



Mindful Parenting- Cultivating Self-Regulation and Compassion with Your Children

**Parents as Partners Conference
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Introductions



Agenda for Today

Introductions

Brain, Emotions and Behavior-Why it matters?

Mindfulness-Overview, Benefits, Strategies

Mindfulness with children

Present Moment Awareness

Taking a minute to BE HERE!



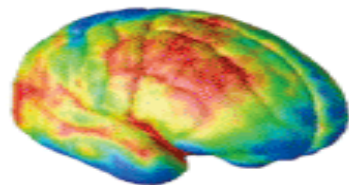
Brain and Development

Growing a Grown-up Brain

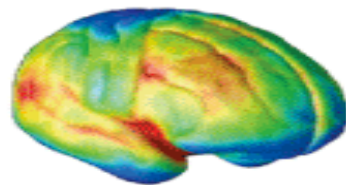
Scientists have long thought that the human brain was formed in early childhood. But by scanning children's brains with an MRI year after year, they discovered that the brain undergoes radical changes in adolescence. Excess gray matter is pruned out, making brain connections more specialized and efficient. The parts of the brain that control physical movement, vision, and the senses mature first, while the regions in the front that control higher thinking don't finish the pruning process until the early 20s.

Gray matter density

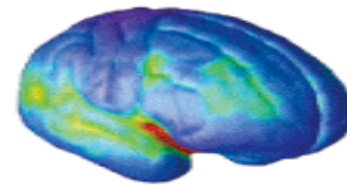
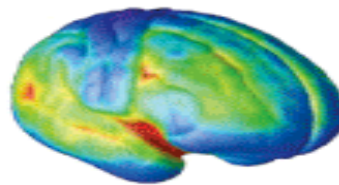
Gray matter becomes less dense as the brain matures.



Age: 5



Adolescence



20

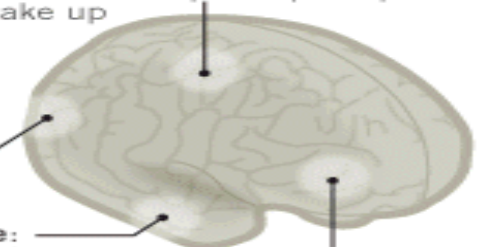
Gray matter: Nerve cell bodies and fibers that make up the bulk of the brain's computing power.

Occipital lobe: Vision

Temporal lobe: Memory, hearing, language

Parietal lobe: Spatial perception

Frontal lobe: Planning, emotional control, problem solving



Source: "Dynamic mapping of human cortical development during childhood through early adulthood," Nitin Gogtay et al., *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, May 25, 2004; California Institute of Technology

