

CHILDREN LOVE LEARNING ABOUT THEIR BRAINS

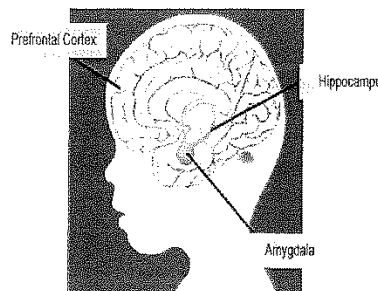
We use beautiful soft puppets - a puppy, an elephant and an owl - to tell students this story:

Deep in the base of our brain there's a small part called the Amygdala. Our amygdala is like a guard puppy that keeps us safe from real dangers. If a branch falls from a tree it helps us run out of danger; if we see a snake it helps us stay still until the snake goes away; it can even help us defend ourselves if someone is attacking us. But like all puppies it barks at things that aren't really dangerous. Sometimes it barks because of worries or silly thoughts or simply because we get too excited or too tired.

When our guard puppy barks loudly about things that really aren't dangerous, it's hard for the other parts of the brain to work – especially the hippocampus. Our hippocampus is like our memory elephant. It has great big listening ears to hear and help us remember - everything – from the names of our friends and family to how to brush our teeth. At school it helps you remember your lessons and how to spell elephant! But our memory elephant is a bit of an 'emo' elephant. It gets emotional and confused when the guard puppy barks for no good reason, and it shuts down its' big listening ears and even trembles! And then it FORGETS!

Luckily we have another big part of our brain, our pre-frontal cortex, or PFC. The PFC is like the Wise Owl in our brains. It helps us think well, focus on what's important, solve our maths problems, make friends, understand the book we're reading.....so many useful things. The Wise Owl is also the part of the brain that can calm down the Guard Puppy's barking, so wise owl can do all these important jobs.

We can help wake up Wise Owl through our Mindful Breathing. When we take two or three Mindful breaths all the way in, all the way out....and again..... Wise Owl opens her big eyes. She sees that Guard Puppy is really not barking about anything important. She spreads her beautiful soft wings and strokes the Guard Puppy so it calms down and stops barking. Wise Owl strokes the Memory Elephant so it can calm down too, open up its listening ears and remember everything it has learned. Now Wise Owl is fully awake, calm, ready to focus and learn again. Wise Owl is also ready to help you play well with your friends when play time comes.



The Mindful Brain & Breathing Song

Here is a song we use with the younger children when teaching them about the brain: (Tune: Twinkle twinkle little Star)

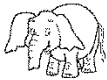
Chorus:
HOCUS POCUS MINDFUL BREATHING
HELPS ME FOCUS AND CALM DOWN



1 When my guard dog starts to growl
I need to breathe up my wise owl
Chorus



2 Wise old owl will help me train
The smarter functions of my brain
Chorus



3 When I'm calm my memory
Elephant will work for me
Chorus

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