

EXAM PREP SKILLS AND STRESS REDUCTION



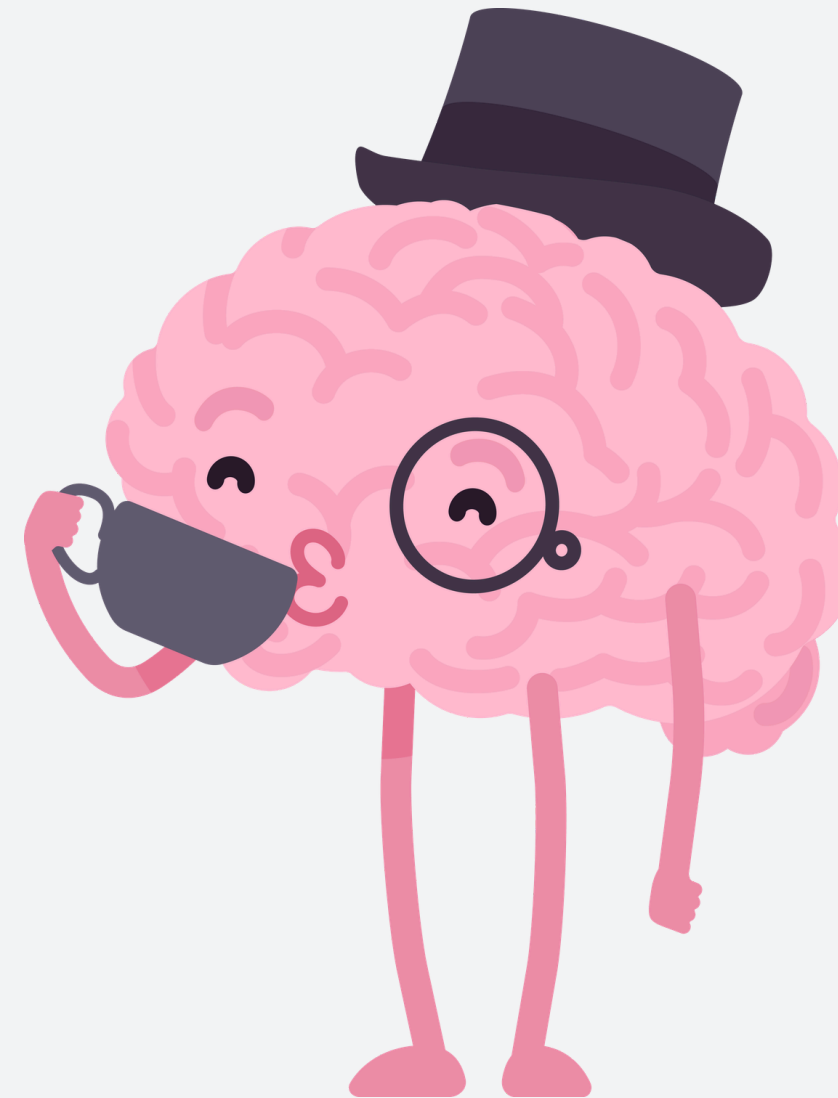
Europäische Schule Rhein Main

23rd March 2026



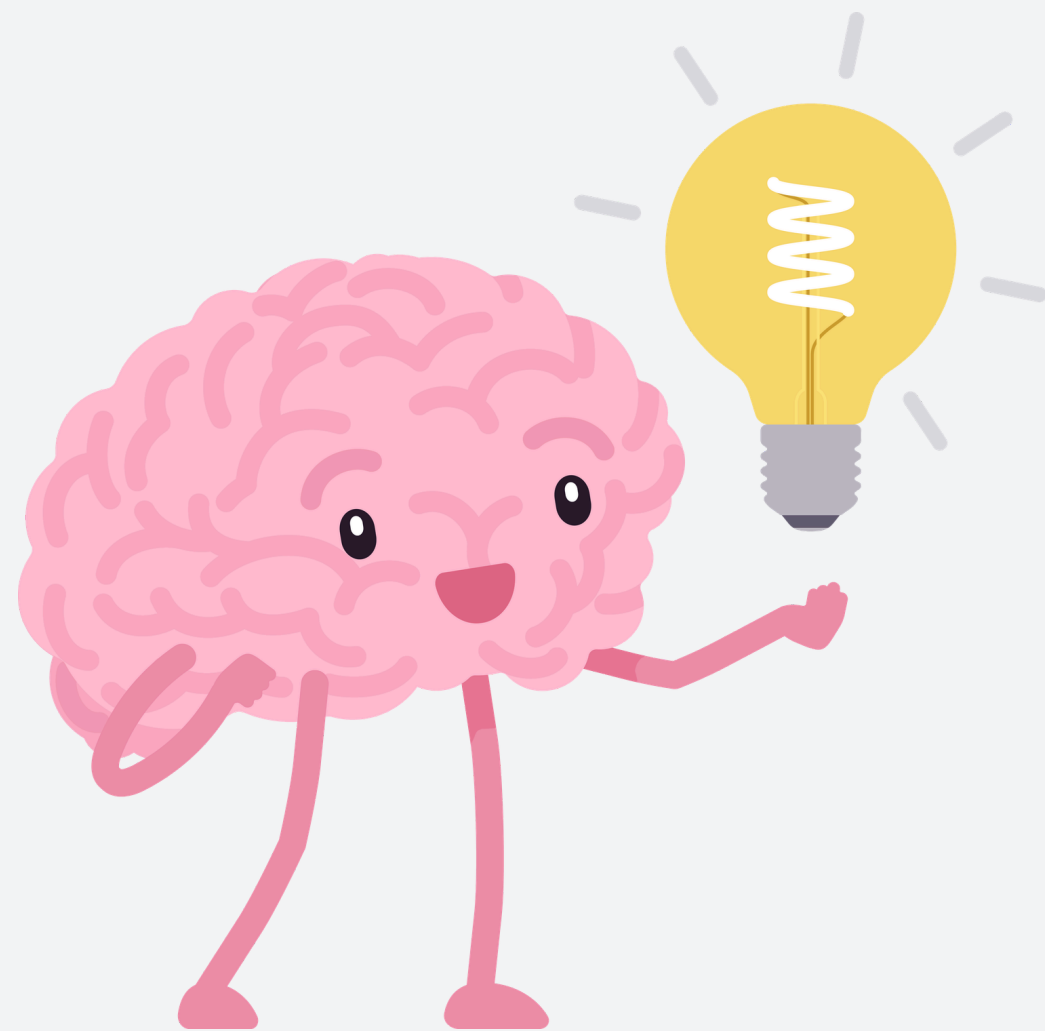
INDEX

1. Introduction
2. Exam Prep
3. Stress reduction
4. Q&A



INTRODUCTION

SUPPORT TEAM UPPER SECONDARY



Lucia Albericio

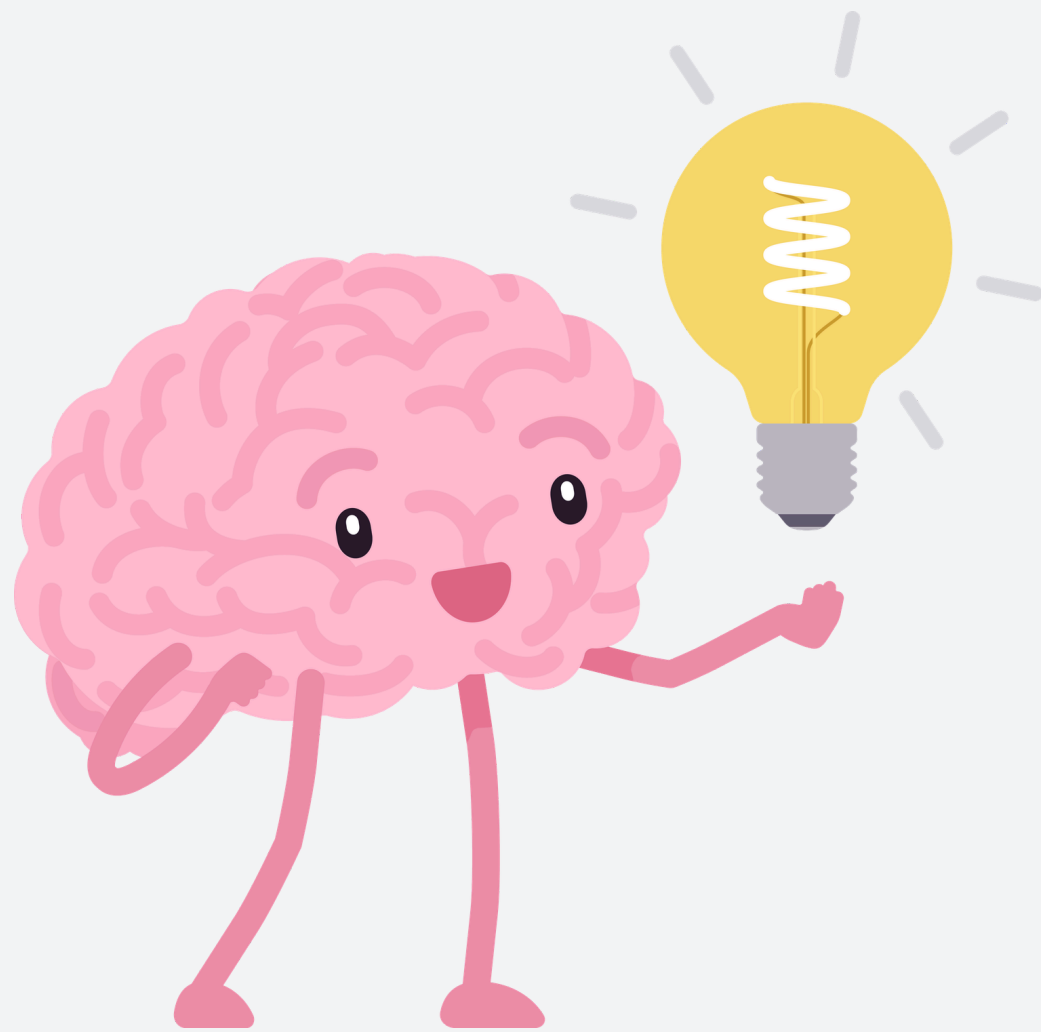
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INTRODUCTION

