your positive FACE.

Examples of Specific Noticing

“You are stacking blocks. 😊 Wow. Four of them! 😊”.

“You are watching Dora and singing along. 😊 I will be upstairs. 😊”

“Your shoes are tied. 😊”

“Oh, you’re drinking healthy juice. 😊”

A child will have a hard time denying or disagreeing with this type of notice.

Remember: Specific Noticing is about giving positive attention without judgement:

You aren’t expecting a response.

You are just noticing and moving on.

You are training your child to recognise and validate what they do every day that is supporting their development, the household, friends, and so forth. This will also remind good noticing practices in your brain in recognition of all that you do and take for granted in this busy, busy life! This way, you also model this behaviour to the child.



Modern Cream Be Kind To Yourself Instagram Post (14 x 14 cm) by marghig

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1. Specific Praise and Specific Noticing: How, when, and why?

Eye contact is key.

More often is better.

For a child's emotional recovery → after a 'ding', a power struggle.

For teaching the child → 'catch' the child in a success moment.

For encouraging new behaviours → 'catch' or notice the child behaving in a way that makes you happy.

Physical contact is through:

A smile, a hug, and share honest excitement.

Specific Praise is honest and from the heart.

When?

All the time!

Can happen for the smallest details.

Why?

You teach little steps to big ideas.

You give the child tiny steps to succeed in your home culture.

You label the exact steps so the child can learn how (to pay attention, to behave).

Boost the child's self-confidence (for choosing, thinking, attending, behaving, learning).

Build your "How-to" Manual → label exact, preferred behaviours you appreciate.



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1. Practising Specific Praise and Noticing

Step 1:

Notice and praise your child and link it to work ethic, experiment with at least two of these statements:

“Your brain is really _____.”

“Your eyes are doing a great job _____.”

“Wow, you keep trying and trying! Your brain and your eyes must be _____.”

“Your hands are _____.”

“Your feet are _____.”

Step 2:

Share your reflections:

How does this compare to what you usually do to share praises?

What challenges will you need to plan for (knowing your child) regarding giving specific praises and specific noticing?

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1. Home Practice: Use Language Differently

Keep aware of MeaningLess questions → Fix with Choices

It's okay to fix the MeaningLess questions AFTER they have been said.

Your awareness will grow throughout this whole process.

Add a choice so the child feels in control of HOW something happens (not IF).

Build your family's "How-to" Manual and Boost your Child's Self-confidence with Specific Praise Noticing

Any time in the day!! → Fill them with Praise!

Actions.

Successes.

Cool behaviours.

Work Ethic (i.e., attention-to-task, self-control).

Ask Children about Weekly Events in their lives (train child's focus and attention to details).

"What places do you visit in any week?"

"What cars do you ride in during the week?" "What colours are the cars?"

"How often do you take a bath?" "How often do you take a shower?" "Do you take more baths or showers?"

"What is something that we do all the time on a Sunday morning, afternoon, or evening?"

Elicit specific details using a range of simple but detailed colours, sizes, and numbers, and help the child notice similarities and differences. This also triggers literacy and numeracy skills.

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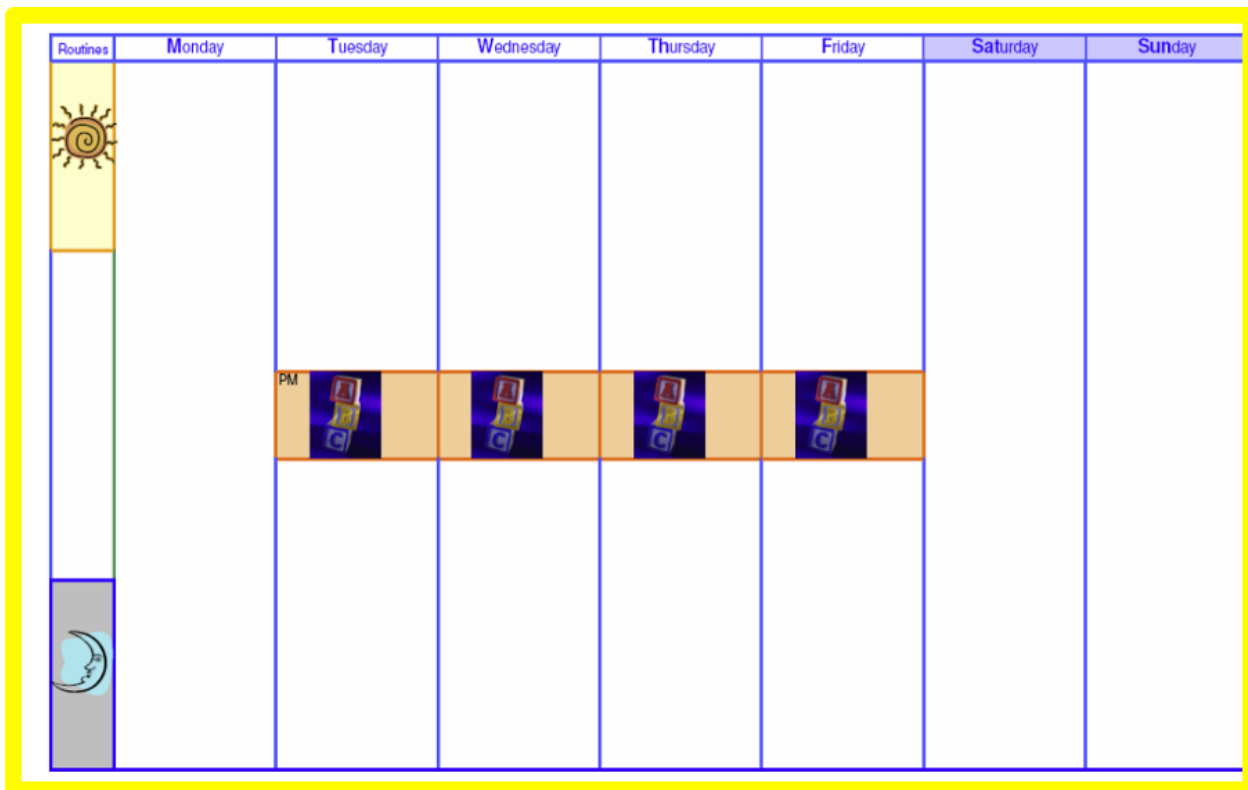
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1. Home Activity: Weekly Planner

Create a **weekly visual planner** to hang somewhere prominent in the house. Many of you already use these planners at home, this is a good reminder of how important they are and how **children should be involved in their creation and maintenance** too, especially in preparation for school.

Involve your child in the process of planning the week, and ideally, create picture notes for it and use blue tack to place them in the correct spot. The Kindy teacher will also do a similar activity in class.

This will be very useful to develop planning **literacy** for when the child starts school and have more set tasks within the primary classroom. It is an all-around good way to minimise anxiety, and stress, and promote organisational skills.



Tips

Ensure it shows all days of the week, and also AM and PM with clear visuals. If you have a chance, refer to the schedule with correct terminology, which can also extend the child's numeracy, such as:

vertical (instead of up and down) = when referring to morning to night.

horizontal (side to side) = when referring to the progress of the days of the week.

use the exact name of the days and words such as today, yesterday, in a week, in a fortnight, after, before.

Create specific picture notes for when you may know that the child is doing their kindergarten classes as well as the day when they undertake Brain Train. Ask the Kindy teacher when that is.

When a child asks for something special (ice cream) and it's not an option.... draw a quick picture note (keep a few sticky notes close by!) with ice cream, and say: will save for later; goes on a schedule where possible so no one forgets; will celebrate a success one day.

Use choice to refocus on less pleasant tasks: "going to bed... you will choose what PJs, the blue or the red?"

Practice Specific Praise and Specific Noticing when working on the weekly planner together. Remember if you catch yourself using a 'meaning-less' question, you can fix it straight away.

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1. Summary: the Family 'Car' metaphor

Inherited ways to deal with 'situations'

We all inherited 'tools' from our parents and grandparents (and other impactful family relatives) on how to be a family and how to manage 'things' in a family. We can compare this to a *family 'car'* and how you go about maintenance for the future. Some aspects of those familial tools we like and appreciate, may not fit in our current lives.


It is time we polished some of these generational tools and made them our own.

Through the strategies in this program:

We will choose our own set of family 'tools' and make them our own.
We will end up with our family toolbox, personalised to our own family culture.
We will start using our own preferred language during child interactions.

Key Strategies learnt this week:

The metaphor of our family car can work well to visualise our learning this week and to explain it to other members of the family if they are interested!

<p>Tires and Alignment</p> 	<p>Meaning-Full Language gives clear, direct communication about what direction the child or family is moving.</p>	<p>Tires help your car roll easily and stay on track, even on bumpy roads.</p> <p>Tyres help your family car be more predictable consistent (a smooth ride you can count on).</p>

First gear



Giving Choices: starting giving choices, your child a “sense” of control and gives them practice thinking.

Low gear starts the car rolling with less wear tear on the engine.

Petrol



Specific Praise: this tells the child EXACTLY what they did well, makes it more likely they will do it again and makes them feel good!

Petrol gets the car going and keeps it going – but you need to keep filling the tank!

Oil



Specific Noticing: you notice your child in ways that cannot be argued.

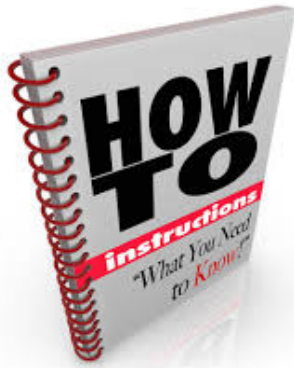
Oil Helps the engine run smoothly, especially with the engine is hot and the road is steep!

Instruction 'How to Manual'

How-To Manual

Parents use Meaningful Language, Specific Praise, Specific Noticing to point out behaviours your family prefers.

A manual gives a toolkit of ideas of what is supposed to happen with a car.



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1. Conclusions

This week you...

Avoided meaningless language and you:

Created **meaningful** language that was worth listening to.

Encouraged your child to pay attention to your words.

Prevented behaviour problems by consistently giving choices.

Prevented power struggles by giving the child a sense of control.

Created lots of chances for your child to hear praise for making choices.

You have used Specific Praise and you:

Encouraged your child's awareness of attention behaviours (work ethic).

Gave your child a few pages for the "How-to" Manual for preferred behaviours.

Labelled the small steps to succeeding by breaking down by body part (eyes, ears, brain...).

Prevented behaviour problems by catching your child's preferred behaviours.

Boosted your awareness of "Ding Mode" tried moving into "Bling Mode".

Boosted your child's self-confidence with specific, detailed praise.

Used Specific Noticing and you:

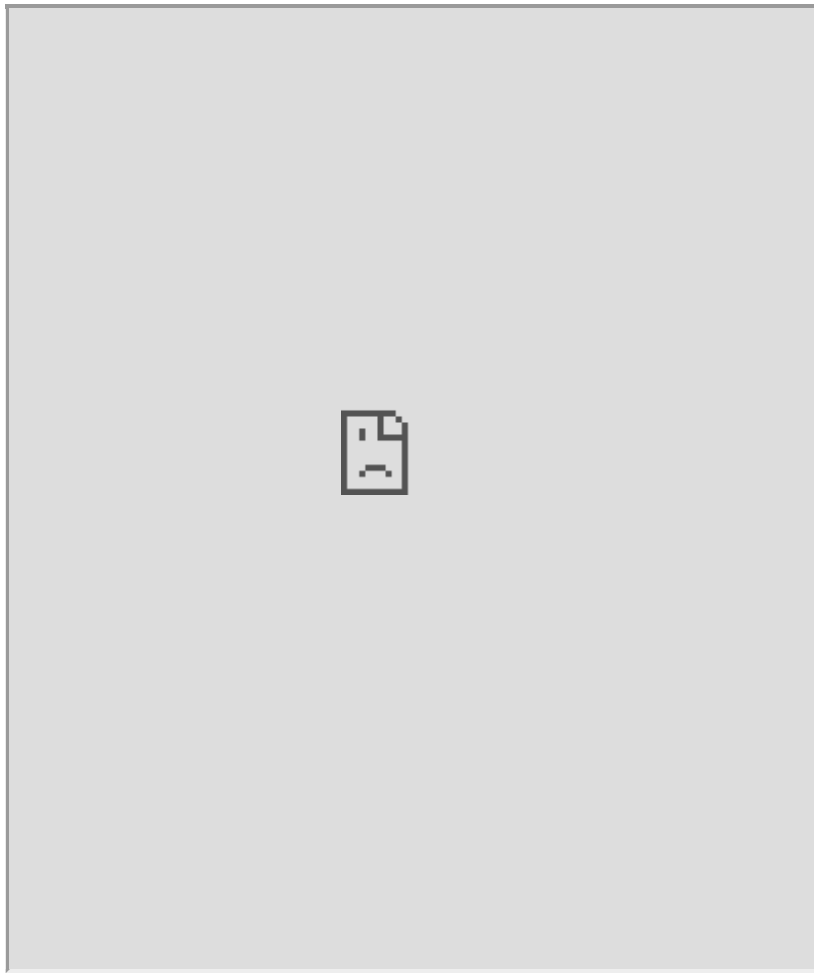
Gave your child positive attention without judgmental words.

Communicated without words how joyful their presence is to you (through voice and facial expressions).

Encouraged your child's self-confidence.

Positively gave attention to your child in ways that couldn't be argued.

Allowed your child to have control over their emotions.



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1. Reflections

As the week progresses and you apply the strategies in this module, let's reflect:

How are meaningless questions going?

Are you becoming more aware of them when you use them?

What were you asking the child to do when you heard yourself ask a meaningless question?

Is there a certain time of day when they happen more?

Have you tried the after-correction (post-correction) by adding a choice statement?

How is Specific Praise going?

What is an example?

When did it happen?

How did the child respond?

How is your awareness?

How is Specific Noticing going?

What is an example?

When did it happen?

How did the child respond?

How is your awareness?

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PARENTS - Module 2, Week 2: Clear Communication & Consistent Routines = Predictability & Child Attention

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Module 2: Clear Communication & Consistent Routines = Predictability & Child Attention



Image by <https://www.amarvelousfamily.com/i-statements-for-kids/>

This week, we will focus on:

- Importance of predictability and consistency.
- How Stress affects our brain and body.
- How-To Manual: clear statements and consistent routines.
- Revision on the importance of giving 'choices'.
- Weekly Planners and Success Charts (an introduction).

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2. Brain Break

Before you start this week's learning.....

Focus on your well-being first!



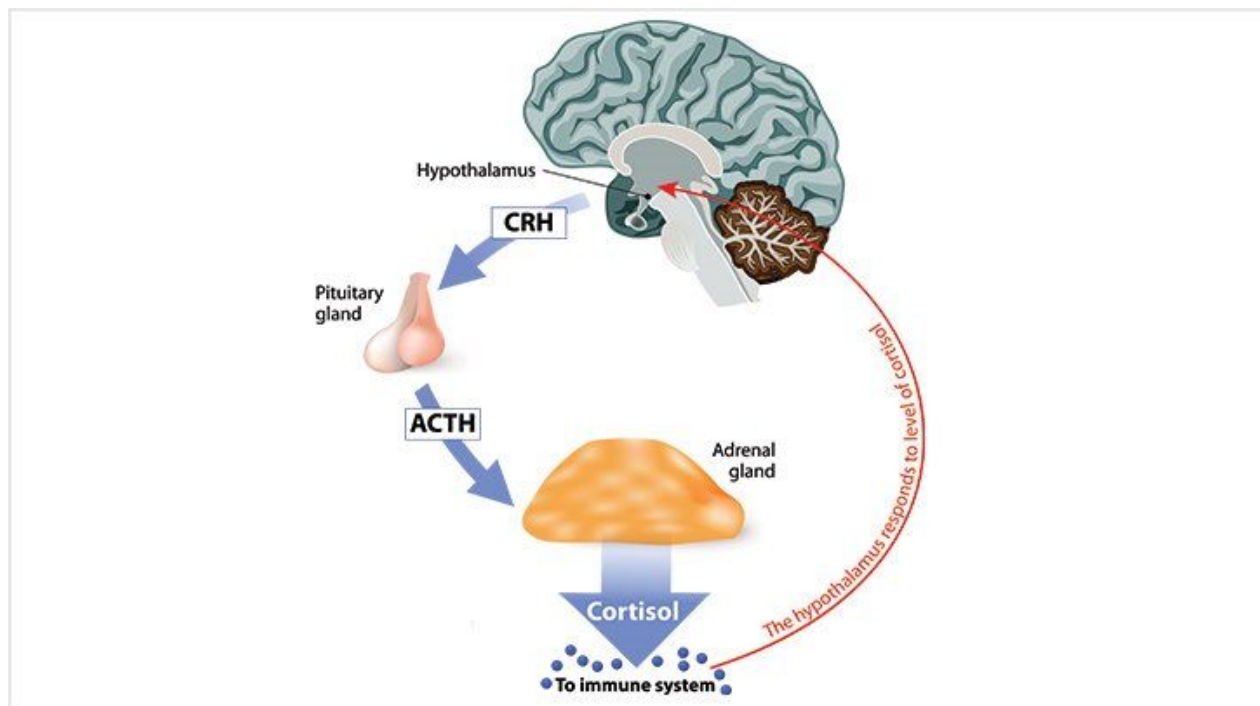
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2. How Stress Affects Us

Stress results in **acute and chronic changes in neuro-chemical systems and specific brain regions**, which result in long-term changes in brain “circuits,” involved in the stress response. Brain regions that are felt to play an important role in traumatic responses include the hippocampus, amygdala, and prefrontal cortex.

Once it hits the brain, stress can then affect also key parts of our body, namely the hypothalamus gland, the pituitary gland, and the adrenal gland. This can have a deep impact on our physical health.



Stress can have long-term effects. In children, it can impact behaviour, memory, learning, and socio-emotional status, and can also impact the immune system and health (so much so that it may create chronic diseases that last till adult life). This is because the release of increased levels of cortisol and dopamine in the body due to stress may have implications on our health, both physical and emotional, through toxicity.

Children may show the effect of toxic stress in various ways:

Might look like behaviour problems, as in they are not focused, not talking, talking too much, not listening, or being extremely shy and reserved.

Can look like hunger, or lack thereof, and may even externalise as digestive issues, or sleeping problems.

A child may look overly agitated or very quiet, aggressive or extremely anxious, or a combination.

Children may feel stress differently:

The child might feel confused, unsure, or hesitant.

The child might feel mad, aggressive, or hostile.

The child might feel sad, depressed, or lonely.

What happens inside your brain during a stress response?

We have all been through some sudden events, even traumatic ones, and the first thing we remember is that we often just froze and could not do much at all. For some of us, the memory of a traumatic accident is like that, something that is even associated with a feeling of almost 'dying' or disappearing, feeling immobilised or panicked.

These are scary as well as normal autonomic nervous system responses, and they are the same whether someone is very nervous or feels physically threatened. This is the same when a child tells you that they felt 'stuck' at the GP or when tested at school.

When a child pushes or hits another child and then, claims they have no idea why they did it, well they may be telling the truth!

The impulsive reaction, triggered by emotions such as fear or anger, comes from the **amygdala** – one of the oldest parts of our brain. These parts have evolved to respond to threatening situations by defending themselves.

If we can delay this reactivity, the **prefrontal cortex** of the brain can respond based on reasoning and thinking.

The prefrontal cortex is involved in self-regulation and executive function, including regulating emotions and behaviour and making wise decisions.

The amygdala controls emotional responses by categorising sensory input as pleasant or threatening. It blocks threatening input from entering the prefrontal cortex, causing an immediate reflexive reaction: either fight, flee, or freeze (Bergstrom, 2023).

In a sense, the amygdala serves as the brain's alarm system. Like a smoke detector or a superhero looking to protect you from danger! Its purpose is to detect danger and prepare our bodies to react to it.

The amygdala doesn't differentiate between perceived and real threats. This can lead to "false alarms" and reactive behaviour, including freezing when faced with non-life-threatening activities like public speaking or taking a test. During these times, we become disconnected from logic and become impulsive and reactive.

Furthermore, even if we have conflict resolution skills stored in our memories, the stress response may prevent us from accessing them because the amygdala inhibits memory recall and storage. The amygdala does not allow the pre-frontal cortex to go and retrieve information from the **hippocampus**, which is where we store memories and 'file' information for retrieval and usage.

The same is true for learning. When a child is stressed, tense, or does not feel safe, learning becomes highly challenging because the brain does not function optimally.

However, when we have the opportunity to consciously process sensory information, we allow the prefrontal cortex to analyse it. Instead of an immediate, impulsive reaction, we are allowed to select the best response.

It must be confusing for children to see themselves suddenly behave in ways that they later regret. **It's as if you had a car that suddenly took control and decided to drive in the opposite direction.**

It is important to explain to your child what happens in their brain when that is the case.

A basic mindfulness exercise for self-regulation: Breathing

A basic mindfulness exercise is to teach children to focus on breathing. Mindful slow-paced breathing helps calm the body and mind by slowing the heart rate, lowering blood pressure, and improving focus. It helps oxygen reach the prefrontal cortex and make good decisions. Controlled breathing can override the fight, flight, or freeze response set off by the amygdala, and instead enable mindful behaviour. Encourage your children to take a Big Bird Breathe when stressed, anxious, or hyperactive: this is one of the activities they do during Brain Train.

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2. Predictability, Consistency and Clarity

Along with mindful breathing, we can apply predictable and consistent practices at home so to minimise the amygdala's overreactions and stimulate calm and clear neurological connections between the amygdala and the prefrontal cortex.

Consistent routines are key in the preschool years. **Consistency and Predictability** are simple de-stressors. It is critical to:

Make a daily routine very consistent.
Make a daily routine very predictable.

Stress is reduced when Consistency & Predictability go up.

- Caregivers can directly affect a child's stress.
- You can control whether your home stress/family stress increases or decreases.



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2. Research and evidence: Cooperation during Routines

How to achieve cooperation with no stress

Research shows that when parents give a single, clear direction with a single, clear focus, they can expect cooperation 70-80% of the time for typically developing children who are not in CYCLES OF POWER STRUGGLES.



When **power struggles** have become a normal part of a family routine, the amount of cooperation is much lower as in 0-40%.

Where are we starting from?

In general, when you give a direction (e.g., “Please clean your room.”) and you do not repeat yourself, this means success.

How many times out of 10 does your child follow through or cooperate with this kind of directive?

How many times do you tend to repeat your statements before the child follows through?

In Module 1, we started changing our language:

If you have tried clearer and meaningful directives, how has that worked out for you so far?

Has that prevented behaviour problems?

Has that prevented power struggles?

Did you notice any of the following?

more helpful child?

happier child?

more cooperative child?
time savings?
more positive home interactions?
less family stress?
happier you?

**If YES to any of the above, you are well on your way to earning
70% - 80% cooperation!!**

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2. "How-to Manual": Clear Statements and Consistent Routines

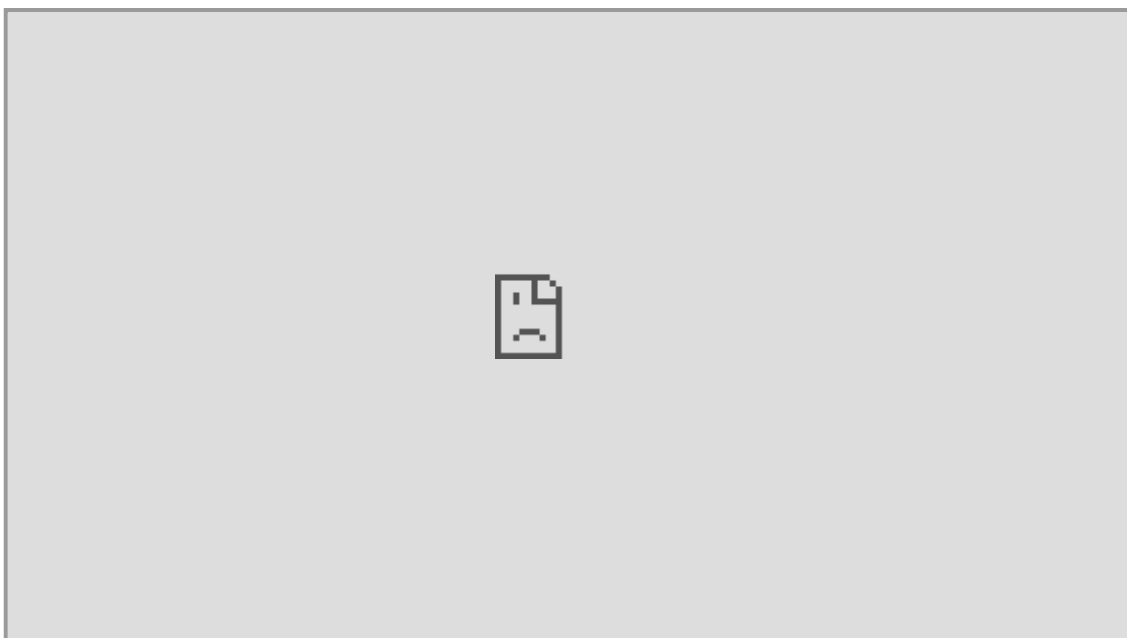
The more specific, the better!

