









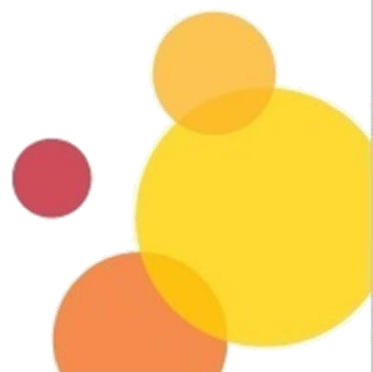


**BUGK** for  
Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander families  
**HANDOUTS**

# The Brain



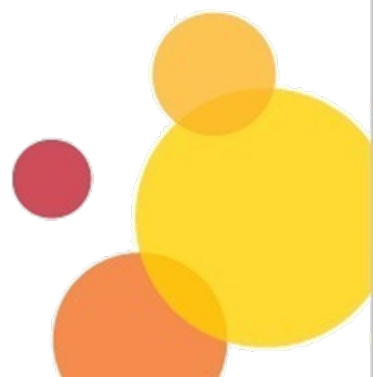
-  CONTROL CENTRE (stories & thinking)
-  EMOTIONS & family
-  YIPPEE! (good feeling)
-  MEMORY
-  LIFE (heartbeat & breathing)
-  Balance body
-  Feel body
-  Move body



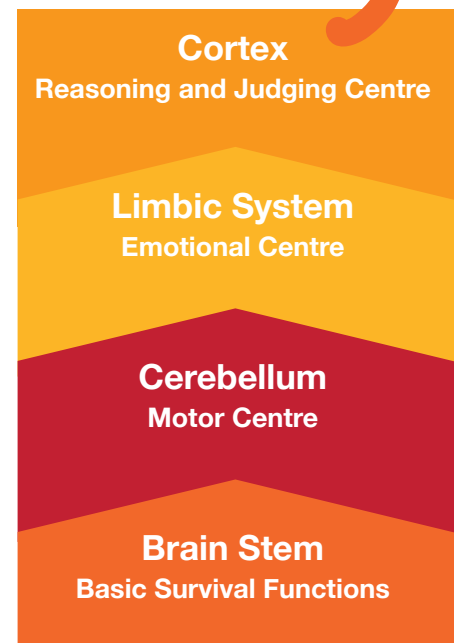


## WHAT DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THE BRAIN DO

- The blue area is the control centre of the brain. This area controls the rest of the brain, it controls our thinking, our emotions and our actions. This is where stories are put together.
- At the top of the brain the green area is sent FROM the body like how the body is moving or how it is feeling.
- The yellow area sends messages TO the body telling it how and when to move.
- The light pink area is where memory is organised.
- The purple area in the middle of the brain is very important for family matters and emotions like worries, shame and happiness.
- The red area at the bottom of the brain balances our body both when it is moving and when it is still.
- The pink area is the "yippee" or "feel good" area of the brain.
- The orange area connects the brain with the rest of the body. This part controls breathing and the heart. This part of the brain keeps us alive.
- These different areas are always working together and talking to each other.



# Bottom-Up Brain Development



The brain is comprised of different structures that grow and develop at different rates and different times.

The **brain stem** area of the brain develops first and is responsible for basic functions that **keep us alive** such as heart rate, breathing and regulating our body temperature. The brain stem is fully developed at birth. It is the part of the brain that is 'hard wired' and least susceptible to change.

Connected to the brain stem is the **cerebellum** or motor centre of the brain. This area is responsible for **movement** and develops over the first few years of life. Development in this area is seen in babies gaining head control, sitting, crawling and walking. In the next few years, children will gain greater co-ordination, learn to skip, kick a ball, ride a bicycle, cut, draw and eat with cutlery.

The **limbic system** is the **emotional** centre of the brain and rules the lives of young children up to around four years. During the toddler years, the limbic system goes through a period of rapid development. This helps explain their bursts of irrational behaviour and tantrums. Toddlers need our help to manage their **strong** feelings. Young children **feel** then **act**, they **can't think** then **act**. This is due to the emotional centre of their brain developing before the cortex, or the thinking part of their brain. Young children basically view the world through an emotional lens.

The **cortex**, or thinking part of the brain, is the last part to develop. This is the part of the brain responsible for reasoning, planning and problem solving. This is the part of the brain that enables humans to **think** before they **act**. As children grow and develop, the cortex is gradually able to help us to pause when we are flooded by **strong** emotions, thus allowing us to **feel, think, then act**.

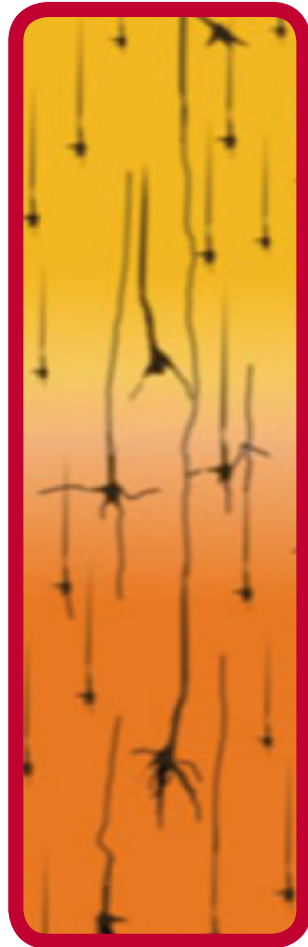
Unlike the brain stem, the limbic system and cortex are highly susceptible to change due to experience and the environment in which the child lives.