SUPPORT TEAM UPPER SECONDARY



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EXAM PREP



Introduction- **Exam Prep** - Stress reduction - Q&A

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD THESE SENTENCES...

The teacher didn't explain it well.

I don't feel like studying.

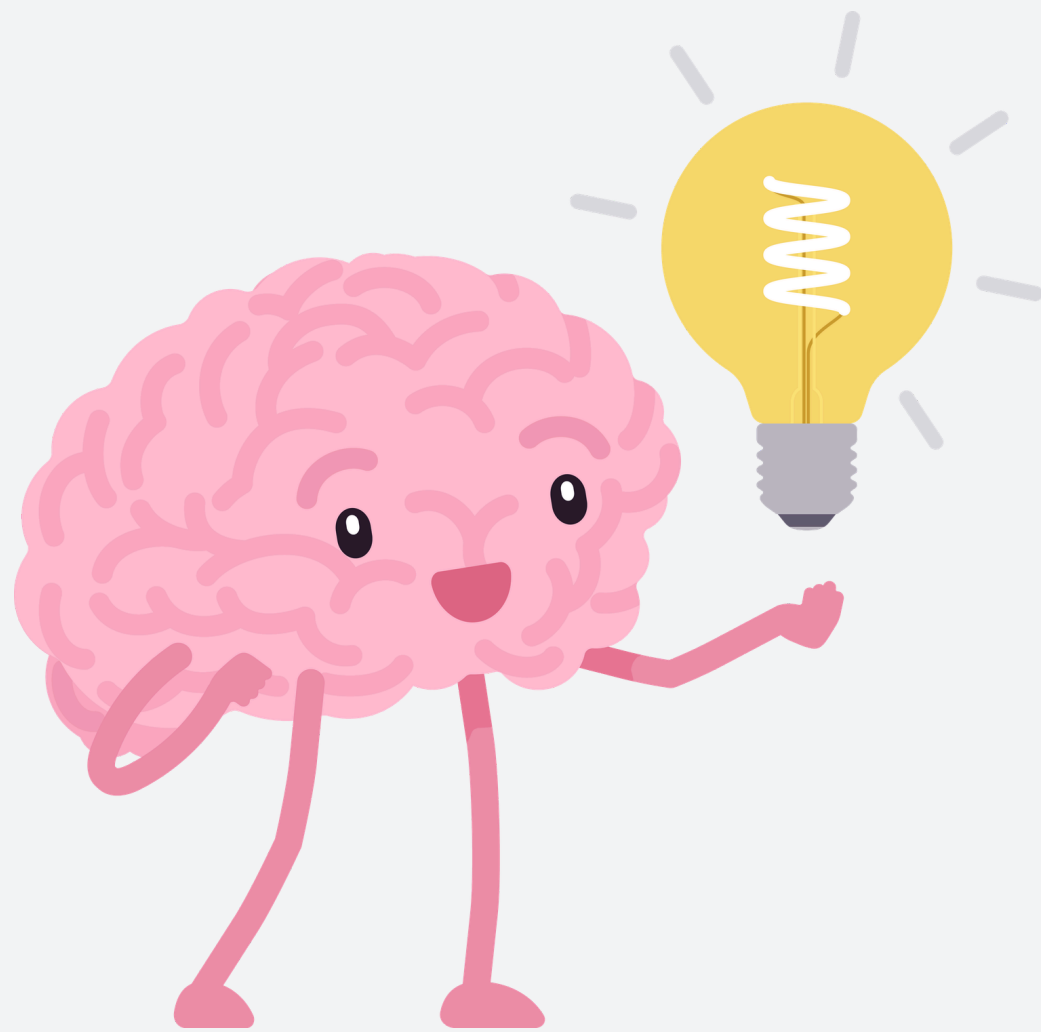
The math test was impossible. Nobody in the class passed it.



My classmates always distract me and the teacher can't get the class to be quiet.



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD



The brain needs to know why it should learn

Set specific goals and measures

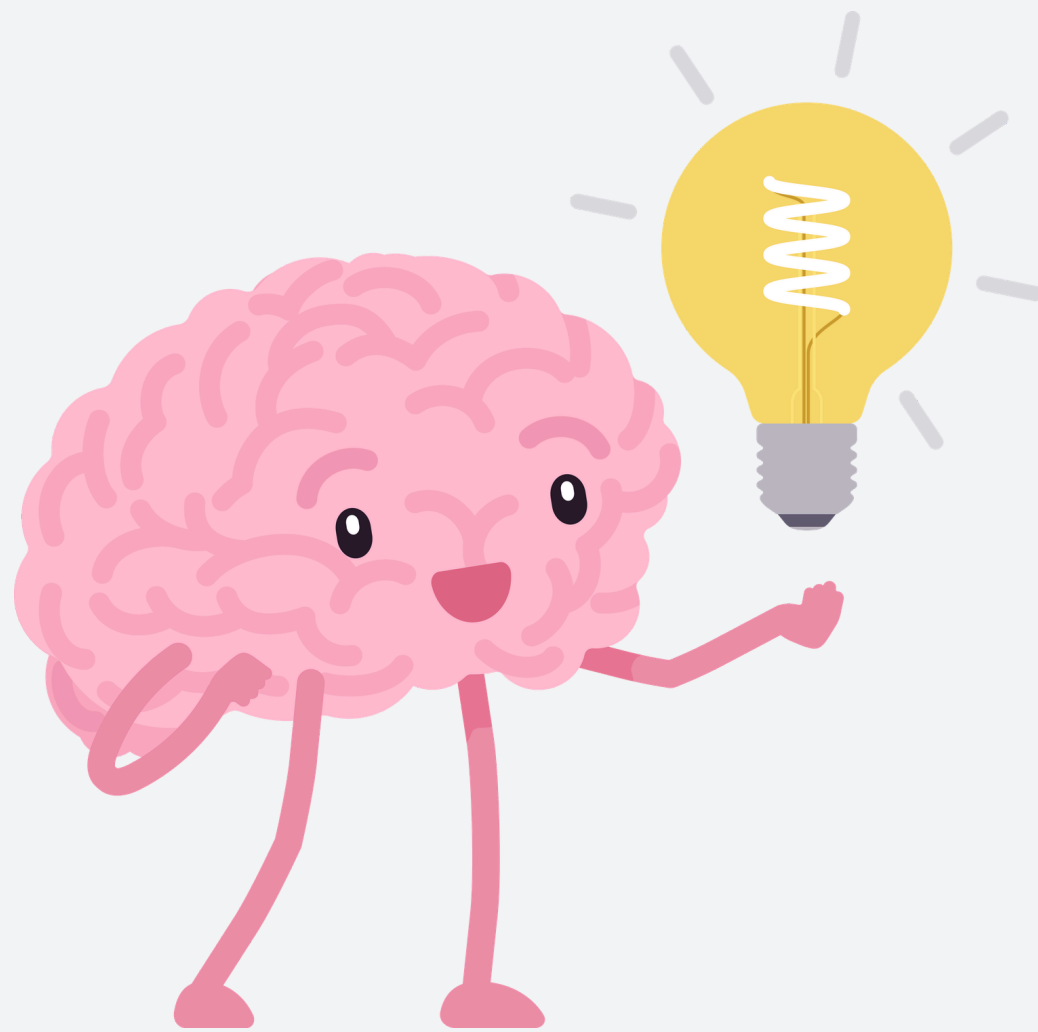
Preventing chronic overload

Offer your support

Emphasize your child's strengths



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD



The brain needs to know why it should learn

Our brain needs **interest in the learning material** for the information to be stored in memory. Uninteresting material is immediately filtered out as „memory junk“.