At times, by using quite wide statements with children (or really, anyone!), we may not achieve as much success! At times, it does not matter, but at times, it may make things difficult for us, it may also frustrate us and add to the stress of daily life.

As discussed in Module 1, the more **meaningful** we are, the better.

We can start by providing **choices** as we covered in Module 1. This week, we are going to extend this further by using **Clear Statements**.

But... before we continue, watch a little bit of this video that focuses on the issues arising from unclear instructions:



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2. Clear Statements

Clear Statements versus Directives or Commands

What is a Clear Statement?

A more pleasant sounding and very specific statement of what the adult wants to be done.

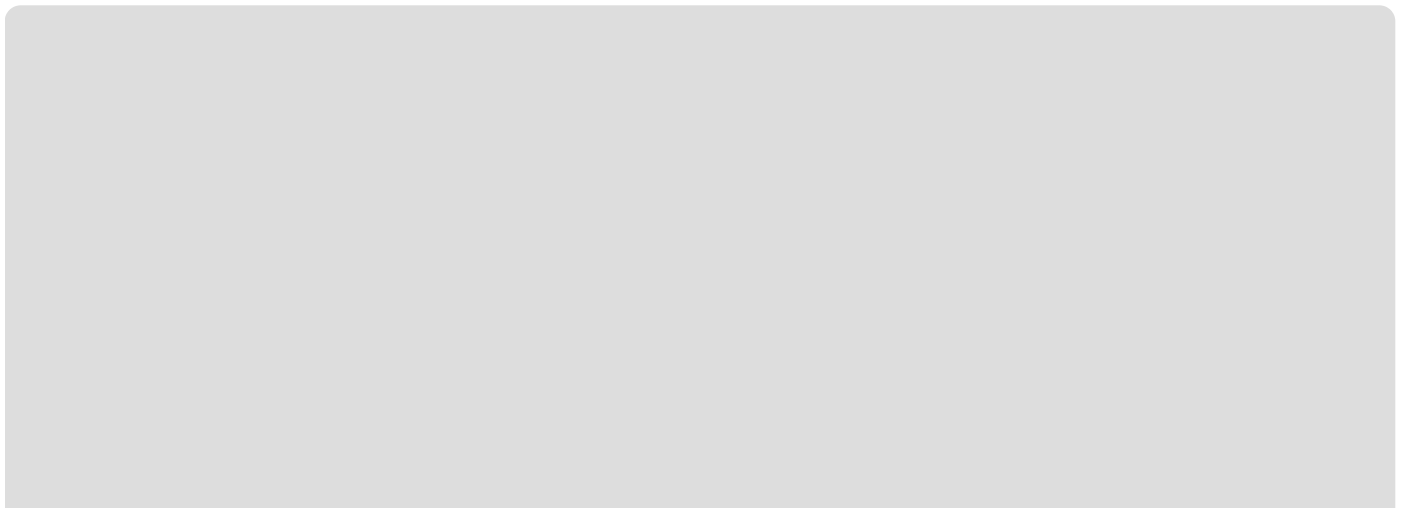
A respectful, adult-controlled sentence, which is very detailed in how something should be done.

An age-appropriate statement that asks the child to do one thing at a time, and avoid a list of very detailed, confusing instructions. Keep it simple.

Examples:

“Please move those toys to the living room into the grey toy basket”.

“Please put your backpack in the closet on the top shelf.”





Canva by marghig

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2. Clear Statements: Benefits

When they are delivered in a kind, direct, and detailed way, **clear statements** give opportunities for the child to ask further questions and learn about the details. This also allows us to establish agreed routines.



- ☐ Directions are clear
- ☐ You give structure
- ☐ You focus the child's attention
- ☐ You create an opportunity to respond to one another
- ☐ You increase the child's self-confidence (again!!)
- ☐ Child learns mini steps to preferred behavior

Tips

Use clear statements to focus your child's attention in busy times.

Give frequent choices to teach your child thinking skills (making a choice is the first step!).

Use clear statements when planning schedules for smooth routines.

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2. Clear Statements and Choices

When do we use Clear Statements?

When we want the child to successfully follow a direction with clarity.

When we would appreciate cooperation from the child.

When we need them to help.

When we want them to join family activities (*at an age-appropriate level!*).

How can we 'supercharge' clear statements?

Whenever possible add a choice like we explored in Module 1.

Examples:

"Please, can you put all your toys in the yellow basket in the living room, do you want to start with the dolls or the stuffed animals?"

"Time to set the table for dinner, what do you want to start with plates or glasses?"

Why is providing choices important?

Give your child a sense-of-control over their life.

Choices you can easily 'give away':

- High/low
- Red/blue
- Inside/outside
- Up/down
- 2 or 3; 3 or 5...
- With teddy bear/without teddy bear
- With the pencil / without the pencil
- With gloves / without gloves
- In 2 breaths or 4 breaths...
- Before _____ or after _____

**Life with no choices can create internal stress even when symptoms are not visible,
it is cumulative over time.**

Having no choices can impact on sense of control.

Let's give our children some control over choices that we can easily give.

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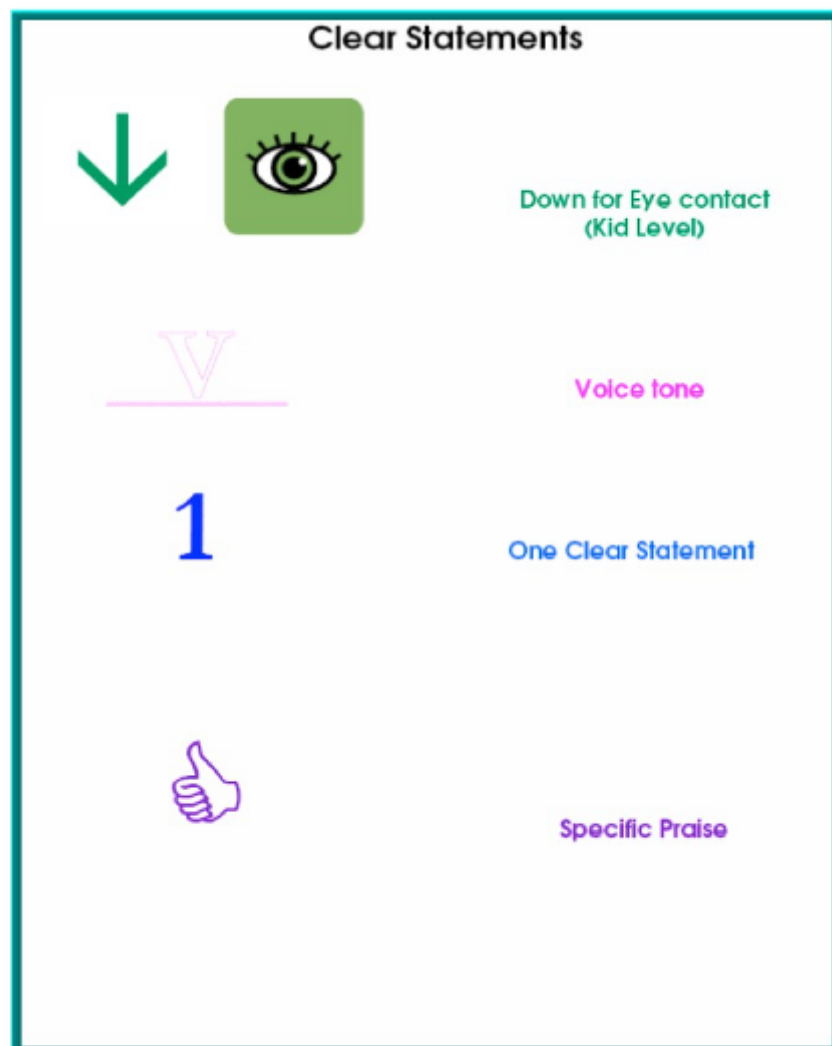
2. Practice with Choices

Clear Statements Practice

Part 1

Start by using clear statements that have a clear direction and expected action.

Consider these four key elements when using clear statements: eye contact, tone of voice, one clear direction only, followed by a Specific Praise or Noticing, or both!



Part 2

Then, do it all over again BUT add a choice.

Be *PlanFULL* (i.e, have a plan and purpose):

for HOW to make requests (the steps from the poster).

for WHAT choices you will give (all choices need to make you happy).

for WHAT 'work' ethic behaviour you will specifically praise.

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2. Planner and Success Charts: An Introduction

Consistent Routines

To ensure predictability and consistency, remember to:

- Make a daily routine very consistent.
- Make a daily routine very predictable.

How can we do this?

These practical strategies are useful:

- 1) **Weekly planner**. Check out again how to create one and how to use it consistently.
- 2) Success Charts.

Success Charts for consistent Daily Routines (evening)

We will discuss success charts much more in Module 3. For now, let's create a success chart to introduce the tool to our child, and make it about the evening:

Break down a BIG evening task into SMALL steps (**mini steps**) from dinner to bed.




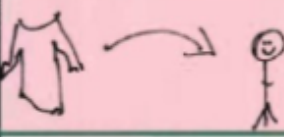

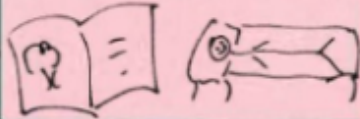
Involve the child when preparing and teaching the chart tool.

Process

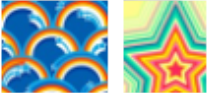
Create a chart that collects all the important evening tasks, those 'things' that your child should do for an effective family evening schedule, and provide a sticker when completed. This is very different than a 'reward' chart as you are not rewarding an expected behaviour, **you are celebrating the child's**

process of choosing and thinking that goes behind each task and allows for the task to be completed effectively and successfully towards a specific goal (e.g., timely dinner and cleaned teeth).

The success chart consistently shows the child how to go *places*, from A to B, through thinking about the best mini steps and options and choosing the best steps with choices that give some self-control:

Summary Success Stickers



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2. How to get the best out of success charts

It is critical to **create a success chart with the child:**

Include your children in selecting the task, draw or choose images for them.

Any small changes? Add as you go.

Can children choose the order? Let them! Any choice that you can let go of, please do, offer the choice if possible.

Add colours? Let the child use markers or crayons to add details.

Give choices for HOW steps get done, not IF, e.g., We will brush our teeth, with the electric brush or the manual brush?

Connect the success chart to the weekly planner as those mini steps that allow the planner to happen successfully.

Other possible questions to include your child in the process:

"Which step do you want to do first?"

"Where should we keep the chart?"

"Do you want to start the steps before ___ or after _____?"

"Time to start...should we start the chart in 3 minutes or 5 minutes?"

"Which song should we sing before starting our chart? Baby Shark or Row Row?"

It is critical to **narrate and describe the chart when checking it:**

Tell the story of the child doing these steps, with details (how they completed the task): make it like a story...it's fun!

Let the child add details, add colours... as you tell the story.

Specifically praise choices about a successful mini-step (frequent, immediate, and detailed).

Specifically praise the child's **CHOOSING THINKING**.

Examples of narrations:

"Hey, I just found out I could be giving you more stickers during the week! Let me show you this cool chart. This chart has pictures showing steps that happen every morning/night. See, here? Here's another cool thing. When you get all 6 stickers for one night, you get a big special super success sticker on the bottom. That big sticker summarises your success with nighttime steps! When you have 1 super success sticker, you get to pick a big sticker to keep!"

*"Now here's how we keep track of our steps—we use stickers! Every time you finish a step, you get one sticker! So, when you **brush your teeth**, you would put a sticker right here. When you put your clothes in the closet, you would put a sticker.....here! That's right. Nice job paying attention to our nighttime chart! These mini-steps can happen in any order, except for the last one... you always lay down in bed last."*

*"It's a toothbrush. That's a picture showing that every night we brush our teeth. This is a toilet...because every night before bed you go to the bathroom. This picture shows your daytime clothes going into the ... closet. That's right! **Good thinking!** This picture shows your pyjamas going onto your body. This shows all the toys that get picked up put into the toy box before bedtime."*

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2. Starting with success charts

Let's share a reflection this week about applying the success chart idea.

What main ideas do you want to be sure to share when presenting the success chart to your child?

How did you encourage your child's thinking with a success chart?

Why do we want to boost consistency? How will you boost a "sense of control"?

After starting with an easier routine for your child to be successful, what more challenging routines might you want to work on?

What may be challenging for you with the success charts? For your child (if anything)?

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2. Home Practice: Use Language Differently

1. Clear Statements with Choices

Be *planfull*: try to catch yourself before you ask for cooperation and ensure to have a simple, specific plan.

Add a choice so the child feels included and not trapped.

Think about how you ask for cooperation: did you plan it before trying to give a Clear Statement? Did you use all the steps? What was the topic? How did it go, how was the child's response?

2. Consistent Success Chart for daily routine

Be *planfull*: sit down and present the plan to the child first.

Present this new tool when the child is calm. Execute a 'bird breath' together to calm down.

Have fun with the shared experience... children love this activity!!

3. Keep using previous strategies!

Meaningful language (increased awareness of meaningless questions).

Specific Praise.

Specific Noticing.

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2. Summary: the 'Family Car' Metaphor

You are polishing “Generational Tools”

Consistent practice increases your self-awareness of your behaviours.

Consistency helps children know what to expect next.



Consistent use of new tools saves your energy and emotions (lowers stress).

Tools:

Clear statements.

Choices.

Success charts (along with weekly planners).

<p>Radiator</p> 	<p>Choices give warm feelings of security by telling what happens next, preventing overheating, and giving children a cooling sense of control over their lives.</p>	<p>Consistent and safe space for all, choices allow control. We all have less stress with more control.</p>
<p>Gears</p> 	<p>Give a child a starting place with practice thinking.</p>	<p>Low gear starts the car rolling with less wear and tear on the engine.</p>
	<p>Clear statements for</p>	<p>Consistent and</p>

Steering wheel



parents point the child in the preferred direction and allow the adult to remain in control.

predictable direction for everyone.

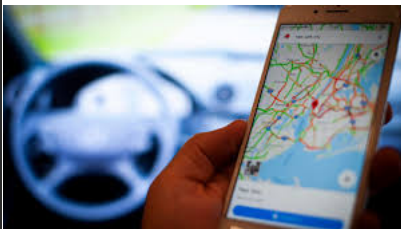
Car frame



Clear Statements give structure to adult requests for cooperation and give structure to boost the child's attention to the adult's words/requests.

Consistent structure allows children to know, and predict, which way the family vehicle is moving, and also cut out meaningless words that children learn to tune out of.

Driving maps GPS



Success Charts give detailed directions for a routine or behaviour and teach children the small steps involved towards more effective behaviours.

Communicate the expectation and break a BIG job into smaller easy tasks, mini steps.

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2. Conclusions

This week you...

Kept working on boosting your child's self-control:

You gave your child **mini steps to success** by giving **1 direction at a time.**

You **boosted several Specific Praises** per day by setting the child up for success (**1 direction at a time**).

You **boosted the child's sense of control** by giving **choices for how** one thing at the time was done.

You encouraged preferred behaviours and continued building your **“How-To” manual**.

You boosted your **child's thinking** with encouraging **Thinking Choosing**.

You **reduced your child's stress** by consistently offering choices.

Kept working on boosting your child's sense of consistency:

You **boosted several Specific Praises** by giving immediate positives with every mini step.

You **boosted your child's sense of control by giving choices** for the order of steps.

You gave your child a **“How-To” manual** to succeed with the evening/morning routine.

You **boosted the predictability** in your home (by making a daily **routine more consistent**).

You **reduced your child's stress** by consistently offering choices.

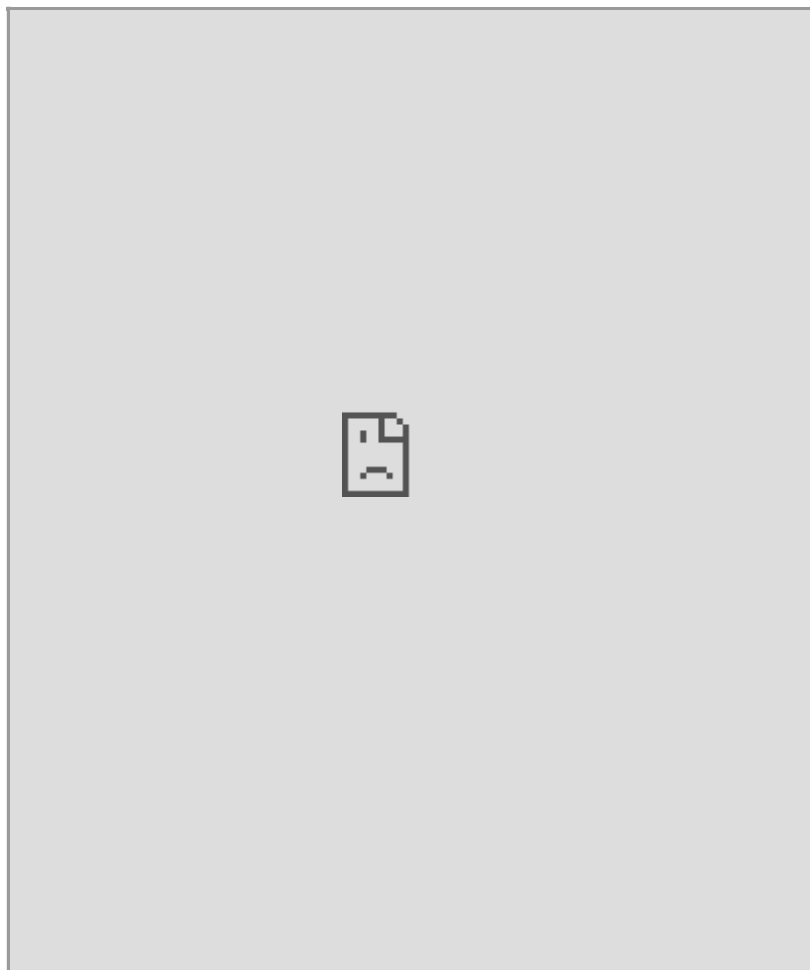
Kept working on boosting your child's sense of predictability:

You gave your child **a way to learn about time** by hanging a weekly calendar with pictures.

You **boosted the predictability** of life by showing what comes next.

You **boosted a child's sense of control** by giving them a tool they can 'read'.

You **respected their ideas** with 'saved ideas' and taught them how to wait for special treats.



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2. Reflections on clear statement, success charts, praise and noticing

Share examples of trying out the strategies so far. Feel free to share more than one example!

How are your Clear Statements going?

- ◆ What is an example you can share?
- ◆ What was the topic?
- ◆ What was the child's response?
- ◆ Other comments/observations?

How is your Success Chart going?

- ◆ Did you present the story to your child?
- ◆ Did you add details and colours?
- ◆ Did you offer choices for the order of steps?
- ◆ Have you given frequent, immediate, and specific praise with stickers? Have you given a big sticker yet for two nights of mini-step stickers?

How are Meaningless Questions going?

- ◆ Your awareness?
- ◆ Repair?

- ◆ Child's response?

How is Specific Praise going?

- ◆ Your awareness?
- ◆ Child's response?

How is Specific Noticing (“See & Say”) going?

- ◆ Your awareness?
- ◆ Child's response?

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PARENTS - Module 3, Week 3: Mini Steps for Mini People

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2. 3. Brain Break
3. 3. Picture Notes
4. 3. Practice: 1-2-3 Picture Note Story
5. 3. Research and Evidence: Thinking and Choices
6. 3. "How-To" Manual: The Golden 3 and Thinking
7. 3. Reflection on Thinking and Choices
8. 3. Focus on more Success Charts
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10. 3. Using the Charts
11. 3. Practice with the Success Charts AM
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Module 3: Mini-Steps for Mini-People - Easy to Use “How-To” Manual



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This week, we will focus on:

Success Charts and Morning Routine.

Picture Notes.

Together Think-Time.

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3. Brain Break

Before we start learning, take some time for yourself....





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3. Picture Notes

Use Picture Notes to:

Grab and keep children's **attention** to your words.

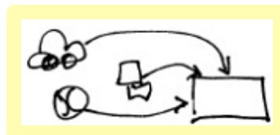
Tell an **upcoming 'story'** of the child's life (through, for instance, planners and charts).

Teach the child to **independently** refer back to your directions.

Picture notes discussed this week are slightly different than the evening success charts since these **picture notes are created on the spot** to communicate an idea.

What are Picture Notes?

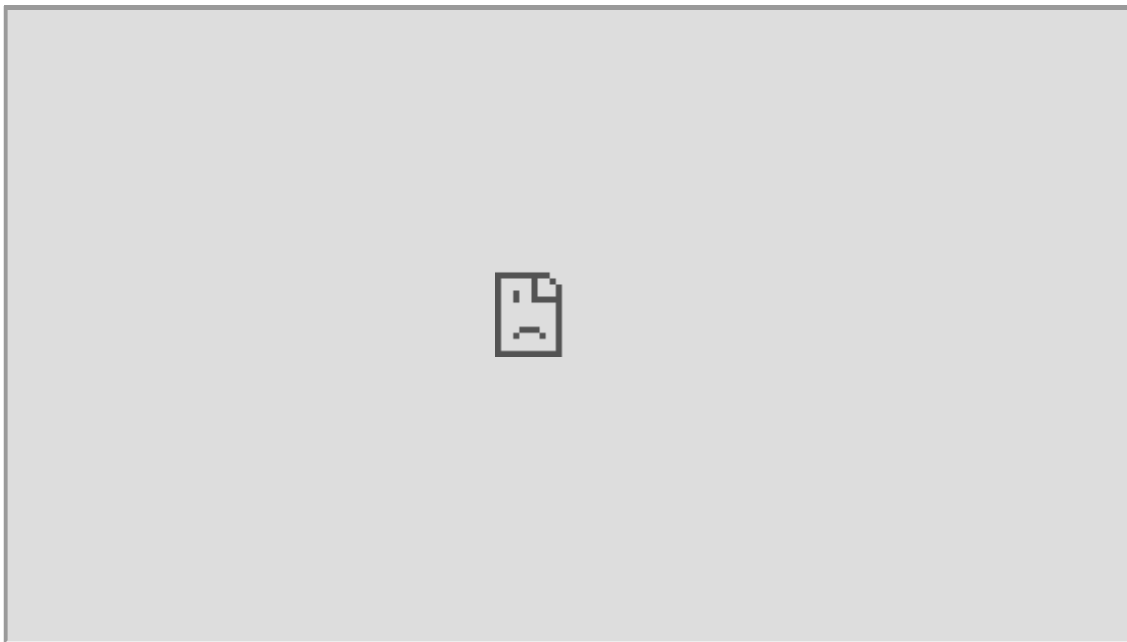
1. Quick stick-figure type of drawing.
2. One picture note tells one main idea.
3. One picture note carries a lot of 'story' information.
4. One picture note can show 'movement' or order.



Why do we use Picture Notes?

1. Selective Attention link: children pay attention to visual stories and pictures.
2. Literacy link: children can 'read' back each note.
3. Independence link: children can be independent managing a longer set of directions.
4. Memory link: children use picture notes to remember what will happen next.
5. Stress link: when children know what will happen next, stress goes down.
6. Brain link: when children have a sense of control, learning goes up!

P.S. We do not need to be Leonardo da Vinci, just be natural and do the best we can :), some ideas here:



Benefits range from attention to literacy and inclusivity

Capture and maintain a child's attention to your words.

You may have already tried this at home some time and the teacher may use something similar at school.

Research shows that when you draw a picture while describing an event or activity, children will recall not only the content of your words but also the

grammar you used while talking.

