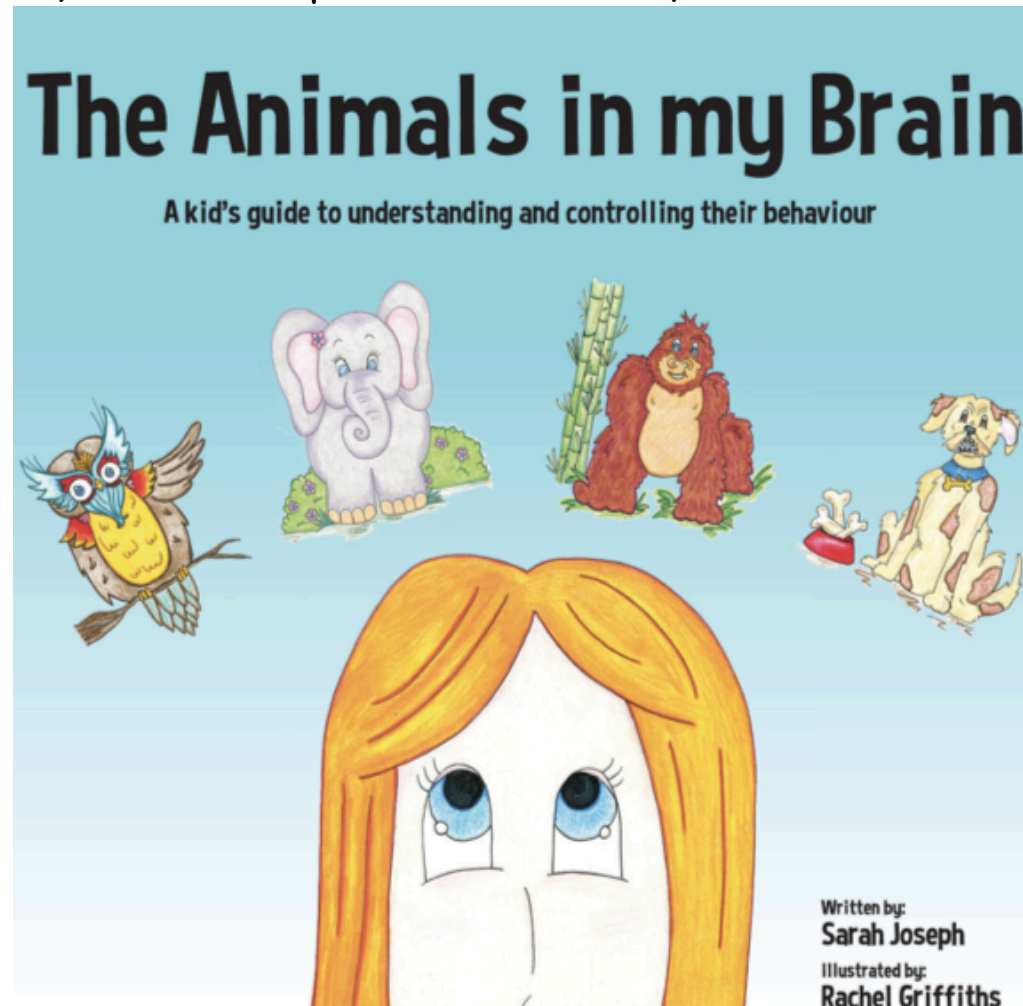


The Animals in my Brain

A kid's guide to understanding and controlling their behaviour

A Discussion and Activity Guide

By Sarah Joseph & Illustrated by Rachel Griffiths



Parents and Educators

Whether you are a parent, teacher or counselor, my hope is that you will find *The Animals in my Brain* and the accompanying resources useful tools for helping children learn about the brain.

Helping children learn about the brain, the connection between brain processes and our behaviour is empowering and helpful in developing self-regulation. My hope is that by reading the book and using the accompanying resources, children and the adults that care for them will have a shared language and understanding of the brain, so they can work together to build more safety, compassion and kindness into their reactions.

