

**INTRODUCTION - SECTION 4**  
**HOW CAN HUMANIST PARENTS TEACH**  
**THEIR CHILDREN TO LOVE THEIR BRAINS?**

**April 3, 2019**

This section of the website is designed to help parents (and all adults) develop a balanced approach to making sure that their children learn healthy brain habits. It teaches thinking skills and emotional control skills that can provide the cognitive basis for a modern humanistic philosophy of life.

Also, you can use the organized brain information to provide reliable brain knowledge for dealing with family life relationship issues. It includes brain information related to applying science-based best-practices parenting principles and skills.

The bonus for using this information is that what is good for the brains of children is also good for the hearts of children. Children need to exercise regularly, eat nutritious foods, get enough sleep, and challenge their brains on a daily basis to solve difficult problems by using modern critical thinking skills and critical reading strategies.

To be a humanist parent is to be able to use your intellectual intelligence (IQ) and your emotional intelligence (EQ) to reason effectively with your children for the purpose of creating a fulfilling philosophy of life for yourself and for your children based upon modern principles of neuroscience within a secular context of history.

As a humanist parent (or any adult) responsible for teaching children, you need to create balance and challenge in your own life, so you and the children under your guidance can create more resilience (more cognitive reserve) and less confusion (less cognitive dissonance).

The goal of ***increasing cognitive reserve*** means that you can prepare yourself for emergencies and also provide you with the basis for fulfilling family interactions. It means that you can ***increase the variety and the density of the neuronal connections*** throughout your brain and nervous system by doing a variety of interesting and challenging new activities on a daily basis.

And you can teach your children to do the same. They must be trained to satisfy their own age-related developmental needs of physical, intellectual, and emotional growth through the ***predictable developmental stages and teachable moments*** of their young lives. This task is much easier for kids when they see their parents and teachers modeling good healthy responsible adult behavior within their family or classroom.

However, parents with emotional problems, such as bipolar disorder or borderline personality disorder, who are responsible for childcare, can become dysfunctional negative role models for children. The examples of ***bad adult behavior*** can have lifelong adverse impacts on the mental and emotional development of a child because of the importance of imitative behavior for children and the injurious effect of extreme emotional stress or trauma on their immune systems.

Conversely, the idea of ***reducing cognitive dissonance*** in your own life, and in the lives of your children, refers to the need for parents to ***conscientiously cope with negative emotional and social problems***, including such things as disruptive television and online advertisements and cable and network program content.

The ***mind-numbing assault on the brains of children*** by the ubiquitous mass media and the addictive social media with their omnipresent advertisements and commercials can seriously damage young brains by causing memory problems.

Also, the incessant violent movie trailers that are still permitted during family television viewing prime times are particularly bad for numbing children to violence and conditioning them to unethical behavior, such as using guns to assert power.

Unfortunately, those movie advertisements and other loud attention-demanding commercials compete with educational programs for the limited precious awake-time that children have during childhood. The time children have for educational pursuits and deeper thinking can be seriously jeopardized by the bombardment of advertisements and the lack of face-to-face human contacts.

If children were not constantly pressured by appealing but unessential media images to waste so much of their time and youth paying attention to noisy commercials, they would have more time to gain a better understanding of science, history, politics, art, and even their health — in addition to learning more about their own brains!

When children's brains are distracted too much of the time, their lives can be reduced to simplistic habits despite the fact that they need to be developing an appreciation for the complexity of reality as they grow up.

The fundamental Humanist Parenting Principle is that parents need to give their children the instruction and the reinforcements they need to keep their brains and minds and bodies healthy for a lifetime of challenges and changes. To achieve this important humanistic family objective, the new brain ideas should be continuously discussed within the family context at all ages.

All family members can participate and contribute to the quality of family life by being encouraged to communicate and share brain facts. Brain facts can help children optimize their brain functions during the sequence of predictable ages and stages concerning childhood growth factors.

Now it is possible to teach the essential introductory linguistic foundation of the new brain vocabulary even to toddlers and young children so they will be prepared to enter nursery school or kindergarten with clearly understood scientific and humanistic values. For example, when started early in the family setting, children can easily identify their head with their brain and learn to express appropriate feelings with specific words, which name their major brain parts and mental functions.

Children can learn to depend on true knowledge rather than unreal metaphorical explanations of the meaning of life. They can learn to depend on the true source of real feelings and real emotions and real thoughts instead of being confused by metaphors that sound true but are not!

Metaphors do not define reality correctly! Neither do silly fantastical fairytale depictions of reality. This means that the true source of children's knowledge about reality should come directly from their physical environments, including their own physical bodies and interactions with other people.

The new brain knowledge can help children learn how to control their thoughts and feelings better by using the most important brain ideas ever discovered in 40-50 thousand years of human history. Now parents and teachers can use the new brain vocabulary to teach children progressive mindfulness skills.

This educational process involves parents and caretakers expressing loving kindness to children every day. The new brain mindfulness mindset can motivate behavior that will always be associated with the rational liberal humanistic values of respect for diversity. This involves showing respect and empathy for the many differences in the age, employment, ethnicity, gender, race, and sexual orientations of all kinds of human beings:

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See link for teaching details about brain mindfulness.

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Also, the use of checklists can empower children to keep track of their activities and responsibilities in the context of weekly family meetings. The achievements and plans and expectations of everyone in the family can be discussed in constructive ways and children can rehearse making important decisions about how they can use their free time better by doing more effective studying and playing.

And they can learn to be more responsible for their decisions by using their creative imaginations to think about any past mistakes so they can learn from the consequences of their past decisions and imagine the kind of decisions that could make them wiser and happier in the future.

This humanistic mindfulness frame of reference can give you a reliable way to guide your children's behavior and also evaluate the results of your own parenting practices. For example, you can teach children not to be distracted by the mass media and social media advertisements and online shopping choices. And you can make a mental note or written list of the number of times you have to remind them to stop focusing on screens and start making more face-to-face contact with family members and their friends.

For example, the young brains of children need to be protected from the daily exposure to the incessant advertisements in addition to the unlimited online options for music and video games on their computers, television sets, phones or other devices. Parental advice can be discussed at regular weekly family interaction planning meetings.

Today, when a child's success in life depends more than ever before on independent thinking skills and emotionally intelligent reasoning skills, it is vitally important to teach children how to determine the rational benefits and possible risks of their decisions.

The more practice children have using their critical thinking skills and critical reading strategies within the family, the better their brains will become. In this regard, the overall function of humanist parents is to consistently teach their children to make good choices based upon reasoning rather than blind obedience.

**RECOMMENDATION:** You may print this pdf version and read it and edit it by adding or deleting ideas. Also you can underline or highlight with colored inks or read it out loud to use these *proven memory boosters* to help you capture this brain information in your *long-term memory*.

Then, you can read your edited version of these ideas according to a reinforcement schedule; such as in a few hours and then in a few days and then several times in the next week or two to take advantage of the power of the *spaced-repetition method of memorization*. Such deeper introspection can change your self-identity and increase your *self-awareness* and *self-actualization*.