Children naturally are intrigued to see what your pen will draw. You can capitalise on their curiosity by describing what is happening in the picture and most importantly, what that means for your child.

Spoken words can sometimes be hard for children to understand and remember. Using picture notes attaches something concrete to your words, which children can understand and look at later to remember.

Have your children ever not wanted to leave the playground, or stop playing when you told them it was time to go? Picture notes can be great in this type of situation too, because, just like a save-it-for-later, you can make a picture note to let the child know that their idea has been heard and respected, even if it can't happen right away.

How to do Picture notes

Picture notes are done **quickly** – 3-5 seconds! **The power of this strategy is NOT reliant upon your artistic skill.** Your child will remember your words associated with the picture – even if the picture looks NOTHING like the thing you are describing.

"I can't draw." **No matter what your picture looks like,** as long as you provide clear spoken directions while you draw, your child is more likely to remember. Simple stick figures are just fine!

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3. Practice: 1-2-3 Picture Note Story

Let's practice and reflect!

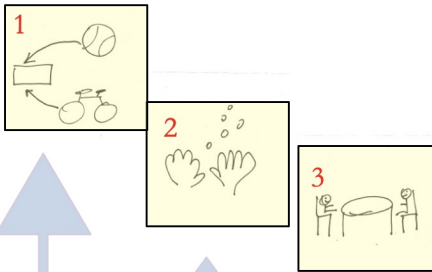
Let's share an example of picture notes we have been taking and sharing with our children.

This is an example of how we can use picture notes to 'explain' something to a child:

“In 10 minutes, it’s going to be time to come inside for dinner. Do you want me to set a timer, or do you want me to use my watch? Great job choosing”.

Let me show you what will happen in 10 minutes:

1. Toys get put away... <draw while talking> see how the balls go into the box... & the bikes go to the ____ Yes, the garage! Great thinking.
2. You will wash your hands <draw while talking>... you can use the bathroom or kitchen.
3. Come to the table to eat <draw while talking>... do you want a booster seat or just a chair?



REVIEW...

Okay! In 10-minutes, what will happen?

<point to 1st note & let children re-tell> Great job remembering!

<point to 2nd note & let children re-tell> Nice brain work!

<point to 3rd note & let children re-tell> Wow, you're an awesome memory kid!

Should we keep these picture notes here or here? Okay, great choosing. I'll let you know when 10 minutes is over...Go have fun!"

Draw the notes quickly as you speak.

Another important step to ensure that your child understands the directions is to ask the child to repeat what you've just drawn/told them to do. The pictures are critical here since that is what your child will use to "read" back what you have just told them.

How many things your child can remember to do at one time? Think about the steps of a clear statement... That's right, **one thing, one choice**. The picture notes are for them to help them remember **multiple steps**. You can also use choices in 1-2-3 picture notes (What colour sticky note? Do you hold pics or do I?).

FAQ

"What happens when they don't follow the directions?"

Use the pictures as an objective tool. Instead of telling children what they need to do, simply point and ask what needs to happen now, next and last. Give lots of **Specific praise** for remembering and lots of choices for how they can complete the directions (red or blue paper, you or I draw, clothes first or toys?).

If they still don't do it? Take a few moments to make sure you and your child are both calm, then try phrasing your request as a clear statement with only one task at a time. Maybe after big mindful breaths!

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3. Research and Evidence: Thinking and Choices

When people feel a **sense of control**:

Stress goes down.

Happiness goes up.

They are more willing to do tasks... even when there is no reward.

They perform at a higher level than when they don't get any choices.

They can do a chosen task for longer periods than a non-chosen task.

Research about choices for people

Having a choice, even a small choice, gives a sense of control that is powerful and lasting, it provides practice for good thinking. It also gives us examples and engages us to critically consider the statements we are making as adults.

For instance, if someone were forcing you to do something (e.g., eat vegetables, go running), you may not enjoy it as much as you would have if you had chosen on your own (I am going to eat vegetables AND go running today!).

EVERY choice a child makes stimulates their brain and gives them practice with accepting the consequences associated with the choice.

Since choices are adult controlled, all the choices you offer are fine, and they will have thousands of opportunities to practice making decisions before they are older and will need to make important decisions (e.g., in secondary school), when choices children make on their own may have much larger consequences.

Praise the *'good choosing'* process, rather than the actual choice itself.

FAQs

"So I'm not supposed to say good choice?"

We encourage parents to say “**good choosing**” instead of “good choice.” Since choices are adult-controlled, either choice should be good. Saying “good choice” may lead the child to think that the other might be a “bad choice” and this may put pressure on the child to try to guess the “right answer.” Choices are adult-controlled so any choices you offer need to always be a ‘right answer’, that way the child is truly free to choose, just for the fun of it, and you can praise their thinking and choosing abilities.

“How many choices should I include in my questions or statements?”

One choice at a time! Frequent choices are great, but usually offering just one choice at a time is best. This can avoid overwhelming the child with too many choices at once. Giving just one choice at a time (carrots or broccoli?) and sticking with that choice, helps to provide consistency and prevent the child from waiting for you to come up with a better option (like chocolate). Once the child has made the choice, feel free to offer another (ok carrots, do you want butter or olive oil on them?).

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3. "How-To" Manual: The Golden 3 and Thinking

Use **THINKING** to:

Give your child **real-life practice** of thinking.

Include your child in the process.

Boost the **child's interest** in your words and **engage them** in an activity.

Give yourself a **break from thinking** (and overthinking).

Teach a child to **independently** create solutions.

Thinking opportunities teach thinking.

What is a thinking opportunity?

A statement or question that allows your child to think of choices.

Opportunity for your child to try something new.

A chance for your child to think about the available choices.

Adults still guide children's thinking and give choices when needed.

Why do we give thinking opportunities?

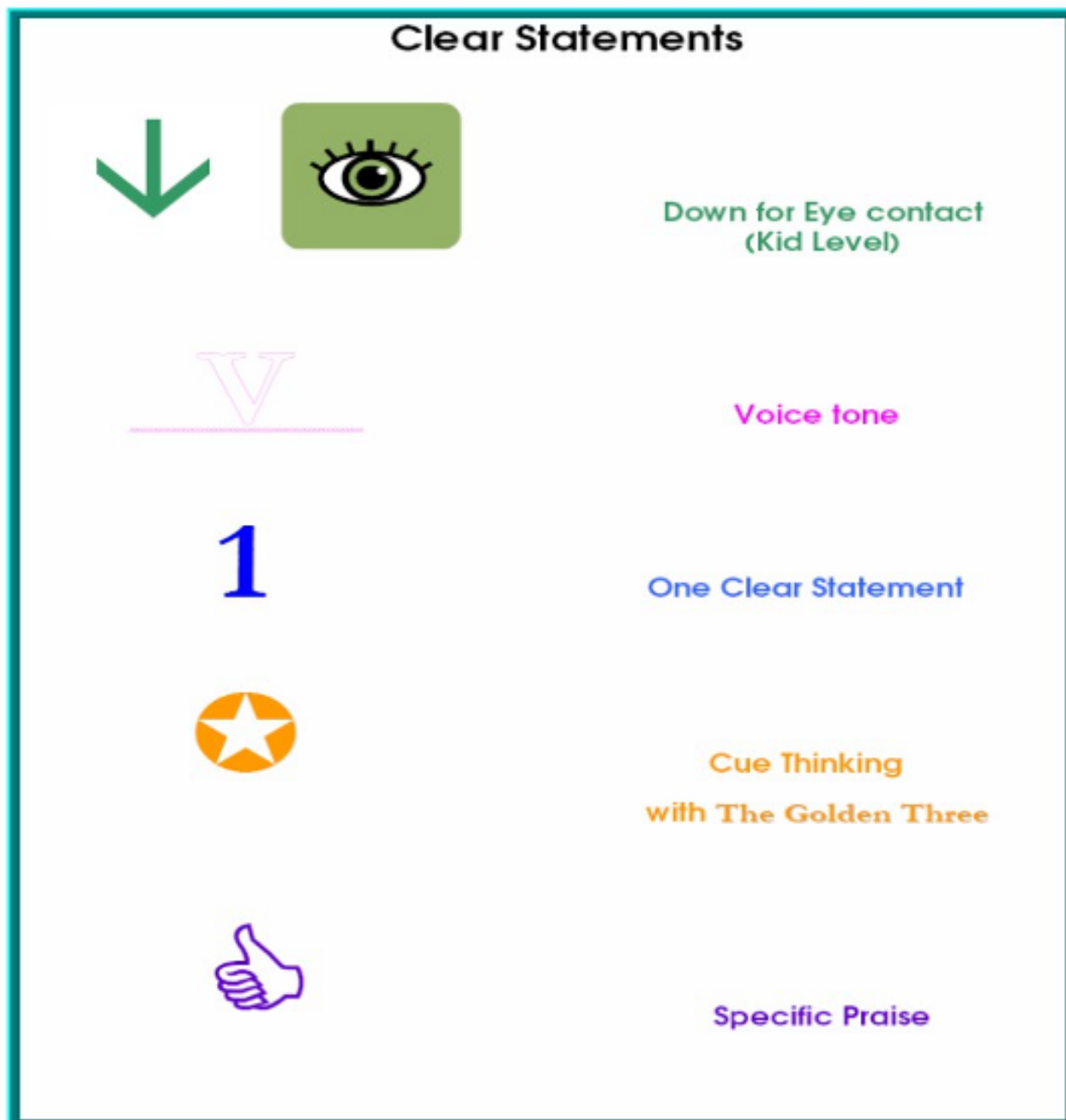
You give choices for practice, and then you let them think of their own choices!

Practice guided thinking. The process is still adult-controlled.

Keeps children engaged. They can think too!

Greater sense of control (let children tell you the 'How-To' manual).

Reminder of steps for clear statements, and choices, leading to thinking:



The Golden 3

We are getting there! We discussed choosing in Modules 1 and 2, and then we focused on thinking in Module 3:

The Golden Three

The "How-To" manual for developing thinking!

* * * Choose * * *

(grow a competent choice-maker)

"You can walk forwards or backwards."

"You can take the box with you or leave it behind."

"You can sleep head in or head out."

"You can sit at the table with the booster or with the chair."

"You can wear your coat inside-out or rightside-in."

* * * Think * * *

(grow an independent thinker)

"You think about how to do that job. Let me know what you think."

"You decide what to do. Let me know your thoughts."

"I can't wait to hear what you think."

"When you think of something, let me know."

* * * Solve * * *

(grow a masterful problem solver)

"What will you do about that?"

"How will you solve that problem?"

"I can't wait to see how you & your brain solve this situation."

"What are you going to say to your friend?"

"When you figure out what to do, let me know!"



Solve – Kids now have tons of guided practice to solve problems

Think – Kids have heard choices so many times, they think of choices

Choose – Kids are given acceptable choices to think about and choose

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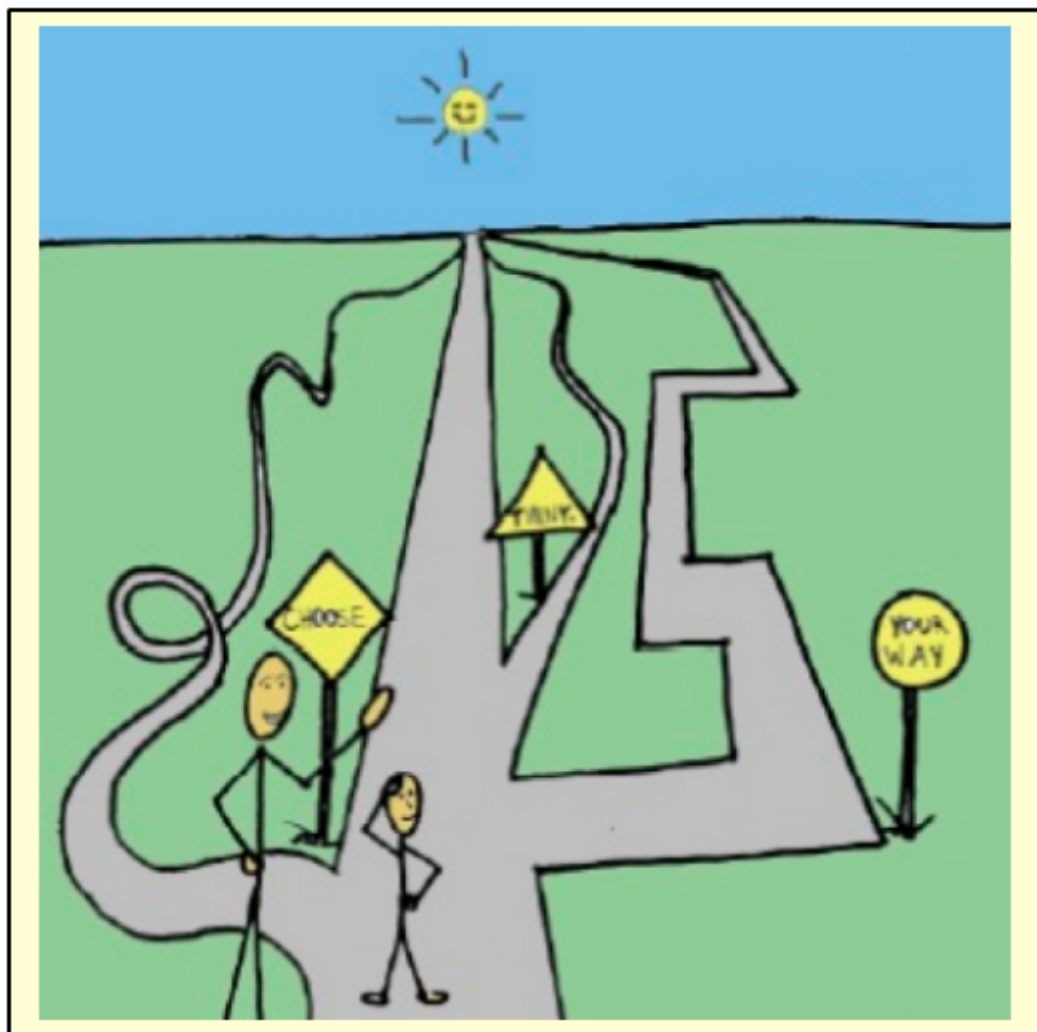
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3. Reflection on Thinking and Choices

In the last two weeks, we started changing old habits by using newer tools. We polished old-generation tools to make space for refreshed strategies.

We are figuring out all the opportunities we could offer our child acceptable choices and reflecting on our family plans. Our child is thinking and choosing more than ever before!

Your children are learning that **they** can be **Good Choice Makers!**



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Let's share reflections on these points:

Where are we now with giving choices?

In the morning, how many choices do you hear yourself giving your child? _____

At night, how many choices do you hear yourself giving your child? _____

What are some tiny little choices you were able to offer? _____

Do you give choices when you ask for cooperation (time for dinner...do you want to...)? Y /N

Do you give choices when the child asks for something (yes you can go outside...will you take your coat or leave it here)? Y / N

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3. Focus on more Success Charts

We first tried out success charts for evening routines in Module 2. Now, we expand on them further adding the morning routine.

We use **Success Charts** to:

Teach the **mini steps in daily routines**.

Boost the child's **sense of control** (decrease stress).

Boost the **child's independence** (matched to home culture).

Teach a child **how to wait** for fun rewards and treats.

Give more **Specific Praise for mini steps**.

Boost the child's **attention to the adult's words** using **Picture Notes**.

Allow your child to do more **Choosing and Thinking**.

When do we use Success Charts?

When we want our child to be **independent** in a routine.

When we want **cooperation** with regular home routines.

Why do we use Success Charts?

To **boost consistency** for what adults expect and how children succeed.

To **encourage cooperation and** guide independent follow-through from the child.

To create a **Blame-free** tool for determining success.

To **boost the predictability** of the home environment, and reduce family stress.

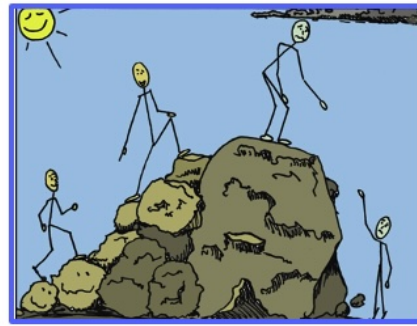
Success charts are different from 'behaviour' charts.

The focus is not only on the outcome, but the mini steps that brought good thinking and choosing.

Success Charts teach mini steps.

What are Success Charts?

- Big idea/task broken into **small steps**.
Called “task-analysis”.
Takes “PlanFull-ness”.
- **Picture notes to communicate.**
- Clear, **consistent reward** system (how many stickers to get _____).
- Lots of success reinforced by **your eyes, voice, & face** as a part of Specific Praise
Gives child a sense-of-control with lots of Choices!



Child can even draw pictures, add details, color □ emotionally invested.



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3. Create a Morning Routine success chart

Think about your family's morning routines. Talk with your child about the mini steps to **Morning Routine** success.

Let's revise what we did in Module 2 for the **Evening Routine**. We broke it down with the child's assistance on the mini steps that ensure the family's evening routine is pleasant, successful, and therefore not stressful:

We already broke down child's Evening Routine:

- Brush teeth... 
- Bathroom ... 
- Clothes off & in hamper... 
- PJs on... 
- Toys away... 
- Pick a book & get in bed... 



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What are the mini steps involved in your child's Morning Routine?

Make a table and with your child, use words and picture notes to denote the steps that are part of your familial routine and that the child is involved with. Use the charts in conjunction with the weekly calendar, and show on that calendar that you and your child decided on consistent ways to ensure the day and week go smoothly and happily.

Words

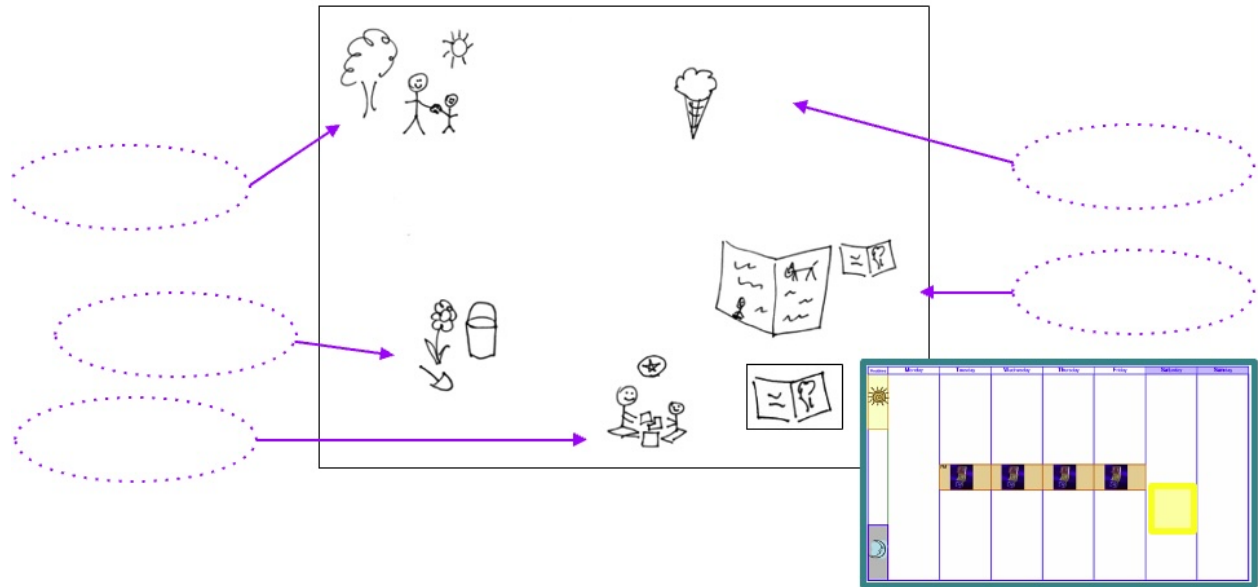
Picture Notes



Draw an arrow across the top of the calendar to show that the morning routine is consistent, every day.

**You can add Special Treats, which do not have to cost money...
just a bit of time!!**

Special Treats don't have to cost money... just a bit of time! (and attention-eyes, voice, face).



REMEMBER: GIVE SOME CHOICES TO YOUR CHILD!

Some 'sample' choices that you can let go of (depending on your family routine and circumstances). Choices will make our children feel included and in control.

“Where do you think we should keep the Success Chart so it’s safe?”

“Do you want to sometimes draw **a smiley face** instead of getting a **sticker**?”

“When you earn a sticker, should *you* **put it on** the chart **or should I**?”

“How do you want to get your Success Stickers, **all at once** or **one at a time**?”

“What do you think we should do if we are not at home?” (chart is very mobile)

“What if you think of another special treat? Should we add it as an option?”





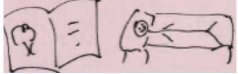
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3. Using the Charts

Think about your Morning Routine and create Mini Steps for Success.

We already broke down child's **Evening Routine**:

- Brush teeth... 
- Bathroom ... 
- Clothes off & in hamper... 
- PJs on... 
- Toys away... 
- Pick a book & get in bed... 



What are the mini steps involved in your child's Morning Routine?

Words

Picture Notes

How do we use Success Charts?

Choose a routine to use as the first Success Chart

- ◆ Start with easier routines and move to more difficult ones (morning or after school).
- ◆ Pick a routine that contains one or two steps that are not *always happening*.

Analyse the routine as a task that includes tiny steps.

- ◆ Decide rewards at each stage.

Create picture notes for the mini steps.

Practice making Mini-Steps-to-Success on a draft chart first.

- ◆ Practice the explanation while drawing.
- ◆ Plan Practice!

Present to a child at home in a calm and peaceful context.

- ◆ Have fun telling the story with Picture Notes.

Once awarded, NEVER take a sticker AWAY.

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3. Practice with the Success Charts AM



[Colorful Organic Child Psychology Presentation by marghig](#)

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3. Summary: The 'Family Car' Metaphor

We are polishing 'generational tools':

Consistent practice increases your self-awareness of your behaviours.

Consistency helps children know what to expect next.

Consistent use of new tools saves your energy & emotions (lowers stress).

<p>2nd Gear</p> 	<p>Thinking about Choices allows the child to move smoothly through adult-controlled events.</p>	<p>2nd gear allows the vehicle to move a little faster with less work!</p>
<p>Oil</p> 	<p>Thinking about Choices gives a healthy sense-of-control of children and keeps them happy.</p>	<p>Oil helps keep the engine healthy, and moving smoothly – similar to specific noticing.</p>
<p>Maps</p>	<p>Success Charts give consistent structure to adult-controlled routines.</p>	<p>Maps show the way for the family vehicle... allow on-purpose movement (not just wandering)</p>



Success Charts for specific routines teach small new behaviours to be consistent (mini-steps to success).

Maps allow families to move through new environments neighbourhoods

Petrol



Picture Notes give adults a powerful tool to attract the child's attention direct the child (in adult-steered directions).

Petrol powers the vehicle to move in adult-steered directions at adult-controlled speeds.

Road signs



Picture Notes: A picture is worth 1,000 words – but preschoolers can't read – so draw what you want to say.

Road signs tell a driver how to safely move through traffic.

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3. Creating Connections: Thinking Together Games

More ideas for fun and thinking games with your children

Use **Together Think Time** to:

Grab and keep children's attention to your words.

Specifically Praise children's brain and thinking abilities.

Swim or Sink!

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Please see separate zip file for access. 😊 📁

"This is a cool science bag called "Sink or Swim". We can do it during bath time. Let's explore what's inside the bag."

This game is about sinking floating.

I wonder which of these items will float... I wonder which ones will sink when we put them in the water?

We can **guess one-at-a-time** or we can make "**guessing piles**".

Okay, **great job choosing**. Let's see what happens.

+ Wow, your guess was right!

+ Wow, you **did a great job guessing, but it happened differently than we thought!**"

Brain Chart

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“I’m learning a lot in my training you have learned a lot in the Brain Train school group!

Your teacher told us about this Brain Chart that we can use at home too.

We can put it up or. Nice choosing. Whenever **you catch yourself** using one of these strategies/tools, let me know so **we can put a good job mark on your Brain Train chart.**

Sometimes you might want **stars...sometimes happy faces.**

When you get **10 good-job-marks, you can choose a sticker to keep.** You **can think about where** that sticker will go.

