



Issue 87

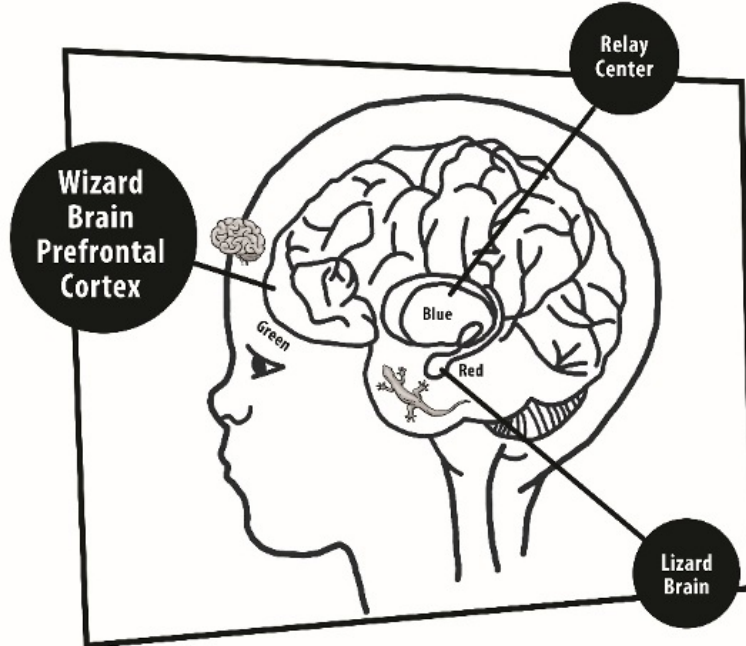
BrainWise Helpers

BrainWise instructors are passionate about obtaining successful outcomes and engage others to ensure children practice their newly learned skills. A key strategy involves collaborating with helpers - family members, school staff, community and church members, health providers, and others - to reinforce children's Wizard Brain behaviors.

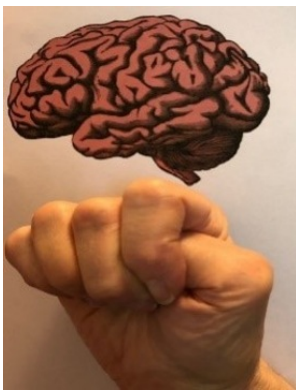
The interaction between helpers and BrainWise-informed children varies in intensity and frequency. Regardless of the differences, their collective input has a major influence on the retention of children's thinking skills.

This newsletter shares easy ways BrainWise helpers can remind children to Stop and Think and reward their positive actions. The following strategies are easy for instructors to implement and will help them engage a wide range of helpers to reinforce children's positive behaviors.

1. Explain BrainWise to the Helper. Tell the helper that the child is learning about the brain and decision-making skills. Show or give them a picture of the child brain in the *BrainWise for Grades K-5* curriculum's reproducible worksheets. Positive behaviors indicate Wizard Brain thinking, while harmful impulsive and emotional behaviors indicate Lizard Brain reactions. The helper's recognition of Wizard Brain thinking and Lizard Brain reactions will remind the child to Stop and Think.



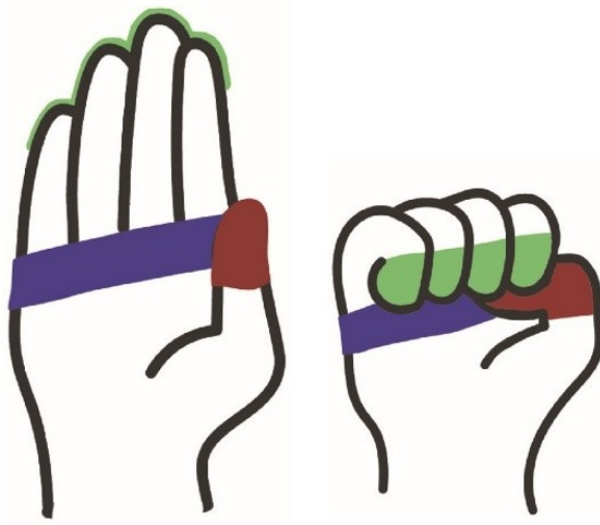
2. **Explain the BrainWise Hand Brain to the Helper .** The child has learned how their hand can represent their brain. Show them the picture of the closed fist underneath a brain and compare how it resembles the brain.



Using a Fist to Represent the Brain

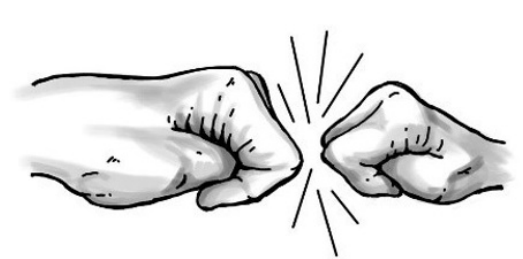
3. **Show the Helper the Drawing of the Stop and Think Hand Brain Gesture.** The open hand gesture reminds the child to **STOP** and the brain fist gesture reminds the child to **THINK**. Tell them to use the Stop and Think Hand Brain to remind the child to use their Wizard Brain.

The helper doesn't need to know the 10 Wise Ways to use this gesture -- their role is to use it to remind the child to Stop and Think in a situation. The child will immediately know what the gesture means.



Stop and Think Hand Brain Gesture

4. Ask the Helper to Reward Wizard Brain Thinking by Exchanging a Brain Bump with the Child. The child understands that brain bumps are like “High Fives” for using their thinking skills. A brain bump is a positive and immediate reinforcement of using their Wizard Brain.



Brain Bumps Reward Wizard Brain Thinking

Practice is critical for retention of the 10 Wise Ways. BrainWise instructors can use a wide variety of helpers to ensure children are reminded and rewarded for using their Wizard Brains. Helpers don't need to learn BrainWise lessons. They can simply learn the Wizard Brain and Lizard Brain, the BrainWise *Stop and Think* Hand Brain gesture, and the Brain Bump for rewards. Helpers are welcome to learn more, but that is not necessary to begin using these helpful gestures to acknowledge children and their awareness of the Wizard Brain thinking. You can share more information about the 10 Wise Ways, but often more details are not realistic or feasible for them to learn. This approach keeps it simple and sets them up to support the child.

Helpers are valuable “double lines” in the children’s Constellations of Support because their important role is to remind and reward them to Stop and Think and use their Wizard Brain.

These reinforcement approaches mirror the successful strategies instructors use and expand the BrainWise milieu, helping children understand their decisions are

important to themselves and others.

Thank you for teaching BrainWise!



My best,

Dr. Pat

On a Lighter Note

Mr. Rogers's lesson, *Find the Helpers* reinforces the crucial role BrainWise helpers play in teaching and reinforcing BrainWise with children and youth.



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