



# BRINGING UP GREAT KIDS

Parenting Program

**HANDOUTS**



# Stop...Pause...Play



When we can relate to our children with mindful awareness we activate a part of the brain (the medial pre-frontal cortex) which allows our defensive systems to switch off, putting us in a more relaxed state and allowing us to think and act more rationally and to step outside our own experience so that we can **BE MORE PRESENT TO OUR CHILDREN'S NEEDS.**

This is an exercise that we will practice every week or use any time you need to take time out to calm down before you respond to whatever is going on.



## Stop

- Stop what you are doing.
- Make sure your feet are placed firmly on the ground.



## Pause

- Focus on your breath.
- Breathe in slowly, right down into your belly, then exhale completely.
- Take 5 more slow breaths, being aware of each breath in and each breath out.
- Smile and enjoy standing like this for a moment. Feel your body relax.
- Reflect. Ask yourself "What do I need?" and "What does my child need?"



## Play

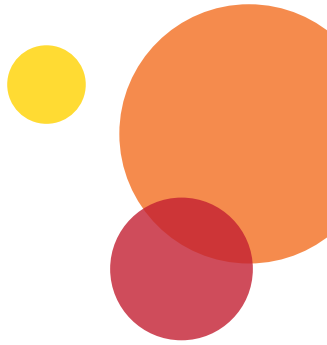
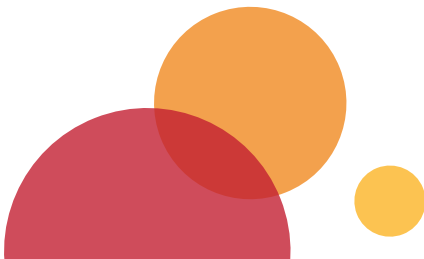
Respond to your child with new understanding.



# My children



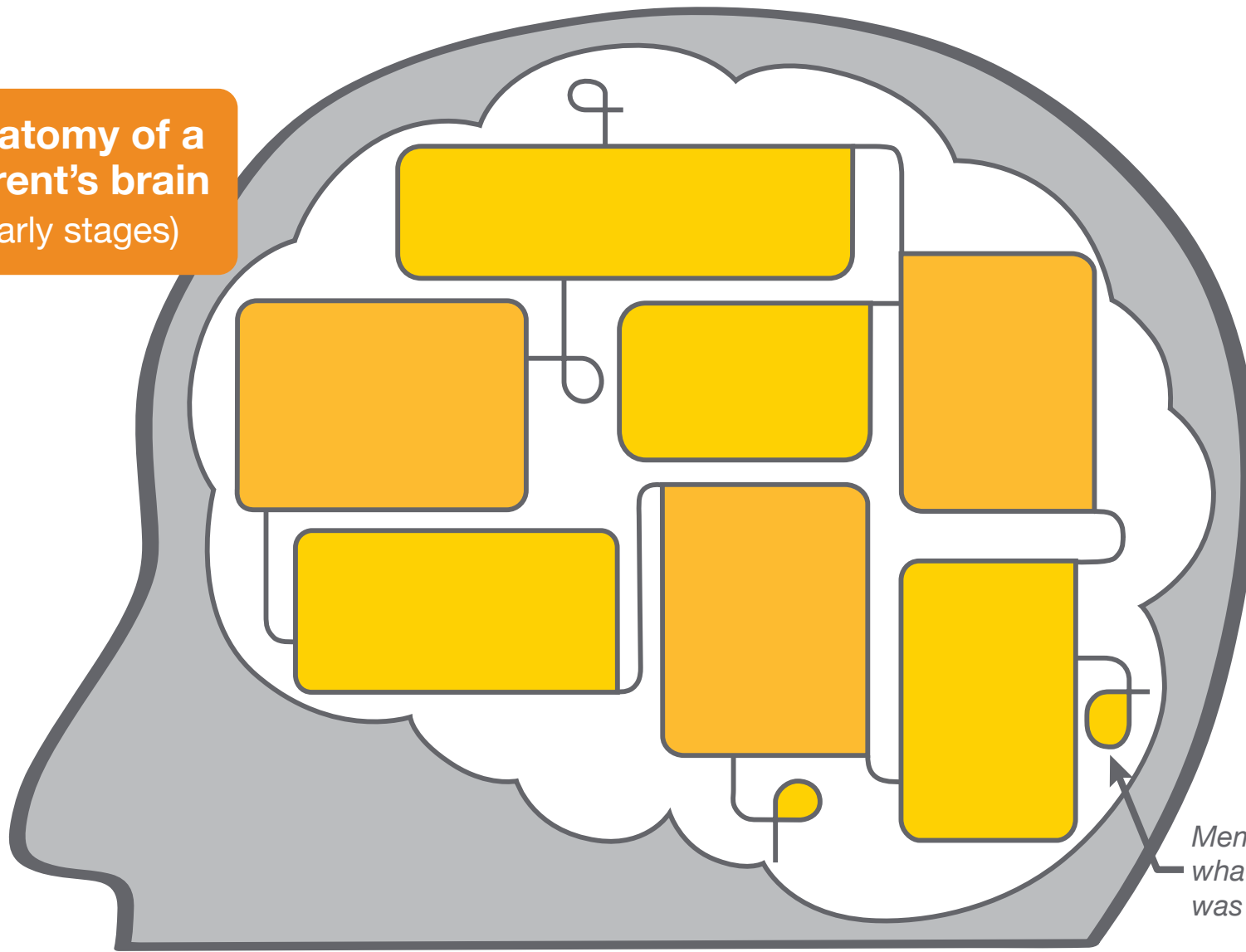
If you had three wishes for your children 20 years from now, what would they be?

