



PARENTING FOR GROWING BRAINS

Connection today. Skills tomorrow.

Big behaviors are not bad behaviors— they're signs of a growing brain that needs support, not punishment. Our job is to help their brains grow regulation, flexibility, communication, and problem-solving.



Remember:
Brains grow through connection, repetition, safety, and time.

THE REGULATION & CONNECTION SEQUENCE

1



REGULATE FIRST

Calm the body before we teach.

- Use fewer words.
- Lower demands.
- Help their body feel safe.

"Your body is having a hard time. I'm here."

HOW THIS HELPS THEIR BRAIN GROW



Helps the nervous system settle so learning is possible. Creates safety in the body.

2



CONNECT BEFORE YOU CORRECT

Name the feeling. Show you get it.

- Validate their emotion.
- Show understanding.
- Stay connected.

"You really wanted more time. It makes sense you're upset."



Builds emotional awareness, trust, and secure connection. Strengthens relationships and cooperation over time.

3



HOLD THE BOUNDARY CLEARLY

The limit stays. The relationship stays too.

- Be calm and consistent.
- No shame, no threats.
- Keep it simple.

"You can be mad, and I won't let you hit."



Provides predictability and structure. Helps the prefrontal cortex learn limits and safety.

4



TEACH LATER, NOT IN THE STORM

Wait until calm to problem-solve and teach.

- Talk when everyone is calm.
- Identify the need underneath.
- Practice a new skill.

"Earlier was hard. What can we try next time?"



Builds problem-solving, language, and reflection. Repetition builds new neural pathways.

5



USE LOGICAL & NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

Teach responsibility, not shame.

- Related, respectful, reasonable.
- Focus on repair and safety.
- After regulation returns.

"The markers were used on the wall, so we'll clean it up together."



Helps the brain connect actions, impact, and repair. Grows accountability and empathy.

6



OFFER AUTONOMY INSIDE THE BOUNDARY

Choices build confidence and cooperation.

- Offer limited choices.
- Respect their voice.
- Keep the adult in charge.

"It's time to leave. Do you want to hop or hold hands?"



Supports executive function, decision-making, and self-advocacy. Reduces power struggles.

7



REPAIR & RECONNECT

Conflict is normal. Repair grows trust.

- Take responsibility.
- Reconnect and restore.
- Try again.

"I got too loud. I'm sorry. Let's try that again."



Teaches that relationships can bend and come back together. Builds trust, empathy, and resilience.

REMEMBER...



Brains don't grow overnight. Small steps add up.



Progress is not always perfect. Connection is the goal.



You don't have to do it alone. Support makes a difference.

LOOK FOR TINY WINS



- ✓ Screamed but didn't hit.
- ✓ Accepted help a little sooner.
- ✓ Came back to repair.
- ✓ Used words.
- ✓ Tried again after calming down.
- ✓ You stayed calm.

These moments matter. These moments build their brain.



YOU ARE GROWING TOO



Your calm helps grow their calm. Your connection helps grow their confidence. Your boundaries help grow their safety.

Keep showing up. You're doing better than you think.

