The Whole-Brain Child: 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind, Survive Everyday Parenting Struggles, and Help Your Family Thrive by Tina Payne Bryson

Fantastic, Immediately Useful Book

Your toddler throws a tantrum in the middle of a store. Your preschooler refuses to get dressed. Your fifth-grader sulks on the bench instead of playing on the field. Do children conspire to make their parents’ lives endlessly challenging? No—it’s just their developing brain calling the shots!

In this pioneering, practical book, Daniel J. Siegel, neuropsychiatrist and author of the bestselling Mindsight, and parenting expert Tina Payne Bryson demystify the meltdowns and aggravation, explaining the new science of how a child's brain is wired and how it matures. The “upstairs brain,” which makes decisions and balances emotions, is under construction until the mid-twenties. And especially in young children, the right brain and its emotions tend to rule over the logic of the left brain. No wonder kids can seem—and feel—so out of control. By applying these discoveries to everyday parenting, you can turn any outburst, argument, or fear into a chance to integrate your child’s brain and foster vital growth. Raise calmer, happier children using twelve key strategies, including
• Name It to Tame It: Corral raging right-brain behavior through left-brain storytelling, appealing to the left brain’s affinity for words and reasoning to calm emotional storms and bodily tension.

• Engage, Don’t Enrage: Keep your child thinking and listening, instead of purely reacting.

• Move It or Lose It: Use physical activities to shift your child’s emotional state.

• Let the Clouds of Emotion Roll By: Guide your children when they are stuck on a negative emotion, and help them understand that feelings come and go.

• SIFT: Help children pay attention to the Sensations, Images, Feelings, and Thoughts within them so that they can make better decisions and be more flexible.

• Connect Through Conflict: Use discord to encourage empathy and greater social success.

Complete with clear explanations, age-appropriate strategies for dealing with day-to-day struggles, and illustrations that will help you explain these concepts to your child, The Whole-Brain Child shows you how to cultivate healthy emotional and intellectual development so that your children can lead balanced, meaningful, and connected lives.

The Whole-Brain Child was so much more than I was expecting. I selected it because my daughter was going through some struggles with her 2 year old twins and my other daughters 4 year old went through several weeks of separation from his mom and dad and now has to adjust to life with twin brothers. I was looking for things I might be able to do or to pass on to them that might help. What I wasn’t expecting was getting some insight into why I feel it necessary to have dessert after a meal or why I have some of the anxieties I have.

I found the book easy to read and understand. There are many specific examples of how each technique can be used. I found these examples to be very useful. Most seems to be directed toward school-age children, but the back of the book has a chart that breaks down how to use each strategy with different age groups. There is 0 - 3, 3 - 6, 6 - 9, and 9 - 12. This makes it easier to see how each technique can be used with the children in your life.
Integrating the brain makes sense, especially the way it is explained here. We have a right brain (emotional) and a left brain (logical) and when we use both our lives are more balanced, meaningful, and creative. We also have an upstairs and a downstairs brain. Downstairs is the more primitive brain, which is intact at birth. The upstairs brain is under construction during childhood and gets remodeled during adolescence. Upstairs can be overtaken by the downstairs especially during high-emotion situations. When we lose it, our downstairs has taken over. There are also different kinds of memories that need to be integrated as well as self and others. In general, this book is about integrating all the different parts of our brain. Doing so makes it so much easier for us to live happy, productive lives. I am ready to use some of the strategies explained in this book.

ETA: This book must have made a big impression on me. It hasn't been that long since I finished reading it, but I find myself quoting from it frequently. Sometimes it's when I am talking to my children about their children, but I have also had conversations with teachers I used to work with where information I learned in this book's added to the discussion.

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