If you want to bring this chart to your Brain Train group, you can show your teacher all your cool brain thinking".

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3. Conclusions

This week...

You boosted the consistency and predictability of home routines.

You boosted the child's sense of control by giving them a tool they can 'read'.

You encouraged preferred behaviours and continued the "How-To" manual strategies.

You encouraged your child's thinking by letting them think of what choices they had (Golden 3).

You involved your child in their special treat reward (sense of control) and connected to the Weekly Schedule.

You encouraged the child's independence in how to succeed with the home routine.

You gave your child a way to learn about time and waiting by using a weekly calendar for special treats.

And...

You grabbed and kept your child's attention with Picture Notes.

You used 1-2-3 Picture Note Sequence to prepare and include the child for upcoming routines and events.

You thought together with your child during the Sink or Swim science game.

You helped the child stay aware of Brain Train strategies in the home with the brain chart.

Furthermore...

You filled your child with Specific Praise.

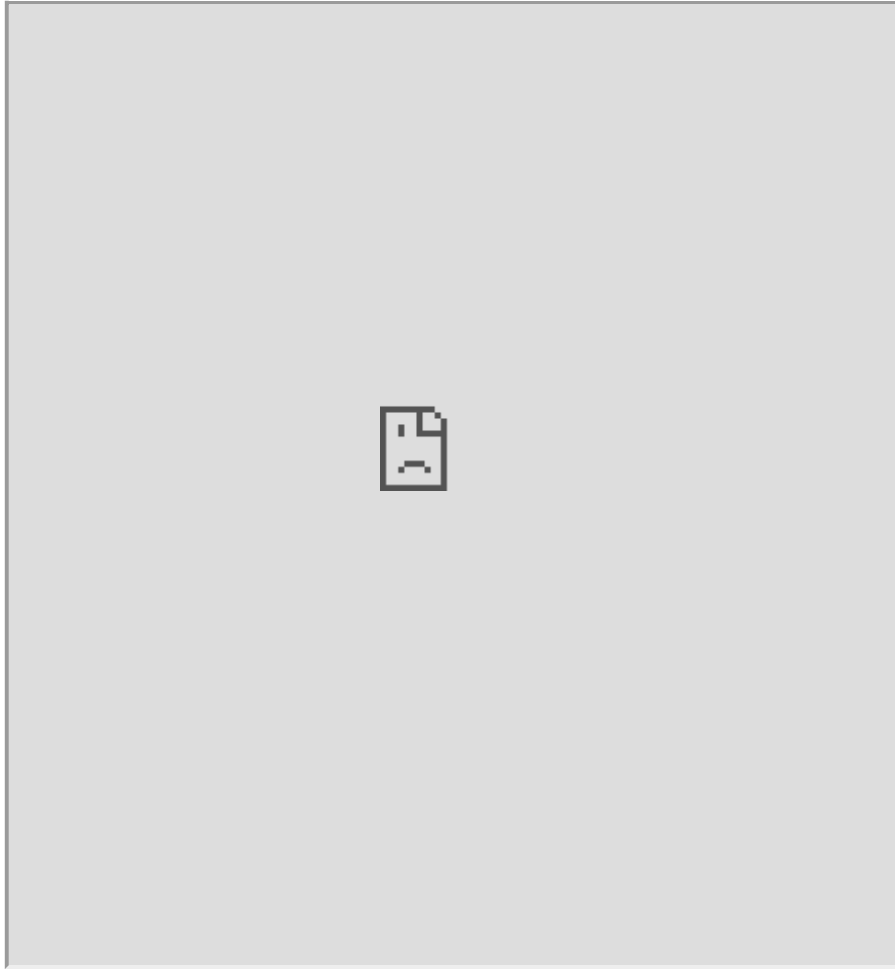
You gave your attention away with Specific Noticing.

You boosted your awareness of Ding Modes and tried to stay in Bling Mode.

You boosted cooperation with Clear Statements.

You boosted your child's thinking with the Golden 3 (Choose, Think, Solve).

You used Meaningful Language that encouraged the child's thinking.

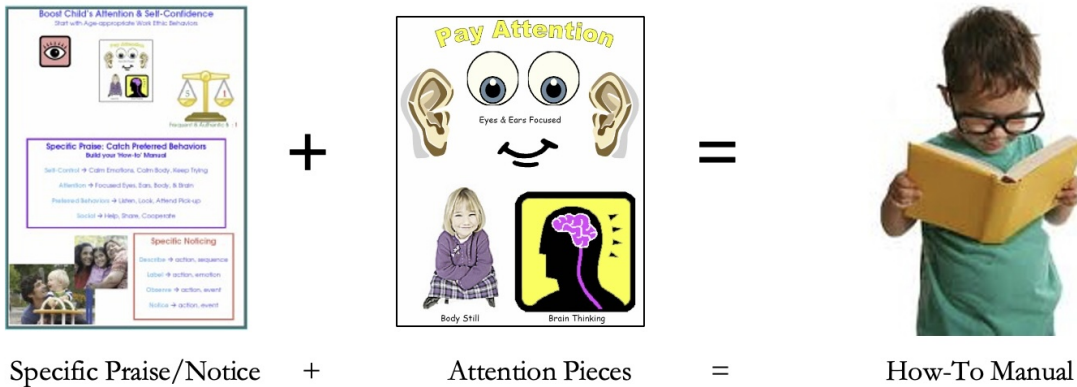
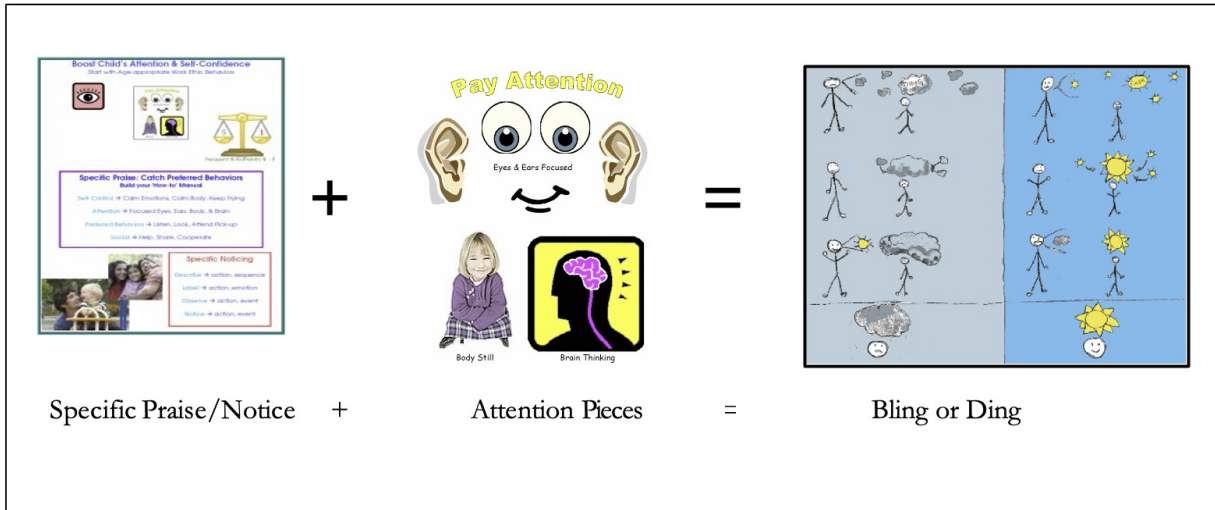


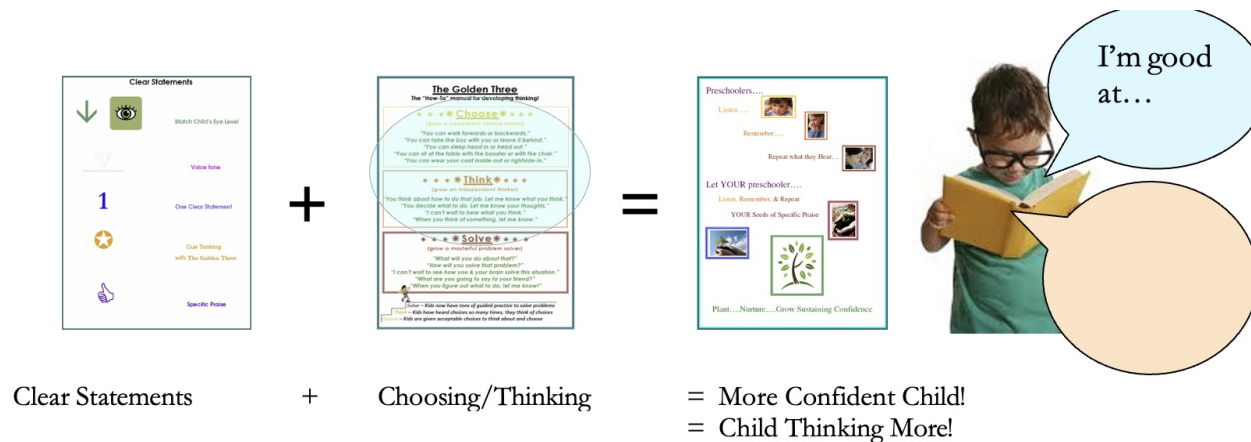
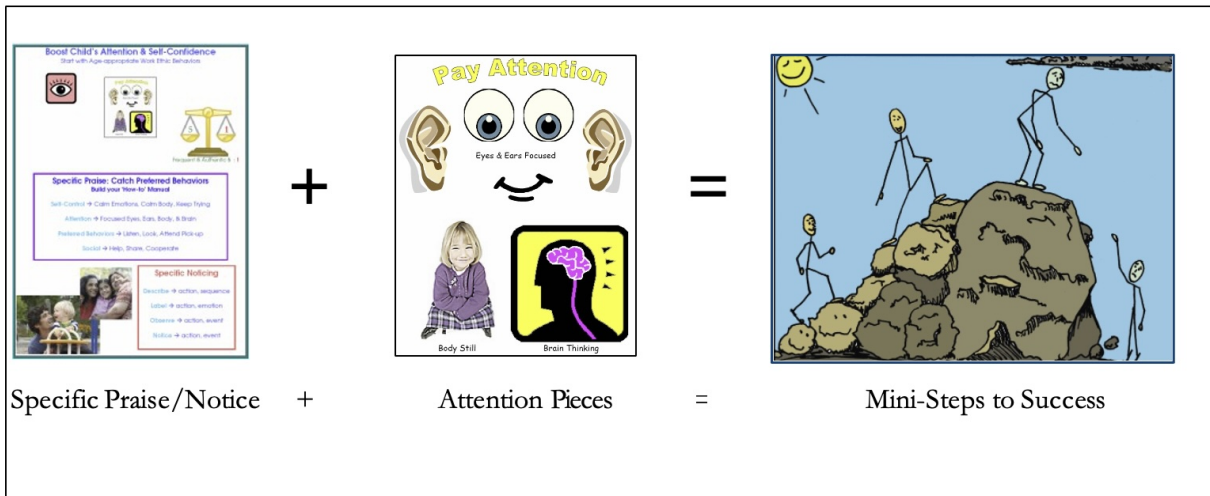
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3. How To Manual from Modules 1, 2, 3

Let's celebrate! In the last 3 modules/weeks, you developed your 'How-To' Manual further.







+



=



Child's want

+ Weekly Calendar

= Learning to Wait
= Emotional Control

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3. Reflections

How is the Morning Success Chart going?

Did you take time with the child to go through the routine?

Did you narrate while drawing Picture Notes?

Did the child help with brainstorming? With Picture Note ideas?

How many steps happen successfully all the time?

How many of the steps are challenging (some success, sometimes gets done & sometimes not)?

What treats did you and the child put on the Success Chart?

Did the child get a Summary Success Sticker?

Did the child get a special treat after 2 Summary Success Stickers? What treat did they choose?

Did you try 1-2-3 Picture Notes to help with transitions?

What was the situation?

How did it go?

Have you tried the “Sink or Swim” game?

Were you able to ask more questions than give answers?

Were you able to do more listening than usual?

Did the child successfully think? (hypothesise/guess, test, observe result)

Did items get categorised in other ways? How?

How is the Evening Success Chart going?

Keeping in daily routine?

Does the child still want stickers?

How are Meaningless Questions going?

Your awareness?

Repair?

Child's response?

How is Specific Praise going?

Your awareness?

Child's response?

How is Specific Noticing going?

Your awareness?

Child's response?

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PARENTS - Module 4, Week 4: Boost Thinking with Consistent Discipline: Using Tools you Already Have

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2. 4. Brain Break
3. 4. Research and Evidence: Children's Brain and Emotions
4. 4. Before and During Strategies
5. 4. Prevention: Clear Statements about Consequences
6. 4. Before: Can't and Can
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10. 4. Power Struggles
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4. Boost Thinking with Consistent Discipline: Using the Tools You Have



Edutopia. (2002). <https://www.edutopia.org/article/social-and-emotional-skill-progression-in-preschool/>

This week we will:

- ◆ Be monitoring the child's emotional saturation.
- ◆ Use neutral words to minimise saturation.
- ◆ Use Can't/Can brainstorm and Clear Consequence statements.
- ◆ Focus on more child-directed Weekly Schedules.

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4. Brain Break

Take some time to chill before learning....





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4. Research and Evidence: Children's Brain and Emotions

Emotional saturation

Research shows that when children are overwhelmed with emotions:

They are like sponges, they can't take in anything else, and their brain may become **saturated**.

They can't hear your words, their brain is **saturated**.

They can't learn anything, their brain is **saturated**.

Emotional Saturation happens quickly in the preschool and lower primary years.

Emotional Saturation is age-appropriate.

Emotional Saturation blocks all other input.

Emotional Saturation

Emotional Saturation

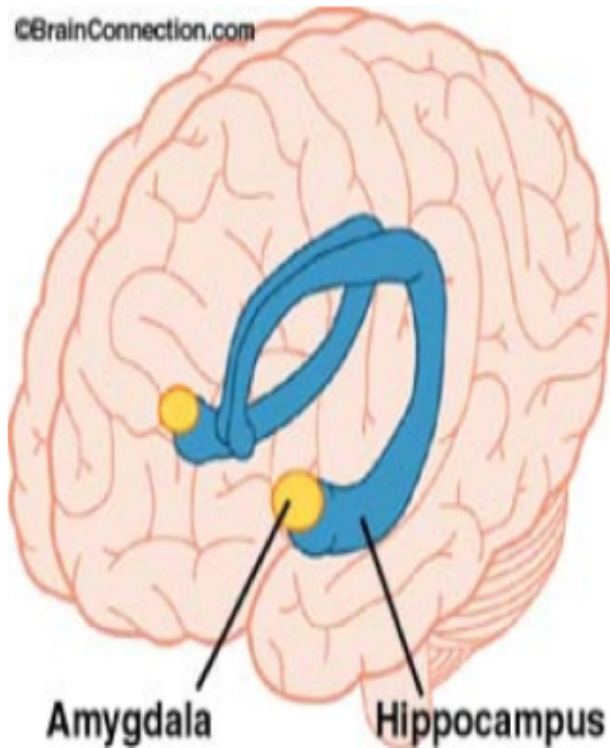


Adults can Stop Wasting Energy!

- ✓ **Short statements.**
- ✓ **Model emotional control.**
- ✓ **No arguing.**
- ✓ **No big explanations or justifications.**
- ✓ **No bribing** ("if you do this, you can have that").
- ✓ **No threats** ("if you ___, you will lose b-day party").

Children's brains aren't ready to listen & learn at that point anyway...

©BrainConnection.com



The **amygdala** (yellow) helps with emotions and the **hippocampus** (blue) helps with learning and creating new memories.

When the **amygdala** gets saturated with emotion, it does not interact well with the **hippocampus**.

During times of high emotions, attention, memory, and learning don't happen optimally.

“Optimised Attention” “Optimised Learning” happen when emotions are calm.



HOW YOUR BRAIN RESPONDS TO ACUTE STRESS

YOUR EXPERIENCE



AMYGDALA

AMYGDALA

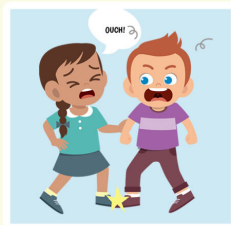


PREFRONTAL CORTEX

PREFRONTAL CORTEX



MINDFUL RESPONSE



FIGHT FLIGHT FREEZE



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Check some of these games by Blissful Kids:
<https://blissfulkids.com/mindfulness-games-kids-teens-stay-cool/>

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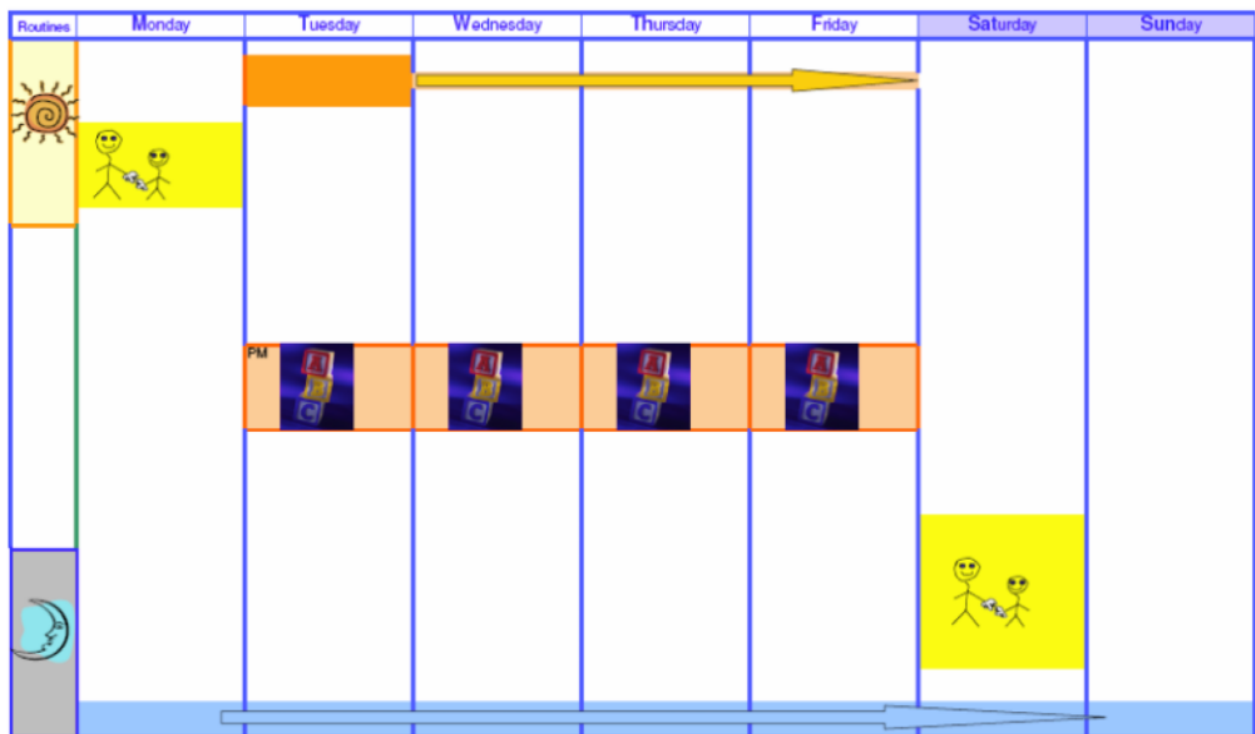
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4. Before and During Strategies

Weekly Schedules

As discussed in Module 1, weekly planners:

- ◆ Prevent behaviour problems.
- ◆ Encourage the child's thinking.
- ◆ Give the child a sense of control.



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4. Prevention: Clear Statements about Consequences

<p>Clear Statement portion</p> <p>Please put on a shirt—you can choose any long-sleeved shirt.</p>	<p>Clear Consequence portion</p> <p>If you don't choose a long-sleeved shirt, I'll choose one for you.</p>
<p>You have 10 minutes to pick up your toys—you can start with big or small. Do you want me to set the timer or tell you from my watch?</p>	<p>I'll pick up the toys that are around after 10 min. When I pick up toys they go away.</p>

Role-play and reflect upon how you can provide a CLEAR STATEMENT followed by CLEAR CONSEQUENCES in some common scenarios:

Getting Dressed

Eating Dinner

Having Friend Over

Doing Chores

Cleaning Room

Picking Up Toys

Playing outside

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4. Before: Can't and Can



CAN'T / CAN Picture Note Brainstorm

Fun way to encourage the child's thinking.

Give the child a sense of control during an adult-controlled interaction.

Before going into the store, draw a picture note story for:

CAN'T / CAN Brainstorm:

1. Go buy groceries.
2. Get ready to go visit Target or BigW.
3. Get ready to drive somewhere nice.
4. Get ready for visiting someone.
5. Get ready to eat dinner.
6. Get ready for the park.

Limits	
	What can't we get in the store? What can we get?



Consequences

What happens if a **'can't'** happens?
What happens if a **'can'** happens?



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4. Role-Play with Can & Can't

Step#1: Be 'planfull' with your child.

Scenario

"We're about to go into the store. **Let's talk about what will happen.** I'll keep track of our story with picture notes. I have two colours...**which colour do you want to use?** Great job choosing. You probably know most of this story already, but **our brains will have fun remembering, thinking, and planning.**"

What CAN'T we get today? *DRAW: candy, corn puffs, ice cream...*

"You're right, we won't get candy today. What else CAN'T we get? ...chocolate milk...sugar pops cereal...ice cream...what else?"

What CAN'T we do with our bodies in the store? *DRAW: run, yell, touch...*

"You're right, there is no running in the store. **Great thinking!** You're right, you can't touch all the stuff on the shelves as you walk by. **Great remembering!**

You can't stand in the cart...**great thought.** Also, you can't ask me over and over for things that we say aren't choices today, although you could draw a picture note and save it for later!"

Make sure the typical problem areas are included!

What will happen if something from the CAN'T list happens?

"If you run, what will happen?" *DRAW: child hand on cart*

"That's right...I'll keep you safe. If you start touching items on shelves, what will happen?" *DRAW: arrow to the picture of child's hand on cart*

"If you ask for candy, what will happen? You're right, I'll say no.... but, what else can you do to help you remember it for later? Yes, you can draw a picture note for yourself!"

"How many sticky notes do you want to carry to keep track of things you might want some other day? Great job thinking about that!"

Now...What CAN we get today? *DRAW: milk, eggs, apples, bananas....*

"You're right, we can pick out milk. I'll take it off the shelf. Do you want to put it in the cart or should I?"



What else CAN we get?

"We can get apples, that's right! What colour should we get? Red, great. How many? Four? That's a perfect number! *DRAW*

What CAN we do with our bodies? DRAW

"Good job planning ahead for our trip inside the store!"

Here's a question for your brain:

What will happen if you keep doing things from the CAN list?

"Sure, we can keep track of stars on your sticky note and put them on the Brain Train chart at home! **Great idea!**"

keep track of Brain Stars/Brain Kisses at the store transfer to the Brain Train chart at home... you child can stay in Bling Mode at the store with lots of Specific Praise...bring home

Step #2: Next, ask the child to Repeat/Retell the "Story"

"So let's look remember. What CAN'T we do today? Great job remembering... What CAN we do? Wow, you your brain can pay attention!"

Step #3: Get Going with Choices!

"Okay, let's use our brains to make sure our bodies are calm as we walk into the store. How many Bird Breaths should we take? One. Great.

Do you want to hold onto our pictures or do you want me to? Great choosing. Which hand will you hold as we go in? Great job thinking.”

lots of Choices! Lots of Thinking! Lots of Specific Praise! Catch the preferred behaviours if you want to see them continue!

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4. During: Neutral Words

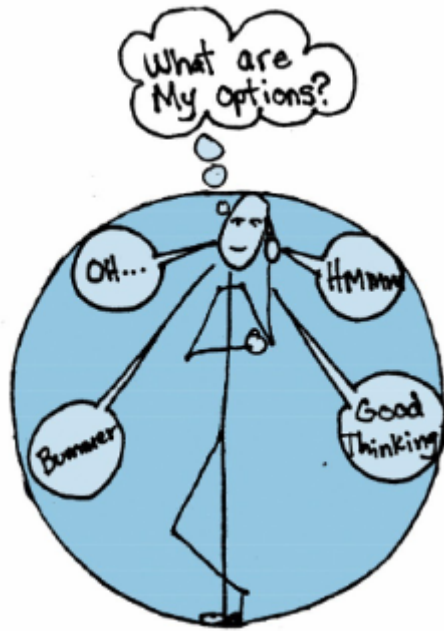


Neutral Words

- Simple responses that put you in neutral and help avoid power struggles.
- Simple responses that help you save energy by keeping you away from power struggles.
- Simple responses that give you time to think along and decide what choices may exist for the child:

“Hmm...”, “Well then...”, “Oh my...”, “Now...”, “Ha...”.