In this guide you'll find a few worksheets that you can complete with your children to help them explore and apply the information from the book to their own experience.

When our Wise old Owl has flown away and Elsa the Elephant is scared, we can't solve any problems or learn any lessons. Help children recognize when this is occurring by helping them identify what it feels like in their bodies when their Guard Dog is barking, and how they can calm their Guard Dog.

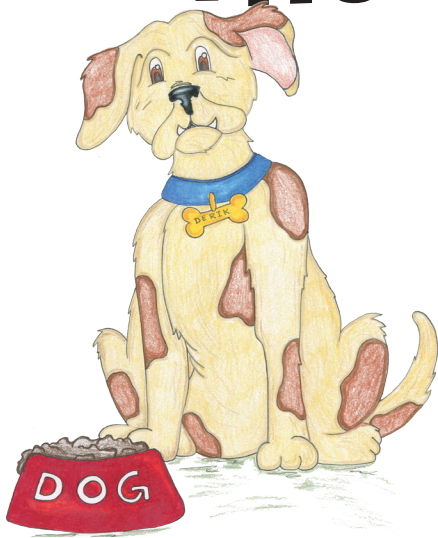
Create a cool-off space together. Directions are included. Practice using the cool-off space and belly breathing before using it. Remember to help kids calm down and get their Wise old Owl back before trying to correct behaviour, teach a lesson, or solve a problem.

Remember to breathe,

Sarah

The Animals in my Brain

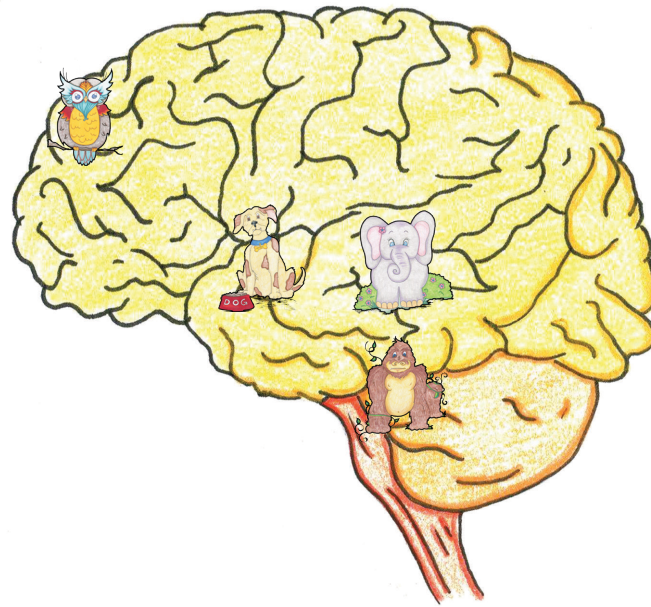
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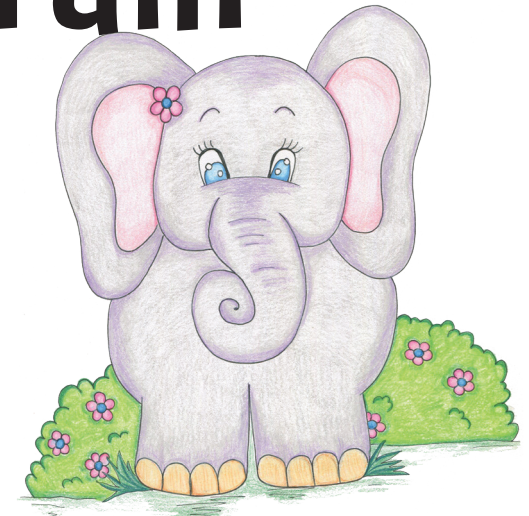
Derik the Guard Dog, our *Amygdala*, barks to warn us about danger and makes us act fast.



The Wise old Owl our *prefrontal cortex* helps us solve problems and make plans. He flies away when Derik barks.



How can you calm Derik the Guard Dog?