A large red thought bubble with a scalloped edge, containing five horizontal white lines for writing.A large red thought bubble with a scalloped edge, containing five horizontal white lines for writing.A large red thought bubble with a scalloped edge, containing five horizontal white lines for writing.

# Incomplete Parent Brain



Anatomy of a Parent's brain (early stages)



Memory of what life was like





# Complete 1st Parent Brain

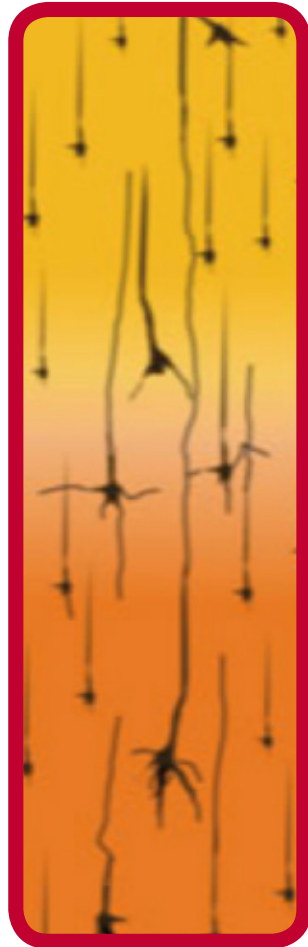


**Anatomy of a Parent's brain**  
(early stages)

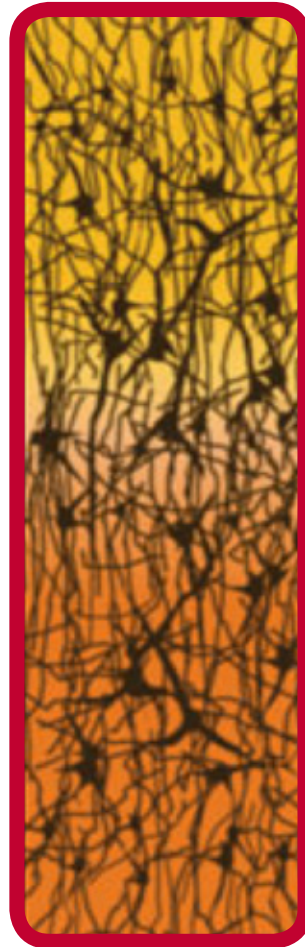




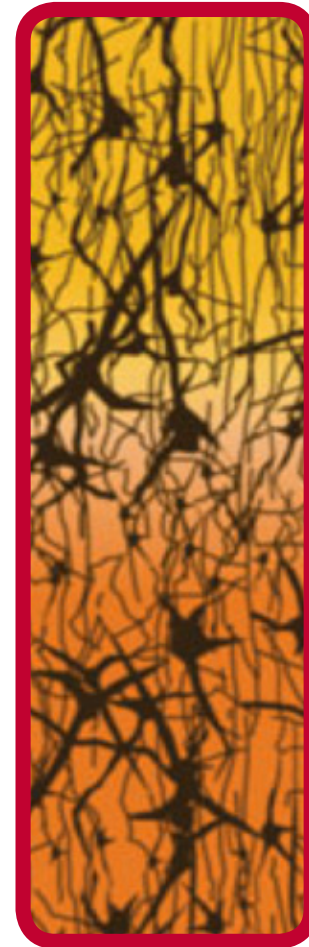
# Neuronal Connections



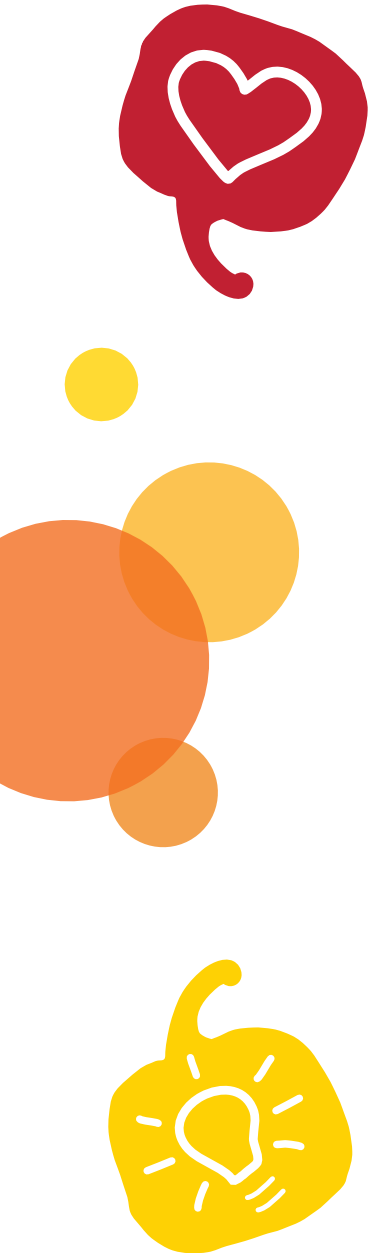
**Newborn**



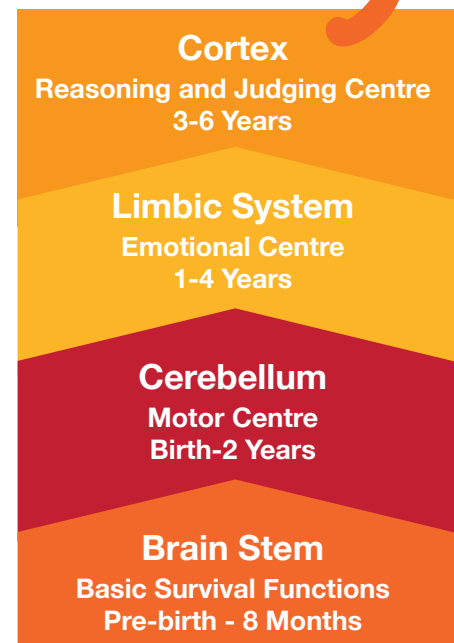
**2 Years**



**Adult**



# Bottom-Up Brain Development



The brain is comprised of different structures that grow and develop at different rates and different times.

The **brain stem** area of the brain develops first and is responsible for basic functions that **keep us alive** such as heart rate, breathing and regulating our body temperature. The brain stem is fully developed at birth. It is the part of the brain that is 'hard wired' and least susceptible to change.

Connected to the brain stem is the **cerebellum** or motor centre of the brain. This area is responsible for **movement** and develops over the first few years of life. Development in this area is seen in babies gaining head control, sitting, crawling and walking. In the next few years, children will gain greater co-ordination, learn to skip, kick a ball, ride a bicycle, cut, draw and eat with cutlery.