- No sarcasm...
- Breathe!
- Use the thinking time to set your own pace.
- Think about what the child CAN be doing right now, what can you let go of?
- Think about a Clear Statement and a Choice.



Role-play with neutral words

The child wants something and it is not an option:

“That’s a fun idea, but it’s not a choice. We should add that to the CAN’T list. Do you want to draw it or do you want me to draw it?”

[child: ‘But mom/dad!’]

you take a breath “Hmm.... Ha....” [child: ‘But mom/dad!’]

you take a breath start thinking... “Oh my....” [child: arguing]

breathe think of CAN options... “Hmm...” [child: arguing]

“That’s not a choice. You can pick something from our CAN list or make a picture note for later.” [Child: arguing]

model calm emotions “Again, that’s not a choice.”

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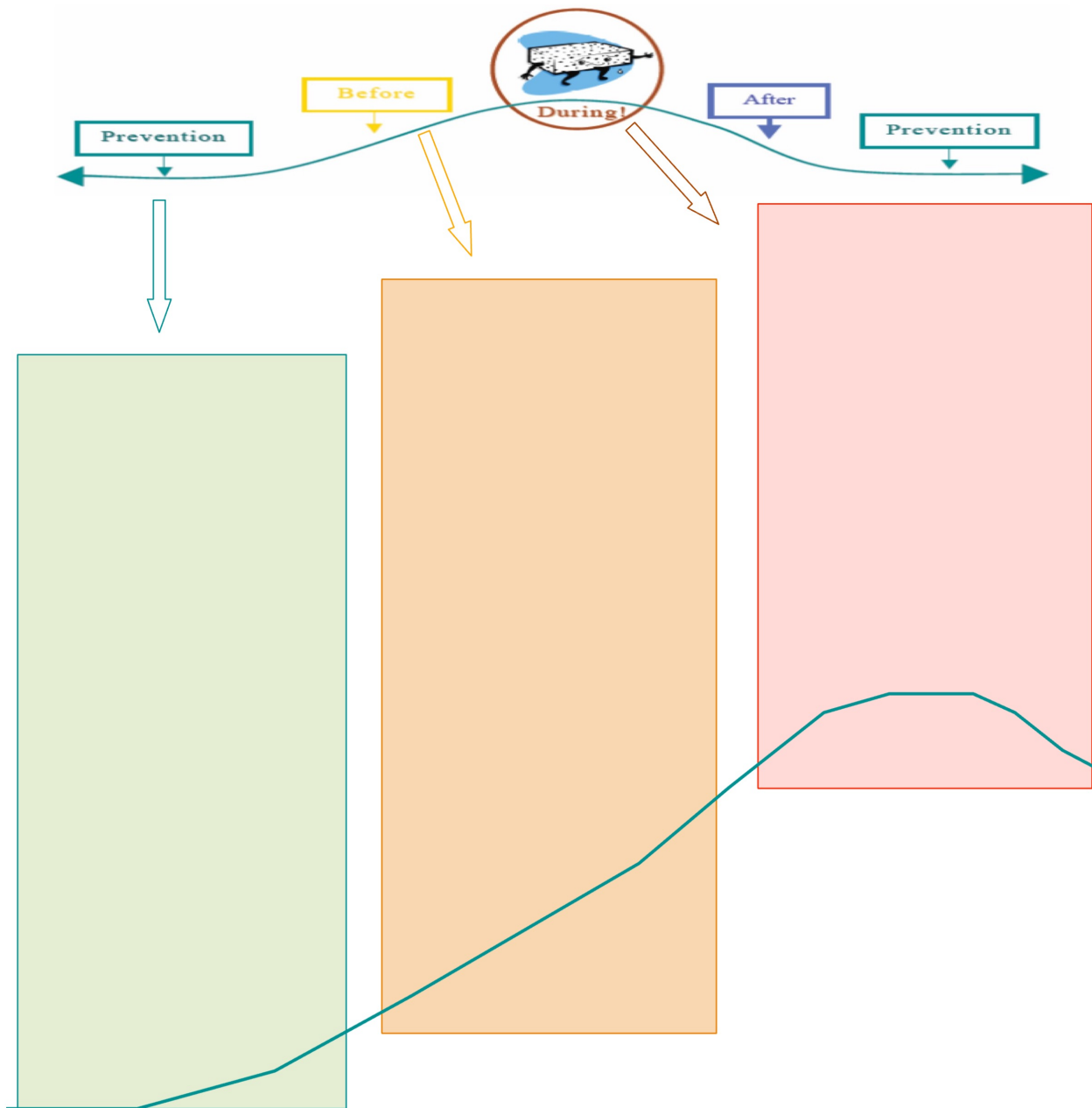
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4. Making New Connections: Use Strategies Before & During

Use all your new and polished tools to:

Encourage preferred behaviours.

Prevent behaviour problems and save energy during problems.



Clear Consequence statement:

Puts your child in charge of their immediate future, with less stress and anxiety.

Gives your child a sense of control.

Engages the child's thinking.

Increase your consistency and predictability.

Success Formula = Clear Statement + Clear Consequence

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4. Power Struggles

What are Power Struggles? Power Struggles feel like SPINNING!

Fast moving (because the child keeps targeting new angles).

Fast pace is the child's, not yours.

When the child pushes limits (tests, argues) and you engage (argue, bargain).

When you say *anything* other than your Clear Statement or Repeated Choices.

Why do children test limits? To find structure and solid grounds.

If they CONSISTENTLY find consistent boundaries, they relax (lower stress).

If they CONSISTENTLY find consistent structure, they will reduce fighting back.

To test consistency (“Will the same thing happen *this* time?”).

To try and find predictability (“If I do this, then *what* will happen?”).

How do we avoid Power Struggles?

1st **Breathe!**

Set your own pace! Model emotional control.

2nd **“Hmmm...”**

Neutral Words keep you protected from arguing...No Spinning!

3rd **Think of CAN** options

- Choices (with Picture Notes)
- Thinking of their own choices (& using Picture Notes)
- Save idea for later (with Picture Notes)

4th **“That’s a great idea, but that’s not a choice right now. You CAN ___ or ___.”**

Praise child’s thoughts & ideas...it freaks them out...they expect an ~~argument~~

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4. Combat Power struggles

1. Clear Statements and Clear Consequences

1. Identify **what you want**
2. Plan **clear statement**
3. Plan **clear consequences**.

A. **Want:** I want my child to put the toys away.

B. **Clear Statement:** "Please, pick up your toys and put them in the basket now or in 5 minutes". 😊

C. **Clear Consequence:** "If you don't put away your toys now or in 5 minutes, you will have your Nintendo take off for 2 days".

2. Try the CAN'T / CAN Brainstorm

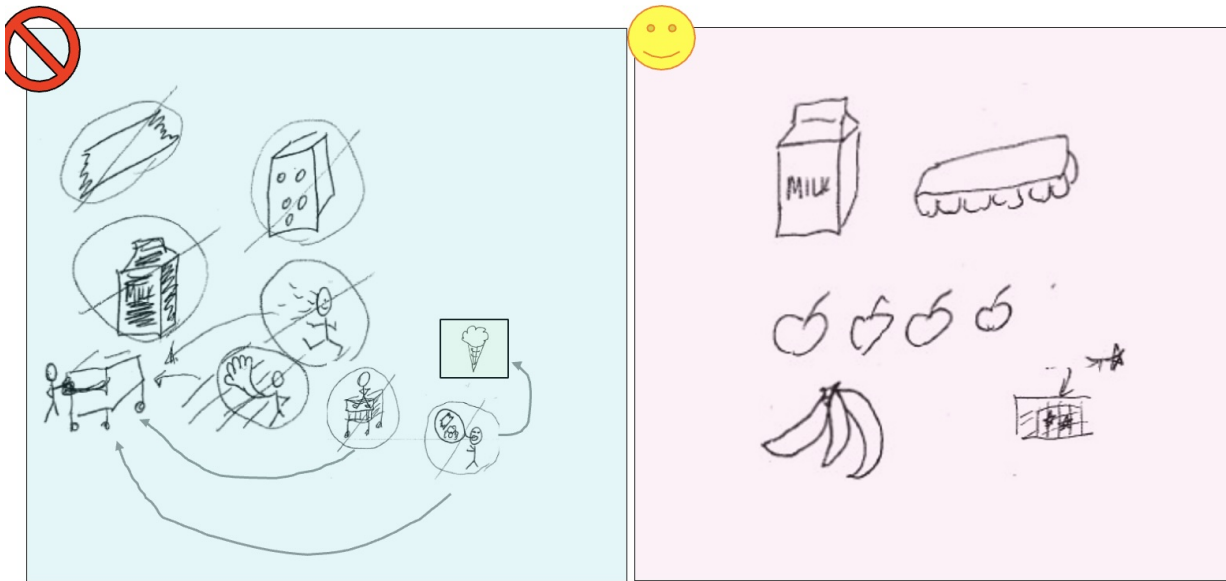
Act with *PlanFullness* - have sticky notes and pen:

Fun story game.

Start with CAN'Ts and have fun, the child is calm and happy, clear consequence picture note.

Brainstorm the CANs. Consequence picture note.

Child retells picture note story, including consequences.



3. Add Parent and Me Time to the busy Weekly Schedules and routines

Parent-and-me times guarantee your attention to the child.

Let the child look forward to an event with you.

Give the child time to plan what they want to do, the child can create picture notes.





Refer to Weekly Schedule often to help children develop of “sense of time”.
Provide a consistent way to refer to what-happens-next to increase predictability

Transfer Success Chart info:

Orange arrow (sun) shows when the morning Success Chart happens.

Blue arrow (moon) shows when we do the afternoon Success Chart.

Earned treats go on when easy for the adult (*adult-controlled, child sense-of-control*).

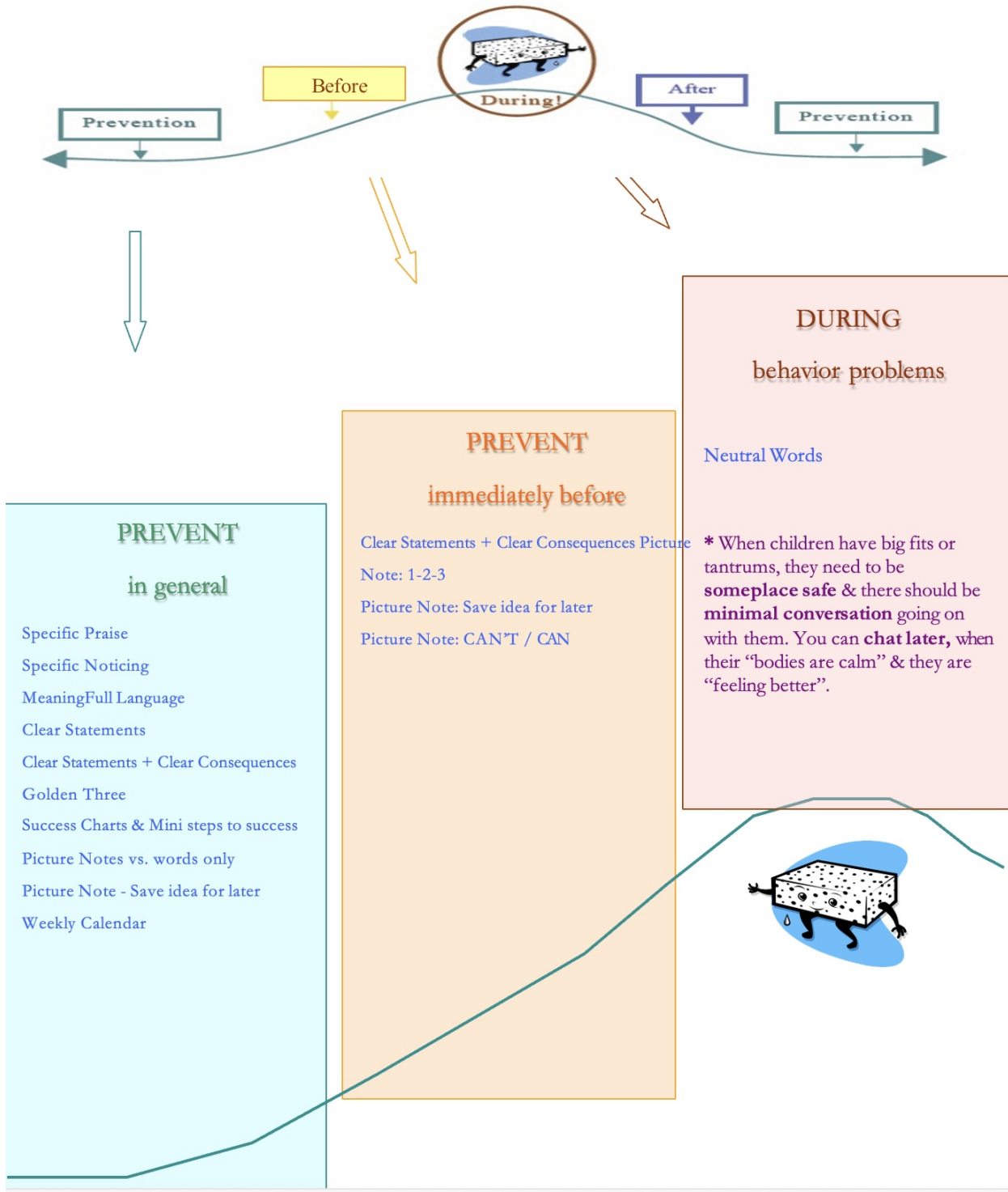
Routines	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
 							
		PM					
							

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4. Achieving structure & discipline

Final overview



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4. Summary: The 'Family Car' Metaphor

Polishing “Generational Tools”:

Consistent practice increases your self-awareness of your behaviours.

Consistency helps children know what to expect next.

Consistent use of new tools saves your energy and emotions (lowers stress).

<p>Maps</p> 	<p>Success charts</p> <p>Clear directions for a specific routine/behaviour.</p>	<p>Map from “A to B” gives exact directions on how to take a small trip. We used to say, “We’re going to Grandma’s house.” Now we say, “We’re taking a Right, then a Left...”</p>
<p>Road Signs</p> 	<p>Picture Notes</p> <p>Simple pictures support words coming from adults.</p>	<p>Road signs give messages with pictures. Everyone can “read” simple pictures. Road signs guide you along the way... with “how-to” info about your trip. Road signs give a warning for upcoming events...</p>
<p>Gears, 1, 2 and 3</p>	<p>The Golden Three</p> <p>Mini-steps of learning how to use your brain to make Choices, Think, Problem Solve.</p>	<p>The transmission gets the car moving... Start in lower gears shift up when ready to go faster.</p>



1st gear

Choose

1st stage: Parents give Choices.

Down-shift when road conditions change or become more challenging.

Slow speed, steep hills, rough terrain

2nd gear

Think

2nd stage: children THINK of options.

Gaining speed is easier on the engine

3rd gear

Solve

3rd stage: children SOLVE problems.

Cruising along
(still need adult steering braking)

Larger maps



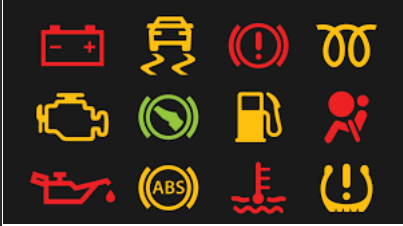

Weekly Calendar

Children “read” what happens next, when things happen, and when threats occur.

A larger view of where you want to go... a city map tells you where you are, where you want to go, and how long it might take to get there.

Warning lights

Warning lights give

	<p>Emotional Saturation</p> <p>Watch your child's warning signs of increased emotion.</p>	<p>drivers warning of possible trouble...if the driver is aware of the warning lights, they slow down give added attention.</p>
<p>Neutral gear</p> 	<p>Neutral Words</p> <p>Words that let you "coast" without using engine energy</p>	<p>Neutral gear allows you to stop acceleration... gives you time to consider what to do next.</p>

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4. Conclusions

This week you...

You guided your child's higher-level thinking by letting *them* think of the available choices.

You allowed your child to think more than you by letting them think of their choices.

You modelled emotional control by talking about non-preferred behaviours while everyone was calm.

You modelled *PlanFullness* by taking time before an event to talk about how it will go.

You respected your child's thoughts with Picture Notes that save ideas for later.

This week you...

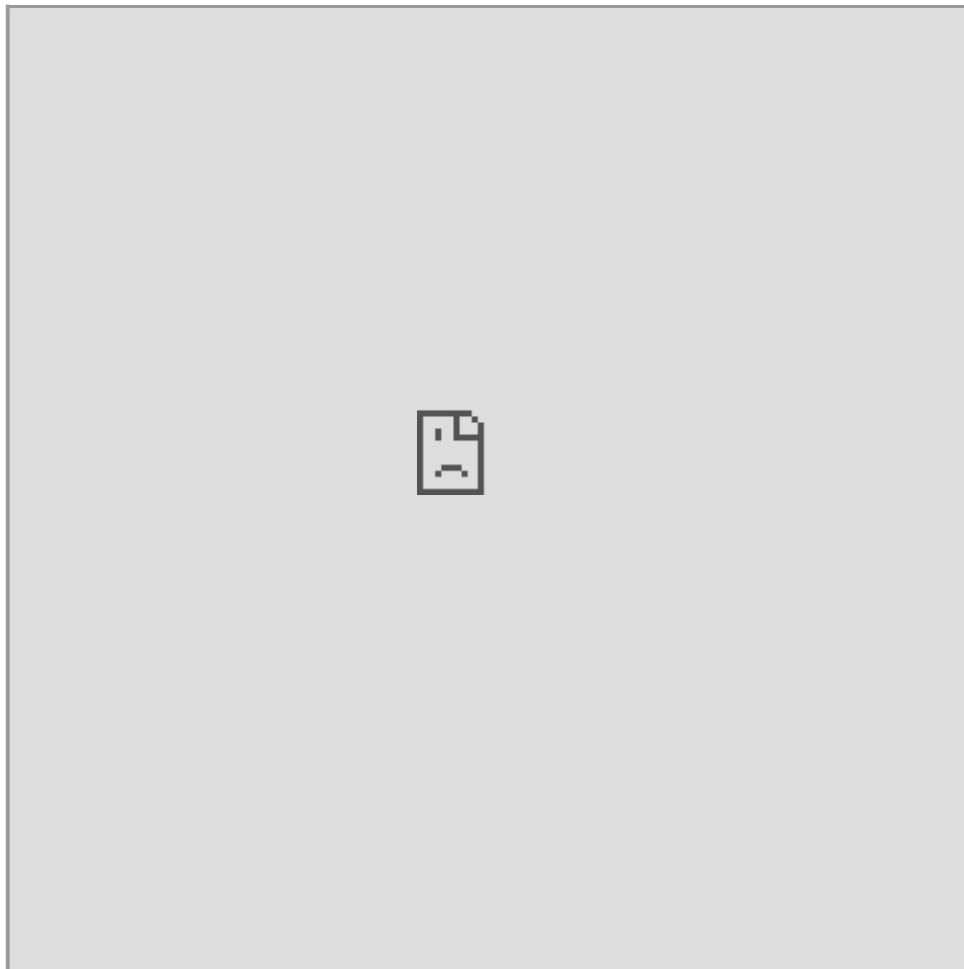
You respected your child's thoughts with Picture Notes that save ideas for later.

You increased the consistency by marking parent-and-me times.

You reduced the child's stress by guaranteeing time together.

You reduce a child's stress by boosting predictability.

You prevented behaviour problems by giving a child a sense of control over their world.



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4. Reflections

This week's strategies

How is it going with using clear statements with clear consequences?

How is your management of power struggles going?

Have you observed any changes in your child's reactions to previous ways of managing conflict?

Share insights, experiences, stories, and ideas from your week at home using the module's strategies.

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PARENTS - Module 5, Week 5: Consistent Limits + Clear Communication = Predictability & Child Thinking

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2. 5. Brain Break
3. 5. Understand Emotional Saturation
4. 5. Managing Emotional Saturation
5. 5. Thinking with Reading
6. 5. Home Practice
7. 5. Summary: The 'Family Car' Metaphor
8. 5. Ideas to try and Reflections

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5. Consistent Limits + Clear Communication = Predictability & Child Thinking



Montessori Australia. (n.d.) <https://montessori.org.au/blog/setting-limits>

This week we will:

Discuss and manage Emotional Saturation.

Make a Home Rules Poster.

Use Breathing Breaks and Brain-Body Breaks for Emotional Management.

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5. Brain Break

Reminder of ways to break stressful patterns...



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5. Understand Emotional Saturation

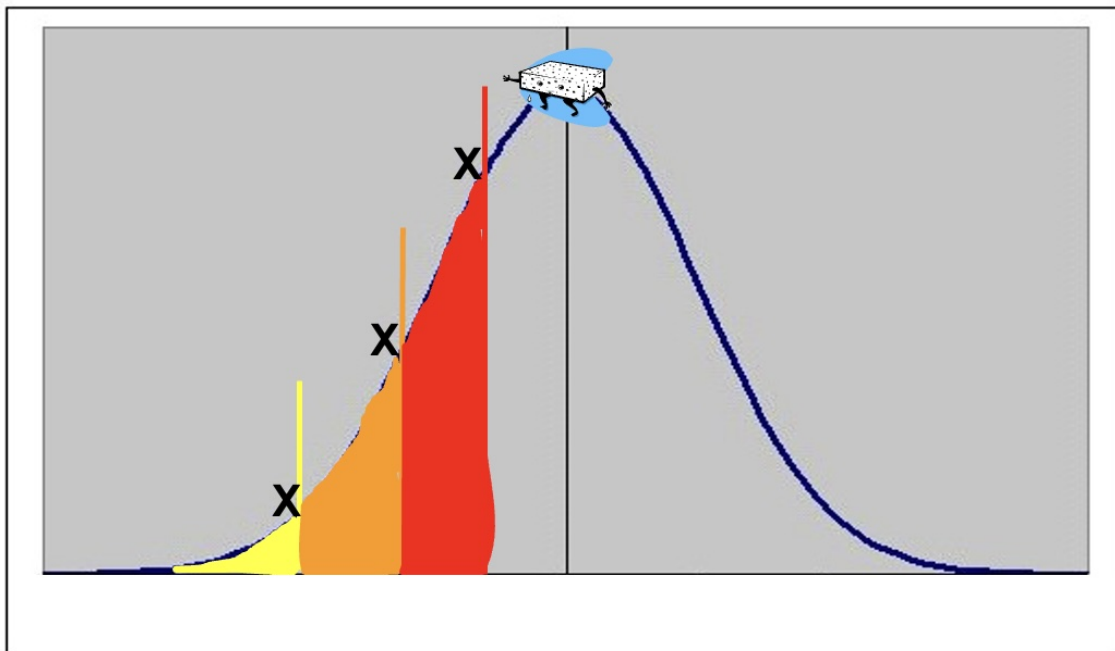
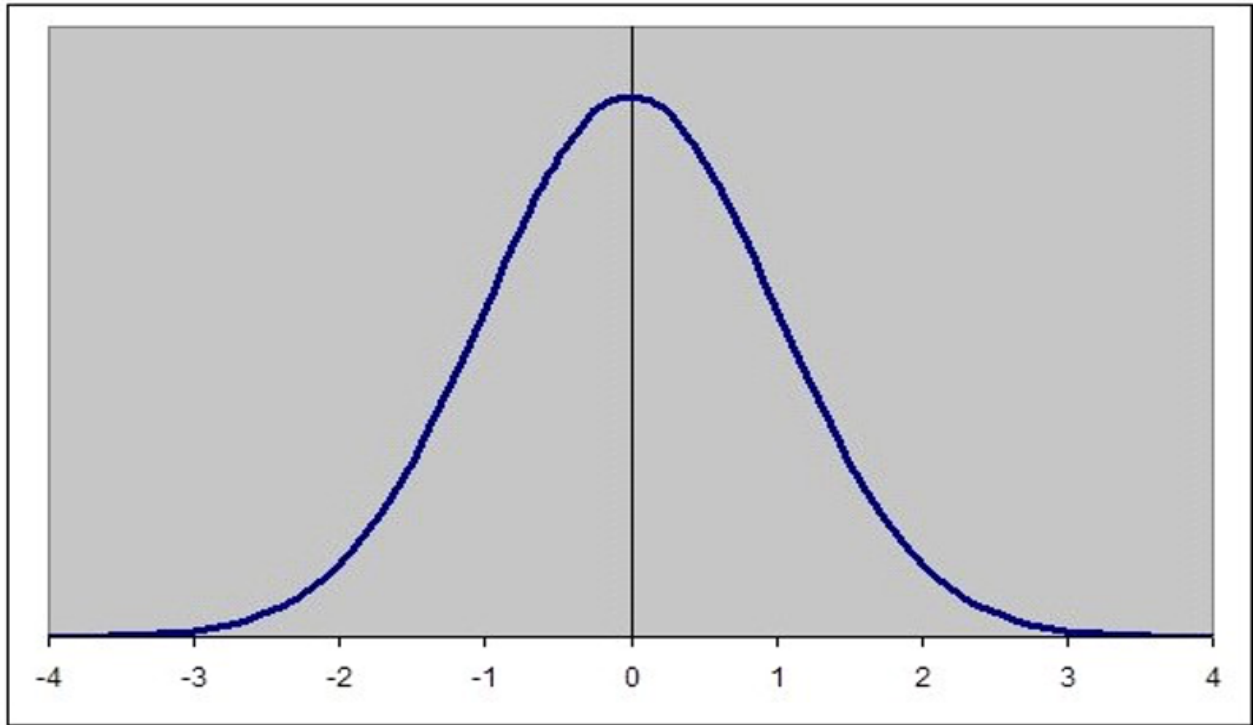


How to avoid EMOTIONAL SATURATION

Children have different energy levels throughout the day.
Adults have different emotions throughout the day.
Our goal is to move closer to being calm regardless of the child's energy.