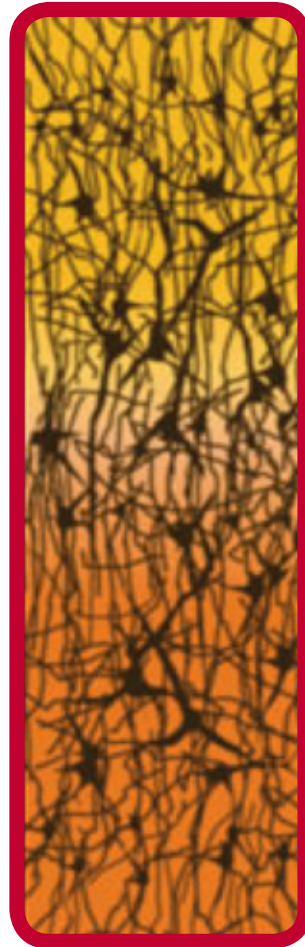




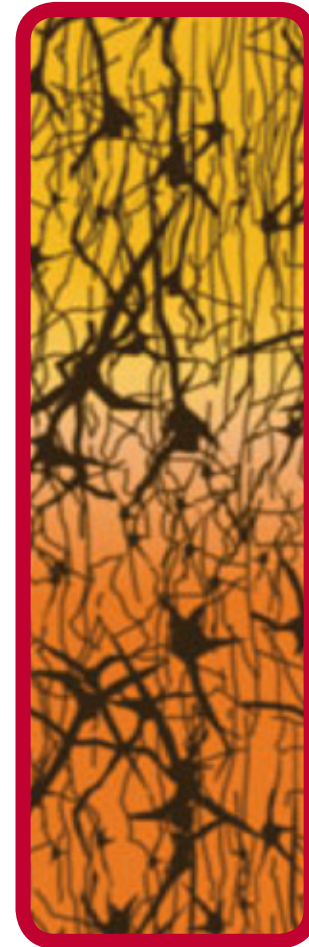
# Neuronal Connections



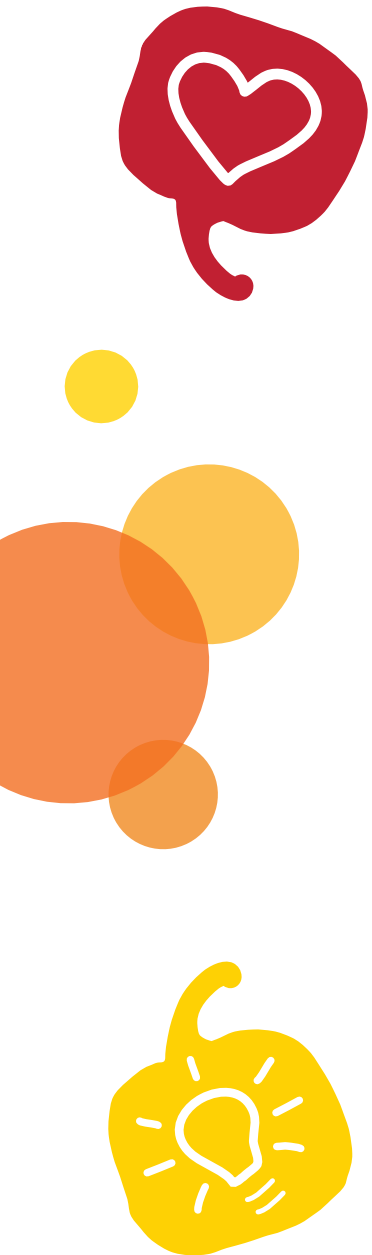
**Newborn**



**2 Years**



**Adult**



# Stop...Pause...Play



When we can relate to our children with mindful awareness we activate a part of the brain (the medial pre-frontal cortex) which allows our defensive systems to switch off, putting us in a more relaxed state and allowing us to think and act more rationally and to step outside our own experience so that we can **BE MORE PRESENT TO OUR CHILDREN'S NEEDS.**

This is an exercise that we will practice every week or use any time you need to take time out to calm down before you respond to whatever is going on.



## Stop

- Stop what you are doing.
- Make sure your feet are placed firmly on the ground.



## Pause

- Focus on your breath.
- Breathe in slowly, right down into your belly, then exhale completely.
- Take 5 more slow breaths, being aware of each breath in and each breath out.
- Smile and enjoy standing like this for a moment. Feel your body relax.
- Reflect. Ask yourself "What do I need?" and "What does my child need?"



## Play

Respond to your child with new understanding.





# Breathing Relaxation Exercises



## 1 Abdominal Breathing

Place one hand over your heart and the other over your abdomen. Breathe normally, noticing the rise and fall of your chest and abdomen. Continue this practice for about 10 breaths.

## 2 1,2,3.....Sigh!

Count slowly 1...2...3 (either aloud or silently) as you breathe in. Then give a long sigh as you breathe out. Repeat this several times until you feel yourself calming down.

## 3 Snake breathing

Breathe in normally. Then with a long breath out, make a SSSSSSSSS sound like a snake.