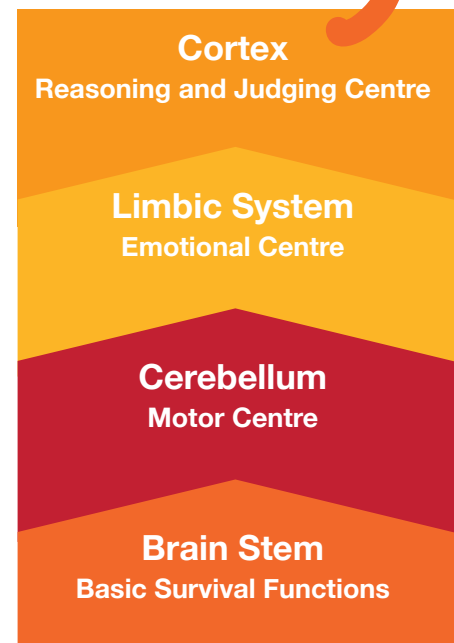
The **limbic system** is the **emotional** centre of the brain and rules the lives of young children up to around four years. During the toddler years, the limbic system goes through a period of rapid development. This helps explain their bursts of irrational behaviour and tantrums. Toddlers need our help to manage their **strong** feelings. Young children **feel** then **act**, they **can't think** then **act**. This is due to the emotional centre of their brain developing before the cortex, or the thinking part of their brain. Young children basically view the world through an emotional lens.

The **cortex**, or thinking part of the brain, is the last part to develop. This is the part of the brain responsible for reasoning, planning and problem solving. This is the part of the brain that enables humans to **think** before they **act**. As children grow and develop, the cortex is gradually able to help us to pause when we are flooded by **strong** emotions, thus allowing us to **feel, think, then act**.

Unlike the brain stem, the limbic system and cortex are highly susceptible to change due to experience and the environment in which the child lives.



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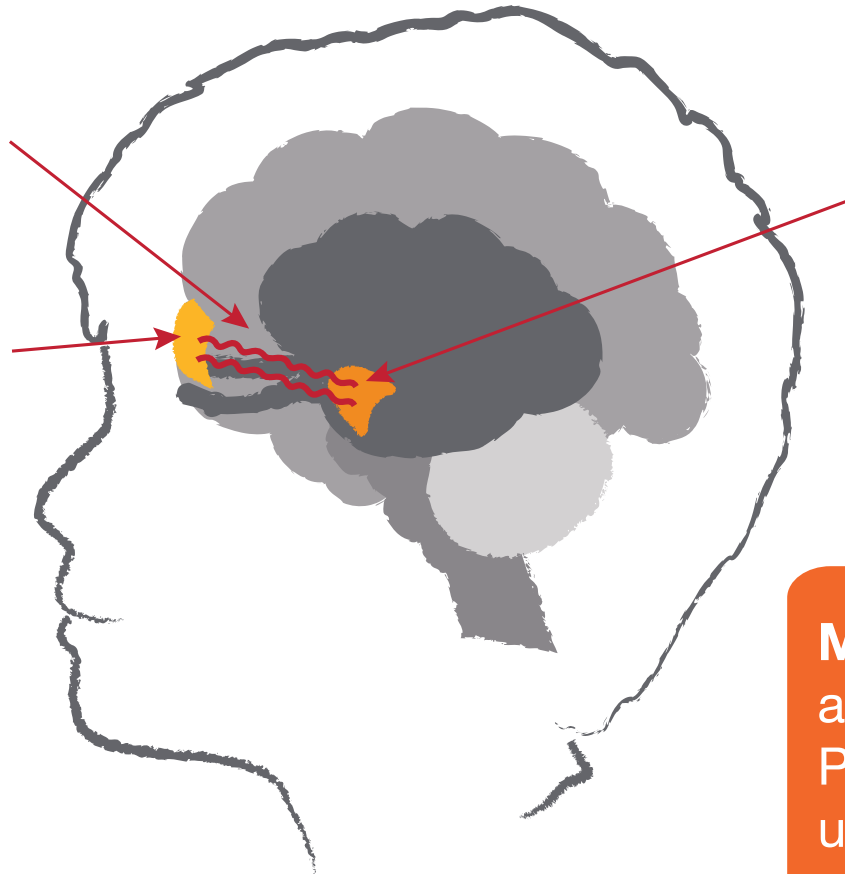