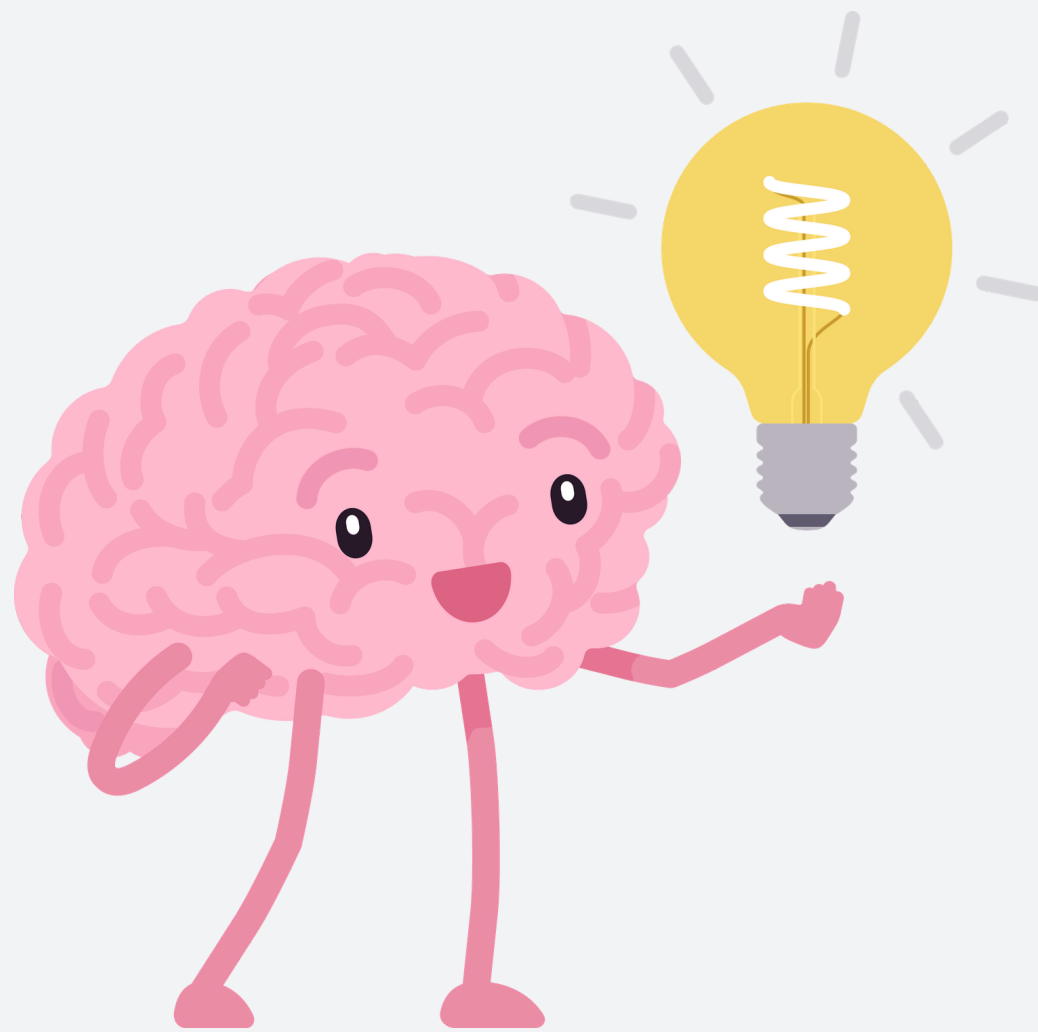


How can I help?

- Understanding of how the brain works
- Find the factors that might help your child to find their interest in the subject (e.g., better grades, BAC)



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD



The brain needs to know why it should learn

Set specific goals and measures



How can I help?

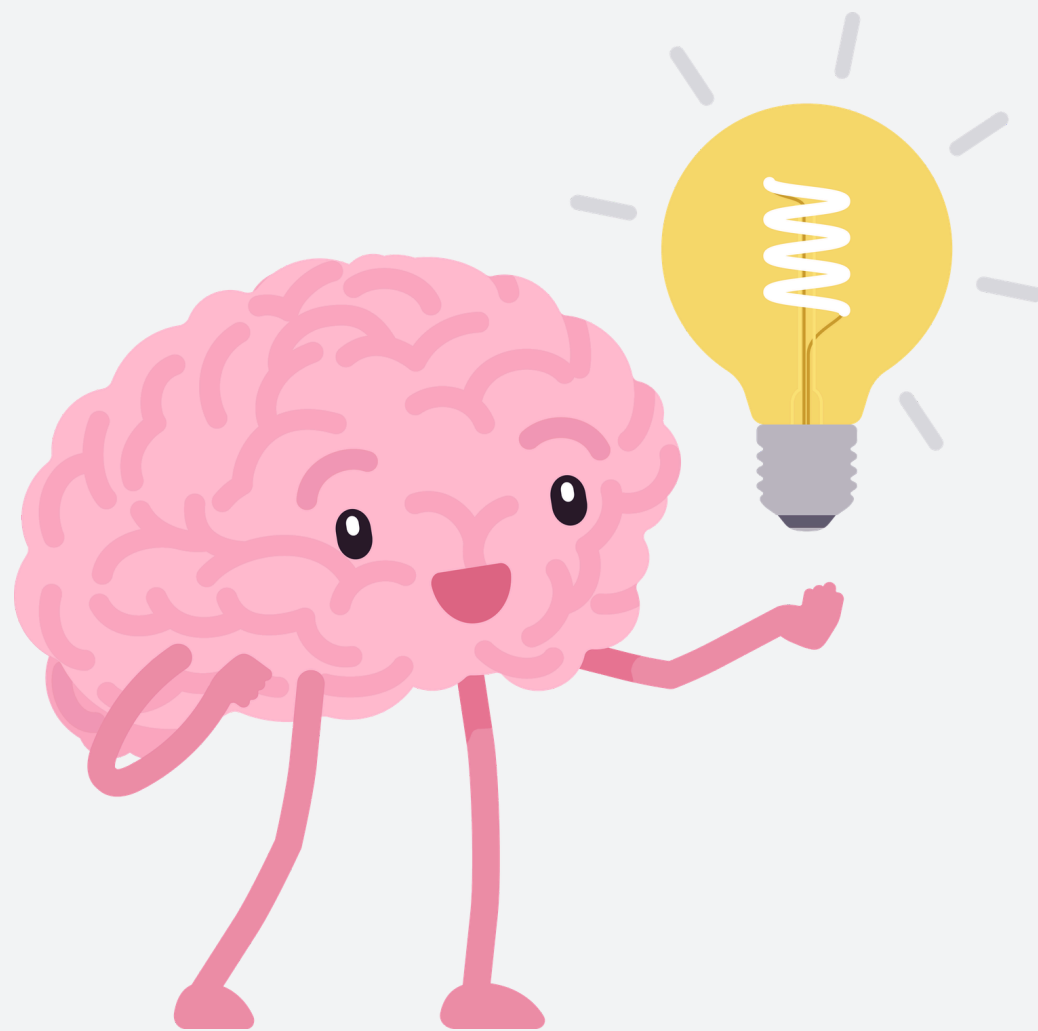
- assessment of your current situation ("Where do I stand in each subject?")
- a concrete definition of goals ("What grades do I want to achieve in the coming school year?")
- action plan ("What do I need to do to achieve my goals?")



It's important to note: Your child must define the goals and action steps themselves – not you!