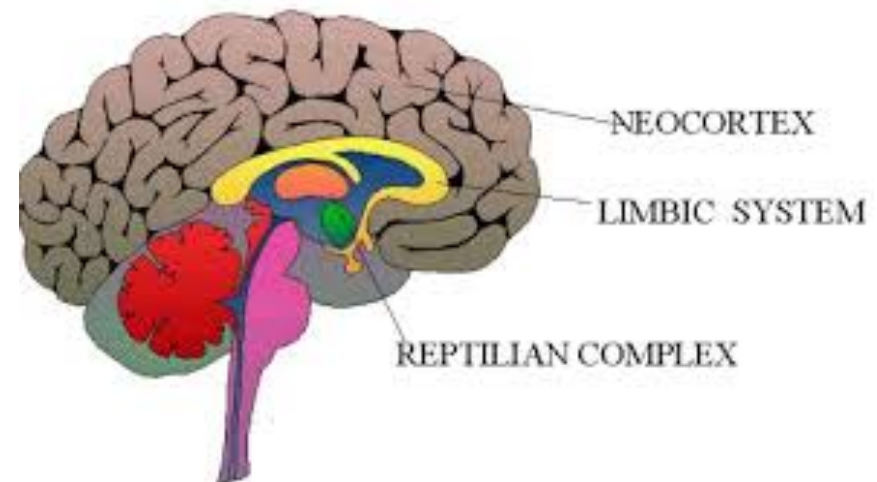
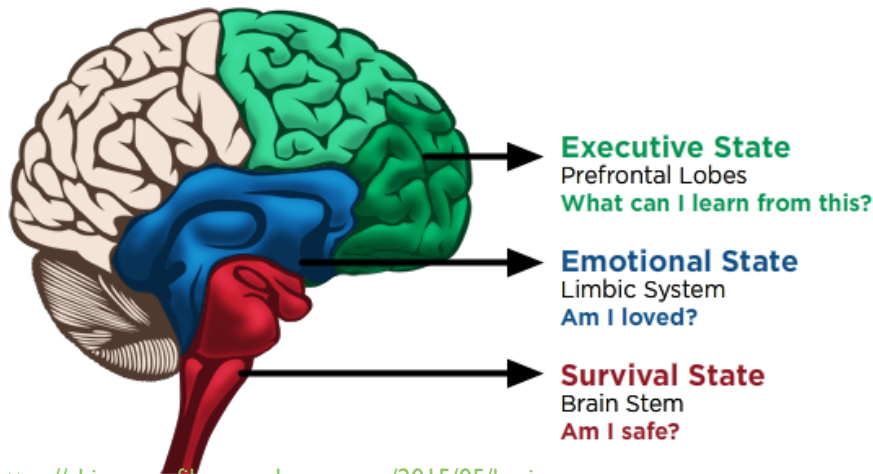
Executive System disengaged

Fear and Flight Engaged



Neuroscience

- **Brainstem:** ancient brain. Regulates basic processes, states of arousal, fight-flight-freeze.
- **Limbic System:** emotions, evaluation of good vs bad, forming relationships and emotional attachment, memory
- **Cerebral cortex:** think, imagine, combine facts and experiences, create



THE “Downstairs” brain- AMYGDALA

- Meets basic needs : food, sleep, comfort
- Asks :“ Am I safe?”
- Fully functional at birth
- Has its own panic button – Amygdala



The “UPSTAIRS” - PREFRONTAL CORTEX

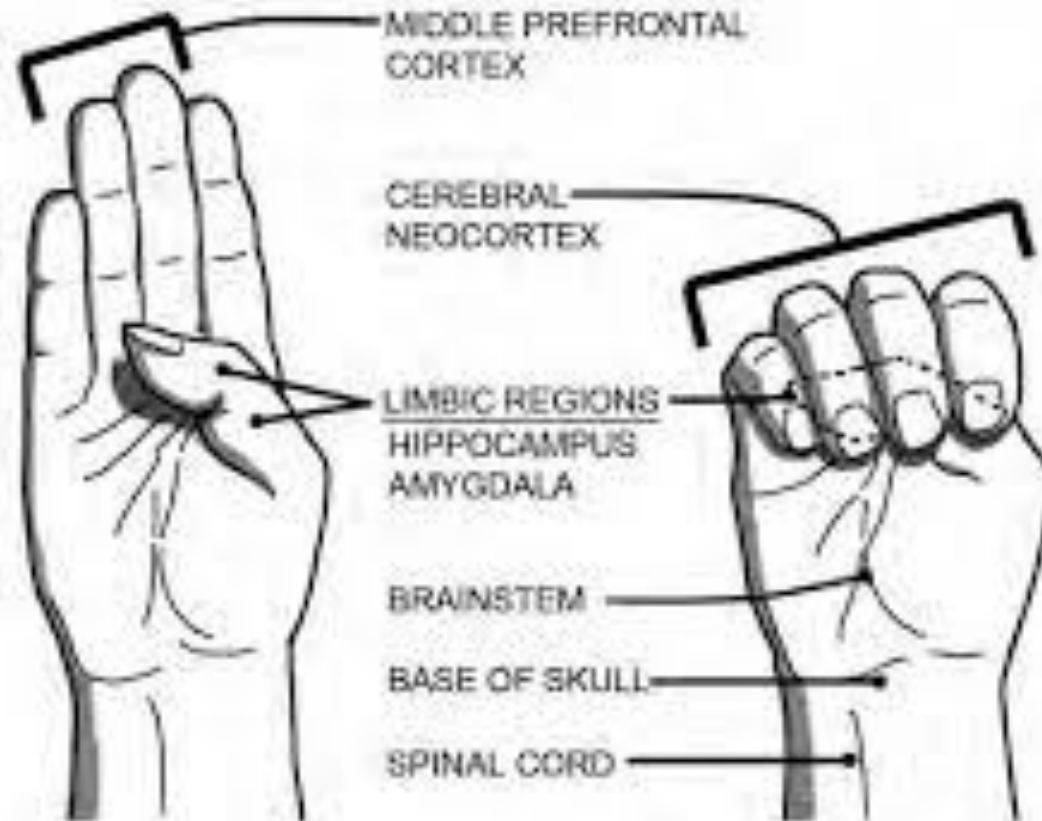
- Reasoning ability
- Goals and priority setting
- Ability to make sound judgments
- Planning and organization of multiple tasks
- Impulse inhibition
- Self-control/Emotional control
- Determining right from wrong
- Determining cause and effect relationships.



