

The Whole-Brain Child

by Daniel J. Siegel, Tina Payne Bryson

A printable to-do list of the most effective habits from this book. Check one off each day you do it.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰¹ **Lead with a brain-state question**

Before reacting, ask: is this child able to learn right now, or are they in alarm? Your answer determines whether to connect, move, name, or teach.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰² **Use one name-it-to-tame-it sentence**

Try: 'You really wanted that, and hearing no felt huge.' Keep it short. The point is not a perfect label; it is giving the feeling language.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰³ **Connect before the boundary**

Move close, lower your voice, and signal safety before correcting. Then hold the limit in one calm sentence the child can actually process.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰⁴ **Move the body before explaining**

When the downstairs brain is hot, try walking, jumping, wall pushes, or slow breathing together. Use movement as the bridge back to thinking.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰⁵ **Tell the three-beat story**

After a hard moment, retell it simply: what happened, what you felt, and what we did next. Coherent stories turn chaos into memory.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰⁶ **Invite one upstairs-brain choice**

Once calm returns, ask for one choice: repair, retry, draw the feeling, or pick the next step. Practice grows the upstairs brain.