# Mindfulness



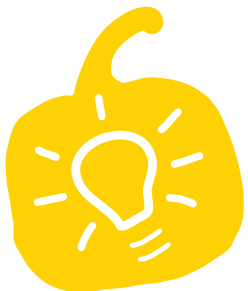
**Deactivation**

**Medial Pre-Frontal Cortex**  
The centre of mindfulness/  
self-awareness



**Mindfulness deactivates the Amygdala** (the 'smoke-detector' of the brain) helping us to calm.

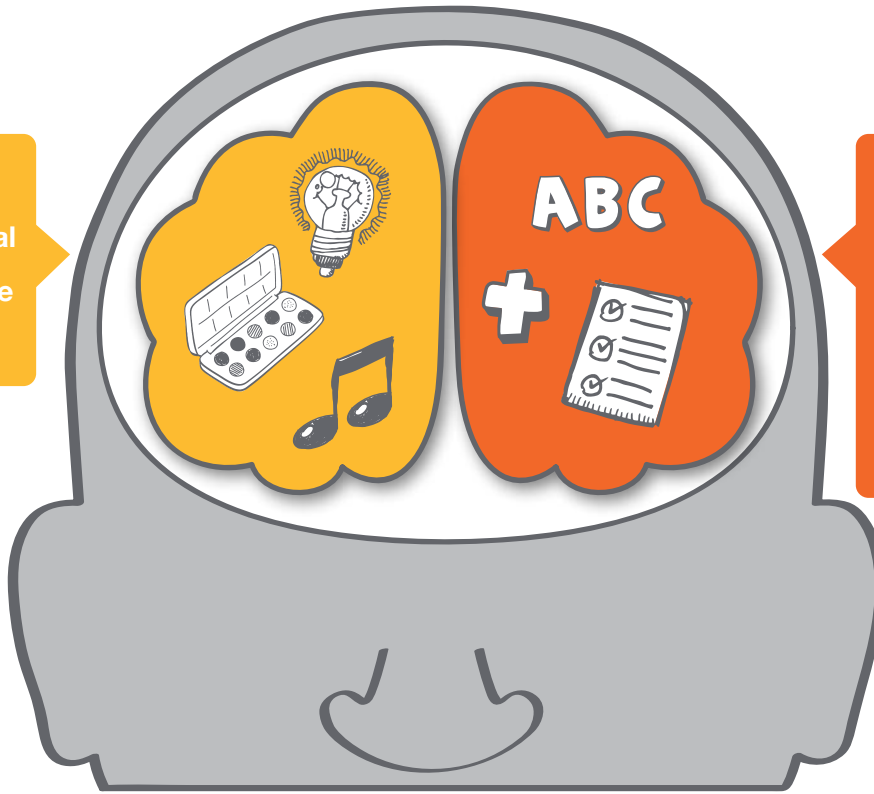
**Mindfulness** also develops the Medial Pre-Frontal Cortex, helping us to develop reflection and empathy for others.



