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January 13, 2017 Newsletter

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# Peace of Mind

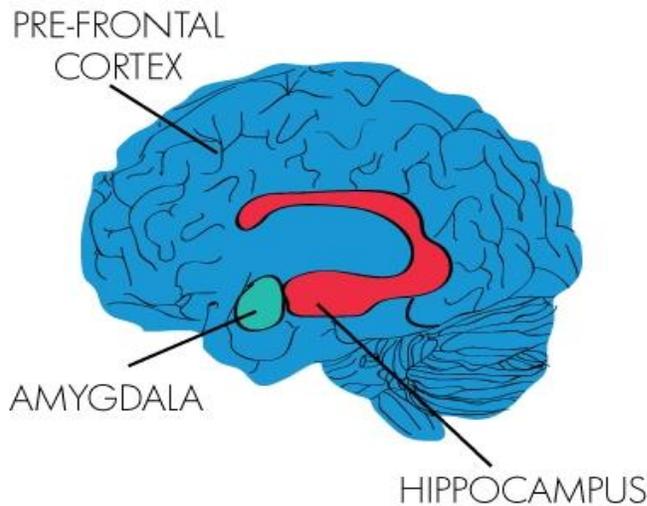
At Lafayette Elementary School in Washington, D.C.

5701 Broad Branch Road, NW

[www.teachpeaceofmind.com](http://www.teachpeaceofmind.com)

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## It's a BRAIN New Year!



So far in the new year, Peace Class is all about the brain! Everybody in grades pre-K - 5th (except 3rd grade which will start the brain unit soon) is learning about how our brains work. We are learning about three important parts of the brain: the Amygdala, the Hippocampus, and the PreFrontal Cortex. These parts of our brain work together to help us with planning and making decisions (PFC), memory (hippocampus), and emotions (amygdala.) We will continue learning about their interactions and ways they help us with calming down and resolving conflicts as the month continues.

You can always read more about Peace of Mind, join our mailing list, and find out about current events at our website: [www.teachpeaceofmind.com](http://www.teachpeaceofmind.com). You can also follow us on Facebook. Contact Linda at [Linda.Ryden@dc.gov](mailto:Linda.Ryden@dc.gov) or Jillian at [Jillian.Diesner@dc.gov](mailto:Jillian.Diesner@dc.gov)



### Upcoming Events:

**February 9, 9-12pm – Peace of Mind Open House** ([link to schedule here](#))

**February 22, 7-8:30pm at Janney ES - Kelly Dorfman:**  
*The A, B, C's of Nutrition: How diet affects attention, behavior and cognition*

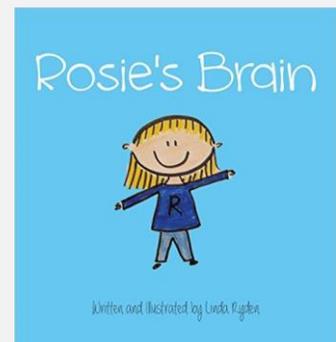
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### Recommended Watch:



Dr. Dan Siegel's Ted Talk on the brain hand model

### Recommended Read:



## More Peace News



### Mindfulness Practice

In Pre-K and Kindergarten Mindfulness practice we have started using our five senses. We have used our ears to **listen** mindfully and notice and label specific sounds in the room. We've used our **eyes** to mindfully notice different colors around the room, and we've used our sense of **touch** to really notice how fabrics and other personal items feel against our fingers. This type of slow and careful, adult-led noticing of everyday items can help kids pay closer attention, have better focus, and become more aware of their surroundings. In short, it can help their brains become stronger!



### Social and Emotional Learning

In Pre-K and K classes we have a new puppet friend, **Brainy**. Brainy is a brain with a sense of humor who helps kids remember the three important parts (PFC, hippocampus, and amygdala.) Brainy's PFC usually is in charge, but sometimes if it "flips its lid" then Brainy's amygdala takes over! "Flipping your lid" is when your amygdala takes over with a big emotional reaction, and your PFC is nowhere to be found to help with making a choice or decision about what to do next. Luckily, a well-developed hippocampus can jump in and save the day, reminding kids that we have strategies and other options we can try instead of just reacting (or over-reacting.)

For third grades we have been focusing on how we treat each other. We've read **Just Kidding** by Trudy Ludwig, and are having discussions about teasing and treating each other with respect.

In the older grades we related our learning about the brain to our school-wide Spelling Bee that took place on Friday January 13. We talked about how no matter how hard we study for the bee, when we get nervous our amygdala (the brain's security guard) decides that we are in danger. Our



Brainy the puppet

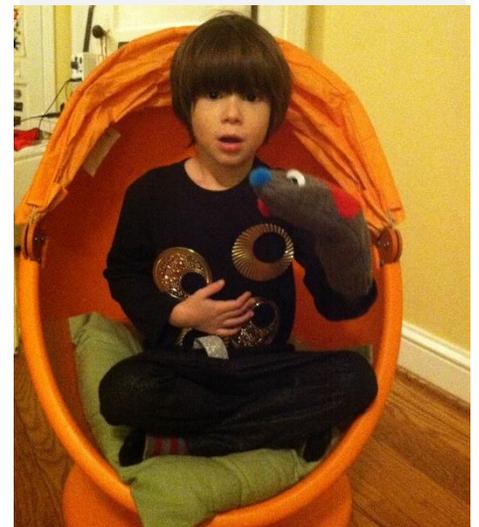
### Ask Your Child:

#### For all Grades:

How can you make the brain model with your hand?

What are the jobs of the PFC, hippocampus, and amygdala?

What does it mean to "flip your lid?"



*Using Brainy to take deep breaths and calm down*

amygdala can't tell the difference between a real danger and a spelling competition so it kicks into action. When we get really upset or nervous or angry our amygdala basically turns off the prefrontal cortex (where our decision-making takes place) and our hippocampus (where our memories are stored) and takes over. The amygdala only knows how to fight, flight or freeze and none of those things are helpful in the Spelling Bee! So that explains why some of the spellers seemed to freeze and fail to spell fairly simple words. Many of our spellers, including our three winners, all used their practice of mindful breathing to help them to keep their amygdalae under control!



### Creating a Kinder and More Inclusive School

With temps falling, Peace Club has become quite the popular place to be at recess! We've had at least 40 students nearly every day Peace Club is open, since school started in January. We love to see so much fun in Peace Club as everyone remembers the main rules: Treat everyone kindly, share everything, and include everyone. Wouldn't it be nice if those rules applied everywhere?