Be vigilant about emotional changes.

Look for the steps leading to Increasing Energy (mini steps towards Emotional Saturation). Start noticing when a child goes from **yellow** (low) to **orange** (medium) to **red** (danger zone), you as a parent will travel there too!



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Communication = Predictability & Child Thinking

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5. Managing Emotional Saturation

You need to match discipline to a child's changing energy.

Parents become aware of their child's changing energy levels (yellow to orange to red).

Parents help children become aware of their energy levels (yellow to orange to red).

Parents help the child learn to calm their emotions.

"Breathing Break"

You are not mad or frustrated...

Child is NOT in trouble... only starting to get revved up...

You are watching the child's energy and give a friendly reminder...

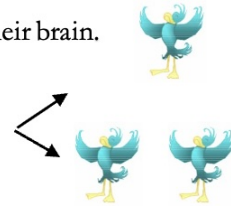
Child gets to choose if, or how many breaths because they are still in control of their brain.

"Please stop____ or take some Bird Breaths...how many?"

- o
- o



OR



So, if you don't follow directions the first time, I will repeat my direction and give you a choice:
to follow directions or take a small break.

- If you **Listen & Follow Directions**, you can put a good-job mark on your Brain Train chart!
- **If you can't make a choice, I will help you. Let's see what will happen next...."**

“Time-out Break”

You may be startled, frustrated, or mad, but try to not to argue or enter a power struggle. You are watching their energy, and they are out of control of their brain/body.

Child does not choose IF they take a break...the child can choose HOW they take a break.



Automatic 4-minute Break:

“Hitting is not allowed. Time for a 4-min-Time-out-Break You can choose the mat or the _____.”



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5. Thinking with Reading

We are maximising time while reducing stress. So far, you have been hopefully **saving time**. How?

You are preventing behaviour problems, which saves time.

You are reducing family stress for a calmer and happier environment.

Bedtime is successful and maybe earlier (*start at 6:30/7:00 so in bed by 7:30 pm*), *which* saves time.

Guarantees a 13-hour time chunk for children to possibly get 12 hours of sleep.

NOTE: Preschoolers and lower primary children need 12 hours of sleep to re-energise their brain for new learning, tired brains don't learn well.

If you wonder how you can use the new-found time for Brain Growth?!

Together Think Time.

Make the most of the time saved with all the new strategies by maximising reading time and connecting it with thinking time!

Reading + Golden 3!

This increases literacy skills.

Read the title of a book, look at the cover art, and let your child predict what this book is about.

“When your eyes look at this picture, what does your brain think this story will be about?”

“When your ears hear the title of this story, what does that make your brain think about?”

View details of the art and link to art supplies the child has experienced.

“These pictures are drawn by an artist who makes money by drawing pictures that go along with the story.”

“What art supplies did the artist use (coloured pencils, pastels, watercolour)?”

“WOW, have you ever used coloured pencils?”

“The next time you use coloured pencils, maybe you can think about these pictures.”

Look at the title page, find the publishing city and relate that city to the child's life.

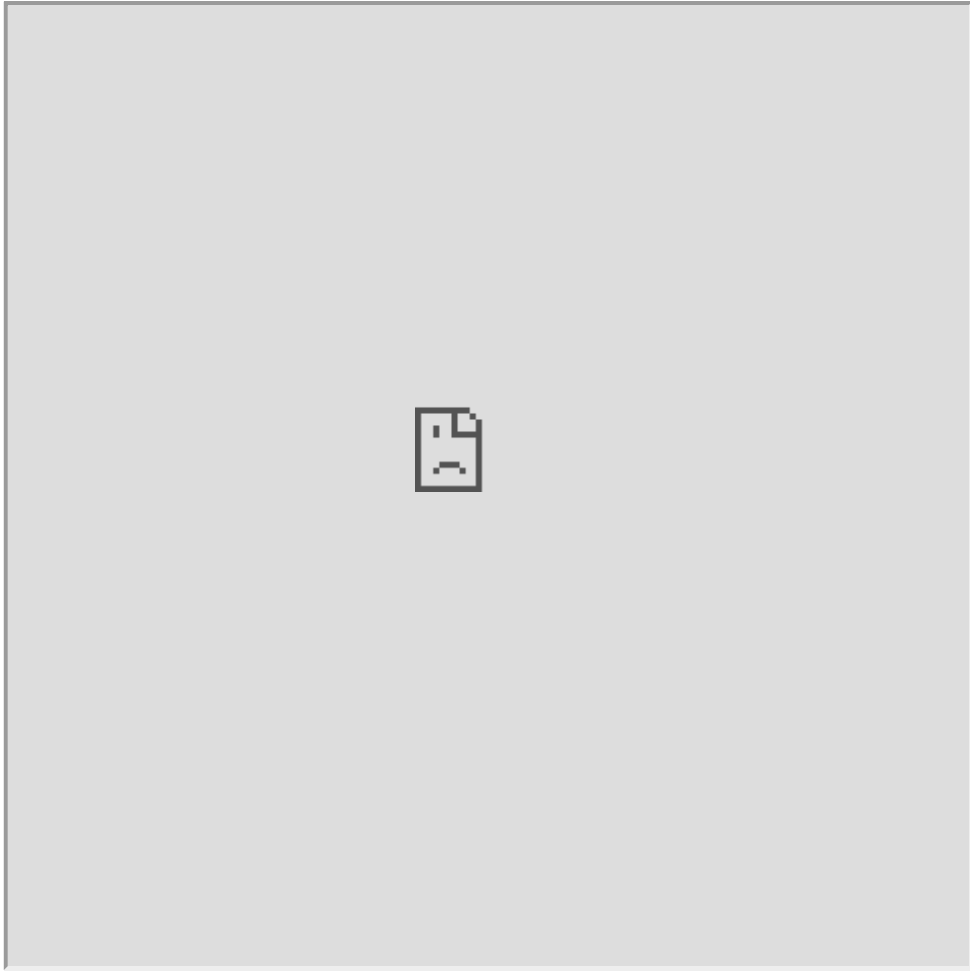
“Aunt Mary lives in Melbourne...”

“Disneyland is in California....”

“There is a Liberty Bell in Philadelphia in the USA where your cousin lives...”

“My cousin's *nonna* lives in Italy...”

“Remember when we went to...? This book was made there...”



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5. Home Practice

Continue to Develop the Predictability of Your Home.

1. Make a Home Rules poster.

You already planned your Home Rules, you know the Can't/Can picture. Pick a calm and pleasant time to work on plans and schedules together. Plan for how many rule categories you might have time to brainstorm draw (each one can take 5-15 min, it's OK to spread out this activity over several days).

Child helps brainstorm but they may need you to help them know what to do! Draw picture notes as you go and review as you go.

The child can decorate, this creates emotional buy-in.

You can ask, "What happens now?" child can refer to the poster for guidance. Your child may tell the Home Rules to home visitors ... this them understand and remember the rules for your home.

2. Body Breaks match the Child's Emotional Escalation.

You monitor and supervise the child's energy increases:

YELLOW: let them choose **Stop-or-Breathing.**

ORANGE: let them choose a **Shorter-or-Longer Break.**

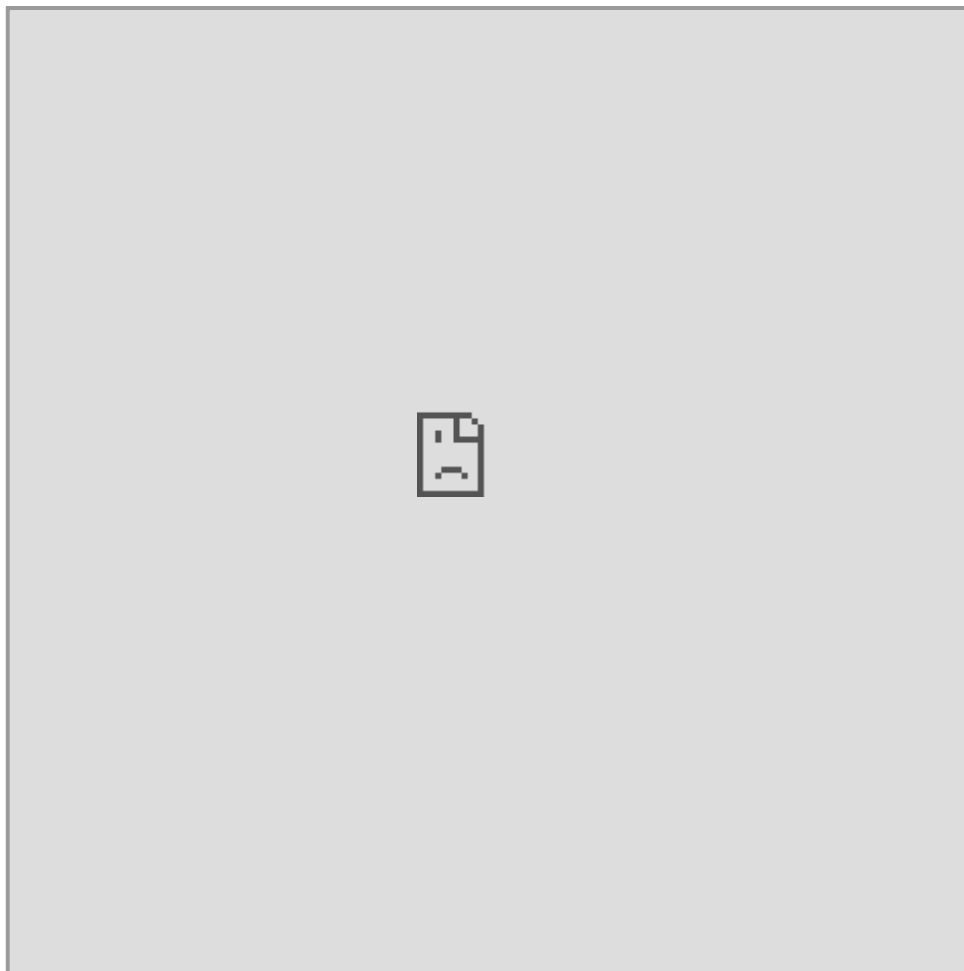
RED: guaranteed break **4-min Time-out-Break...** on mat OR

3. Try Thinking Ideas and strategies during Reading time.

See how much thinking the child does during the reading and praise the thinking and choosing.

See if the reading experience is any different when you start a different way.

See if your child would like to create art similar to the art in the book.



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5. Summary: The 'Family Car' Metaphor

We are polishing “Generational Tools”.

Rules of the road are consistent and the drivers can predict what will happen if broken.

Seat belts provide consistent safety for all.

Posted traffic rules allow for Thinking/Choosing and meaningful deciding.

<p>Traffic rules</p> 	<p>Clear Statements with Consequences</p> <p>Road signs with clear consequences are like clear statements with consequences.</p>	<p>Traffic signs clearly state the rule.</p> <p>Traffic rules are consistent.</p> <p>Traffic rules put people in charge of their destinies.</p> <p>People know in advance the ‘cost’ of ignoring limits.</p>
<p>Seat Belts</p> 	<p>Home Rules for the whole family are like seat belts.</p>	<p>Seat belts keep everyone safe (adults and children).</p> <p>Seat belts provide consistent safety even when the road is bumpy.</p> <p>Posted signs can tell the rules of the road in general.</p>
	<p>Time-out-Break + Choices for HOW Time-</p>	<p>Red light = Stop</p>

Red light



out break is like a red light.

Orange light



**Body-Brain-Break +
Choice for HOW**

Body Brain Break is like
an orange warning light.

Orange light = slow down
choose how to proceed,
in an adult-steered, adult-
controlled manner.

Yellow Light

**Breathing work +
Choice**

Breathing Break is like a
flashing yellow light.

Yellow light – keep going,
but be aware of people,
bikes, cars and
everything else around.



Green Light



Calm Child.

Greenlight!

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5. Ideas to try and Reflections

NO Spinning! Save Energy? Avoiding Argument?

Neutral Words (avoid engaging in a power struggle while thinking of CAN options)?

Match your Response to the child's energy level.

Try offering a breathing break, body/brain break, or time-out.

Allow your child to have a choice for maximum thinking and engagement.

Parents can guide children to learn self-control.

Home Rules Poster.

Child helped brainstorm CAN'Ts & CANs? ?

Drew picture notes as you narrated together??

Child can decorate afterwards, during....needs emotional investment?

Used it as a consistent blame-free ruling source for Clear Consequences to occur?

You are not the one telling the child about the consequence, the chart is?

Together Think Time and Reading.

Engage your child in the thinking process while reading.

Talk about the illustrations and ask what they think.

Brainstorm supplies you have at home to make their pictures.

Talk about the publishing city and where that is.

Strategies: Prevent problem behaviours.

Fill with positive attention (specific praise, specific noticing).

PlanFullness (1-2-3 Picture Note sequence, success charts, picture notes on weekly).

Catching preferred behaviours with/ Specific Praise.

Meaningful Questions and Clear Statements.

Golden Three and Choices with Thinking.

Together Think-Time, Success Charts, and Picture Notes.

Strategies: Right before asking for compliance.

Clear Statement + Clear Consequence.

CAN'T / CAN.

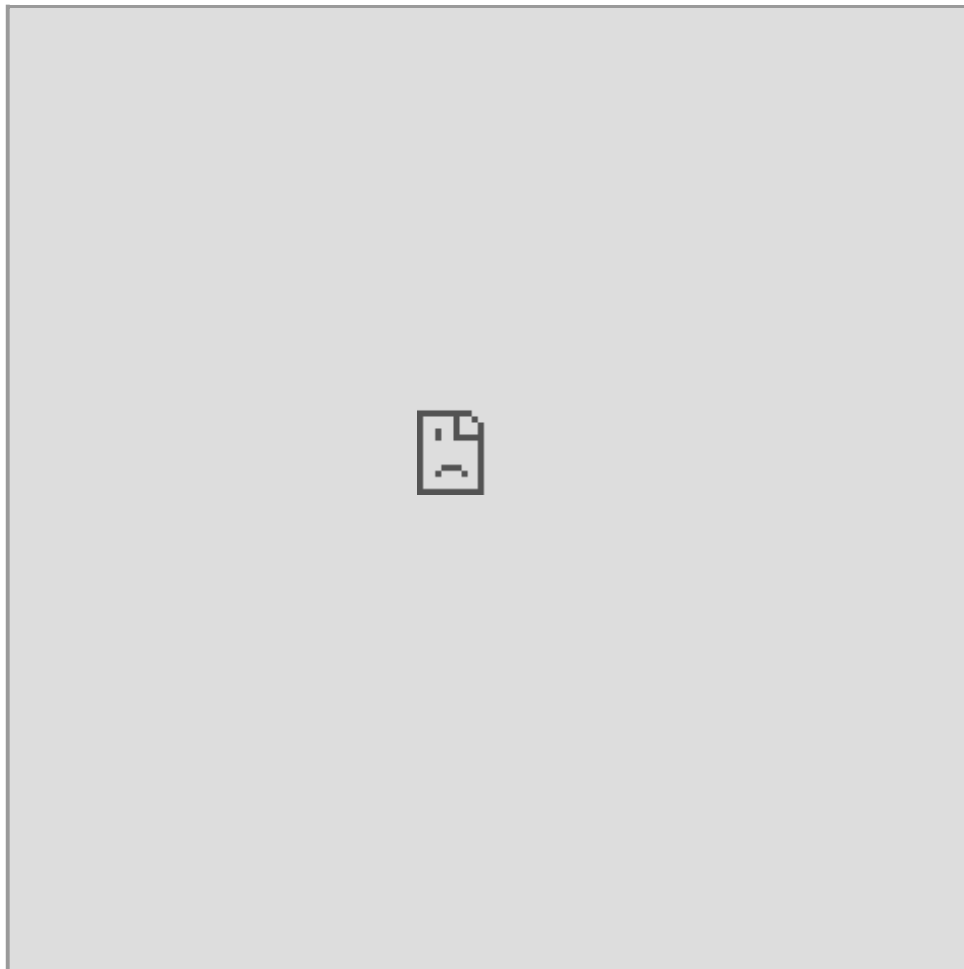
Picture Notes? 1-2-3 Sequence. Save a thought for later.

Weekly Schedule.

Save ideas that can't happen.

Look forward to the event.

Prepare for an unusual event.



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PARENTS - Module 6, Week 6: Enhance Child's Attention to Family Discipline

1. 6. Enhance Child's Attention to Family Discipline
2. 6. Brain Break
3. 6. Paths of Choices and Control: Child-led or Adult-led
4. 6. Paths of Choice and Control: Child Starts the Path
5. 6. Paths of Choice and Control: Adult Starts the Path
6. 6. Demo: Privilege Removal
7. 6. Role Play Scenario: Privilege Removal
8. 6. Research: about Play
9. 6. How-To Manual so far
10. 6. Thinking with Reading (Part 2)
11. 6. Summary: The 'Family Car' Metaphor
12. 6. Reflections

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6. Enhance Child's Attention to Family Discipline



Child Development Institute. (n.d.) <https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/ages-stages/preschooler-development-3-6/limits-for-preschoolers/>

This week, we will focus on:

Two Paths for Choices and Control.

Limit Setting Options: Body Breaks, Time-out, and Privilege Removal.

Picture Note Story for Time-Out Routine.

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6. Brain Break

A reminder about the power of meaningful rest and personal space...



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6. Paths of Choices and Control: Child-led or Adult-led

Two paths to power struggles

The child starts OR the Adult starts.

When the child starts, you can handle it because you already know all these steps.

What does the Path look like when the CHILD starts?

1. They ask for something.
2. It doesn't matter if you agree, start by specifically praising their idea.
3. You decide if it's a possible, allowable choice and tell them whether their idea is an option.
4. After that, you stay calm and repeat the process with clear statements and reminders of can's or cannot's.

Let's consider a case:




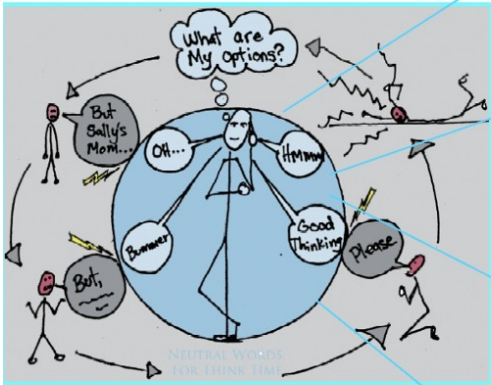
"I want a cookie."



Specific Praise Thinking
"That's a fun idea..."
"Cool thinking..."

Clear Statement = IS an Option
"...and we can do that. Now OR later?"
"Let's do it, chocolate OR vanilla?"

Clear Statement = Not an option
"...but that's not a choice right now."
"...but we don't have that option today." 



Neutral Words "Hmmm..."
"Bummer..." "Hmmm..."

Clear Statement + CANs
"That's not a choice, but you can save that idea for later. ... do you want to draw the note Or me?"
"That's not a choice, but you can help choose apples... red Or green?"

Broken Record
"Again, that's not a choice."
"Again, that's not an option."

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6. Paths of Choice and Control: Child Starts the Path

Brainstorming Scenarios

Scenario 1 - How to manage a successful path that avoids power struggles.

® **Child Starts:** Can I have a cookie?

© **Parent:** That's a fun idea but today it's not a choice

“®” ... Humm <Breathe>

“®” ... Bummer <Set your pace by not hooked >

“®” ... Humm <Think of CAN options to offer the child>

PARENT: "A cookie isn't a choice today...."

WHAT IS THE OPTION?	WHAT ARE POSSIBLE SIMPLE CHOICES?
You can choose a piece of fruit.	Blueberries or Bananas?
	Great job choosing!

Should you hold it or should I?

If the child resists:

"Again, a cookie is not an option this afternoon, you can make a picture note to save for later. Will you draw it or will I draw it? Will you colour it or will you leave it as is?"

Scenario 2

® Child Starts: Can we get chocolate milk?

© Parent: That sounds fun, but it's not an option today.

“®”... Bummer <Breathe>

“®”... Humm <Slow the pace by not hooked >

“®”... Bummer <Think of CAN options to offer the child>

PARENT: "That sounds fun, but it is not an option now..."

WHAT IS THE OPTION?	WHAT ARE THE CHOICES AND ENCOURAGEMENT?
You can choose another snack.	A smoothie or a yoghurt?
	In a small bottle or a tub?
	Small or medium size?

If the child resists:

"Again, chocolate milk is not an option this time, check the schedule, we have it there for tomorrow afternoon. You can draw another picture note. Will you draw it or will I? Will you colour it or leave it as is? What colour, red or blue?"

Brainstorm privileges and treats

What can you 'let go of' and provide as fun, enjoyable options as the ones your child will appreciate?



