

FOUNDATIONS OF CONNECTION



Understanding Behavior, Communication,
and Development

ABOUT ME – CHLOE



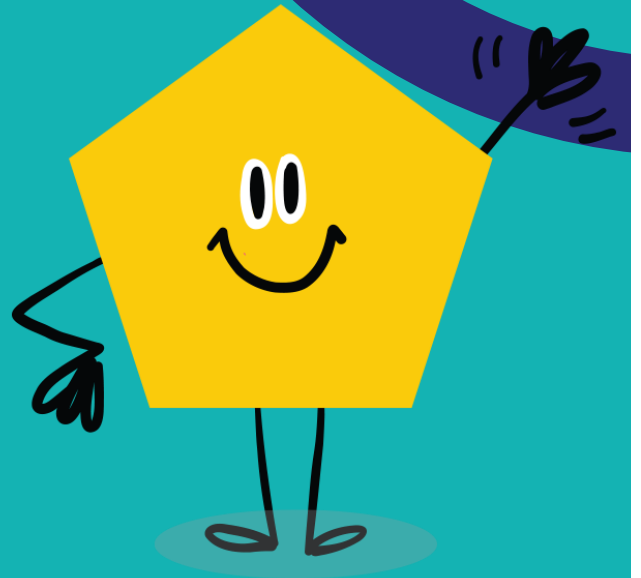
- Occupational therapist
- Graduated from Mizzou in 2018
- I've worked for Playabilities since 2019
- Clinical Director since 2025
- Passionate about understanding individuals unique wiring and helping empower their caregivers!



OBJECTIVES



- Understand basic concepts of development
- Understand basic concepts of behavior
- Learn tools to understand your child's unique wiring
- Gain strategies to support your child with emotional development & resiliency
- Understand how OTs, SLPs, and PTs can support



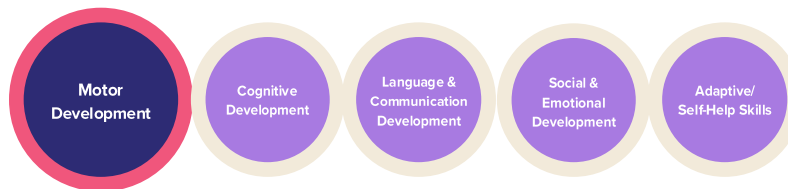
FOUNDATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT



MOTOR DEVELOPMENT



- Gross motor
- Fine motor
- Visual motor
- Oral motor
- Sensory processing



COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT



- Attention
- Memory
- Perception
- Problem Solving & Reasoning
- Executive Function
- Concept Formation & Categorization
- Metacognition
- Creativity & Imagination



LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT



- Receptive language
- Expressive language
- Pragmatics/Social communication



SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



- Self-Awareness
- Self-Regulation/Emotional-Regulation
- Social Awareness
- Relationship skills



