

FACT SHEET • PRIMARY

Understanding Your Child's Brain

A primary-aged child's brain is still under construction, especially the part that manages impulses, weighs consequences and calms strong feelings. That part develops slowly, well into the teenage years, so a seven-year-old genuinely cannot reason the way an adult can, however capable they seem at other things. Understanding what their brain can and can't yet do changes how you respond to it.



TIP 1

Expect big feelings, not logic

In the heat of the moment, a calm explanation won't land. Wait until your child is settled again before talking through what happened or what to do differently.

TIP 2

Remember, brain development still has a long way to go

The part that controls impulses and plans ahead keeps developing into someone's twenties. A young child forgetting something for the third time isn't being careless on purpose.

TIP 3

Lend them your calm

A child's nervous system settles by borrowing from an adult's. If you stay steady when they're overwhelmed, their own system learns, over time, to steady itself the same way.

TIP 4

Explain, don't excuse

Knowing why your child struggles with something doesn't mean letting it go. Keep the same expectations and boundaries, just with more patience about how long it takes to meet them.

TIP 5

Talk about the brain itself

Simple language helps: "your thinking brain" for the calm, sensible part and "your feelings brain" for the part that reacts. Naming the two gives your child a way to describe what's happening inside them.