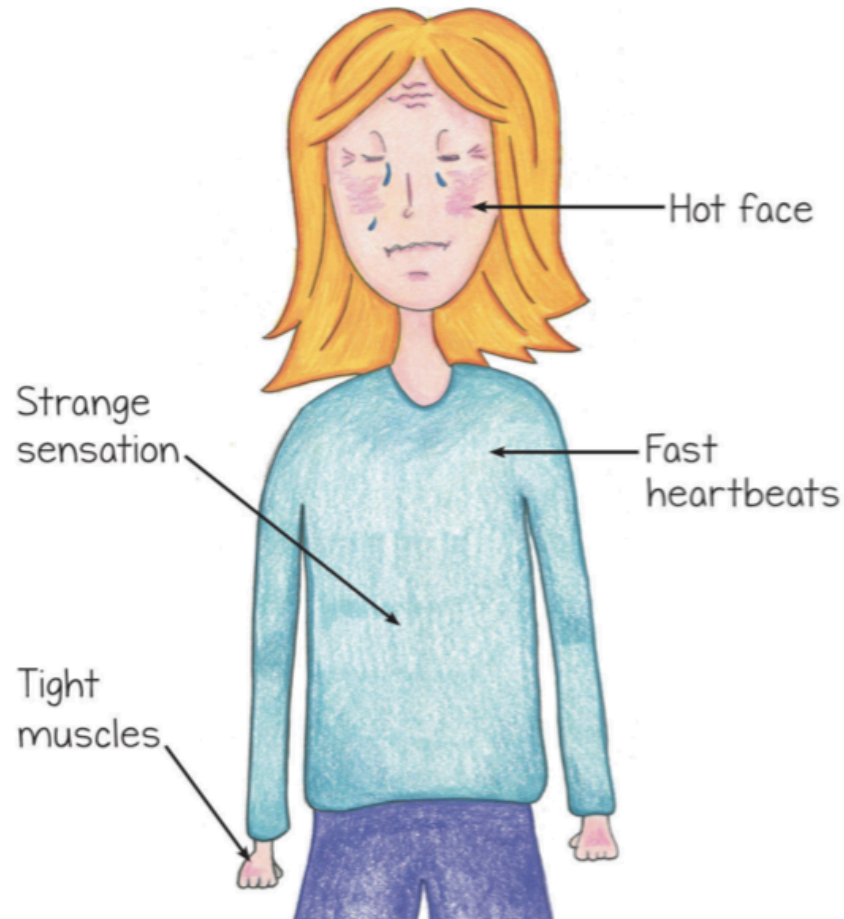


Elsa the Elephant our *Hippocampus* helps us learn and remember unless she's scared away by Derik's barking.



Anthony the Ape our *fight, freeze or run response*. When Elsa and The Wise old Owl leave, Anthony's in charge and things don't go so well.

What does it feel like in your body when your Guard Dog is barking?





What can you do to calm your Guard Dog?





Cool-Off Space (A Positive Discipline Tool by Dr. Jane Nelson called a positive time out)

Create a space with kids where they can take a break to calm down when their Guard Dog is barking.

Use the next page to help kids create a plan for their cool-off space.

Help kids understand how to use their space:

Role play when and how to use the cool-off space before it's needed. Create some guidelines around using the space if more than one child is going to be using it. In a classroom setting, you can work on the next page as a class instead of individually.

Never send a child to the cool-off space for a Time Out, instead ask: "Would it be helpful to go to your cool-off space?"

Make a list of some things that you could include in a cool-off space that would help you calm down when your Guard Dog is barking. For instance: art supplies, books, pillows, music, etc.

Where do you want your cool-off space to be (a room, corner, area)?

The name of your cool-off space is (examples: quiet place, calm down space, the beach):

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I created this free activity guide to accompany my book because I want the concepts to be taught to as many children as possible. I want them to be able to apply the concepts to their own experiences and use the tools provided in the book. Please follow the guidelines below.

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