# Left and Right Brain

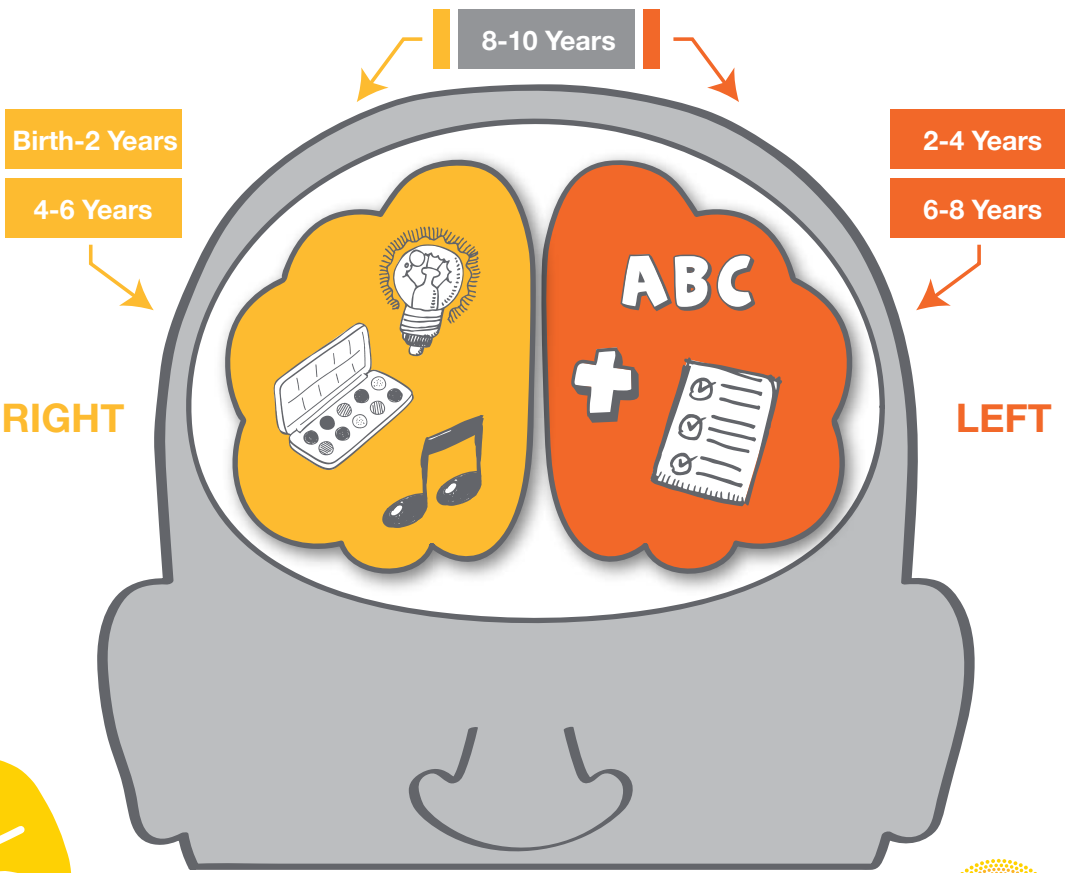


**RIGHT**  
Non-Verbal  
Big Picture  
Sensory



**LEFT**  
Logical  
Language  
Lists  
Linear  
Literal

## Lateral Brain Development





# The midline



## Notes

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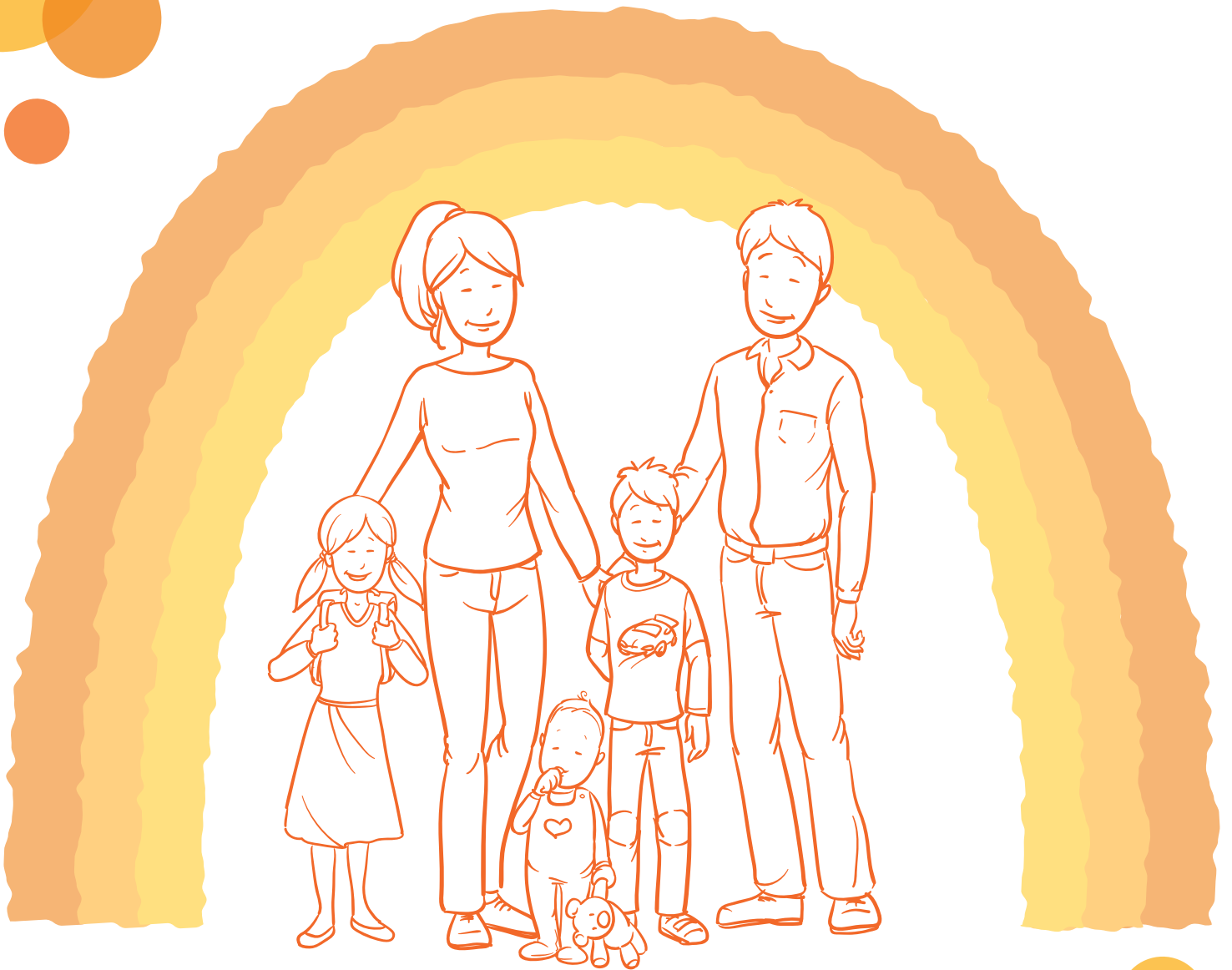
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# Parenting Rainbow



# Values and goals



What are your goals for yourself as a parent?

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What are your values in parenting?

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If you were to choose, which one would be your choice to focus on? Values or goals?