## 4 Bee breathing

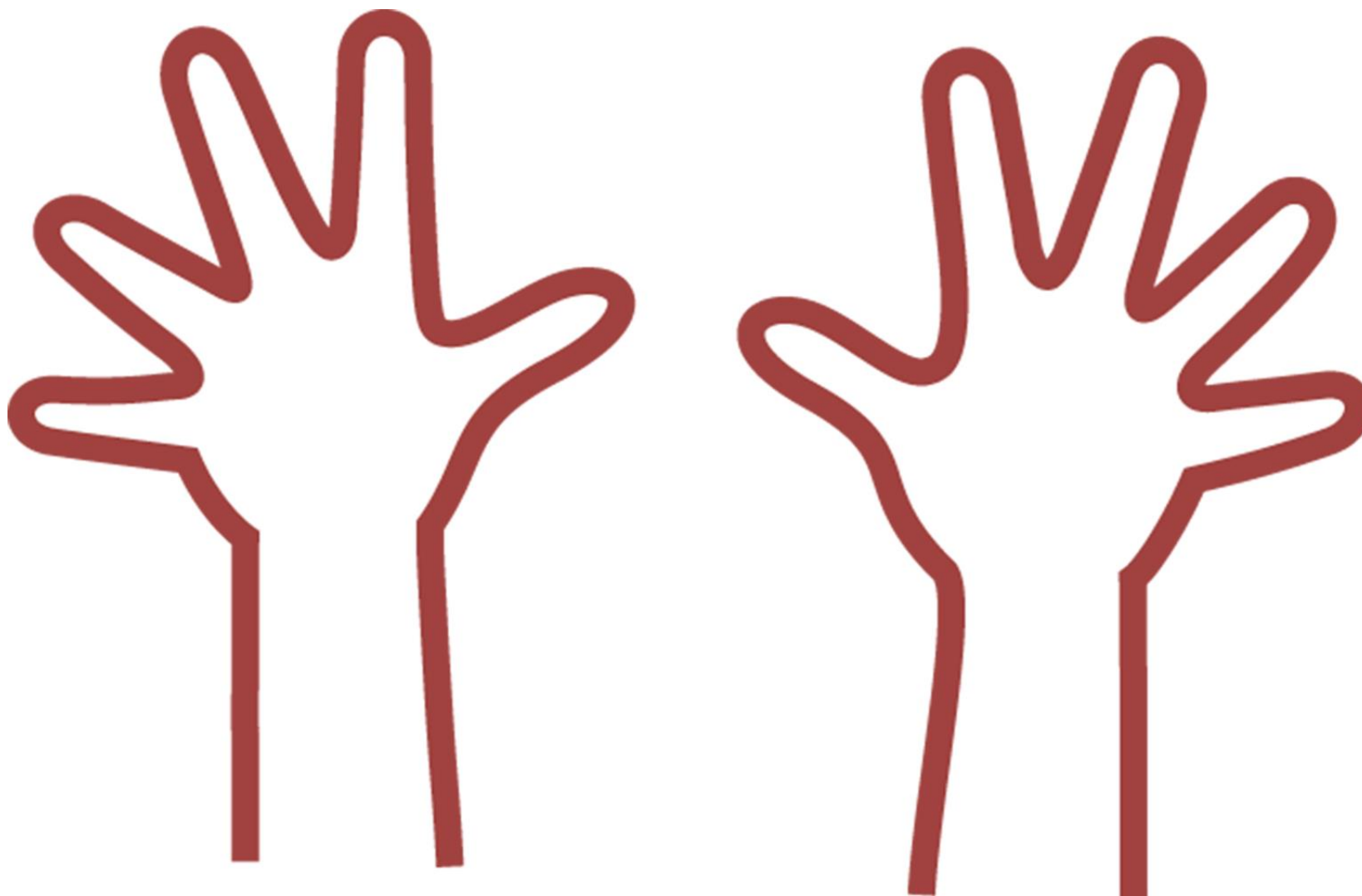
Breathe in normally. Then make a humming or buzzing sound like a bee as you exhale an extended breath out.

## 5 Feather breathing

Hold a soft feather in one hand and raise that hand as you breathe in. Let go of the feather and breathe out slowly as you watch the feather float to the ground. Try to make your breath out last until the feather reaches the ground.



# Two hands



# Outline drawing of an adult hand



# Barriers to Communication

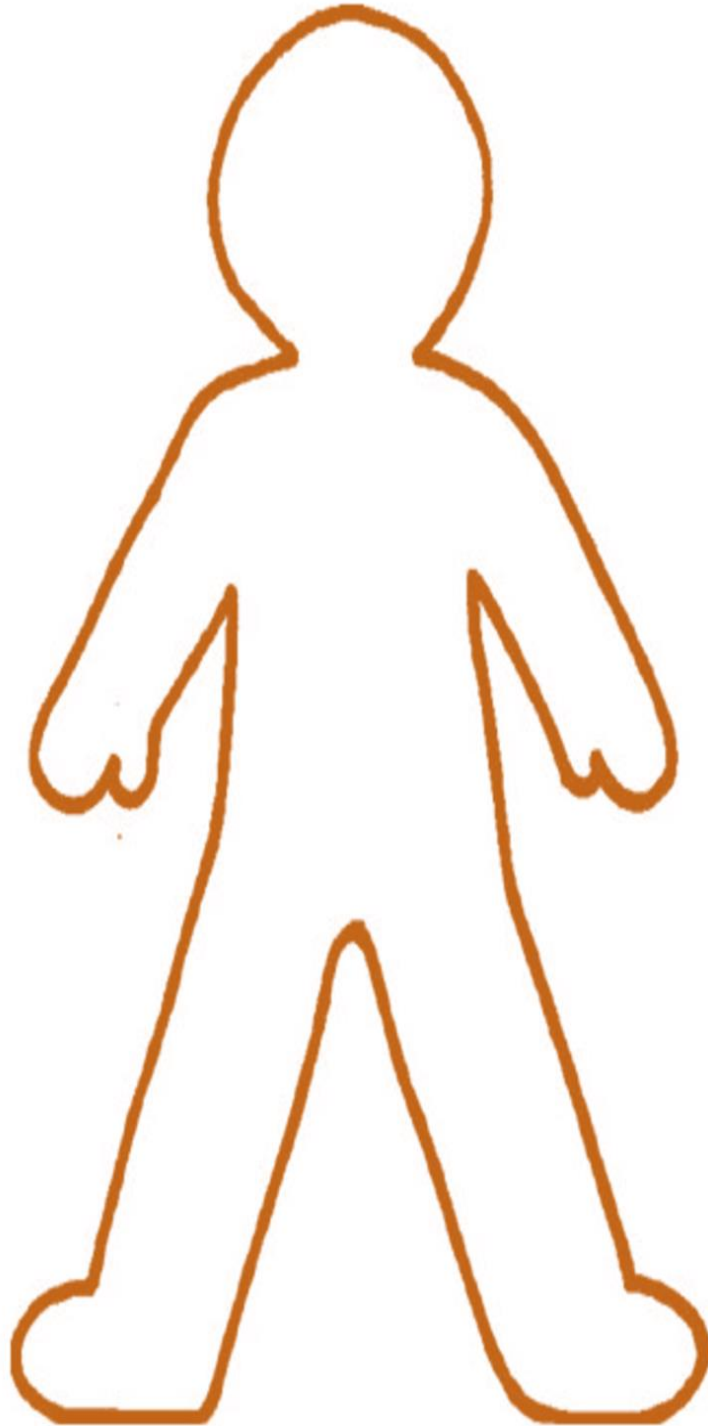


‘Waht tnihgs get in the way  
of us cmomiuntcanig celalry  
wthi our clihrdn?’

