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What if...?

What if the brain is the source of all behaviors?
 What does this mean for our kids who struggle behaviorally?
 What does it mean for the way we parent and teach them?

What about all the different diagnosis our kids have received?

Why do "very good" parenting techniques fail miserably with my child?

If things like consequences don't work, what DOES work?

What if we always started from the standpoint that our kids would be doing well if they could? How would this change our approach and support of them?

What if I didn't focus on changing the behavior but instead focused on my child's unique brain function? What would change?

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The Neurobehavioral Model

Seeing Our Unique Child Through a Brain-Based Lens


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The neurobehavioral model is an individualized approach based on your child's unique brain function.



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What does the brain have to do with my child's challenging behaviors, anyway?

Everything.

Provides understanding and clarity
Reduces frustration and improves outcomes

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The Brain is the Brain is the Brain
Different source, similar symptoms


Illness, trauma (experienced pre- and post-birth), pre-natal substance exposure, medical events at the time of birth, neuroimmune conditions, conditions caused by gene mutations and a traumatic brain injury all result in difficulty with seemingly easy cognitive tasks.

Behaviors are usually the only symptom of this brain-based difference.

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The Logic Behind the Neurobehavioral Parenting Model

Is a brain-based disability a physical condition and if so, what does this mean for the way we parent our child?

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If So, Then What?

Providing accommodations for our child with brain-based differences is as appropriate and effective as providing accommodations to other children with physical disabilities.

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Pre-natal toxic stress
Alcohol
Other substances
Trauma
TBI
Genetics
Illness
Loss of oxygen

Changes in the Brain with Similar Challenging Behavioral Symptoms

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The Neurobehavioral Model Components
The Path to Transformation

The Parent Experience
Building Resiliency


Accommodations & Building Skills
Parenting Our Child Differently

Secondary Characteristics
Seeing Our Child's Challenging Behaviors as Symptoms of Their Disabilities

Primary Characteristics
Insight into Our Child's Unique Brain Function and Lagging Cognitive Skills

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Primary Characteristics

The Brain-Behavior Connection

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Primary Characteristics

Behaviors that help us gain insight into the way in which a brain works (or works differently). It includes things such as processing pace, executive functioning, language and communication and so much more.

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Assumption based on "Neurotypical"	Neurodiverse Characteristics
Think fast, listen fast	Processes slowly
Predict & plan ahead	Difficult predicting outcomes
Multi-task & prioritize	One thing at a time
Learn remember, apply info	Memory difficulties
Inhibits impulses	Impulsive
Ignore or manages sensory input	Easily overstimulated
Identifies & solves problems	Difficulty problem solving

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Primary Characteristics

- Dysmaturity
- Sensory Processing and Integration
- Nutrition
- Language and Communication
- Processing Pace
- Learning and Memory
- Abstract Thinking
- Executive Functioning

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Dysmaturity

The gap between our child's chronological and developmental age.

They are not "acting" like a baby, they are a younger age socially, emotionally, and in relation to other cognitive skills.


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Seeing Our Child's Uneven Development Through Their Behaviors

Chronological age.....	13
Social/emotional age....	7
Strengths.....	14
Expressive Language.....	13
Receptive language.....	8
EF skills.....	6

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Sensory Systems

What happens when our child experiences everything?

Caused by structural and functional changes in the brain.

Child appears "disorganized".

Child's behavior is an attempt to normalize their nervous system.

Children can be over-sensitive or under-sensitive to touch (or both).

Their system can be over-responsive, under-responsive, sensory seeking or all three.

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Nutrition & Hunger

Cravings for sweets and fats beyond what "typical" child experience

May not experience hunger pangs, becoming "hangry".


May not experience sensation of fullness.

May need to eat frequently due to cognitive fatigue.



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Language & Communication

Talks better than understands (can "talk the talk" but can't "walk the walk")

Confabulates - tells truthful lies

Doesn't seem to understand, just doesn't "get it"

Chatty, may talk a lot (excessively at times), but can't participate in the back and forth/answer questions

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Processing Pace

- 10-second child in one-second world
- Frustrated if interrupted
- Listens slowly, often asks, "What?" or says, "I don't know."
- Slow, halting speech
- If interrupted, has to start from beginning of story

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Learning & Memory

- Poor short-term memory, especially auditory
- Has difficulty remembering and learning from past experiences
- Can do 1 step, but not follow 2-4 step directions
- Can recite the rule, but then can not follow it
- Inconsistent performance (on/off days)
- Needs to be retaught the same thing many times
- Cannot take what learned from one setting and apply it to another

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Abstract Thinking

The ability to think about concepts that are real, like freedom and vulnerability, but are not tied to the senses or concrete objects. It also includes our ability to absorb information from our senses and make connections to the wider world.

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Abstract	Concrete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to learn the meaning behind things to explain the why and the how • Ability to understand metaphors, humor or sarcasm • Ability to interpret, and discuss ideas that have no concrete nature • Ability to break knowledge down into separate parts and show the relationship through comparison, experimenting, and categorizing • Ability to "get the gist" of a given situation or request • Ability to understand what is implied, but not explicitly stated • Ability to understand the big picture in a situation (independently gather context) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to "brainstorm" • Need for tangible information to make comparisons and categorize • Taking things literally, as stated • Not being able to take a learned skill or rule and apply it to different settings • Important and relevant information may be ignored because it can not be seen • Not being able to think beyond what is right in front of them (and experienced by the senses) • Only able to be in the "here and now" • Taking information as it is said (very literally) and not questioning it

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Executive Functioning

The Brain's Air Traffic Control Center

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Executive Functioning Difficulties Looks Like:

- Difficulty transitioning, shifting gears
- Upset by unexpected changes in tasks, schedule, or routine
- Impulsive behaviors
- Difficulty getting started or engaged in a task (especially non-preferred activities)
- Difficulty staying engaged or finishing a task
- Unable to link past experiences to current situation


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Executive Functioning Difficulties Look Like:

- Difficulty identifying goals and planning steps to reach them
- Getting stuck in behavioral or verbal loops, perseveration
- Cognitively rigid, can't "let go" in an argument, difficulty seeing others' points of view
- Can't see what's coming next
- Difficulty tolerating frustration or staying emotionally regulated

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Emotional Regulation & Our Child's Fragile Nervous System

- Narrow window of tolerance
- "Flip their lid" more easily than neurotypical children
- Out of "thinking brain" when this happens
- Regulated --> Relating --> To Reason

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