Brainstorm Privileges



Daytime

After School

Evening

Bed time

Weekends

Other

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6. Paths of Choice and Control: Adult Starts the Path

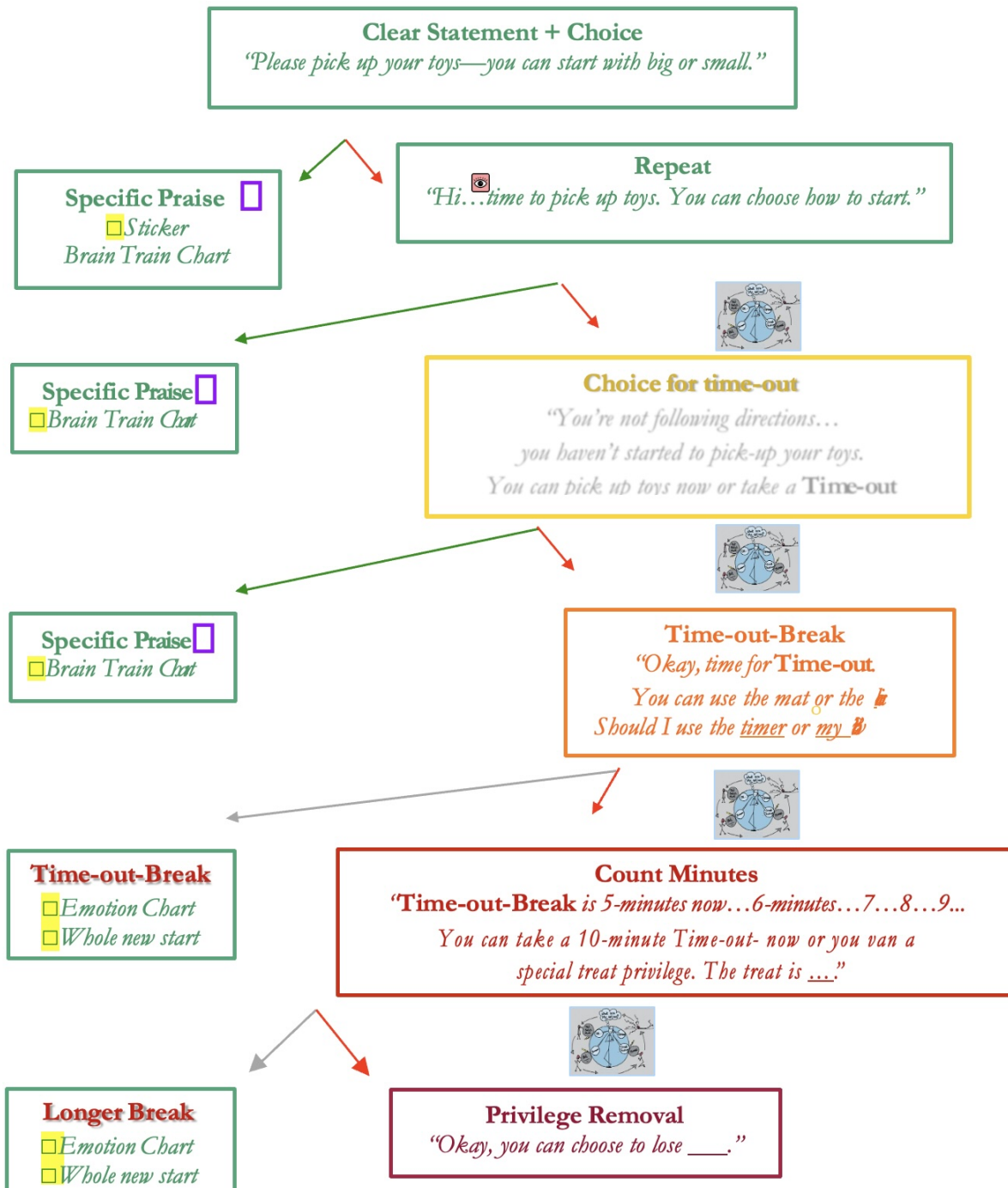
What does the Path look like when the **ADULT** starts?

You request compliance/ cooperation and they refuse.

Give choices the whole time. Brainstorm well ahead of time what some allowable treats may be, what can you let go off?

Use brain/body breaks and timeout breaks.

You can go to Privilege Removal (**new tool**).



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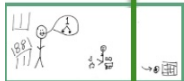
6. Demo: Privilege Removal

Counting Minutes and Steps to Removal

It's beneficial to **practice these steps when your child is calm**. Some children enjoy practising with a stuffed animal so they can be in charge of putting the toy, for instance.

Steps from negotiation to losing privileges.

GREEN ZONE



Okay, here's a picture of me in the kitchen. I'm asking **for your cooperation** to pick up your toys. Each time I'll probably give you a choice for how you can get started...or you can think of your own way to get started...

- If you Listen & Follow Directions, you get a good-job mark on your Brain Train chart!
- If you don't use your brain to Follow Directions, let's see what will happen next..."

ORANGE ZONE

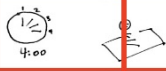


So, if you don't follow directions the first time, I will repeat my direction and give you a choice: **to follow directions or take a small break.**

- If you **Listen & Follow Directions**, you can put a good-job mark on your Brain Train chart!
- **If you can't make a choice, I will help you.** Let's see what will happen next..."

RED ZONE

When you **ignore me and don't follow directions**, it's **time for a Time-out-Break**. If you are not in control of your body or hit/ kick, that will be a **4-min break** with our new mat & timer.



I may ask if you want to **set the timer or use my watch?** You also get to **choose to sit on the mat or a chair?**

- After a **Time-out-Break**, we start over. You can tell me if you need a hug or want to talk.
- When you & your brain **can't take a Time-out-Break**, let's see what happens next...

PURPLE ZONE: TIME-OUT BREAKS

If your body & your brain can't take a **Time-out-Break**, here's how we will solve the problem

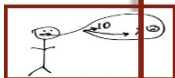


- **I will start counting.** I will be counting minutes for a longer **Time-out-Break**. It will sound like this, "**5-minutes... 6-minutes... 7-minutes.**" I will count up to 10-min.
- If you chose to not take the 4-min T.O., you can still choose a longer break (5, 6, 7min...).

PURPLE ZONE: LOSING THE PRIVILEGE

"Losing a special treat would be a bummer, but you can always choose to calm down during a time-out-break."

Then you will hear a final choice for **HOW to deal** with our problem. It might sound like, "You can **take a 10-min break now OR lose a special treat.**"

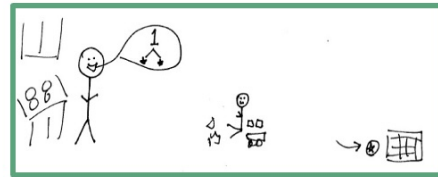


The special treat might be computer time, watching a movie, or a special dessert that night. I will let you know what the special treat is so **you can decide to have it or lose it.**

- If you choose a longer **Time-out-Break**, after your minutes are done you can still put a good job mark on your Brain Train chart for **choosing a break to get your body under control!**
- If you choose to **not get your body under control**, then you will lose a special treat.

THINKING BACK TO THE STEPS: OUR THINKING

- I **ask for cooperation** (i.e., please pick up toys)
- Choice/ thinking for how
- If you **listen and follow directions** ☐ sticker on brain train chart
- If you don't follow directions...



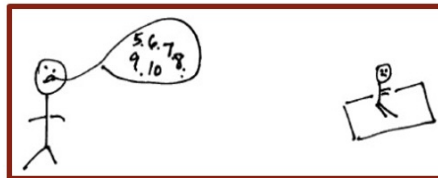
- You'll have a choice to **listen & follow directions** or **take a break**
- If you listen & follow directions ☐ sticker on brain train chart
- If you still don't listen and follow directions ☐ time-out break



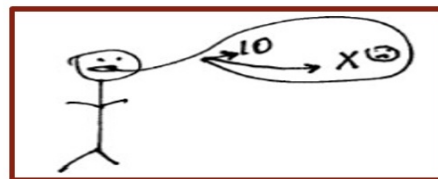
- If you ignore me and **don't make a choice** ☐ **time-out break**
- 4 min break with new mat and timer
- Choice for how to sit (mat or chair)
- Choice for how to track time (timer or watch?)
- After time out break ☐ fresh start
- If you can't control your body and take a time-out break...



- If you **don't take your time-out break** that is a little problem
- I'll start **counting minutes** ☐ longer time-out break
- Sounds like "6 minutes....7 minutes....8 minutes..."
- You can choose to take a longer time-out break
- I will only count to 10 minutes...



- If you **choose not to take the longer time-out break**
- Final choice ☐ **10 min time-out break** or **lose privilege**
- I'll say, "the special privilege is _____"
- If choose not to take 10 min time-out break ☐ lose privilege



Conclusive thoughts:

"If you do not choose to get your body under control and take the time-out break, then you will lose a special privilege. That would be such a shame, but it will help us solve those little problems together. It will be your choice in the end."

Great listening to learn about our new time-out routine! Let's practice so we know what it will be like. Do you think a teddy bear should help us practice? Where do think we should put the mat?"

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6. Role Play Scenario: Privilege Removal

Share what you would do and how you would go about any of these scenarios.



Role-Play Scenario: You want something (follow 2 Paths)

What you want (choose one):



- ~ clean room
- ~ take a bath
- ~ come to dinner
- ~ stop running in house (walk in house)
- ~ share toys with sibling

Child:

- ~ ignores
- ~ says “no”
- ~ argues
- ~ claims unfairness in life

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6. Research: about Play

Social, Positive, and Responsive Environments = Best Natural Learning.

Children Naturally Learn in Social Environments

- To learn naturally through play...this is a gift to parents!
- To learn about things that interest child in natural settings
- To learn on child's timetable
- To learn at child's developmental level

Awareness to different parts of play

- During a fun "Parent and Me time" this week
- One-on-one play session
- Fun awareness activity for parents
- Can try with each of your children.



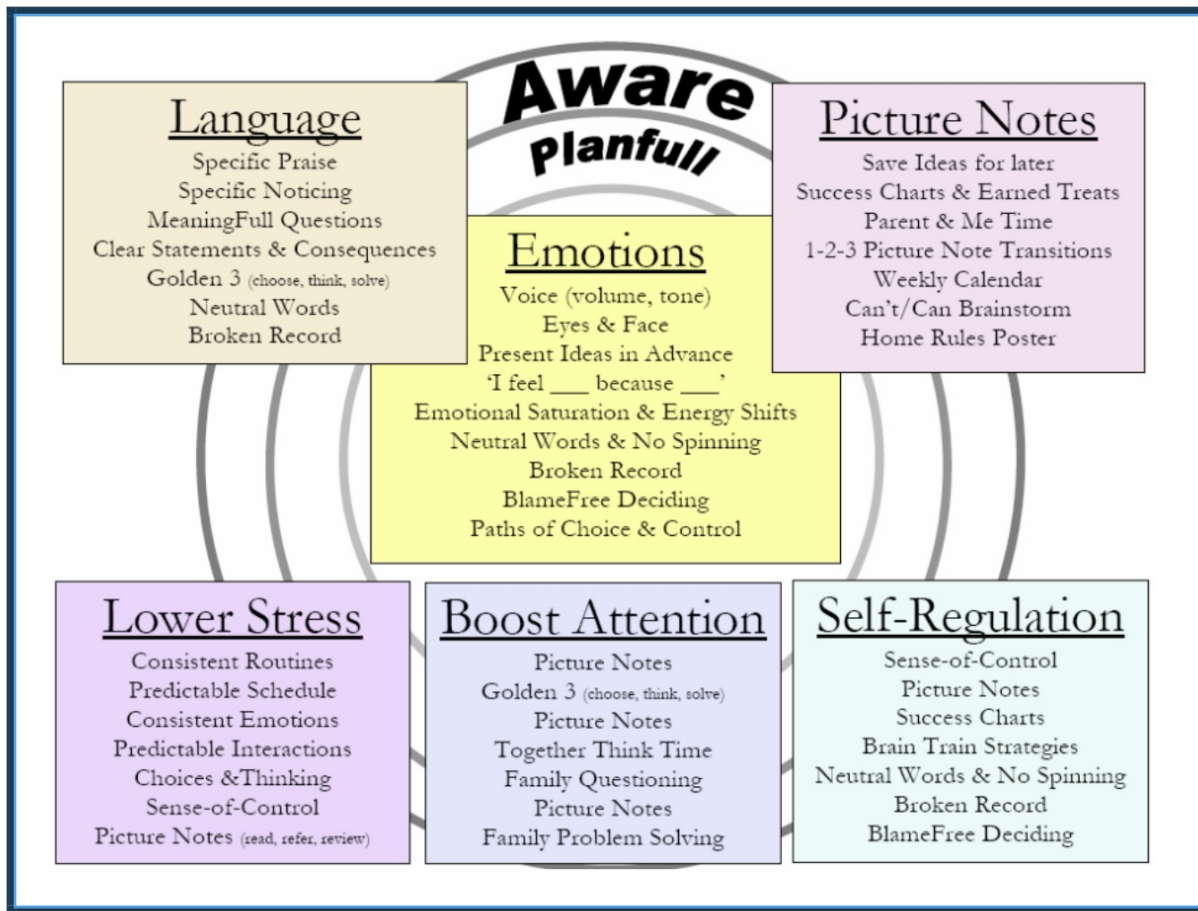
While you play, think about:

- **Who is in charge of play?**
 - ~ Does child lead the play or does parent lead?
 - ~ Does parent play with child, or does the parent and child play separately?
 - ~ What is child interested in playing with? What is parent interested in playing with?
- **Whose turn is it?**
 - ~ A turn is when a one person says something and the other person responds.
Child: "Here is a ship!" Parent: "A pirate ship!"
Parent: "Boom! I'm shooting the cannon!" Child: "Yeah!"
- **Who is talking?**
 - ~ Does parent do most of the talking or does child do most of the talking?
 - ~ Does parent use long or short sentences? What about child?

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6. How-To Manual so far



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6. Thinking with Reading (Part 2)

Together Think Time

More Thinking ideas for Shared Reading time.



Reading child books: Mix it up!

Talk about **character feelings** use **Emotion Poster**



Talk about **characters** link to **Brain Train skills**



Talk about **where** the story is taking place link to the **“Setting”** of the story



Artist & Art Supplies



Publishing City **Map, football team, phrase associated with city**





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6. Summary: The 'Family Car' Metaphor

We are polishing "Generational Tools".

<p>4 wheel drive</p> 	<p>Counting Minutes and Privilege Removal</p> <p>Counting Minutes and Privilege Removal is like an adult steering wheel.</p>	<p>4-wheel drive keeps the vehicle moving over rocky terrain.</p> <p>4-wheel drive gives the driver extra control in tricky situations.</p> <p>Steering 4-wheel drive allows the driver to remain calm while navigating rocky roads.</p> <p>Steering Wheel allows consistent adult-controlled travel.</p>
<p>Windshield</p> 	<p>Playing Watching Child's Development</p> <p>Playing together and watching is like a clean windshield.</p>	<p>The windshield allows the driver to see exactly what's happening now and what's coming up.</p>
	<p>Your tune-up is nearly</p>	

Keys to a brand-new car



complete. You can start planning where your family will go in the new “vehicle”.

Watch the road signs, use the maps, and remember to keep up with the everyday maintenance!!

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6. Reflections

How is it going with applying different strategies to manage the paths of choice and control?

Have you tried some activities at home such as Thinking with Reading?

How did it go?

Share any insights, ideas, and story.

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PARENTS - Module 7, Week 7: Boost Attention and Thinking with Problem Solving and Play

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2. 7. Review: Paths of Choice and Control
3. 7. Brain Break
4. 7. Review: Picture notes
5. 7. Review: "Parent-and-me" Time and Reading
6. 7. Problem Solving
7. 7. Problem Solving - Strategy
8. 7. Research: Play and Learning
9. 7. Enhanced Play and Optimised Learning
10. 7. Role Play: Step 1 - Locking-in Deposit and Withdrawal
11. 7. Thinking Together Time: Blame Free
12. 7. Thinking Together Time: Reading Time (Part 3)
13. 7. Summary: The 'Family Car' Metaphor Finale!
14. 7. Home Practice: Practising Consistency and Predictability
15. 7. Conclusive thoughts
16. 7. Reflections

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7. Boost Attention and Thinking with Problem Solving and Play



Mighty Kids Academy. (n.d.) <https://mightykidsacademy.com/how-to-teach-problem-solving-to-kids-ages-3-14/>

This week, we will focus on:

Reviewing Paths of Choice and Control.

Reviewing Picture notes.

Reviewing aspects of play and parent-and-me time.

Reviewing Together Thinking Time techniques.

Enhanced Play (Deposit / Withdrawal).

Optimised Learning (boosting language and attention).

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7. Review: Paths of Choice and Control

Avoid power struggles.

Save your energy and save time.

No spinning in stressful circles.

Don't argue, be clear and consistent.

Summary of strategies covered in Module 6.

Path 1: Child-Led

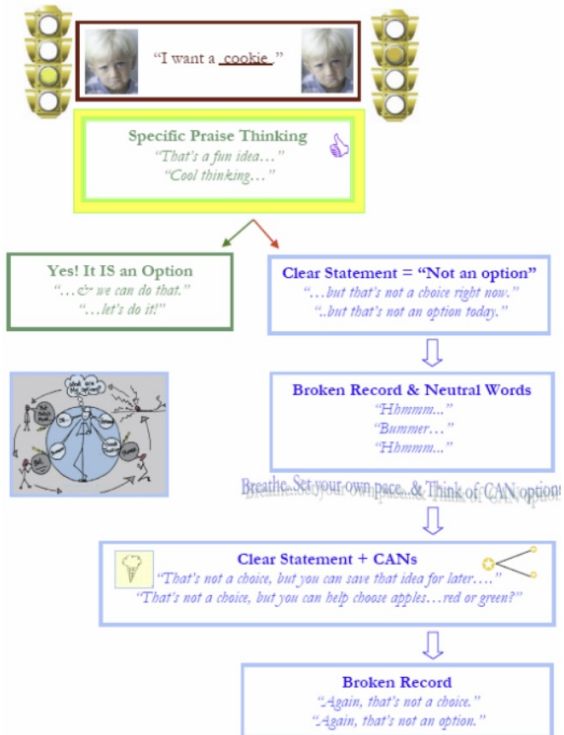
Path 2: Adult Led

Strategic pathway	<i>Planfull</i> Direction
	<p data-bbox="852 1213 1393 1787"><u>Planfullness</u> What do they want, & is it an option? When might it be an option? Do you have sticky notes with you? a pen?</p> <ol data-bbox="925 1438 1360 1690" style="list-style-type: none">1. Give Specific Praise for thinking/ idea2. Tell them if their idea is an option & give Choices3. Stay calm...breathe...use a few Neutral Words...think of upcoming CAN options...4. Broken Record & give Choices

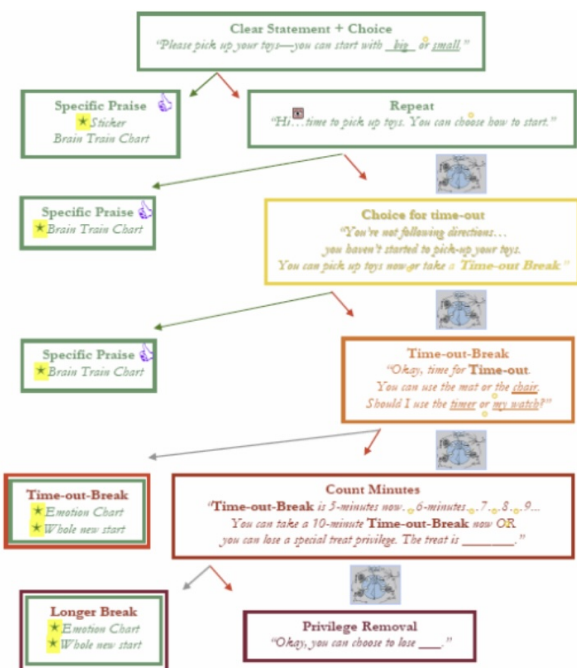
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Paths of Choices & Control

Avoid power struggles
 Save your energy, no spinning
 Don't argue



Strategy Pathway



Planfull Direction

Planfulness

What cooperation are you about to ask for?

What problems do you expect?

What will you do about that?

What privilege will you offer?

1. Give choices all along the way...
2. Stay calm... give clear choice statements... allow child to choose their path...
3. Use simple sentences, no arguing...

--	--

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7. Brain Break

Time to breathe and reboot before learning something new....





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7. Review: Picture notes

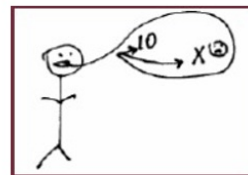
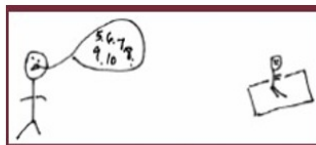
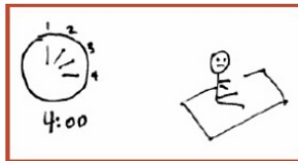
Share visual notes.

Remember, before attempting to picture noting, reflect:

Are you calm, is it a pleasant time?

Draw while telling the story?

Child tell parts? Remember a past example?



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7. Review: "Parent-and-me" Time and Reading

Together Think and Play Time.

One-on-one play time for about 15 minutes.

Did you notice:

Who was in charge of the play?

Taking turns talking while playing?

Who was doing most of the talking?

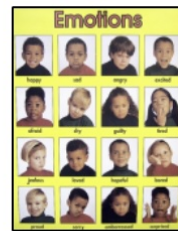
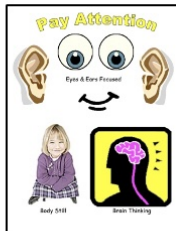
What did you observe about your play?

Reading Time and Brain Awareness.

You focus on sensory focus and being calm, listening up, breathing for mindfulness, paying attention, and being aware of your own emotions.

Reading time strategies to enhance literacy skills.

Weekly schedules reduce anxiety.



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7. Problem Solving

Your child can Think ‘more than you’ Think.

They can think for themselves (in many situations).

You can support real-life learning by letting them solve their problems.

Problem solving starts with you...

You can guide child's ability to think & solve!

Consistency

- gives the child a sense of control & reduces stress

Choosing & Thinking

- give child sense of control & boosts confidence

Thinking & Solving

- boosts confidence, independence, & responsibility

The Golden Three
The "How-To" manual for developing thinking!

******* Choose *******
[grow a competent choice-maker]

"You can walk forwards or backwards."
"You can take the box with you or leave it behind."
"You can sleep head in or head out."
"You can sit at the table with the booster or with the chair."
"You can wear your coat inside-out or rightside-in."

******* Think *******
[grow an independent thinker]

"You think about how to do that job. Let me know what you think."
"You decide what to do. Let me know your thoughts."
"I can't wait to hear what you think."
"When you think of something, let me know."

******* Solve *******
[grow a masterful problem solver]

"What will you do about that?"
"How will you solve that problem?"
"I can't wait to see how you & your brain solve this situation."
"What are you going to say to your friend?"
"When you figure out what to do, let me know!"

Solve – Kids now have tons of guided practice to solve problems
Think – Kids have heard choices so many times, they think of choices
Choose – Kids are given acceptable choices to think about and choose

Problem solving helps everyone...

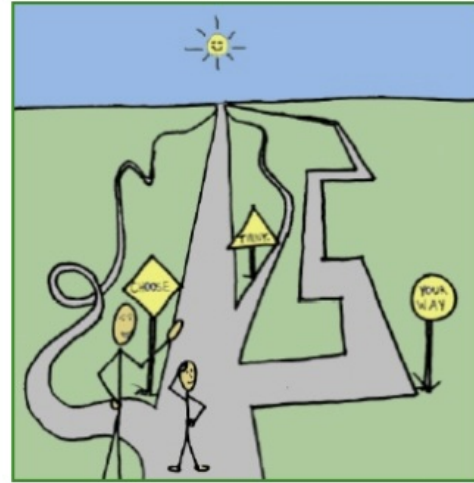
- Happens all the time
- Helps us learn naturally

Children need many opportunities

- To help them learn about cause & consequence
- To think through problems & outcomes (in advance)

Give the Gift of Making Mistakes

- Easier now than in the future
- Lessons are small
- Lessons are frequent



“What do you want to do about that?”

- Support their thinking but offer support to avoid frustration
“If you want to hear a few of my ideas, let me know...”

Guide the thinking process with questions

- “How should we solve this?”
- “What will you do?”



 Blame Free Decision, dispute resolution.png

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7. Problem Solving - Strategy



I'm cold.

Hhmm, you're cold. That happens to me too when I don't wear a coat.

I need a coat!

I bet! That's exactly why I brought mine.



I'm freezing!

You do have a little problem.



What do you want to do about this?



Let's go back home for my coat!

Driving back home is not a choice.
How else can you solve your problem?



Let me wear yours.

I need my coat because it is cold outside.
What other ideas can you think of?

I don't know...

That's okay...there's no hurry.
I can wait.



I wonder what else you can use to keep your body warm? Hhhmm...



A blanket!

A blanket is a good idea...where can you get one?



In the car!

You're right, we do have one in the car.



That's a great idea!



I did it!

You are a great problem solver!
You sure did a lot of thinking!



I'm good at thinking!

How can you solve problems like that?

Because I'm smart...

Thanks for figuring that out. It sure helps us stay on time with the rest of our day.

1. Identify the Problem

- Relate to it
- Remain objective
- No sarcasm!

2. Give Control, Cue Brainstorm

- Don't fix!
- Be realistic
- Ask questions
- No rush
- Stay thoughtful

3. Guide & Choose

- Help avoid frustration
- Rephrase the problem
- Guide child to a good answer
- Choose one solution & try it out

4. Reinforce Efforts

Specific Praise for:

- thinking
- sticking with it
- solving
- creative thinking
- responsibility
- independence

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7. Research: Play and Learning

The Connection between Play and Self-regulation

Play-based approaches' benefits:

Social and Positive = Best Natural Learning.