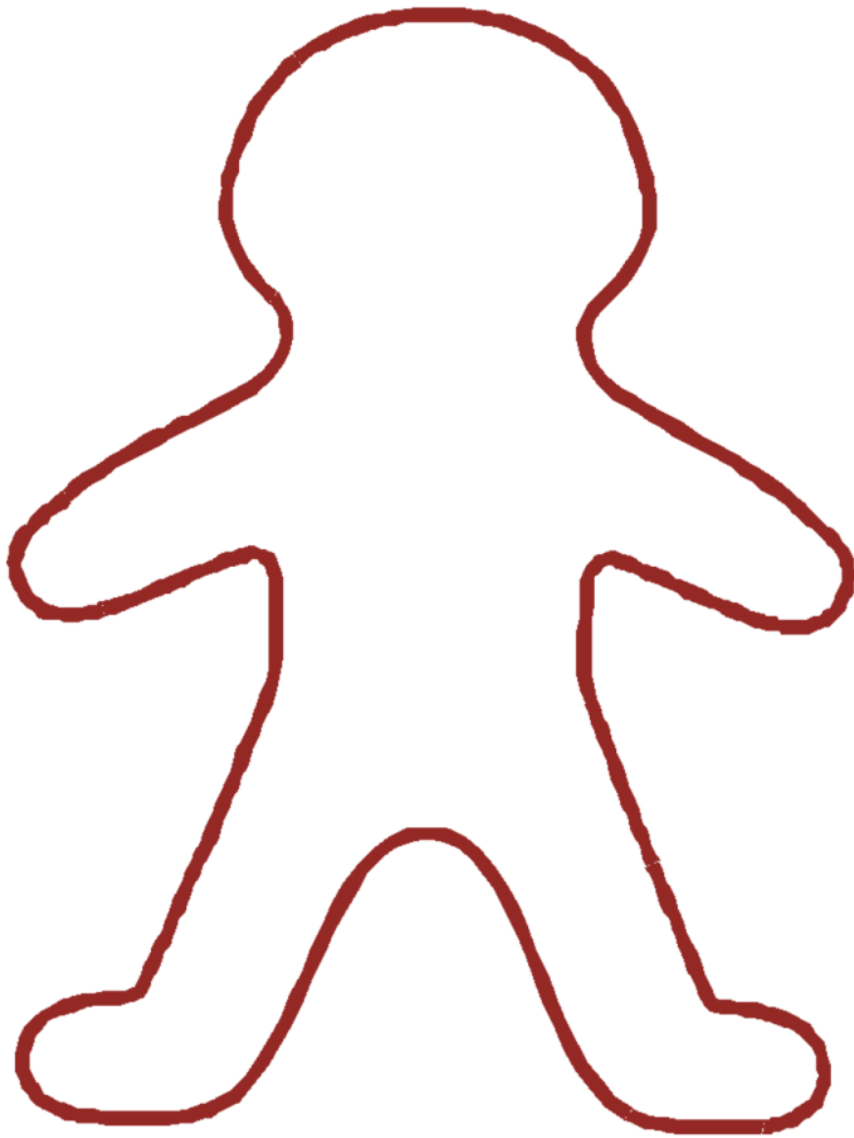
‘Yuor bairn is so pfworeul, taht it  
can raed sntcenecs wthi mexid  
up wrdos as Inog as the frsit and  
lsat lterets are in the rgiht pacle.’