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Where did these goals come from?

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From where your values come from?

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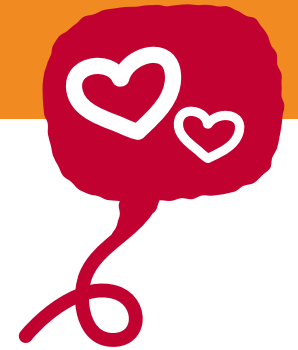
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# Chinese symbol for listening



聽 Listen

耳 Ear  
眼 Eye  
心 Heart  
一 One (whole body undivided attention)  
王 King

聽



# The rights of all children & young people



Almost all of the countries in the world came together and agreed that all children and young people have an important set of rights that can never be taken away from them. It does not matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is and whether they have a disability.

They all have the right to be loved, be cared for, be safe, have an education and be special. All adults should try their hardest to make sure that children are supported to grow up free from being hurt.



All adults should do what is best for you. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children.

You have the right to give your opinion, express your view, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.



You have the right to find out things and share what you think with others.

You have the right to live with and be raised by your parents, unless it is harmful for you.



You have the right to practise your own culture, language and religion - or any you choose.



You have the right to your own nationality (to belong to a country).

You have the right to help if you have been hurt, neglected or abused.

You have the right to be protected from being hurt or abused.

You have the right to the best health care possible.



No one is allowed to punish you in a cruel or harmful way.



Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.



You have the right to protection from work that harms you, and is bad for your health and education. If you work, you have the right to be safe and paid fairly.



You have the right for your personal information to not be given out to anyone without your agreement.



You have the right to special education and care if you have a disability.

You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level you can.

You have the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (if you have been forced to leave your home and live in another country).



If you live in care or in other situations away from home, you have the right to have these living arrangements looked at regularly to see if they are ok and right for you.

You have the right to food, clothing, a safe place to live and to have your basic needs met. You should be able to do many of the things other children can do.



You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you.

You have the right to choose your own friends.



You have the right to live with a family who cares for you.



You have the right to play and rest.

You have the right to special care and protection if you cannot live with your parents.

You have the right to legal help and fair treatment by police, judges and magistrates.



All these rights and more are written down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

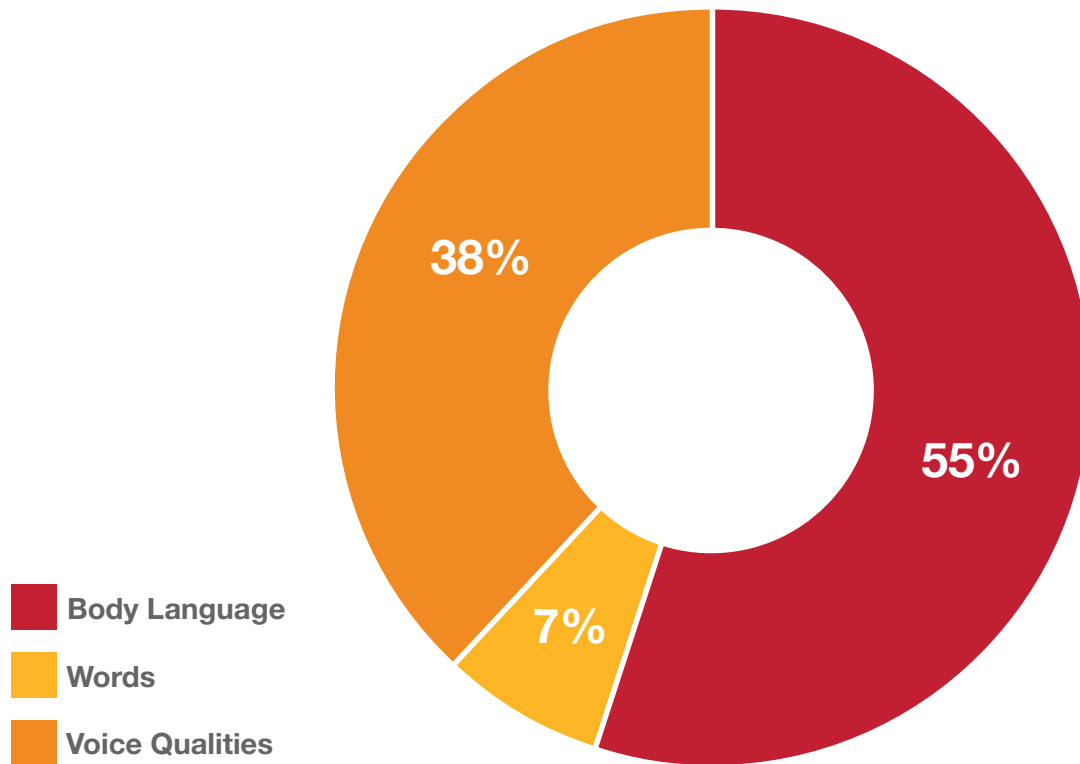


# Are we missing anything?



When parents have a new baby they learn about the baby through their body language “cues”. Some examples would be when your baby is tired they might rub their eyes or when their tummy hurts they pull their little knees up to their tummies.

## Communication Pie



Somehow when children become verbal, parents forget to use the skill of reading body language and only listen to the words. We are only using 45 percent of the communication pie and missing 55% of opportunities to tune into our children “missing cues”.

Are we putting up communication barriers by not embracing all elements of the communication pie?





