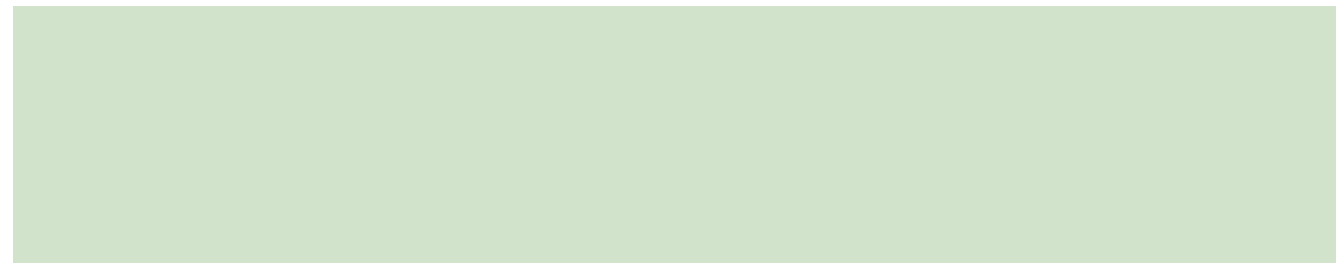


# PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 1: The MindUP™ Brain

As a parent, understanding the links between the brain and behavior can be enlightening. We can see our children's behavior more objectively when we are able to put it into a biological context. An understanding of your child's developing brain can help to lower your parental frustration and increase the effectiveness of your responses. We don't all have to be neuroscientists; however, learning a few key facts about the brain can optimize our ability to help our children navigate childhood and become successful adults. In the MindUP™ curriculum, children learn about four main parts of the brain: the Amygdala, the Pre-frontal Cortex, the Hippocampus, and the Reticular Activating System. Children of all ages love learning interesting facts about their brain. It is powerful for kids to begin learning about their brain because it allows them to actively seek the optimal state for learning and being.

## How To Explain The MindUP™ Brain

**MindUP™ helps children understand how their brain works in an age-appropriate way. Practice describing either the hand model or the animal analogy with your neighbor. Additionally, using the analogy examples below, create your own analogy for the functions of the different parts of the MindUP™ brain:**



### MindUP™ Brain Part:

Amygdala  
PFC  
Hippocampus  
RAS



### Animal Analogy:

Guard Dog  
Wise Old Owl  
Hippo  
Whale



### School Analogy:

Fire Alarm  
Teacher  
Library  
School Secretary



### Football Analogy:

Offensive Lineman  
Quarterback  
Offensive Coach  
Center

# Parent Workbook Activity 1 : MindUP™ For Parents

Scenarios	Keeping the Brain in Mind	A MindUP™ Parent Response
A four year old is on the floor at the grocery store screaming	This child may be hijacked by his emotional brain (amygdala) and not able to reason in the moment (using his PFC).	Say something like "I can hear and see that you're really upset right now, your guard dog is on alert. Let's take a break. Let's go outside and find a quiet place so we can calm the guard dog down."
An eight year old child is so anxious she often can't remember seemingly simple details	These two things could be related. When the emotional brain (amygdala) is in overdrive we don't store information well (hippocampus).	Say something like "I've noticed that sometimes when you feel really worried your hippocampus isn't working as well, and you forget some things. I think we need to try to calm your guard dog down so your hippocampus can do its job and help you to remember to bring your lunch to school."
A teenager can't sleep the night before a speech she has to give in English class	The teen may be hijacked by her emotional brain (amygdala) and may need help calming down fears and insecurities to better be able to access her reasoning mind (PFC) and positive memories.	Listen to and empathize with her fears and feelings. Help to remind her that her guard dog is on alert, and see what she wants to do to calm it down. Perhaps you can practice mindfully breathing together in bed. What would the wise owl say?