# Body outline



# Body outline

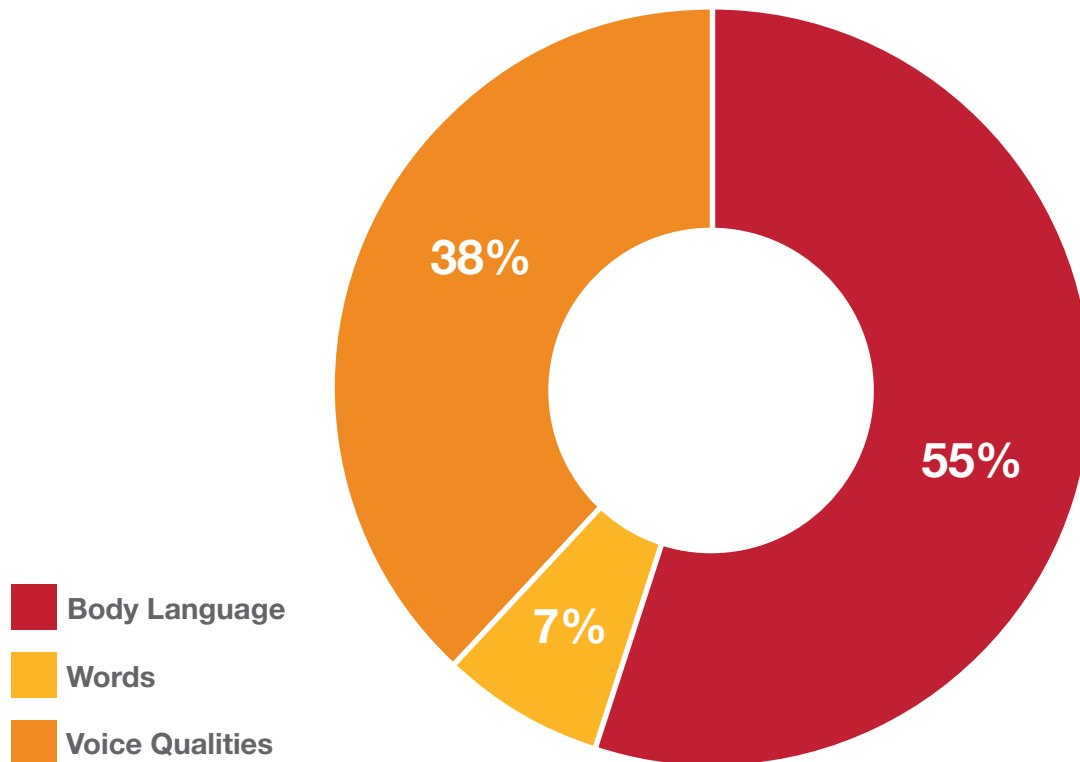


# Are we missing anything?



When parents have a new baby they learn about the baby through their body language “cues”. Some examples would be when your baby is tired they might rub their eyes or when their tummy hurts they pull their little knees up to their tummies.

## Communication Pie



Somehow when children become verbal, parents forget to use the skill of reading body language and only listen to the words. We are only using 45 percent of the communication pie and missing 55% of opportunities to tune into our children “missing cues”.

Are we putting up communication barriers by not embracing all elements of the communication pie?



# Anthill Scenarios



7 month old

Cries loudly when left at Childcare and when put in cot for sleep.

My child does that because he is feeling...  
What he needs is...  
When he does that I feel...  
... because I need ...

2 year old

Screams, throws them self on floor and kicks, when taken off coin-in-slot ride at shopping centre.

My child does that because he is feeling...  
What he needs is...  
When he does that I feel...  
... because I need ...

4 year old

Cries loudly when left at Childcare and when put in cot for sleep.

My child does that because he is feeling...  
What he needs is...  
When he does that I feel...  
... because I need ...

6 year old

Stares at the window during class time, leaves work uncompleted.

My child does that because he is feeling...  
What he needs is...  
When he does that I feel...  
... because I need ...

8 year old

Hits other children and disrupts other children's games.

My child does that because he is feeling...  
What he needs is...  
When he does that I feel...  
... because I need ...

10 year old

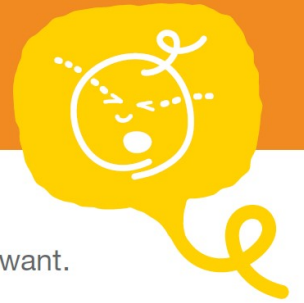
Very quiet, with a blank expression on their face. Never asks for help. Chooses to stay in the library at lunchtimes.

My child does that because he is feeling...  
What he needs is...  
When he does that I feel...  
... because I need ...





# Feelings and Needs Cards



Cut out each card and fold them in half. You may choose to laminate the card if you want.

bringupgreatkids.org

rest/sleep safety shelter touch

play creativity hope belonging

empathy love nurturing respect

security trust comfort support

**Needs**

**Feelings**

calm	happy	proud	playful
curious	enthusiastic	angry	mad
sad	frightened	lonely	scared
bored	excited	fulfilled	relaxed

bringupgreatkids.org Australian Childhood Foundation

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bringupgreatkids.org Australian Childhood Foundation

# Repairing Relationships



A mother, her 18 month old and newborn baby are in a supermarket carpark. They have just returned to the car with a trolley full of shopping and the mother is putting the baby into her capsule in the car, when the toddler runs off into the carpark and is narrowly missed by a car backing out.

Mum grabs the child's hand and shouts 'what do you think you are doing you stupid thing, you could have been killed' The child is screaming as mum lifts her quickly into the car.

## Time to repair

1

### Restore Calm and Safety

Mum stopped what she was doing and took three deep breaths. She could hear her child crying and needed to be calm to deal with the situation. Mum sat in the back seat of the car beside her children and tuned into her breathing. (Stop, Pause, Play)

2

### See it from your child's point of view

As mums breathing calmed her down she was able to re think what had just happened from her child's point of view. Her child had first been scared by the car backing towards her and then when mum yell at her. Mum felt regret that she had reacted the way she did.

3

### Repairing Relationships

Mum turned to her child and lifted her up, telling her I'm sorry I yelled at you, you must have been scared. It's not ok to run off from mum, I love you and I want you to be safe. Mum strokes her child's hair the way she knew she liked until it calmed them both.

Mum then calmly put her child into her car seat and gave her a kiss. Mum then drove the car home. On the way she sang some of her child's favourite songs and her child clapped her hands and laughed.

4

### Future Plans

Later that day when the children were sleeping mum reflected on what had happened. Now she felt calmer mum was able to recognise that she had expected too much for her 18 month old to recognise danger. She recognised that an 18 month old can be very curious and wander away.

