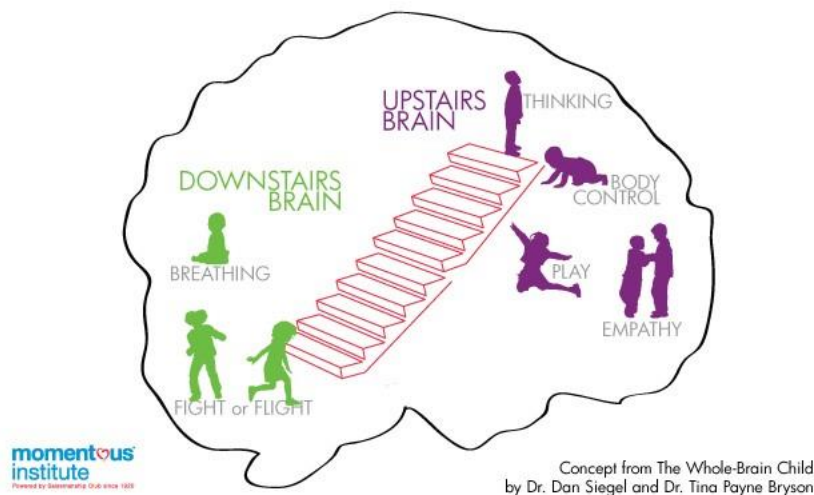


SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

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OUR BRAINS!

The Downstairs Brain is in charge of our automatic bodily functions. It also is the part of the brain that reacts to BIG FEELINGS like fear and anger. When we go into fight/flight/freeze, we are using our downstairs brain.



The Upstairs Brain can think, understand, empathise and play. Children are still developing their upstairs brains and need help from adults' upstairs brains to grow their own. When the downstairs brain takes over with big feelings, the upstairs brain cannot work properly.

When a child's downstairs brain takes over (Big Feelings like anger, crying, anxiety) and they can't use their upstairs brain anymore, they need help from an adult they know and trust to calm down.

HALT! - Stop and think.. Hungry? Angry? Lonely? Tired?

CONNECT - eye-level, touch, tone of voice, body language

REFLECT – see the world from your child's perspective and empathise “your sister kept taking your toy and you had enough so you pushed her.. it's hard having sisters sometimes”

THINK TOGETHER ABOUT CONSEQUENCES – Only do this when the child is calm and can use their upstairs brain again. “ I understand you felt so frustrated but it's not ok to hurt your sister. What can you do now to make things better?”

REPAIR – connect again later in the day. Have a heart-to-heart moment. If you can laugh together during this time, even better! This will show your child that the incident is over and you love him/her just as much as you did before. It will help your child feel connected to you, and therefore happier.

Key Points:

- Uncooperative or aggressive behaviour is usually a communication about a need. Stop and think about what your child might be needing.
- Find time to play with your child as often as possible (at least 3 x 15 mins a week)
- Laughter is great for helping your child feel connected to you.
Laugh together as often as possible!
- Give your child choices
- Help your child to think together with you
- Empathise with your child and when he/she is calm, offer clear and simple explanations
- Find time to refill your cup! Looking after your own needs will leave you with more patience, energy and joy for your child