Change Your Language, Change Their Lives: What Adults Can Say Differently Today to Change the Brains of Tomorrow

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PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

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The Children’s Guild

PROGRAMS
- 6 Schools
- 2 are Non-Public
- 4 Charter (Reg-Ed)
- 3 Group Homes
- Foster Care
- OMHC
- 2 Autism Centers

- Located in Baltimore, MD; Glen Burnie, MD; Laurel, MD; and Washington, DC, USA
- Urban (8.4 million)
- African American (80%), Hispanic (10%), Caucasian (5%) Students
- Majority of Students Live at or Below Poverty Level
- Majority of Students Have Had 2+ Failed School Placements

TRANSFORMATION EDUCATION
Translates the fields of neuroscience (brain compatible approaches) and anthropology (culture) to be **practically applied** to child-serving organizations and schools.

Why Learn About The Brain?
As parents and teachers, learning about the brain will help us achieve the real American Dream:
That our children will live an even better life than we have.

The Brain Is Involved in Everything You Do and The Brain Is Everywhere

In our society today, most children will use their **ability to learn** as the primary tool to reach their dreams.
1. First, Teach Listening so your Words can be Heard.
2. Words that Develop the Right Mindset about Learning.
3. Words that Stimulate Executive Function.
4. Words that Help Memory.
5. Words that Build Hope.
6. Words that Make the Abstract Specific.
7. Words that Prepare Students for Challenges.

1. How to be a Listening Genius.

**HALT**

**ENGAGE**

**ANTICIPATE**

**REPLAY**
2. Words that Develop the Right Mindset about Learning.

Adopt the LANGUAGE of the BRAIN!

Research continues to reveal that what we say to our children and how we say it has a powerful impact on their developing brains.

Just Two Examples ...

“Don’t tell your [kids] they are smart. More than three decades of research shows that a focus on effort – not on intelligence or ability – is the key to success in school and in life.”

FIXED Mindset vs. GROWTH Mindset

**FIXED**
- Intelligence is a fixed trait — you only have a certain amount and that’s that.
- Mistakes are attributed to a lack of ability.
  “If I struggle or have to work hard, I am dumb.”

**GROWTH**
- Intelligence is malleable and can be developed through education and hard work.
- Mistakes are attributed to a lack of effort.
  “If I work hard enough, I can learn this.”

MINDSET
Focus on:
- Learning Strategies
- Effort
- Perseverance

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*Image of a brain and a child writing.*
3. Words that Stimulate Executive Function.

BRAIN RULE: What We Say Matters

Not only to the development of the mindset our children have about intelligence, but to how fast and how deep the executive system of the brain develops (those all important frontal lobes!)

Executive Function Teacher Prompt

“Self Regulation Executive Function Descriptions With Examples of Teacher Prompts,” George McCloskey, PhD, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Why Executive Function Skills Matter

Sociologist Annette Lareau and “Concerted Cultivation” Alex and Katie Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race and Family Life (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003)

AMYGDALA
The Palace Guard
FRONTAL LOBES
Learning to Drive

NOTES

A complete list of the Executive Function Prompts can be downloaded at The Upside Down Organization website: www.upsidedownorganization.org
4. Words that Help Memory.

**SENSE and MEANING**

1. **Survival Value Info/Experiences**
   - Can the child understand the item on the basis of past experiences?

2. **Learning that Makes Sense**
   - Is the information relevant to the child?

3. **Learning that Has Meaning**
   - Is the information relevant to the child?

**Incorporate These Two Essential Questions into Every Teaching Moment:**

1. How does this relate to what they already know?
2. How might they use this in the future?
5. Words that build Hope.

The Technical Side of Hope

1. Affirmation
   Unconditional positive regard unrelated to behavior or compliance.
   “Frank, great to see you today. I’m happy to have you in class.”

2. Prediction of Positive Outcomes
   “You keep working hard and your love of storytelling will get you paid for telling stories. I heard about a volunteer opportunity at the Heritage Museum that would give you some practice…”

3. Vision of Personalized, Compelling Possibilities by a Believable Authority Figure
   “Good storytellers like you are in great demand. I could see you working for a newspaper or a television station. You’ll have to keep up your hard work, but I believe you’ll tell stories for a career.”

Enhanced brain chemistry supports mood, attention, cognition, memory and even neurogenesis. (Jensen, 2006)
6. **Words that Make the Abstract Specific.**

**AN UPSIDE DOWN IDEA:**

Be specific | Focus on action | Avoid abstract terms without a concrete example ("Responsibility," "Respect," "Appropriate") | If using abstract terms, always pair with a specific behavior.

**3-PART MODEL** to boost behavioral feedback and increase your child’s ability to respond:

- Step 1: State the context and the general behavior desired in that context.
- Step 2: Precisely state the behavior desired.
- Step 3: Connect the context and desired behavior to the abstract term.

7. **Words that Prepare Students for Challenges.**

**Can I Do It? Is the Best Question**

- I Can Do It!
- I Can’t Do it!
- In the Middle

**BONUS STRATEGY**

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