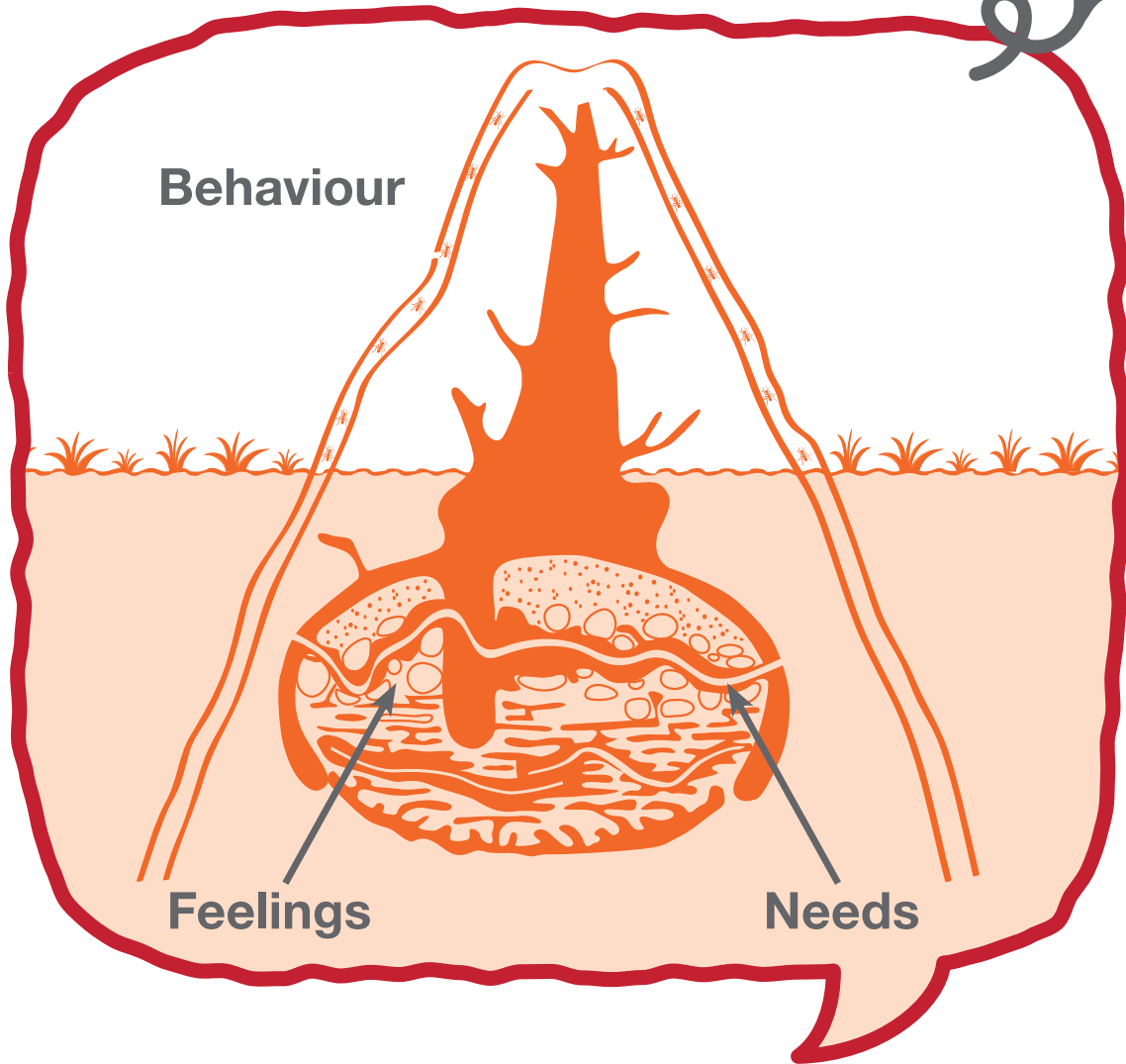
Next time she knew she would make some changes and plan a bit better so things were not so rushed. She would always now put her 18 month old safely into their car seat first so that they could not wander off into danger.

We thank Family Inclusion Network of WA Inc. (FinWA) for their feedback that helped in writing this handout.





# Behaviour Ant Hill



Notes \_\_\_\_\_

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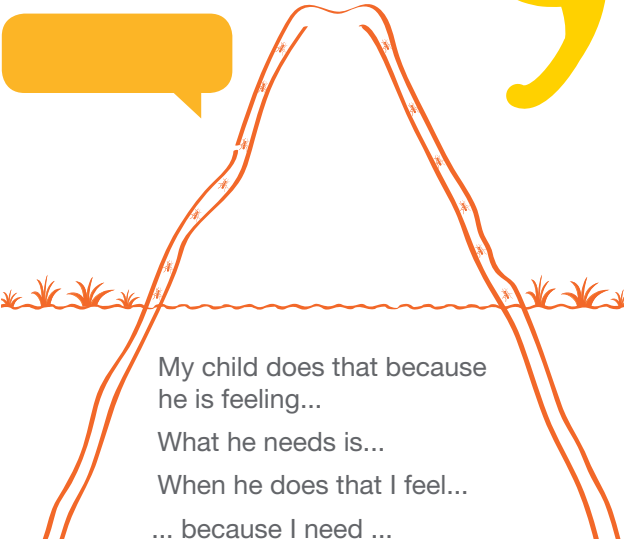

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# Anthill Scenarios



My child does that because he is feeling...  
What he needs is...  
When he does that I feel...  
... because I need ...



My child does that because he is feeling...  
What he needs is...  
When he does that I feel...  
... because I need ...



My child does that because he is feeling...  
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My child does that because he is feeling...  
What he needs is...  
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# 10 Breaths

When something wonderful touches you, savour the experience by offering it 10 full breaths. By paying close attention to special moments, we come to see that opportunities for happiness present themselves many times each day.