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD



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Preventing chronic overload

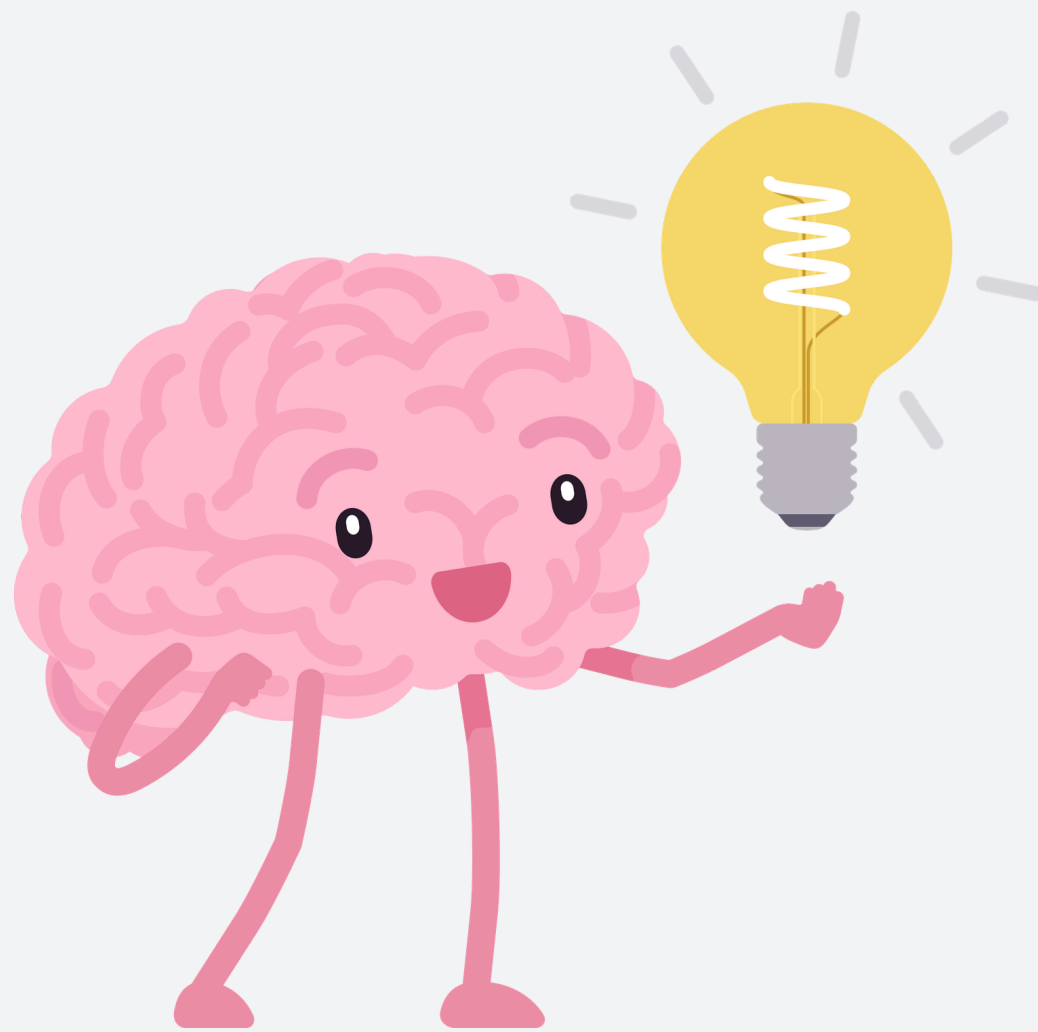
There are cases where students have a positive mindset but are still consistently overwhelmed, the resulting failures impact their self-confidence and motivation to learn negatively.

How can I help?

- If your child is unable to close the resulting gaps in their knowledge, you should discuss possible alternatives together, such as changing schools or repeating a year.



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD



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Preventing chronic overload

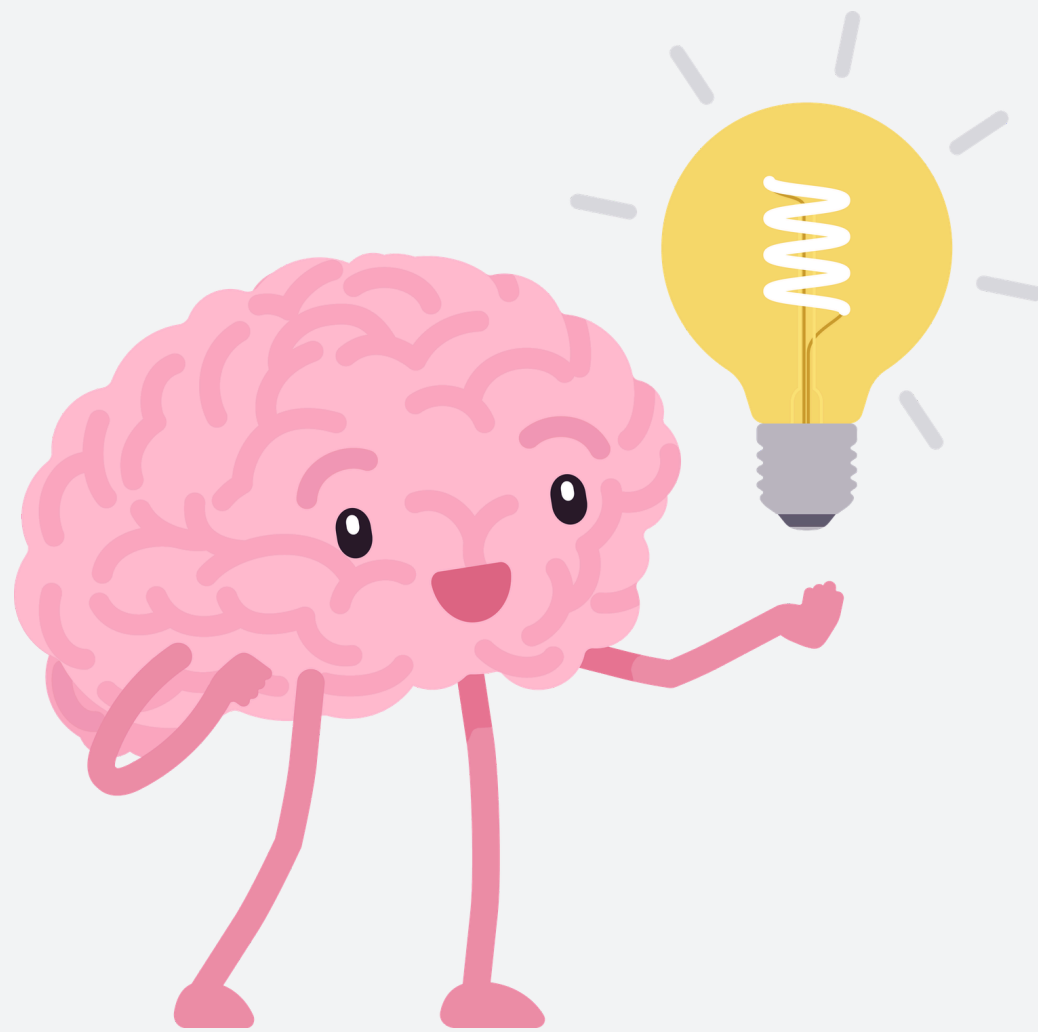
Offer your support

...but don't force your help on your child.

Your teenager won't always enthusiastically accept your help or heed all your well-intentioned advice. However, this should never deter you from offering your child support when you feel it's needed.