Neuroscience

- Parts of the Brain Hand Model (Video):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gm9CIJ74Oxw>



BRAIN ARCHITECTURE

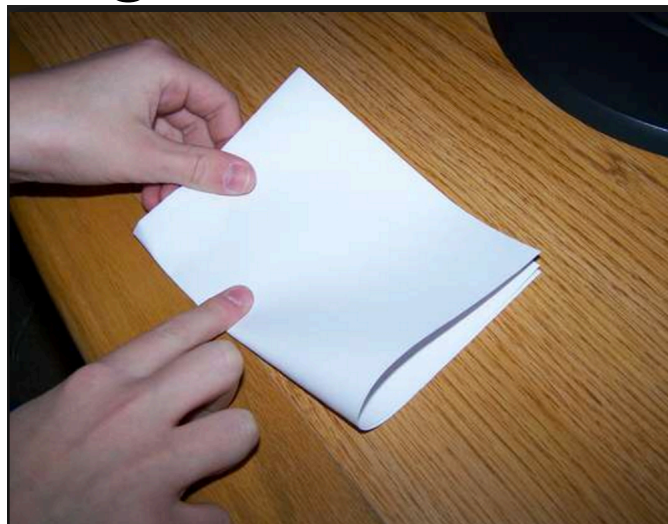
Brains aren't just born. They're also built.

- Early life experiences build brain architecture
- More complex brain circuits are built on simpler circuits
- It's crucial to build a strong foundation throughout early childhood
- Brain architecture affects behavior and learning, and lifelong physical and mental health



Hebb' s Axiom

- “Neurons that fire together wire together(Hebb, 2009)
- Activity:
 1. Paper folding exercise
 2. Paths in the grass



Establishing Pathways



Understanding Stress and Anxiety

Three Core Concepts in Early Development

3 Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development

NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL ON THE DEVELOPING CHILD

Center on the Developing Child  HARVARD UNIVERSITY

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVwFkcOZHJw&index=3&list=PL0DB506DEF92B6347>

What about YOUR stress!

Mirror Neurons and Emotional Contagion



Mindful Listening



Mindfulness?

“Mindfulness is paying attention to your life, here and now, with kindness and curiosity.”

Amy Salzman

Other related vocabulary

- Presence
- Being
- Awareness
- Attention
- Balance
- Alertness
- Attentiveness
- Openness
- Resting the mind

Examples of Mindfulness

- Becoming aware of the breath;
- Noticing thoughts as they pass through the mind;
- Feeling the various physical sensations of an emotion;
- Attending to the body at rest and in motion:
- Noticing what happens in the body when there is stress;
- Paying attention to all the sounds in the room;
- Feeling the stomach rise and fall with each breath
- Watching the thoughts that arise when there is boredom;
- Choosing to respond rather than react to stressful situations;
- Practicing sending kindness to oneself and others.