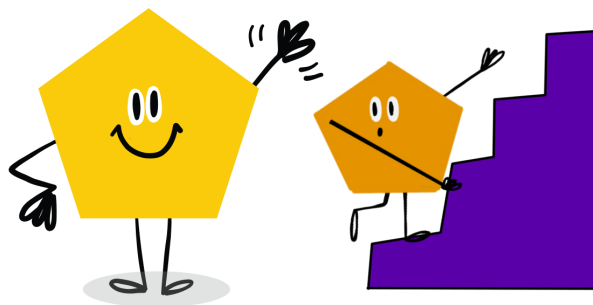
ADAPTIVE & SELF-HELP SKILL DEVELOPMENT



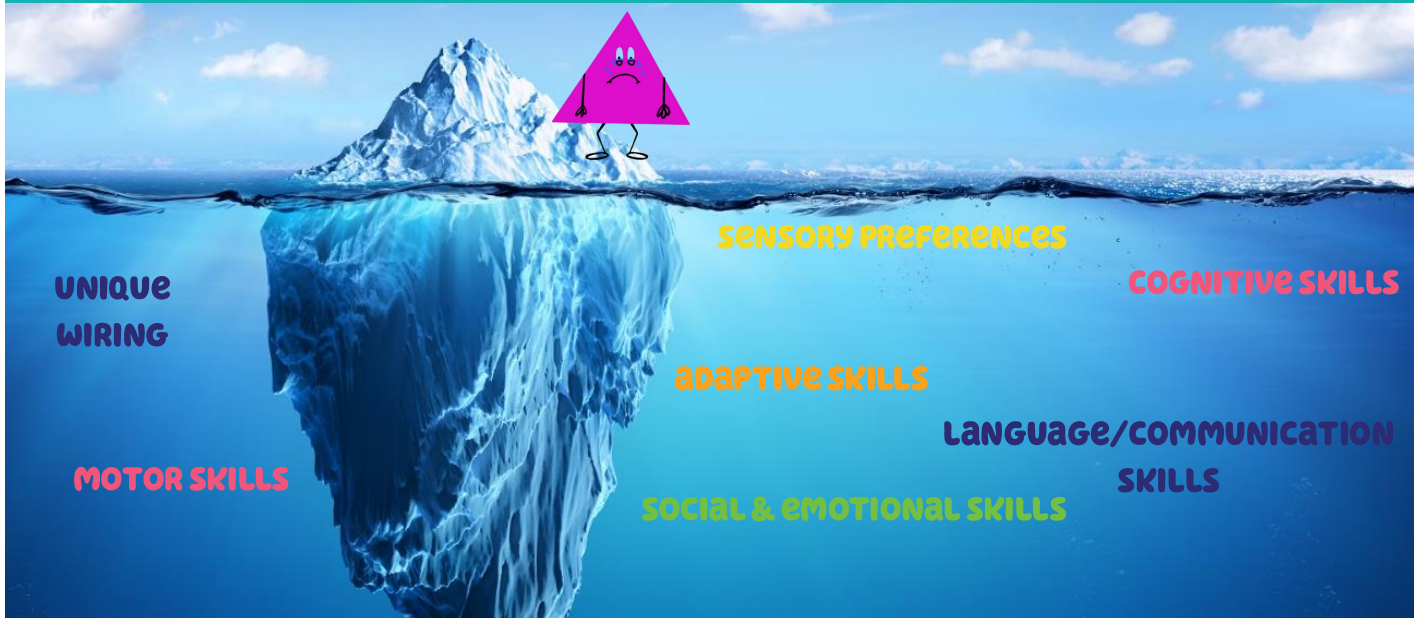
- Taking care of one's body
- Taking care of one's things
- Taking care of one's day



EXAMPLE – LEARNING TO CLIMB STAIRS



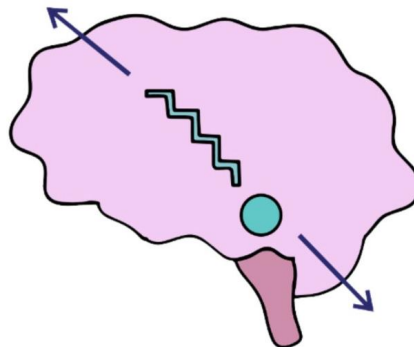
BEHAVIOR



SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



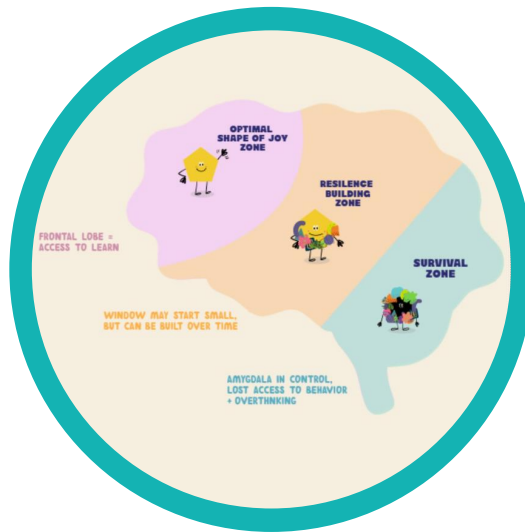
UPSTAIRS BRAIN



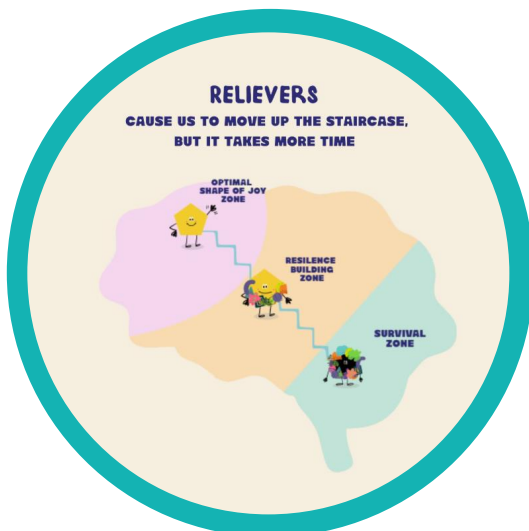
DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN



Source: The Shape of Joy (Reardon, 2024)



Source: The Shape of Joy (Reardon, 2024)



Source: The Shape of Joy (Reardon, 2024)

