

## Family Newsletter:

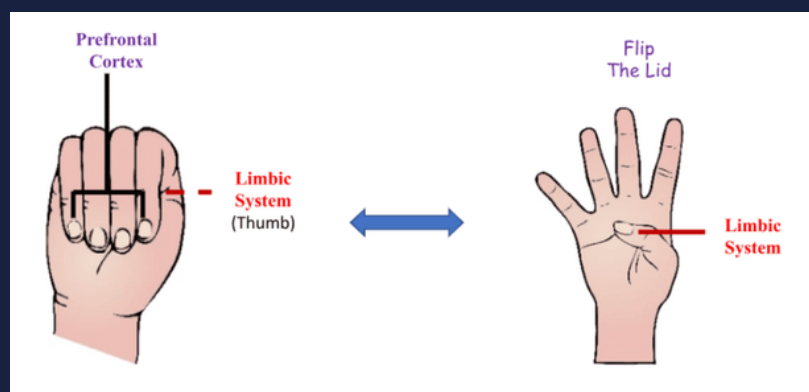
# Mental Health and Well-being for Learning

## Mental Health Literacy

Understanding how the brain grows and develops can help parents and caregivers make sense of their child's behaviour and emotions.

Dr. Daniel Siegel developed [The Hand Model of the Brain](#) as a simple and visual way of understanding how the different parts of the brain interact with each other.

*Here's how it works:*



- **Thumb (Limbic System):** This part of the brain handles emotions.
- **Fingers (Prefrontal Cortex):** This part is responsible for logical thinking.

When the fingers are wrapped over the thumb, it means the emotional and logical parts of the brain are working together. This balance helps your child stay calm and make thoughtful decisions.

However, when your child is stressed or upset, they might "flip their lid." This is like lifting the fingers off the thumb, meaning the emotional part takes over, and the logical part can't keep it in check. This can lead to emotional outbursts and irrational behavior.

To help your child manage their emotions and behavior, you can:

- **Take Breaks:** Encourage them to step away from stressful situations until they calm down.
- **Deep Breathing:** Teach them to take deep breaths to relax.
- **Mindfulness:** Practice mindfulness or meditation together.
- **Exercise:** Physical activity can help reduce stress.

By understanding this model, you can better support your child's emotional and behavioral development. Remember, their brain is still growing, and they need your guidance to learn how to balance their emotions and logic.

For more information on child brain development, visit:

- [The Whole-Brain Child Summary | All 12 Strategies Explained](#)
- [Parenting with the Brain in Mind - Institute of Child Psychology](#)

Book recommendations to read with your child:

- [Karen Young Books - Shop Anxiety Books for Kids](#)
- [Neurology for Kids: A Fun Picture Book About the Nervous System for Children \(Gift for Kids, Teachers, and Medical Students\) by Betty Nguyen | Goodreads](#)
- [Big Brain Book: How It Works and All Its Quirks by Leanne Boucher Gill | Goodreads](#)



## Trauma-informed practice

Understanding how the nervous system works supports children's emotional well-being and ability to respond to everyday challenges. The nervous system is responsible for how we react to stress, emotions, and social situations. An important part of mental health literacy is understanding that the way we feel, think, and behave is a response to the nervous system.

Dr. Lori Desautels recently presented at the SIEC Mind Over Matters Connecting Minds, Inspiring Wellness Mental Health Conference in Saskatoon. She talked about two types of Focused Attention Practices (FoAP's) that regulate the nervous system:

- Calming FoAP's are brief activities involving intentional breathing that calm the brain's limbic system and enhance executive functioning and emotional regulation.
- Energizing FoAP's are brief activities involving novelty, rhythm/pattern, and movement designed to create a state of relaxed alertness, priming the brain for learning.



## Mental Health Supports

### Rapid Access Counselling (RAC)

Family Service Saskatchewan's Rapid Access Counselling Program is delivered through a partnership of member agencies in communities across Saskatchewan.

Counselling sessions are available to children, youth, adults, and families in Saskatchewan.

Virtual counselling is available to support families across Saskatchewan.

For more information and to book an appointment: [www.counsellingconnectsk.ca](http://www.counsellingconnectsk.ca)