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD



The brain needs to know why it should learn

Set specific goals and measures

Preventing chronic overload

Offer your support

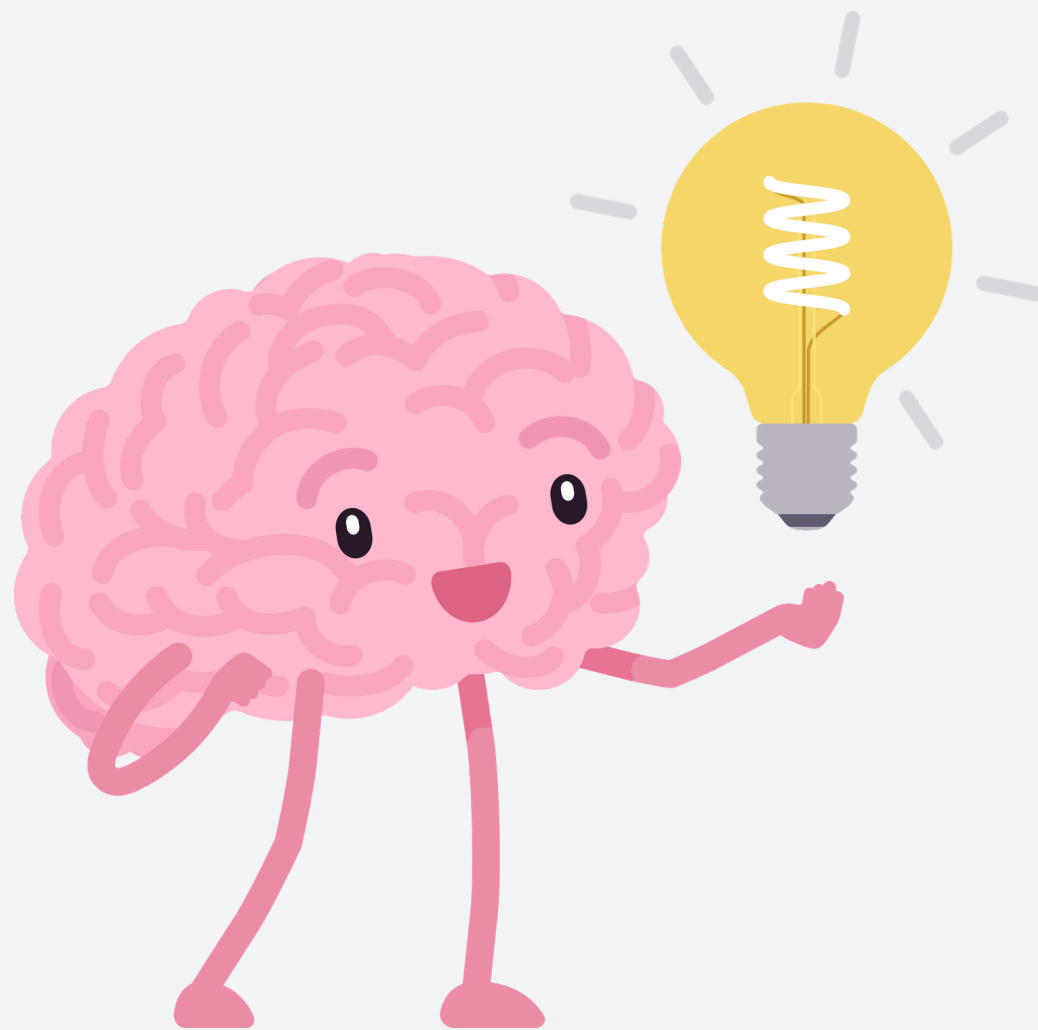


How can I help?

- Find a good time with a relaxed atmosphere
- Explore solutions together
- Show support even if there's conflict



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD



The brain needs to know why it should learn

Set specific goals and measures

Preventing chronic overload

Offer your support

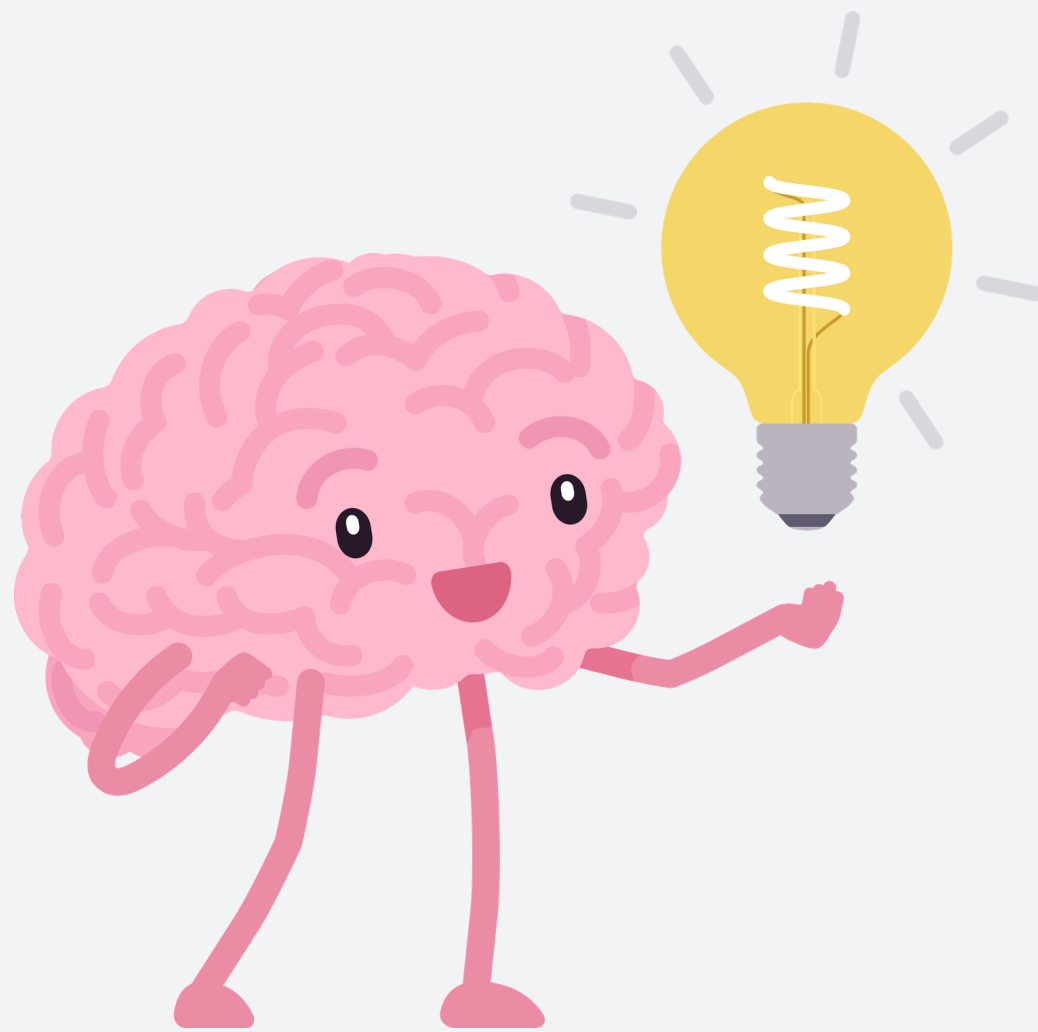
Emphasize your child's strengths

...but don't force your help on your child.

Praise your teenager for everything they do well at school, even if it's just small things. Because only by keeping the positive experiences in mind can your child gradually improve their attitude towards learning.



HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD



The brain needs to know why it should learn

Set specific goals and measures

Preventing chronic overload

Offer your support

Emphasize your child's strengths



How can I help?

- Praise your child for small changes in the right direction but also for things that are already running smoothly