# 10 Breaths

When something wonderful touches you, savour the experience by offering it 10 full breaths. By paying close attention to special moments, we come to see that opportunities for happiness present themselves many times each day.

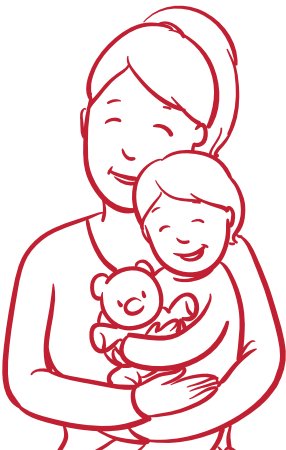


## Give your 10 breaths to anything that seems wonderful to you

- Something beautiful from Nature
- A special moment with your child/partner/friend
- A piece of music
- Eating something delicious
- A work of art

- 1 Stop whatever you are doing
- 2 Close your eyes, place a hand on your belly and take 3 deep breaths to calm yourself.
- 3 Open your eyes and focus on your special object/person/experience
- 4 Stay focused on whatever has caught your attention as you 'count with your body', 10 slow breaths, by pressing and releasing in turn, each finger resting on your belly.
- 5 If you are still entranced by your special moment, repeat the 10 breaths practice.

## Children's Behaviour



Situation	Behaviour	Understanding (emotion, reason, intention)
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# Anthill Scenarios



7 month old

Cries loudly when left at Childcare and when put in cot for sleep.

My child does that because he is feeling...  
What he needs is...  
When he does that I feel...  
... because I need ...

2 year old

Screams, throws them self on floor and kicks, when taken off coin-in-slot ride at shopping centre.

My child does that because he is feeling...  
What he needs is...  
When he does that I feel...  
... because I need ...

4 year old

Cries loudly when left at Childcare and when put in cot for sleep.

My child does that because he is feeling...  
What he needs is...  
When he does that I feel...  
... because I need ...

6 year old

Stares at the window during class time, leaves work uncompleted.

My child does that because he is feeling...  
What he needs is...  
When he does that I feel...  
... because I need ...

8 year old

Hits other children and disrupts other children's games.

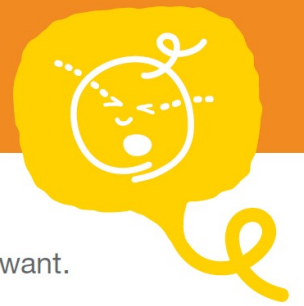
My child does that because he is feeling...  
What he needs is...  
When he does that I feel...  
... because I need ...

10 year old

Very quiet, with a blank expression on their face. Never asks for help. Chooses to stay in the library at lunchtimes.

My child does that because he is feeling...  
What he needs is...  
When he does that I feel...  
... because I need ...

# Feelings and Needs Cards



Cut out each card and fold them in half. You may choose to laminate the card if you want.

bringupgreatkids.org

rest/sleep safety shelter touch

play creativity hope belonging

empathy love nurturing respect

security trust comfort support

**Needs**

**Feelings**

calm	happy	proud	playful
curious	enthusiastic	angry	mad
sad	frightened	lonely	scared
bored	excited	fulfilled	relaxed

bringupgreatkids.org Australian Childhood Foundation

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bringupgreatkids.org Australian Childhood Foundation

# Helping Children to Manage Big Feelings



## 1 Listen to the child's feelings with your whole body

- stop what you're doing
- get down to your child's level
- look at child (their focus is on the expression on your face)
- speak using a calm voice (their focus is on the tone of your voice)

## 2 Put your child's feelings into words

Eg: "It looks like you're pretty angry/sad/scared about that."  
"You sound pretty cross."

## 3 Help him to notice what's happening in his body

Eg: "How does that feel in your tummy/head?"  
"Your arms look stiff and tight."

## 4 Empathise with him

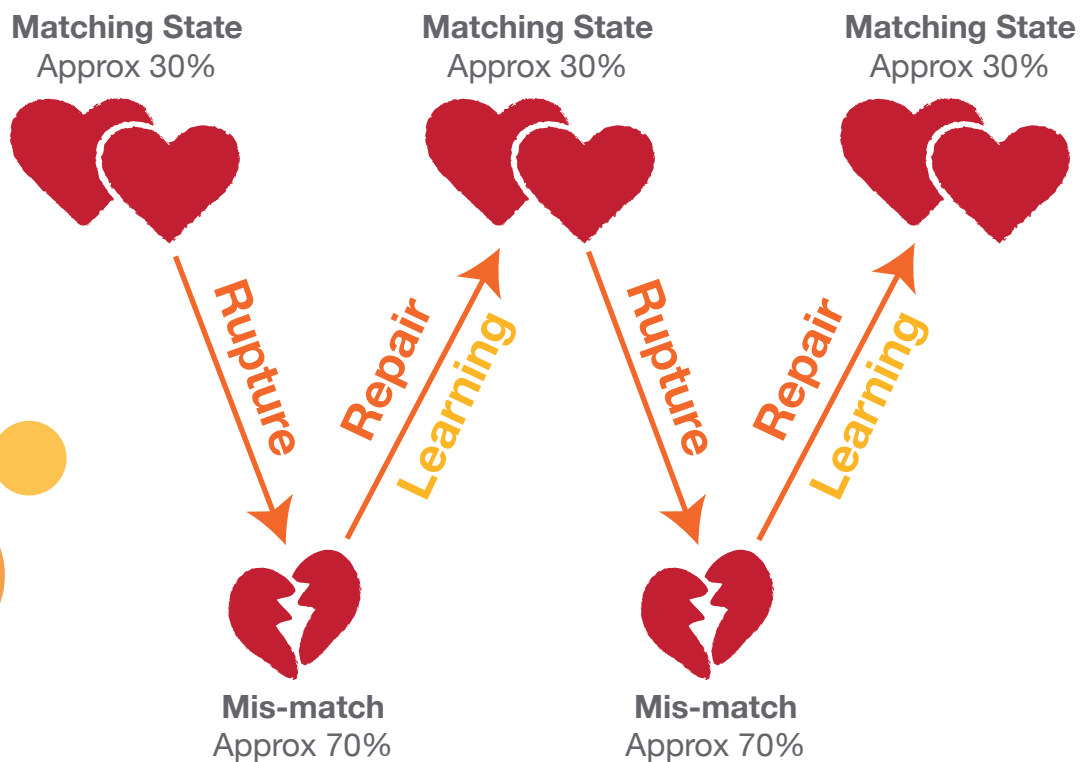
"It's tough when ..."  
"I can understand that you might feel annoyed when..."  
"If my friend did that, I'd feel angry too."

