



Brain Lesson- Amygdala Guard Dog

Why we like it: We enjoy teaching students about their brain and how to be in charge of it. When kids understand how their brain works and that they can be in charge of it, they are empowered to take responsibility for themselves. The Amygdala is a key player in the brain because it is our fight, flight, or freeze center and where big feelings and emotions are coming from.

Duration: 30 minutes

Materials: Guard Dog puppet, chime, brain poster, Guard Dog feelings chart, brain puppets coloring page, gel pens

Lesson Activities: The Chime, Mindful coloring

FocusedKids Lesson Video: [3 parts of the brain lesson](#)

FocusedKids Book: [I am Safe, and I am Healthy! Guard Dog Manages His Fears About Coronavirus](#)

VOCABULARY

Guard Dog, Amygdala, Chime, Calm, Focus, Emotions, Feelings (we recommend having a chart that displays different feelings and emotion words and pictures)

MAKE IT A HABIT

Talk about when you notice students' guard dogs are on alert. Ask the class, "What can we do to calm our guard dogs right now?"

PRACTICE IT

Practice mindful coloring each day for 5-10 minutes.

Hold up the guard dog puppet as a cue that the class needs to get calm. Encourage students to hold up a puppet when they feel the class needs to get calm.

Give each student a bad to keep their puppets in as they complete each one.

SEND IT HOME

After students have completed all 3 brain puppets send home a description for parents about the 3 key players in the brain.

Challenge students to teach their parents about the 3 key players in the brain!

CORE LESSON

Opening Brain Break

"Before we can learn about our brain, we have to get our brain ready."





Begin by introducing the chime if you have not already (you can find The Chime, in Lesson Activities). Start off with the chime. Hands on belly or other anchor spot (heart, lap, knees). Listen to the chime consecutively from one time to three times depending on the student's needs for getting regulated. See chime lesson in the brain break section. Use this short time to help students get their brains and bodies ready for learning.

What to Say

A key part of this lesson is engaging the class by having the puppets do the talking. This can feel silly or uncomfortable at first but it is necessary for engaging the class and integrating the information.

- “Today we are going to begin to learn about our brain!”
- “Do you know where your brain is? That’s right?!”
- Have a quick conversation about the brain. How it feels... the bone protecting your brain. This will help engage the class. If you have the brain model, pass it around the class.
- “Now today I brought a friend who is going to teach us about a really important part of our brain. Are you ready to meet him?”
- Introduce the guard dog puppet by making him loud and silly with the class. Explain that Guard Dog represents a really important part of your brain.

THIS DIALOGUE IS JUST A GUIDE. USE AND ADAPT TO YOUR OWN STYLE.

- “Hi, boys and girls! I am SO excited to be here today! Oh my- look at all of you! Are you ready to learn all about me?”
- “I have a huge job...I have to keep you safe. Do you feel safe right now?”
- Tell me what makes you feel safe now. When you are scared, or sad, or angry, or hungry, or tired, I’m the one who lets everyone else know that you need help. I do this by (bark). Do you know the times when you cry or just get upset? (have them name some of those times)
- That is when I bark. So someone will help you feel better. I am also in charge of “curiosity.” Do you know what that is? It’s when you are doing one thing, and then something else happens, and you want to know what it is. So you stop what you are doing, and go to the new thing.”





	<p>(Demonstrate with the puppet by sniffing, and moving and sniffing something else.) "Curiosity is a great thing because you get to learn new stuff."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Do you want to learn what my brain name is? It is a really big word. Are you ready?!" • Amygdala! Say it several times with the class including breaking it into syllables and saying it "A-myg-da-la." • Repeat after me and clap with each syllable." (3 times) • Chant: "A-myg-da-la, I keep you safe! A-myg-da-la, I keep you safe! A-myg-da-la, I will keep you safe!" • "When I think you are in danger or need something really important like food or sleep or time with mommy, or when I am curious, I sort of take over the brain. It might feel like you are flipping your lid! And when this happens, the other parts of your brain don't work as well, making it hard to learn or pay attention. So you have to help me calm down. That's why we take deep breaths!"
Lesson Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Mindful coloring: Guard Dog puppet
Closing Gratitude	<p>Create a closing routine with your class around gratitude. We know that when children practice thinking about what they are grateful for it wires their brains to be happier, calmer, and less stressed. See the gratitude section for more ideas or to expand on what we provide.</p> <p>Gratitude for Students</p>

LESSON EXTENSIONS	
Brain Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ The amygdala is fully developed before birth. The amygdala is deep inside the brain and is about the size of an almond.
Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Your Fantastic Elastic Brain ☐ Your Brain
Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ https://momentousinstitute.org/ ☐ Focusedkids.org (https://focusedkids.org/what-you-need-to-know-old/kids-brains/)





MAKE IT YOUR OWN!