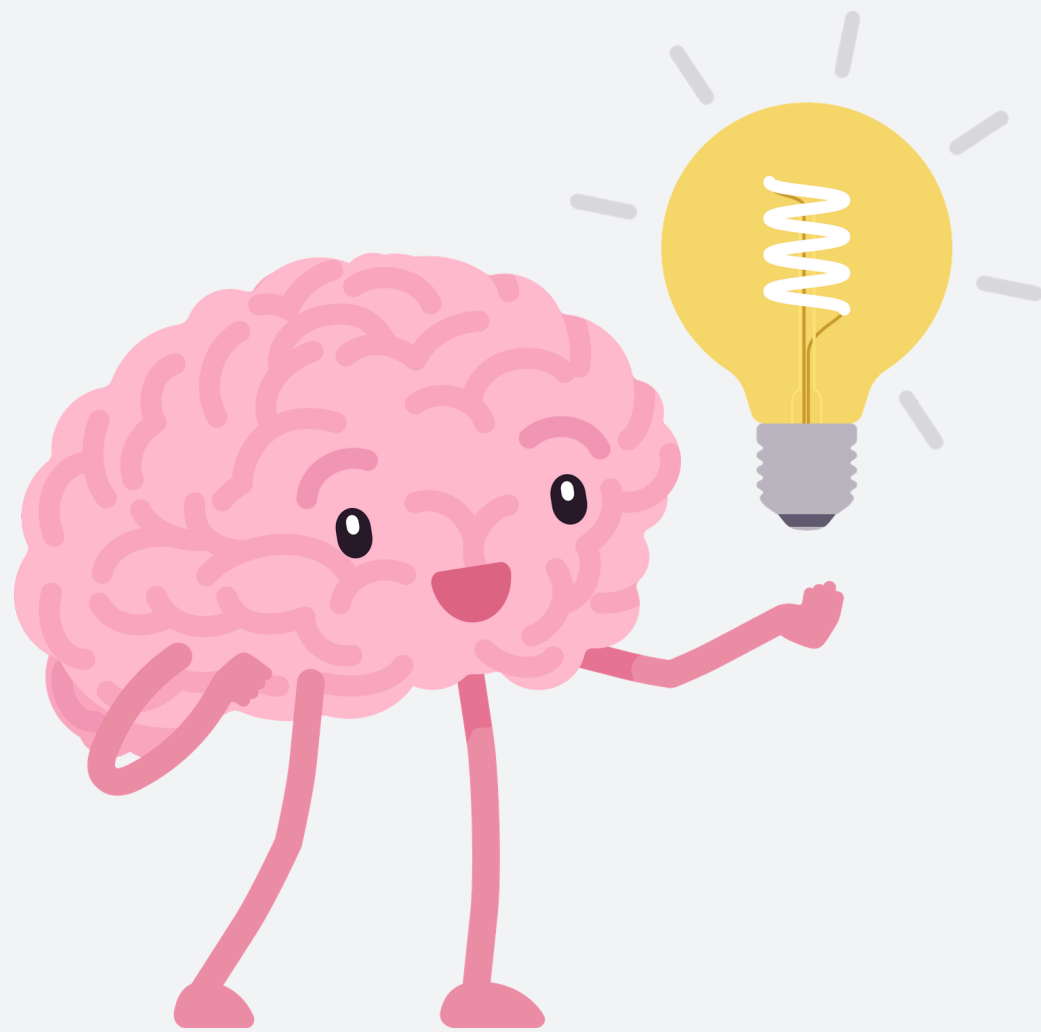


STRESS REDUCTION



Introduction- Exam Prep - **Stress reduction** - Q&A

STRESS REDUCTION



Recognize warning signs

Be aware of protective factors

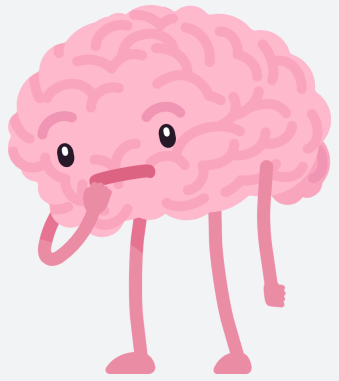
Build Open Communication

Support Healthy Habits

Resilience, Self-Esteem and Academic Pressure



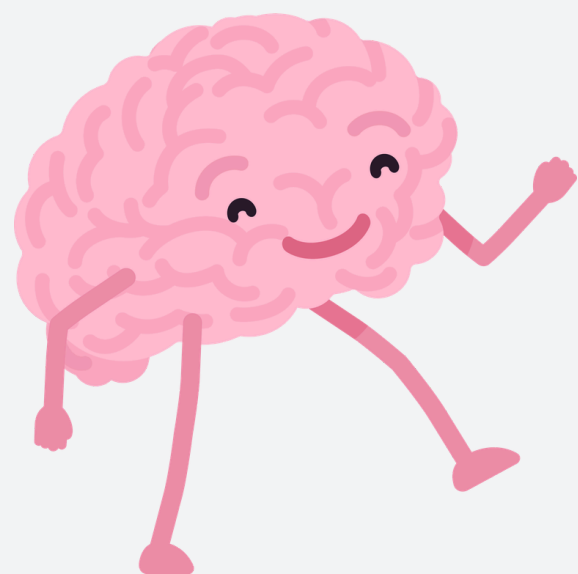
WARNING SIGNS



1. DROP IN GRADES
2. SCHOOL AVOIDANCE
3. EATING TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE
4. SLEEPING TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE
5. PHYSICAL COMPLAINTS
6. SOCIAL WITHDRAWAL, LACK OF ENERGY
7. EXCESSIVE WORRY. IDEAS OF SELF HARM
8. MOOD SWINGS; ANGER, SADNESS



PROTECTIVE FACTORS



RESILIENCE

Learning strategies to promote resilience (talking/identifying feelings)

POSITIVE COPING STRATEGIES

Less time in front of screens, Physical activity, Regular sleep patterns

SOCIALLY CONNECTED

Positive peer relationships
Being hopeful, talking about the future

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Strengthening family relationships
Participate in family activities
Talk with parents (reconnect)



WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A PARENT?

VALIDATE YOUR
CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

CONNECT EMOTIONALLY
(SHOW EMPATHY)

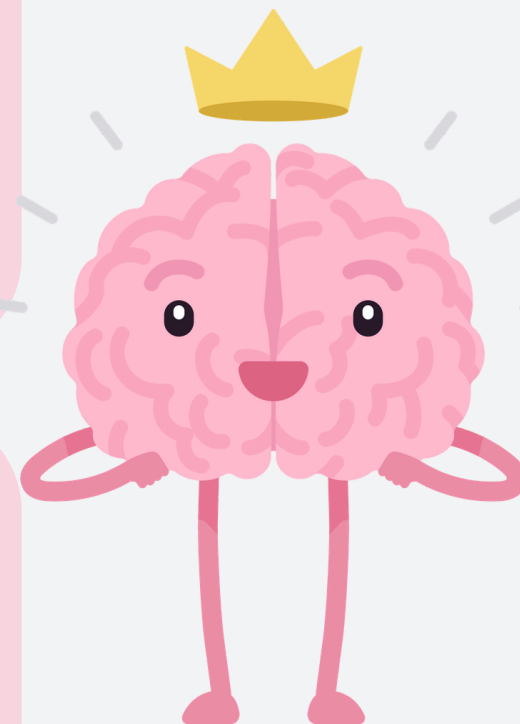
PRACTICE CAREFUL
AND GENUINE
LISTENING

COMMUNICATE WITH
US!
LET'S NORMALIZE
ASKING FOR HELP



HOW TO FOSTER OPEN COMMUNICATION

ITS NOT ABOUT SAYING THE PERFECT THING; ITS ABOUT THE TONE AND DIRECTION OF THE CONVERSATION



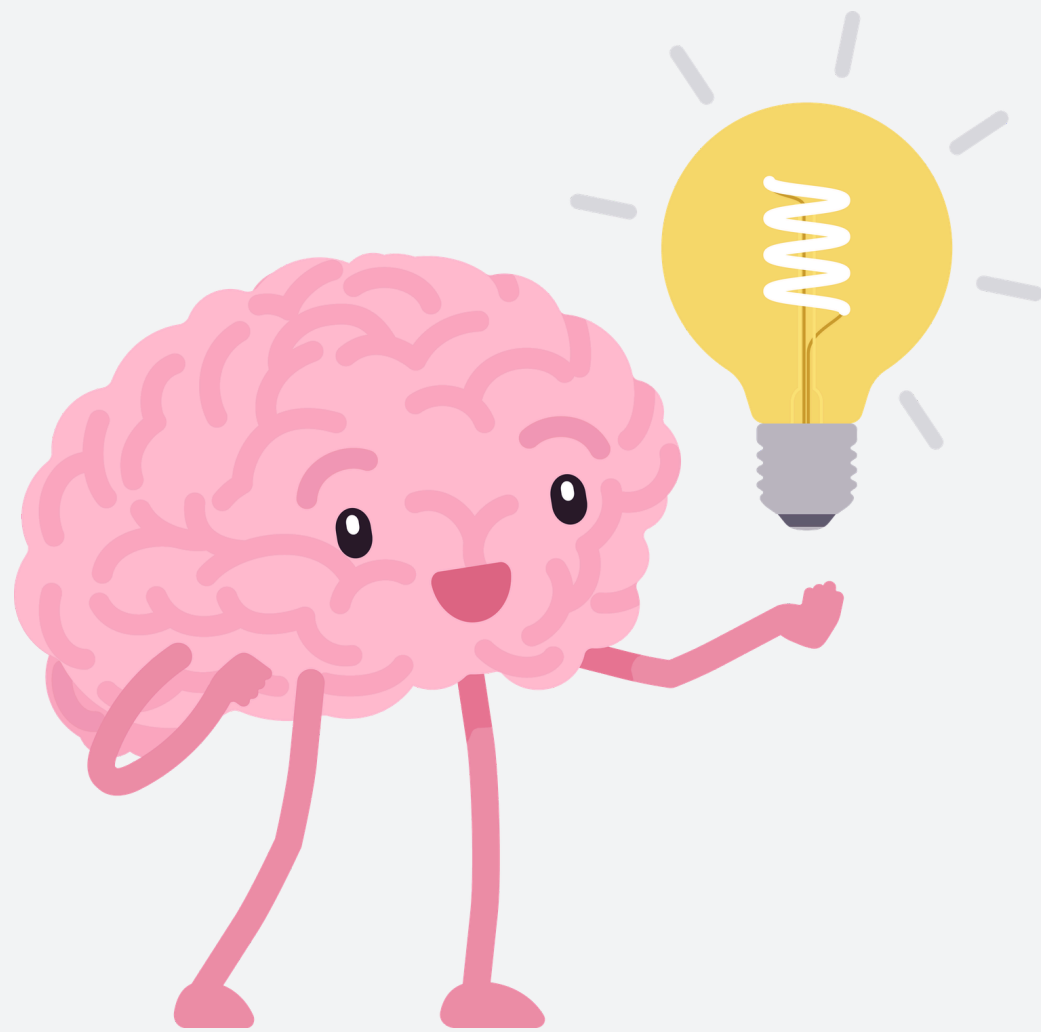
- FIND THE RIGHT MOMENT
- PREPARE YOURSELF TO BE SUPPORTIVE, EVEN WHEN DISAPPOINTED

FOCUS ON EFFORT AND PROGRESS; SEPARATE STUDENT FROM GRADES

ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS
BE CURIOUS, DONT INTERROGATE



WHAT IS THE GROWTH MINDSET?