Child-directed, Balanced and Enhanced = Best Natural Learning.

Child-directed

- You are an invited guest...follow their topics (matched attention)
- You are an invited guest...follow their eyes to see what they see (matched attention)
- They are the Play Experts...follow their flow of play (matched attention)

Balanced

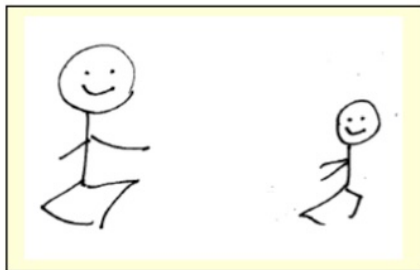
- You are an invited guest...let them start talking first (encourage child language)
- You are an invited guest...let them fill the play space with their own words (child filled)
- You are an invited guest...take a turn **after** them (encourage child social language)

If you talk a lot → count to five before taking another turn

- You are an invited guest...fill them with Specific Praise for thinking, creativity, ideas...

Enhanced

- Boost child's language → model new vocabulary & concepts
- Boost child's attention → encourage child to attend a little longer



OR

Adult talks a lot ...sometimes good when adult is teaching a new concept, but not optimal for child exploration & discovery during play.

Child talks a lot...great for child exploration & discovery during play. Gives the adult a perfect environment for Boosting Child's Language & Child's Attention!

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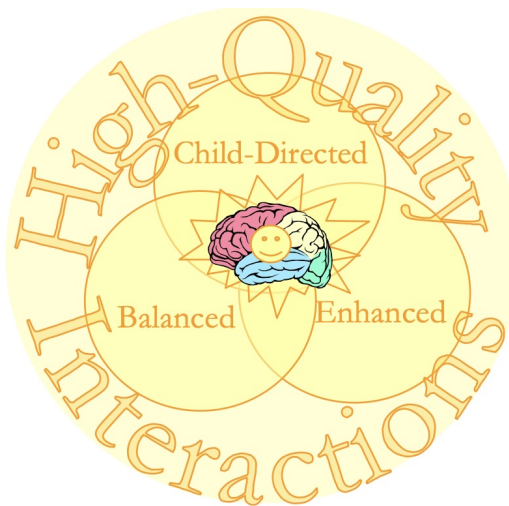
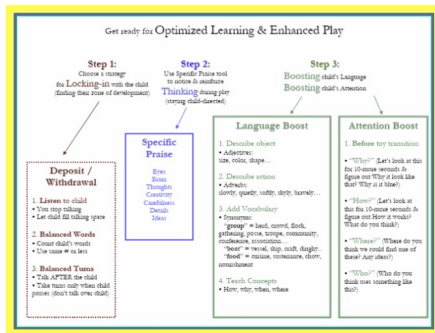
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7. Enhanced Play and Optimised Learning

Guide to play that is:

- Social.
- Positive.
- Responsive.
- Child-directed.
- PlanFULL.*

STEP 1. Lock-in with Deposit / Withdrawal Strategy.



Step 1. Lock-in

- ~ to what child is thinking about
- ~ to what child is looking at

Deposit / Withdrawal strategy

- start with you listening & child talking
- balance your talking (words, turns)

Step 2. Specific Praise Noticing

Step 2. Specific Praise & Noticing

- ~ to reinforce creativity, exploration, problem-solving, thinking...
- ~ to keep the play positive

Specific Praise/Notice strategy

- body parts (eyes, brain, fingers, hands)
- attention behaviors (work ethic: try hard, stick with it)
- regulation behaviors (preferred behaviors, emotions)
- creativity
- attending to details
- ideas, story telling

Step 3. Boost Language Attention

Step 3. Boost Language & Attention

- ~ PlanFully add vocabulary
- ~ PlanFully add time (when attending to an item)

Language Boost strategy

- ~ add descriptive words (adjectives: large, red, loud)
- ~ add "how" words (adverbs: slowly, quietly, etc.)
- ~ add vocabulary (synonyms: enormous, gigantic, huge)
- ~ teach concepts (where, how, who....etc.)

Attention Boost strategy

- ~ Before a topic/toy transition:
Why?
How?

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7. Role Play: Step 1 - Locking-in Deposit and Withdrawal

Share your efforts and positive feedback!

Think and share:

- What might be hard about doing this?
- When is the next time you can try this?
- How will you remember the steps?

Role-Play Practice → Locking-in with Deposit / Withdrawal

C: Look!	A: _____
C: Wow.	A: _____
C: This is neat.	A: _____
C: What's this?	A: _____
C: Hey, this goes here.	A: _____
C: I know, let's build a zoo.	A: _____
C: This is where all the animals will live...	A: _____
C: and this is where the bears live...	A: _____
C: the penguins can live here because there's water.	A: _____
C: the penguins and the polar bears are friends.	A: Specific Praise
C:	A: match attention, encourage language

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7. Thinking Together Time: Blame Free

Blame-Free Decisions.

A tool for your children to practice Problem-solving.

“I’m not going to get in the middle of your problems. You can solve problems on your own. Here is a new tool to help you use your brains... All you do is roll these dice. *(child name)*, you roll first. Now, *(child name)* can roll. The person with the lowest/highest number goes first ...”.

"Great job solving your argument/ problem! I will keep the dice here....let me know if you need to use them to solve other little problems."

An overview of blame-free strategies to resolve conflict.

No Dispute Too Big!

Children naturally believe that it is their turn and their toy. Everything is always theirs.

Dispute bags are a fun and easy way to hand the problems back to your children and let them choose a method to settle the argument. Soon your children will understand that everyone gets a turn and they may be able to settle a dispute without a game.

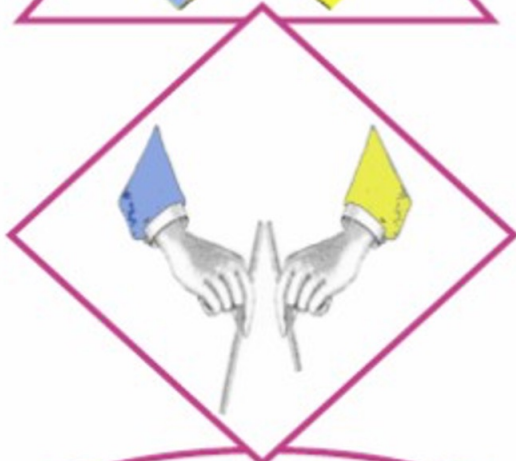
Rock-Paper-Scissors



Flip-a-Coin



Choose-a-Straw



Roll-the-Dice



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7. Thinking Together Time: Reading Time (Part 3)

Keep trying different ideas and strategies.

Reading child books: Keep trying these fun ideas!

- ☑ Talk about character feelings → use Emotion Poster



- ☑ Talk about where the story is taking place → link to the “Setting” of the story



- ☑ Talk about characters → link to Good-Friend skills



- ☑ Artist & Art Supplies



- ☑ Publishing City → Map, football team, phrase associated with city



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7. Summary: The 'Family Car' Metaphor Finale!

You Inherited...



You looked carefully at the pieces...
You decided what needed a tune-up...
You decided what needed an over-haul...



...You Created!

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7. Home Practice: Practising Consistency and Predictability

TASK 1

Keep using **Play to Boost** Learning (Language and Attention).

Child-directed, Balanced and Enhanced.

Try the Blame Free deciding tools.

TASK 2

You will share a story (can be written, audio or video). Think about these questions:

What was your favourite strategy?

What strategy made the greatest difference in your life? In your child's life?

What strategy made the most sense to you?

What strategy were you able to use in your home?

What strategy do you think you have the most practice with?

The strategy/tool that I know best:

The cool success story that shows how the tool works:

TASK 3

Pretend that it has been 6-months since we were in the PCMC-A group...

What: What is the strategy called? What is it used for? What is the ultimate goal?

Who: Who benefits?

When: When is this a good strategy to use? Tell your story!

Where: Where is this a good strategy to use? Tell your story!

How: Give the steps for how a parent can start to use this strategy

What:

Who:

When:

Where:

How to do it:

How were you PlanFULL, How did you introduce the strategy to your children (the mini-steps)?

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7. Conclusive thoughts

This week...

You followed the child's lead during play and allowed the child's direction.

You balanced the turn-taking with your child during play.

You locked in with the child's expressive language with Deposit/Withdrawal.

You boosted language by adding words to the child's statements.

You boosted attention by asking Why/How when the child was leaving a toy.

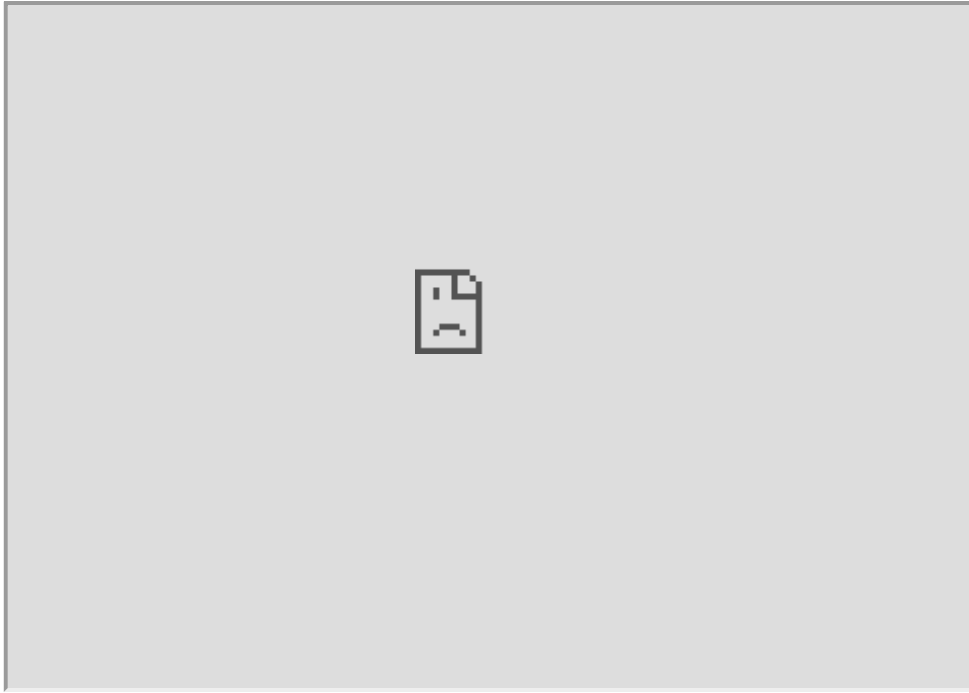
Furthermore...

You let your child fix problems by asking, "What are you going to do about that?"

You gave your child the gift of making a mistake by allowing them to make a choice and experience the events that followed.

You *planfully* thought ahead about how to take care of your child while they experienced their own choices (e.g. extra blanket in the car, a bag of clothes in the car, extra jacket in the car).

You assisted the child in Identifying their problem, starting a brainstorming, and making a choice, you reinforced your child's problem-solving efforts.



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7. Reflections

Play with Deposit / Withdrawal

Is it child-directed?

Child's topic?

Child's choice?

Is it balanced?

Turns?

Number of words?

Is it enhanced?

Boost Language (describing words, synonyms, new vocabulary)?

Boost Attention (Why? How? postpone toy/topic transitions by 30-seconds)?

Keep reflecting on all strategies developed so far

Home Rules Poster

- ◆ PlanFULL
 - Child helped brainstorm CAN'Ts & CANs? _____
 - Drew picture notes as you narrated together? _____
 - Child can decorate afterwards, during... needs emotional investment? _____
- ◆ Use it as the No-nonsense way for Clear Consequences to occur
 - You are not the one telling the child about the consequence, the *chart* is? _____

Paths to Choices & Control

- ◆ When you start? _____
- ◆ When they start? (1 – 2 – 3 Steps to Avoid Power Struggles)? _____

Strategies: Prevent problem behaviors:

- ◆ Fill with positive attention (specific praise, specific noticing)? _____
- ◆ PlanFullness (1-2-3 Picture Note sequence, success charts, picture notes on weekly)? _____
- ◆ How-To Manual w/ Specific Praise? _____
- ◆ Catching preferred behaviors w/ Specific Praise? _____
- ◆ MeaningFull Questions → Clear Statements? _____
- ◆ Golden Three → Choices & Thinking? _____
- ◆ Together Think Time → Success Charts, Picture Notes? _____
- ◆ Clear Statement + Clear Consequence? _____
- ◆ CAN'T / CAN? _____
- ◆ Picture Notes? 1-2-3 Sequence... Save a thought for later...? _____

Strategies: NO Spinning! Save your Energy! Don't Engage in Argument?

- ◆ Neutral Words (keep you brainless for the power struggle so you can THINK of CANs)? _____

Weekly Schedule?

- ◆ Save ideas that could happen later? _____

Success Charts?

- ◆ Introducing new chart? _____
- ◆ Raising the stakes? _____

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PARENTS - Module 8, Week 8: 'Planful' Parenting for Life

1. Module 8: PlanFull Parenting for Life
2. 8. Brain Break
3. 8. Transition to Primary School OR to Year 1 in Primary School: BEFORE School Starts
4. 8. Transition to Primary School or Year 1: AFTER School starts
5. 8. Transition to Primary School or Year 1: DURING school year
6. 8. Showcase: You know so much! Part 1
7. 8. Showcase: You know so much! Part 2
8. 8. Summary: Final "Family Car" metaphor
9. 8. Congratulations!
10. 8. Final reflections and surveys

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Module 8: PlanFull Parenting for Life

range+community+Kindy_05.jpg

This week, we will discuss:

PlanFull Parenting across Home Cultures.

Transitioning to primary.

Graduation.

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8. Brain Break

Celebratory dance moves before final learning...



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8. Transition to Primary School OR to Year 1 in Primary School: BEFORE School Starts

BEFORE school starts (summer)

Discuss, Practice, Walk-through Transportation

- ~ Practice drop-off & pick-up routines (you can walk the route instead of drive)
- ~ Practice bus routines...with your own vehicle
- ~ Talk about ways for the child to seek help if they get confused about transportation (if they miss their bus, if they can't find you, if they get scared)



- ◆ Show the child which door leads them straight to the office
- ◆ Introduce the child to the front desk people & talk with those adults about how your child can always come to them for help...and that those adults will always know how to get in touch with you (parent)...and that those adults will always make sure the child is safe...no matter what!!!



Discuss, Practice, Walk-through School Building

Meet the teacher(s)

- ◆ Even if the child's teacher has not yet been assigned, you & child can meet *potential* teachers...those faces will be familiar in first couple weeks of school

Meet the front desk personnel & the Administrators (Principal, Vice Principal)



Walk around school

- ◆ Look at **bathrooms**
 - ♦ practice using doors, stalls
 - ♦ water, soap, paper towels
- ◆ Look at **cafeteria**
 - ♦ talk about Lunch Helpers, lining up
 - ♦ sitting at big tables with friends
 - ♦ recess
- ◆ Look at **gym**
 - ♦ talk about the P.E. teacher, ball games, group games, outside games
- ◆ Find kindergarten **classroom(s)**
 - ♦ talk about what you see in room
- ◆ Look at **art on walls**
 - ♦ talk about art supplies
 - ♦ sure will be exciting to do that in kindergarten!
- ◆ Look at & read **signs** together (places, rules, calendars)



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8. Transition to Primary School or Year 1: AFTER School starts

AFTER school starts

Contact classroom teacher

Emphasize your interest in **staying in contact** with the teacher

Show how this communication could easily happen

- ◆ back-&-forth notebook (stays in child's backpack at all times)
- ◆ email address exchange
- ◆ bimonthly phone dates



Show your interest in helping to generalize classroom skills to the home, when appropriate

Show your interest in **assisting the teacher's efforts** in the classroom

- ◆ volunteer time
 - for large projects that require a lot of teacher planning time
 - on a weekly basis



- ◆ Be willing to send supplies, snacks, etc. for special events that require teacher funds
 - this is a nice way for the teacher to hear your genuine commitment to your child's educational experience AND your respect for the teacher



- this type of commitment from you (as a parent) communicates to the teacher that you understand how much teachers are currently asked to do (in today's schools), and this helps the teacher understand that you are on her/his side

- even if you work during the day & can not commit volunteer time in the classroom, this type of communication makes it clear to the teacher that you are willing to support your child/teacher/classroom in creative ways

Create the expectation that **school rules are important** for the child to learn & that you are more than willing for your child to take responsibility for their actions & to be accountable to class/school rules

- ◆ this means that you (as a parent) are willing to follow-through with those learning opportunities at home (if the teacher requests that type of assistance)

- the teacher may ask you to 'get on board' with a classroom discipline action IF the teacher feels that the parent will help with stopping the behavior that broke a school/class rule



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8. Transition to Primary School or Year 1: DURING school year

DURING school year

Reinforcing your Child's New Attention Skills

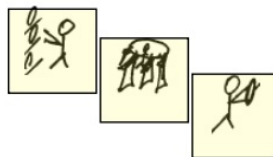
Use the Brain Train chart

- ◆ Think with the child about times during the school day when they used strategies
- ◆ Use the chart as a way to ask specific questions & give specific praise
- ◆ Keep a copy of the chart in the Back-&-Forth notebook, so the teacher can add stars to it



Use sticky notes & picture notes to show your child's school day stories (especially the feeling stories!)

- ◆ Use picture notes as a way to order problems
 - How the problem started?
 - What happened during the problem?
 - What choices did people make during the problem?
 - How was the problem get solved?
 - How were people feeling throughout the situation?
 - Can anything happen differently next time this same situation happens
- ◆ If you & the child brainstorm new ways for a solution to happen in the future, draw those new picture notes & let the child substitute out the old ways for the new, planned ideas



Continue to use Specific Praise to encourage the school-to-home behaviors you want

- Specific praise for Work Ethic behaviors
- Specific praise for Friend behaviors
- Specific praise with Star Chart



Continue to develop your abilities to Avoid &/Manage Power Struggles

- Let the child **think more than you**
- Stay away from Ding-Mode....get used to What-You-CAN-Do-Mode
- Let your child Choose, Think, & Solve

Encourage Child's Responsibility as well as their Independence

- This means the child needs to make some mistakes... and they need chances to learn from their mistakes
- ◆ The mistakes themselves can be instructive... saves you from doing all the teaching
- ◆ The 'bad' decisions or choices can be instructive... the child's reflection will be the vehicle to their learning... saves you from being the person with all the answers (which is nice for the child to experience)



I'm cold.
Hmmm, you're cold. That happens to me too when I don't wear a coat.



I need a coat!
I bet! That's exactly why I brought mine.

I'm freezing!
You do have a little problem.

What do you want to do about this?

How else can you solve your problem?

What other ideas can you think of?

I wonder what else

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8. Showcase: You know so much! Part 1

Building new foundations of AWARENESS and
PLANFULLNESS

**You can lower child's stress, and boost their attention & self-control
through:**

LANGUAGE

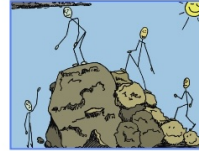
1 Upon your new foundation of Awareness & PlanFullness....

Use your Language to lower child's stress, boost child's attention & self-control

- Catch Preferred Behaviors



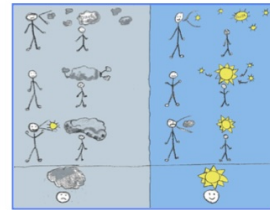
- Specific Praise



- Specific Noticing



- Build How-to Manual



- Stay in positive mode (not Ding Mode)

- Clear Statements & Choices



BLING! Don't ding.

- Encourage child Thinking & Solving



- Encourage child's work ethic behaviors (attention behaviors)



- Avoid power struggle energy drain



- Clear Statements + Choices + PlanFull Consequences



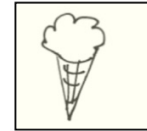
- Prepare child by teaching new concepts in advance (when calm & pleasant)



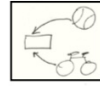
PICTURE NOTES AND VISUALISATION

Use your Picture Notes to lower child's stress, boost child's attention & self-control

- Respect child's ideas, teach how to wait, & how to plan



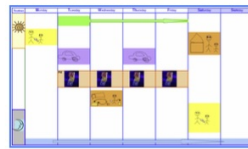
- 1-2-3 Picture Notes for successful transitions



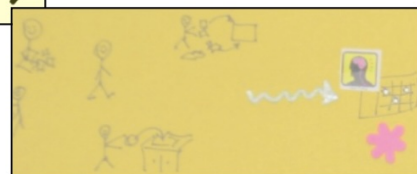
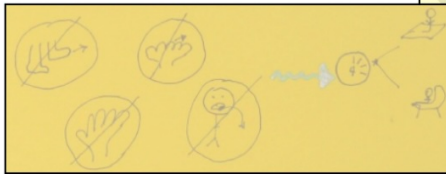
- Success Charts (task analysis **BIG** to small)



- Child-directed Weekly Schedule



- Can't/Can Picture Notes



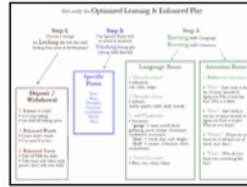
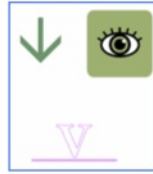
- Home Rules Poster



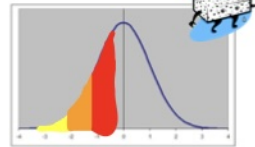
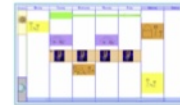
POSITIVE INTERACTIONS AND EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT

Use Positive Interactions & Emotional Management to lower stress & boost thinking

- Encourage child's self-confidence by planting seeds of specific praise
- Positive interactions by checking your voice volume, voice tone, face, body position



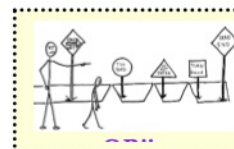
- Lower child's stress by telling child in advance about transitions & events
- Match your emotional response & consequences to child's actual energy levels



- Model self-control when responding to child's request
- Set your own pace when responding to child's request



- Encourage child's pleasant cooperation by offering *how* choices



- Encourage child's sense of control by giving a lot of choices thinking, & solving opportunities



- Model emotional control by using BlameFree tools



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8. Showcase: You know so much! Part 2

Lower Stress, Boost Child's Attention, Language, and Self-Control.

② Lower Stress & Boost Child's Attention, Language, & Self-Control

Consistent & Predictable Routines

- Child knows what to expect & what happens next
- Child has sense of control over routines & available choices

Consistent & Predictable Structure

- Child knows parental expectations, home rules, & consequences

Consistent & Predictable Discipline

- **1st Prevent** behavior problems
- **2nd Before** potential problems anticipate arguments & stubbornness
- **3rd During** behavior problems manage your emotions, set your pace, guide the child

Understand & accommodate age-appropriate levels of Emotional Saturation

Provide choices for Body Breaks based on child's Energy Escalation

Sphere of Safety = No Spinning = Child thinks more than parent!

- Parent provides child with sense-of-control during discipline/structure interactions

BlameFree tools (picture notes, home rules, success charts, Can't/Can, dispute methods)

③ Predictable Environments (*Routines, Structure, Discipline, Interactions, Emotions*)

- Parent provides frequent Thinking & Solving opportunities
- Parent frequently asks, “**What are you going to do about that?**”
- Parent supervises safe ways for child to make decisions (small lessons) & live the natural consequences
- Boost Attention during play → Optimized Learning
- Boost Language during play → Optimized Learning

④ Ongoing Parental PlanFullness & Supervision

- Model how a person HealthFully cares for self (emotionally, physically, mentally)
- Stress management: Breathe, take breaks, talk with others, brainstorm ideas, emotional awareness...
- Use school contacts to find community supports & activities
- Advocate for yourself to establish and maintain contact with the school, teacher, & administration



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8. Summary: Final "Family Car" metaphor

You have polished your generational tools.

Before...



After...



All the changes **started with the caregivers**

Increased **Awareness**

Increased **PlanFullness**

Increased **Consistency**



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8. Congratulations!



Purple Playfun Kids Award Certificate by marghig

Any feedback and ideas, please email marghi.ghezzi@griffithuni.edu.au

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8. Final reflections and surveys

Please, share some final reflections about completing the CCA training.

Also, kindly, complete these surveys so that we can collect useful data and keep supporting your children's and your wellbeing:

SURVEY 1 COMING

SURVEY 2 COMING

SURVEY 3 COMING

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