Practice Time: Mindful Breathing

- Anchoring
- Shifting brain modes: Rest and Grow



Brain and Breathing



Benefits of Mindfulness

- **Better focus and concentration**
- **Increased calm**
- **Decreased stress & anxiety**
- **Enhanced health**
- **Improved impulse control**
- **Skillful ways to respond to difficult emotions**
- **Increased self-awareness**
- **Increased empathy and understanding of others**

Creating a Space

*Without
Mindfulness*



*With
Mindfulness*



Heartfulness



Why Mindfulness ?

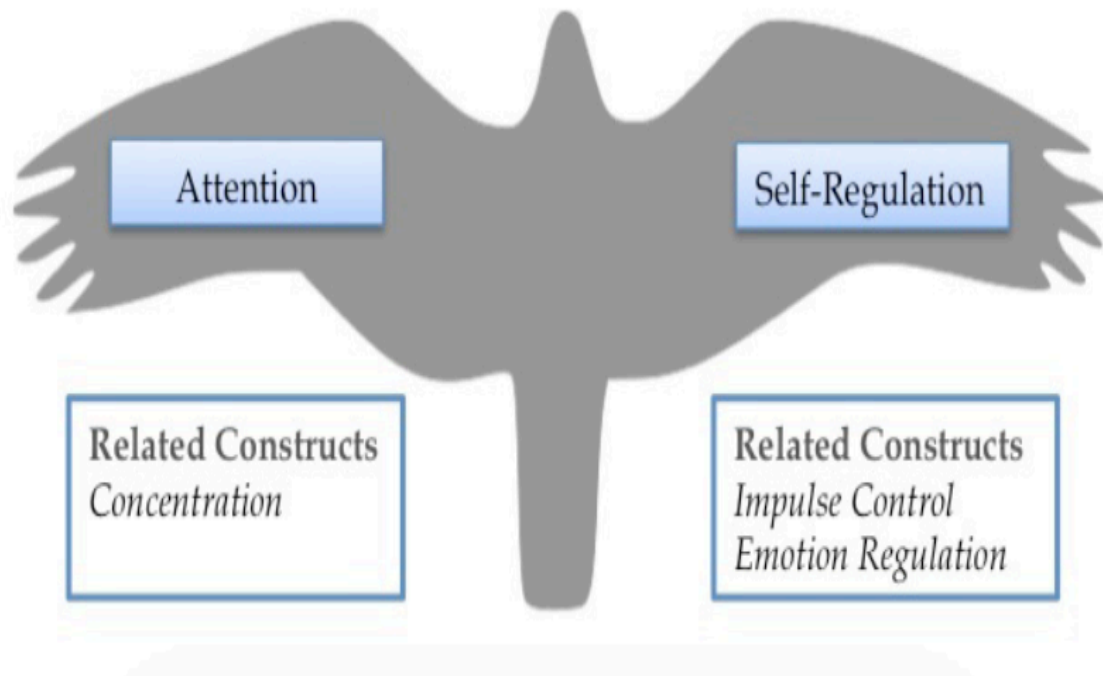
Just Breath Movie

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVA2N6tX2cg>



Mindful Education

The Two Wings of Mindfulness for Students



- Mindfulness eating meditation



- Feedback and discussions

- <http://cdn.franticworld.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Chocolate-Meditation-from-book-Mindfulness-Finding-Peace-in-a-Frantic-World-128k.mp3>

Mindfulness in schools

- 8 weeks curriculum (e.g., Mindful Schools)
- Building-based practice (e.g., Quiet Time)
- Small group/individual practices (e.g., The Mind Jar; The Gratitude Jar)

