

## BUILDER SERIES: THE BRAIN PT 3

# “THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX AND BRAINSTEM”

### ***Prefrontal Cortex (“The Computer”)***

- Logical part of our brain
- Controls Problem Solving, Impulse Control, and Decision Making
- Job is to regulate the amygdala
- Starts developing between 0-3 years old
- Develops through attunement and emotional regulation of caregivers
- NEEDS PROBLEM SOLVING TO GROW

The Zone: when a child is capitalizing, doing good, super focused, and demonstrating solid understanding and ability to problem solve.

Prefrontal Cortex does not grow if parents/teachers continually problem solve for the children. Problem solving for children takes away their ability to utilize their cognitive skills and abstract thinking to create a solution.

### ***Brainstem (“The Reptile Brain”)***

Physical State: Fight, Flight, or Freeze

When in this part of the brain, you cannot access memories in our hippocampus

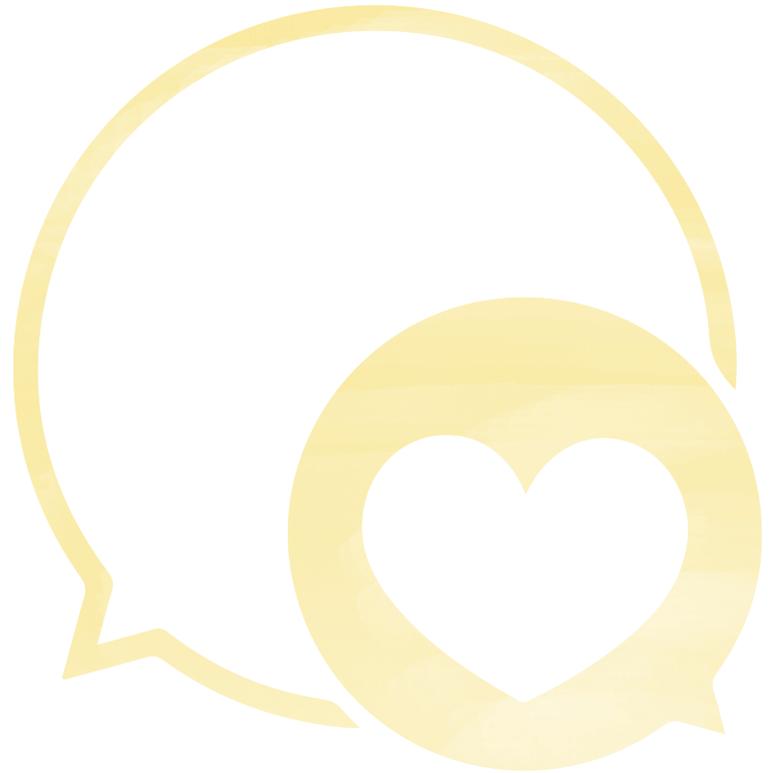
This is the only part of the brain that does not learn

When the child is in their brainstem, your job is to ground them to reality and assure them of safety in order for their prefrontal cortex to turn back on.

#### **When children are in their brainstem:**

1. Utilizing grounding techniques. Examples might include: Example: “It’s Thursday. You are in the classroom. You are wearing a red shirt. You wore your favorite pair of shoes today. We just finished math and are about to go to recess.”
2. Help them label their emotions. Examples might include: “You seem disappointed” or “You seem annoyed.” Avoid labeling the emotion as anger. Anger is a secondary emotion and so attempt to label the emotion that’s underneath the anger

3. Validate the emotions that you labelled. Examples might include: “I know, it’s really frustrating to turn off the tv” or “I know you wanted to play outside and are disappointed because it’s raining.”
4. Role-model coping skills. Examples might include: deep breathing, counting to ten, etc.



*\*This information is a compilation of Grow and Guide Kids, Becky Bailey, Dan Siegel, and Tina Bryson.*

