

Dynamic: The Brain in My Hand (For Children Ages 2-6)

Objective: To help the child understand that their strong reactions (tantrums) come from the "Lizard Part" of their brain and that the "Wise Part" can help them calm down.

Concept	Character and Metaphor	Function for the Child
Brainstem (Reptilian)	 The Lizard Brain: It's down low (show the wrist). It's fast, it wants to run or fight (tantrums). It doesn't think, it only reacts.	It acts when I'm scared or very, very angry..
Limbic System (Emotional)	 The Puppy Brain: It's the bent thumb (show the thumb). It feels love, sadness, and connection.	It wants hugs and to play, but if the Lizard is scared, the Puppy cries a lot.
Prefrontal Cortex (Rational)	  The Wise Brain/Captain: These are the fingers covering the Lizard and the Puppy. It thinks, solves problems, and chooses calm.	It's the part that helps me breathe and talk instead of yelling.

Steps of the Dynamic:

- 1. Building the Brain (1 minute):** Ask the child to mimic your hand.
 - Fold the thumb into the palm (the Puppy Brain/Limbic).
 - Fold the four fingers over the thumb (the Wise Brain/Cortex).
 - The wrist is the Lizard Brain.



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2. The Emotional Flip (The Tantrum): Ask the child to imagine they are very, very angry because they can't have a toy.

- Action: Say: "**The Lizard Brain is taking over!**" And have the hand flip open abruptly (fingers lift up, exposing the Lizard and the Puppy).
- Parent: "Look! It flipped its lid! When the Lizard Brain is out, we can't think clearly. We just yell or hit."

3. The Regulation (The Calm):

- Parent: "For the Lizard Brain to calm down, we need the Wise Captain to come back."
- Action: Ask the child to put their fingers over the Lizard slowly (closing the hand). While doing this, the child should take three deep breaths.
- Parent: "Wise Captain is back in charge. Now we can think and not just yell."

Phrase for Parents:

"When you see your child having a tantrum, you can say: 'Your Lizard Brain is out. Let's put the Wise Captain back in charge with three breaths.' This gives the child a physical tool (their hand) and a simple language for self-regulation."