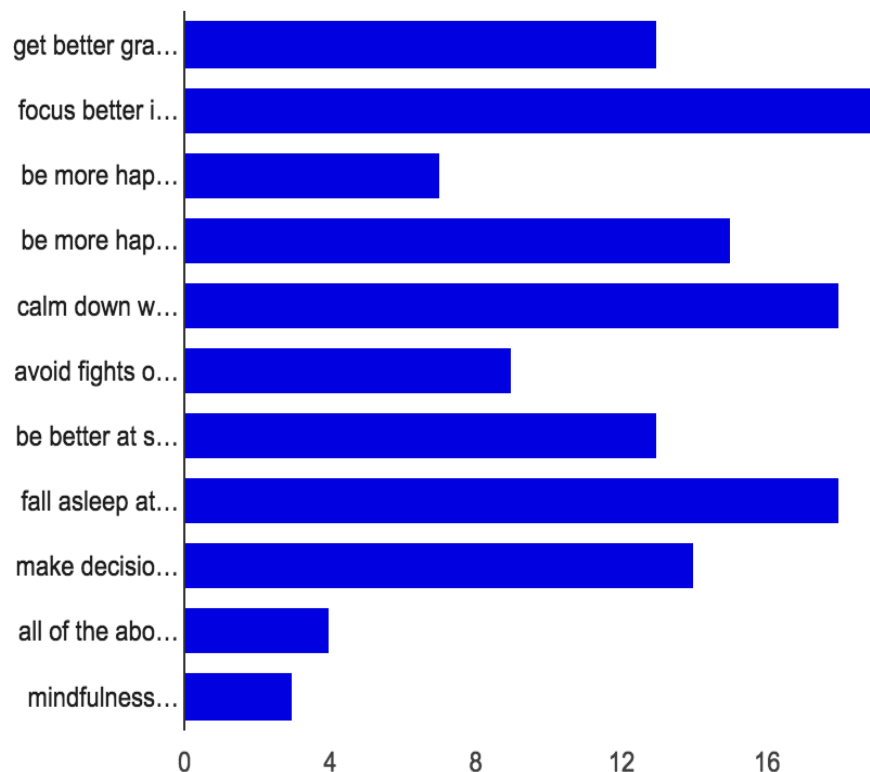


Object Meditation



Data and Feedback

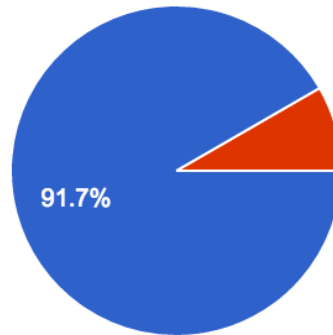
Mindfulness has helped me: (check all that apply)



get better grades.	13	56.5%
focus better in the classroom.	19	82.6%
be more happy where you live.	7	30.4%
be more happy at school.	15	65.2%
calm down when I am upset.	18	78.3%
avoid fights or arguments.	9	39.1%
be better at sports, music.	13	56.5%
fall asleep at night.	18	78.3%
make decisions.	14	60.9%
all of the above.	4	17.4%
mindfulness has not helped me.	3	13%

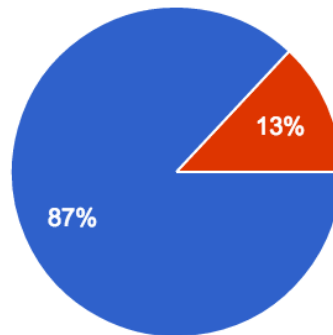
Student Feedback

Did you enjoy your mindfulness classes?



Yes	22	91.7%
No	2	8.3%

Has learning mindfulness helped you in your life?



Yes	20	87%
No	3	13%

Sample Lessons

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Make your own Mind Jar (bottle)



JC Mindfulness Initiative- What Students Say



Questions/Feedback



Resources

- <http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22>
- <http://www.freemindfulness.org/download>
- <http://franticworld.com/free-meditations-from-mindfulness/>
- <http://annakaharris.com/mindfulness-for-children/>
- <https://vimeo.com/73160445>
- **Apps: Mindfulness Daily; Headspace**
- <http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>
- <http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/home/index.aspx>
- <http://www.parentmindfully.com/>
- <http://www.mindandlife.org/>
- www.garrisoninstitute.org/
- <http://drdansiegel.com/>