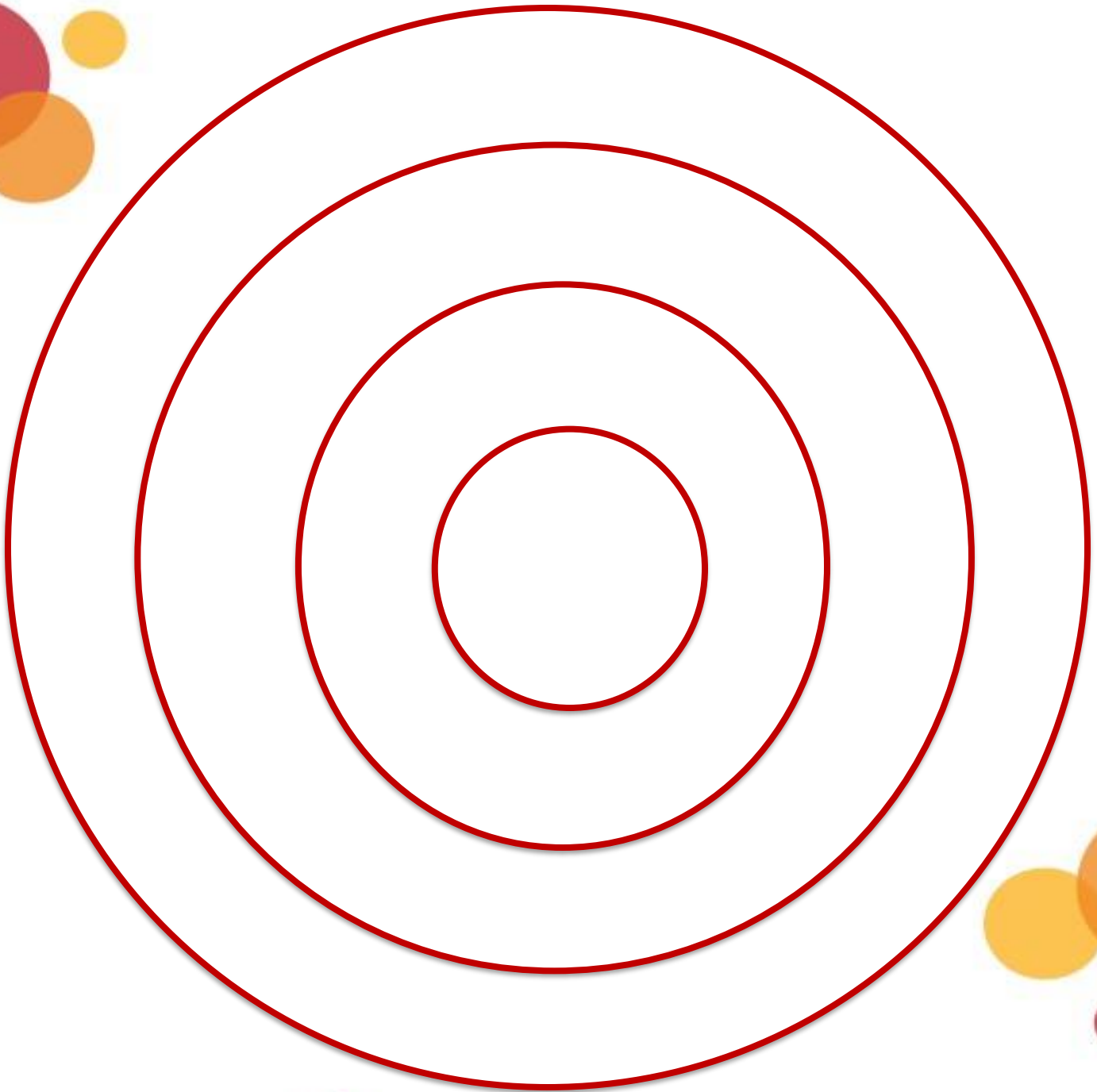
## Give your 10 breaths to anything that seems wonderful to you

- Something beautiful from Nature
- A special moment with your child/partner/friend
- A piece of music
- Eating something delicious
- A work of art

- 1 Stop whatever you are doing
- 2 Close your eyes, place a hand on your belly and take 3 deep breaths to calm yourself.
- 3 Open your eyes and focus on your special object/person/experience
- 4 Stay focused on whatever has caught your attention as you 'count with your body', 10 slow breaths, by pressing and releasing in turn, each finger resting on your belly.
- 5 If you are still entranced by your special moment, repeat the 10 breaths practice.



# Child in the middle





# Helping Children to Manage Big Feelings



## 1 Listen to the child's feelings with your whole body

- stop what you're doing
- get down to your child's level
- look at child (their focus is on the expression on your face)
- speak using a calm voice (their focus is on the tone of your voice)

## 2 Put your child's feelings into words

Eg: "It looks like you're pretty angry/sad/scared about that."  
"You sound pretty cross."

## 3 Help him to notice what's happening in his body

Eg: "How does that feel in your tummy/head?"  
"Your arms look stiff and tight."

## 4 Empathise with him

"It's tough when ..."  
"I can understand that you might feel annoyed when..."  
"If my friend did that, I'd feel angry too."

## 5 Help him to solve his own problem

"What could you do about that?"  
"What could you do next time that happens?"



# Mindful Walking



Mindful Walking allows you to be more present in your body and in the present moment.

So much of the time we are caught up in our intellectual worlds — thinking of the past or future, planning, imagining...

Paying attention as you walk will help you to enjoy simply being alive and connecting with the present mindfully - paying attention with flexibility, openness and curiosity.

A simple mindful walking practice is just to breathe in while taking a step with the left foot and breathe out when taking a step with the right foot.

Breathing is always available as a point of reference - a reminder to be present.

Walking is almost always available.

Mindful Walking can be done very slowly or at a normal walking pace. It's simply a matter of synchronising breath and footstep.

Before you start walking it is a good idea to stand quietly and focus on your breathing for 3 breaths and then commence your mindful walking practice.

Walk for 3-5 minutes if time allows. If you are busy, walk for as long as time permits. Even one minute of mindful walking will help bring you back into the present moment.



# Life Tree



## The Fruits

represent your children.

★ Draw them on your tree in a way that says something about each child.

## The Leaves

represent your values and your skills.

## The Branches

represent your hopes and wishes for your children.

## The Trunk

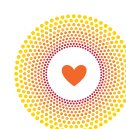
represent your strongest supports.

## The Earth

represent all those things which keep you 'grounded' and make you feel stable and strong.

## The Roots

represent where you have come from, your family history and important places and people from your past.