EXAMPLE –

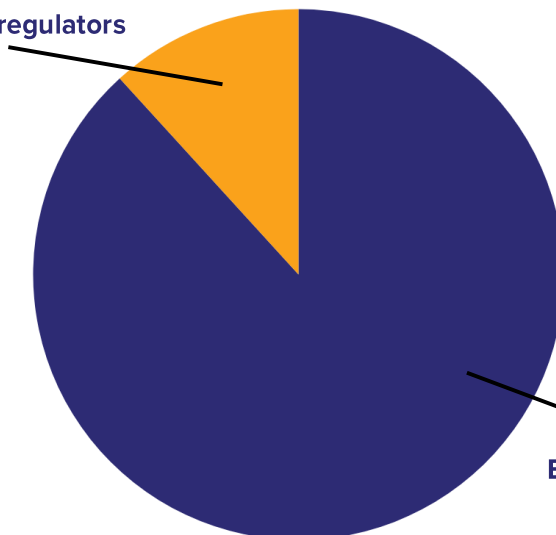


EMOTIONAL REGULATION



Age 0-2

Internal regulators



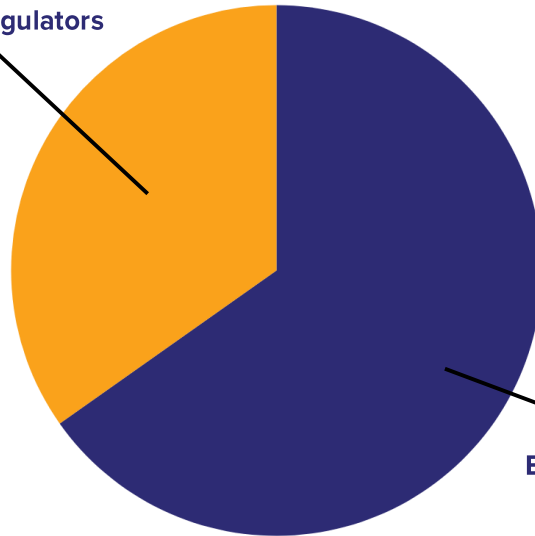
External regulators

EMOTIONAL REGULATION



Age 3-7

Internal regulators



External regulators

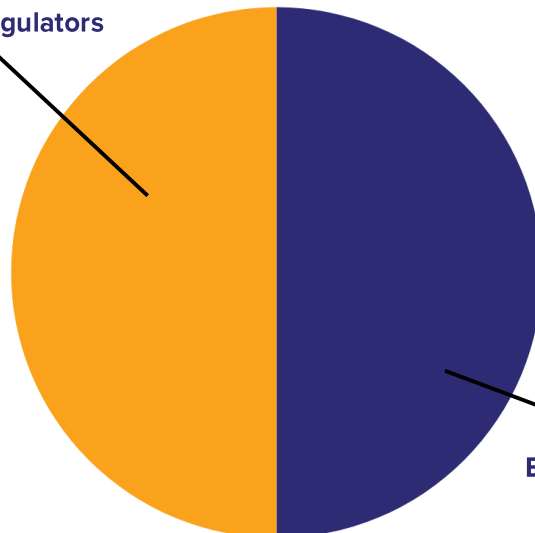
Source: Foundations of Development course, STAR Institute (2024)

EMOTIONAL REGULATION



Age 7-13

Internal regulators



External regulators

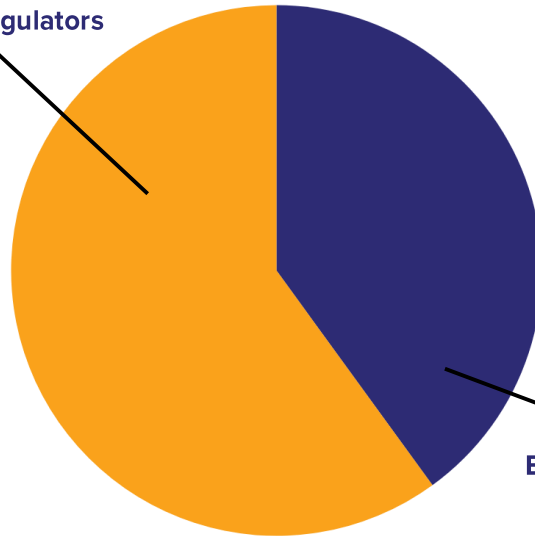
Source: Foundations of Development course, STAR Institute (2024)