## 5 Help him to solve his own problem

"What could you do about that?"  
"What could you do next time that happens?"



# Good Enough Parenting (Ed Tronick)



Having a look to this illustration, please discuss the following questions in your group:

- How do you feel about your relationship with your child?
- How can a rupture in relationship be an opportunity for learning and growth?
- Do you feel able to repair after a relationship rupture?





# I still love you



What you did is not okay.....  
I was angry with you.....

but you are still a good person and  
you are not your behavior  
but I should not have reacted like  
that.....



You are lovable.  
and I love you.





# Family Case Scenario 2



## James, a single dad, cares for his three children.

Adam, aged 6 who demonstrates some challenging behaviours and has recently been diagnosed with ADHD. Sarah, aged 10, is a very nervous child who struggles to make friends. Sam, aged 3, is a very sociable and friendly child.

The only support James gets each week is from his mum who lives nearby and looks after the children two afternoons a week.

The house James has been renting for five years has been sold and will no longer be available for rent. There are no other houses in the nearby area within James's budget so he no choice but to move to the other side of town to where he can afford to rent. The move will mean a change of schools and finding a new day care for Sam.

## Group Discussion



Consider the children in the scenario and what the change of circumstances may mean for each one, take into account each child's;

- Stage of development
- Personality / Temperament
- Gender
- Position in the family

Consider possible impacts on the child's:

- Feelings
- Sense of security
- Friendships
- Behaviours



# Personality



**Every child's personality is unique to them. Personality helps explain why a child reacts to the world the way he does.**

Below are scales from 1 to 10 for a range of different aspects of personality. Think about your child. Mark a cross where you would place him/her of each scale.



**Complete the scales for each of your children.**

1

Very intense



10

Very easy-going

1

Very active



10

Prefers to sit and watch

1

Easily frustrated



10

Very patient

1

Can't cope with change at all



10

Adjusts easily to change

1

Takes a long time to feel comfortable with new people



10

Loves meeting new people



**Now repeat this exercise for yourself.**

Using a different coloured pen, rate yourself against. Compare your ratings with those of your child. Do you find it easier or more difficult, to relate to a child who has a similar personality to your own?



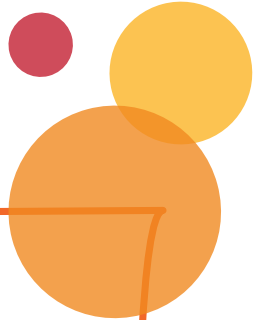
# Reflections on Culture



Draw a visual representation of your own culture.

Try to include some aspects of:

- your beliefs, values and philosophies and ambitions
- your symbols, languages
- your customs, traditions, dress, food, home, lifestyle, behaviours, health practices

A large, empty rectangular box with a hand-drawn orange border, intended for drawing a visual representation of one's culture.

Share your drawing with another participant from a different culture (is possible).  
Talk about how different or similar your culture is from that of the other person.



# Self-care Prescription



Prescription (My self-care activity)	Dose (How long?)	Frequency				
		Daily	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Yearly
Call or visit a friend or family						
Practice breathing / muscle relaxation						
Walk, play sport or exercise						
Have a bath						
Read a book or magazine						
Have one-to-one time with your partner						
Watch a movie						
Listen or dance to music						
Write, paint or play an instrument						
Cook your favourite meal						
Go out for dinner						
Do some gardening						
See a counsellor						
Go away for a weekend						
Go on holiday						



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed: \_\_\_\_\_

Displayed: 

# Life Tree



## The Fruits

represent your children.



Draw them on your tree in a way that says something about each child.

## The Leaves

represent your values and your skills.

## The Branches

represent your hopes and wishes for your children.

## The Trunk

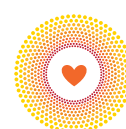
represent your strongest supports.

## The Earth

represent all those things which keep you 'grounded' and make you feel stable and strong.

## The Roots

represent where you have come from, your family history and important places and people from your past.



# Asking for help



**6** How do you feel about these statements?

**“It’s my job to look after my children, no one else’s job.”**

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**“It takes a village to raise a child.”**

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**“Every parent needs help at times.”**

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**7** Who do you feel comfortable to ask for help with your children?

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