# Life Tree



## The Fruits

If you think about your children as gifts that you will pass on to the next generation what are some of the messages you would like them to take with them?

## The Leaves

What are your values and your strongest skills? Who did you learn these from? Think about how you are passing those values and skills on to your children.



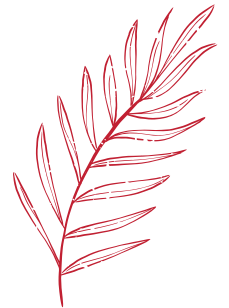
## The Branches

What are your hopes and wishes for your children? Where did they come from?



## The Trunk

Who are the people or organisations you feel comfortable to turn to for help when you need support?



## The Earth

Write about the things that you do to nurture yourself to make you feel good and to keep you calm.

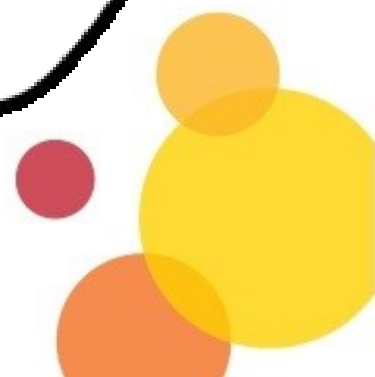
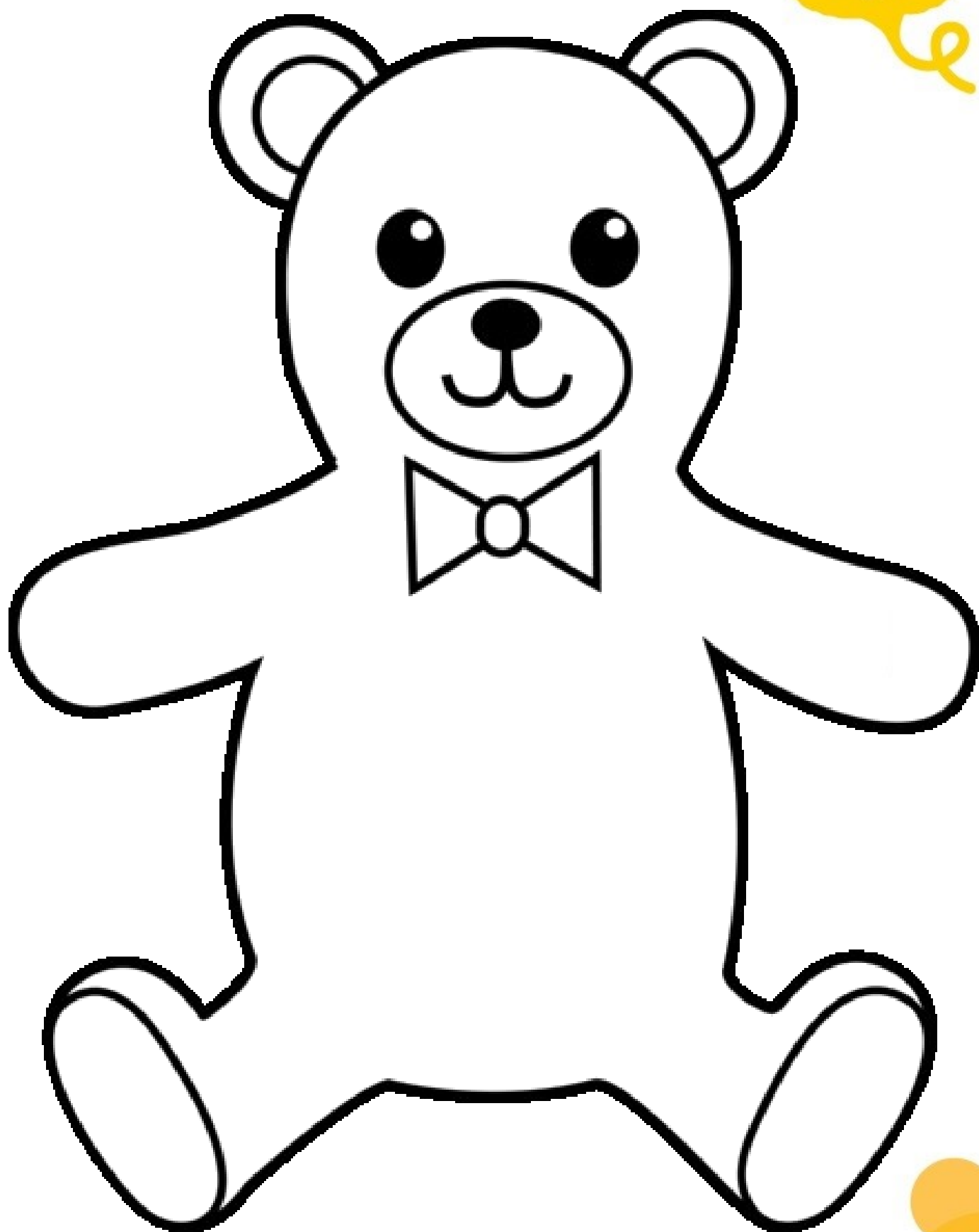
## The Roots

Think about the people from your childhood who were most important to you. Who were they and what are some of the most important messages they gave you? Name some things from your childhood that you would like to pass on to your own children and some you would choose to leave behind.





# Bear outline



## De-stress cue card



1. Sit or lie down in a comfortable, quiet location
2. Gently rest your hands on your stomach
3. Take 10 slow deep breaths, breathing in through your nose for a count of 3, hold for 4, and out through your mouth for the count of 7
4. As you breathe in, feel your stomach rise and as you breathe out, feel your stomach fall
5. As you breathe out, say to yourself: 'RELAX'
6. Keep your mind focused on breathing and counting each breath
7. If your mind wanders, just gently bring your attention back to your breathing