EMOTIONAL REGULATION



Age 14-19

Internal regulators



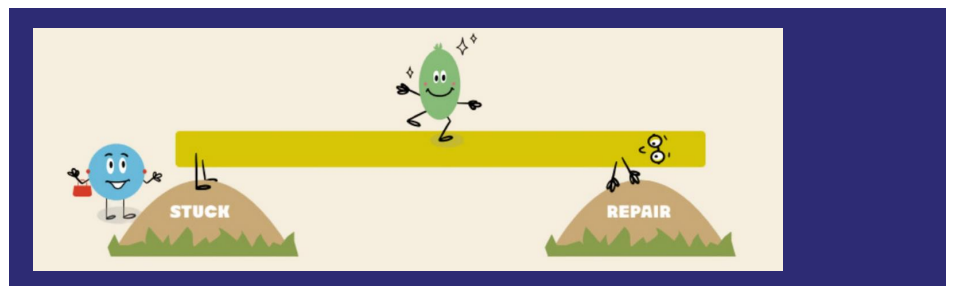
External regulators

Source: Foundations of Development course, STAR Institute (2024)

CO-REGULATION



- Connection
- Safety
- Strengths-Based



“Co-regulation is what we do for our children before they can do it for themselves. It’s the act of helping them manage their emotions by staying present, calm, and responsive — showing them they are safe, seen, and supported while their big feelings pass.” - Dr. Becky Kennedy

UNDERSTANDING YOU & YOUR CHILD



Source: The Shape of Joy (Reardon, 2024)

UNDERSTANDING YOU

	STRESSORS	RELIEVERS
Basic Needs	Less than 6 hours of sleep	Daily movement (yoga, walks, low impact exercise)
Sensory	Loud or unexpected sounds	Quiet car rides, listening to calm music
Relationships	Last minute plans, disappointing people	A few predictable, low-maintenance friends
Predictability	Disruptions in familiar routine	Organized family google calendar
Unique Wiring	Highly empathetic so is deeply impacted by other's emotions	Routine self-care activities



Source: The Shape of Joy (Reardon, 2024)

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD

	STRESSORS	RELIEVERS
Basic Needs	When she's hungry, she's HANGRY	Access to snacks throughout the day
Sensory	Loud or unexpected sounds	Noise cancelling headphones
Relationships	Sharing toys with siblings	Built in alone time for play
Predictability	Disruptions in familiar routine	Visual schedule to support understanding changes to routine
Unique Wiring	Feeling overwhelmed when she perceives others are upset	Helping parents out by being a "leader" at home

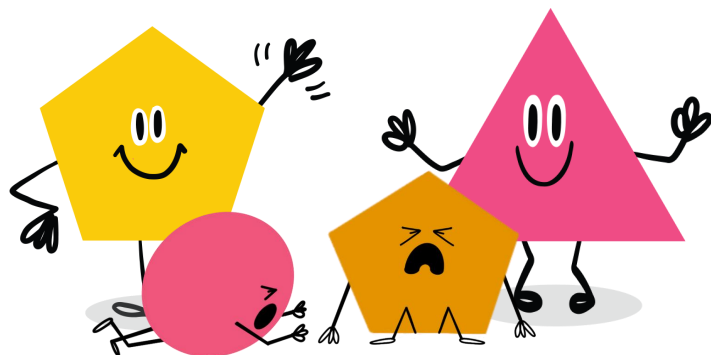


Source: The Shape of Joy (Reardon, 2024)

EXAMPLE –



- Listen for:
 - Connection
 - Safety
 - Strengths-Based



EXAMPLE –



TANGIBLE STRATEGIES:

- Pause & regulate yourself!
- Use your body as a tool (body language, tone, volume, words, etc.)
- Incorporate movement
- Identify basic needs first (hunger, tired, bathroom, etc.)
- Emotional validation
- Create safe & predictable routines
- Offer choices
- "Engage, Don't Enrage"
 - Source: The Whole-Brain Child (Siegel & Bryson, 2011)
- "Connect and Redirect"
 - Source: The Whole-Brain Child (Siegel & Bryson, 2011)

GREAT RESOURCES

- Good Inside by Dr. Becky Kennedy
- The Whole Brain Child by Dr. Daniel J Siegel & Dr. Tina Payne Bryson
- No Drama Discipline by Dr. Daniel J Siegel & Dr. Tina Payne Bryson
- Raising Kids with Big, Baffling Behaviors by Robyn Gobbel
- Shape of Joy online course
 - Free with promo code: **F&WMSOJ**



REFERENCES



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025, June 11). CDC's Developmental Milestones. US Department of Health and Human Services. https://www.cdc.gov/act-early/milestones/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/

Reardon, K. (2024) The Shape of Joy

STAR Institue. (2024). Foundations of Development [Professional training course]. STARInstitute for Sensory Processing.

Kennedy, B. (2022). Good inside: A practical guide to becoming the parent you want to be. Harper Collins.

Siegel, D.J., & Brson, T.P. (2011). The whole-brain child: 12 revolutionary strategies to nurture your child's developing mind. Bantam books.

QUESTIONS?