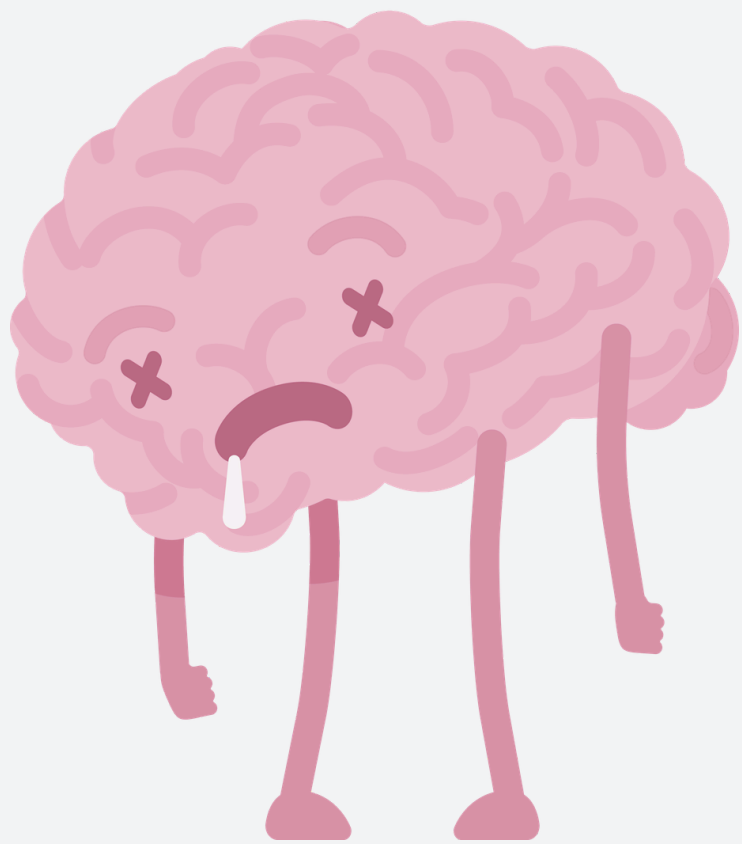


The belief that a child's abilities (academic, social and emotional) are not fixed. They can grow with **practice, effort, feedback and care**

The mindset that a kid develops is strongly shaped by **how we talk to them**, especially in moments like looking at their grades



WHAT IS THE FIXED MINDSET?



Fixed-Mindset messages (often said with good intention)

“you are not a maths person”

“you should be doing better”

“your sister didnt struggle with this”

“You are so smart, what happened?”

Ability is fixed, struggling means there is something wrong with me



WHAT IS THE GROWTH MINDSET?



“Lets look at whats working and whats not working yet”

“This shows us where you need support, not who you are”

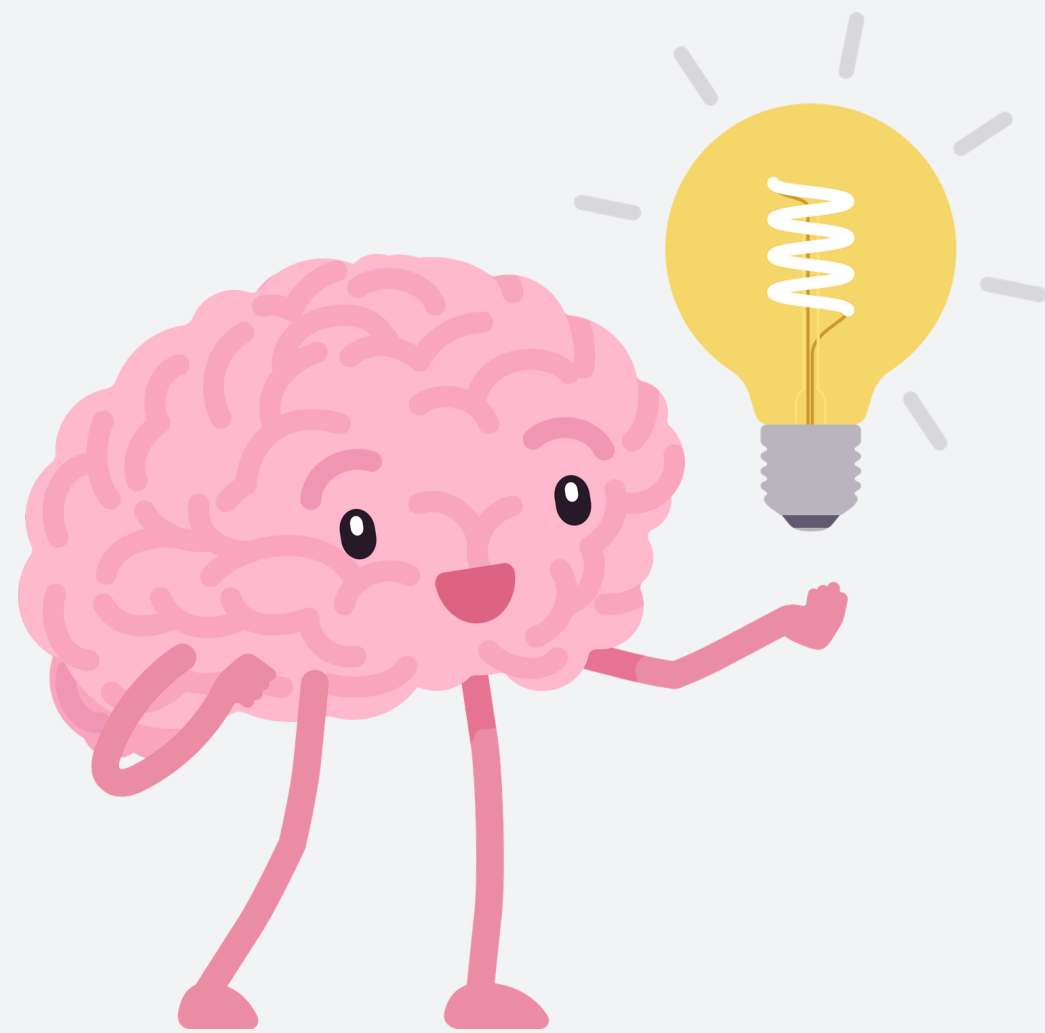
“What made this subject difficult this term?”

“What should we try next term”

Struggle is part of learning, and I can improve



GROWTH MINDSET IS NOT...



- X Lowering standards
- X accepting poor effort
- X its ok, dont worry

It means:

High expectations **with** support
Accountability **without** shame
focusing on progress, not just outcome

**You can hold your child to high standards
and be compassionate**



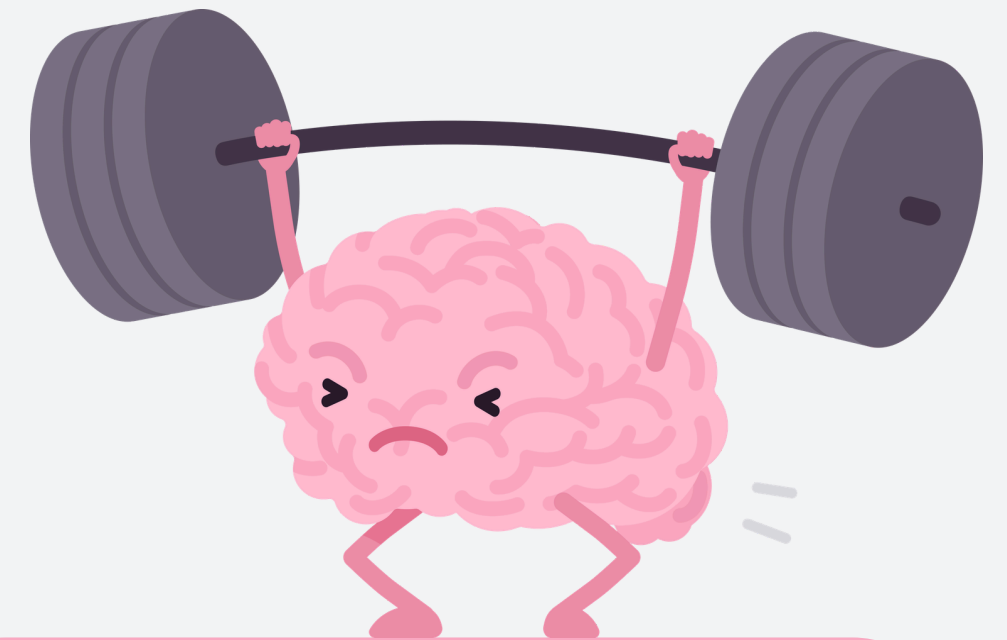
SUPPORTING HEALTHY HABITS

Why habits matter:

Teenagers need structure; habits reduce anxiety and improve academic performance

Sleep Hygiene: Regular Sleep Schedule, Reduce Screen Time before bed

Nutrition: Balanced breakfast, offer healthy snacks, involve them in meal planning/preparation (ownership over their food)

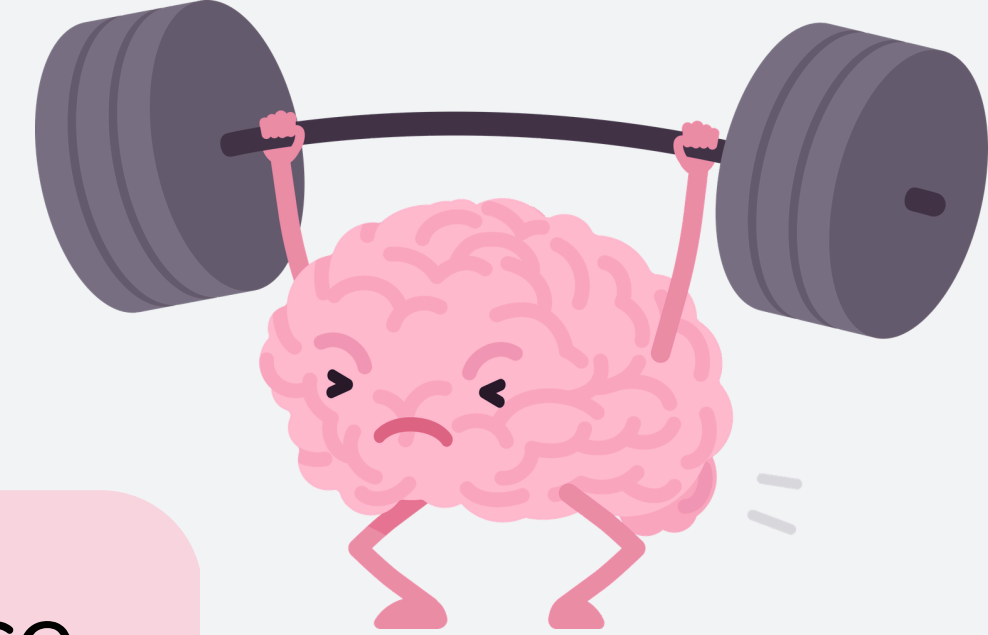


Physical Activity: walking, dancing, cycling...

Screen Time: co-create screen time agreements (e.g no phone during meals or after 9pm)



SUPPORTING HEALTHY HABITS



Sleep Hygiene: Regular Sleep Schedule, Reduce Screen Time before bed
Sleep is not “Lost Time”

During Sleep our brain processes and consolidates memory, from short term to long term memory

Chronic sleep deprivation: reduces focus, memory recall, emotional regulation (due to increased cortisol); which are **ESSENTIAL** for academic success



SUPPORTING HEALTHY HABITS



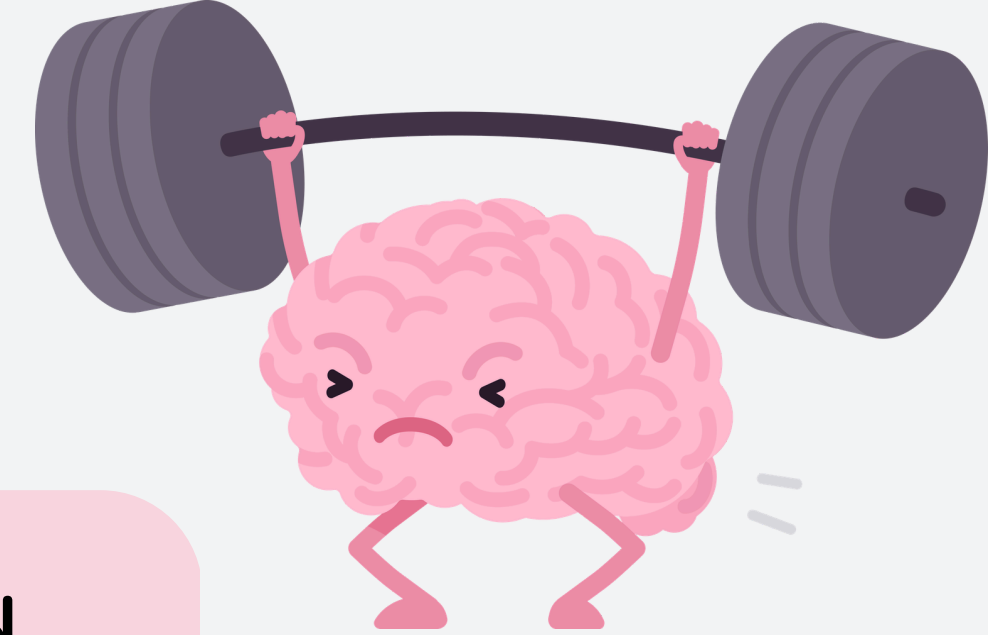
Balanced nutrition gives our brain energy and therefore, it increases cognitive functioning

TIPs

- Dont skip breakfast
- Include protein, carbs and healthy fats at meals
- Make sure you stay hydrated



SUPPORTING HEALTHY HABITS



Increase in Dopamine and Serotonin: improved mood and mental clarity
Increases sleep quality, reducing stress and anxiety

TIPs:

- 15 minute walk between study sessions as a reset
- Try stretching, physical activity doesn't have to be high intensity



ACADEMIC PRESSURE AND SELF ESTEEM

- Internal (self-driven)
- External (parents, school expectations and peer comparison”

Support them navigating failure:

- What went well?
- What can you do differently next time?
- Share your own experiences with failure; show them that a challenge is an opportunity to learn

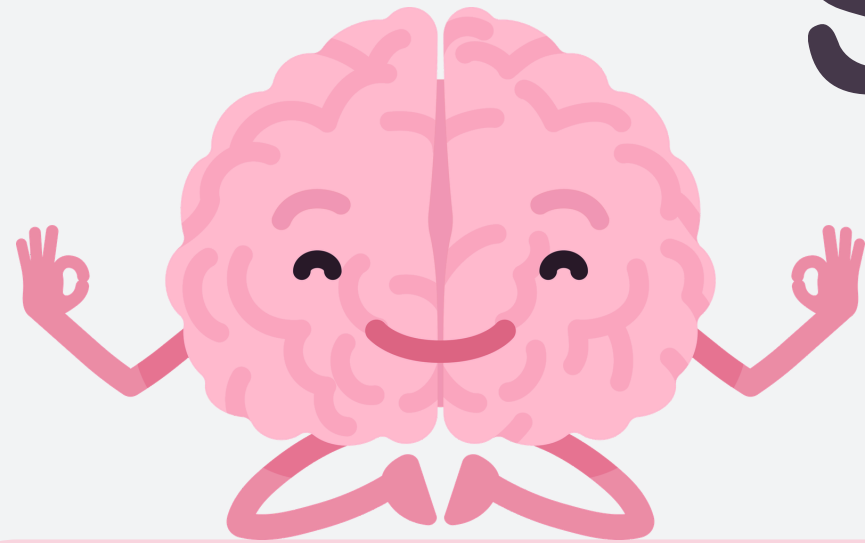
Praise Effort, not just results
“You have worked hard” rather than “You are smart”

Set realistic goals and expectations
Help them create a study routine, and to use planners or checklists

Watch out for over-scheduling (too many extra-curricular activities)



STRESS REDUCTION



Write down 3 moments everyday where you felt satisfaction

Helps to see the positive things of everyday life, even the bad days

Identify your “toolbox for when feeling overwhelmed”

- Do walks help?
- Does listening to music help?
- Do you have someone to talk to?
- Does writing help?

Focus on your senses:

Name 3 things you see

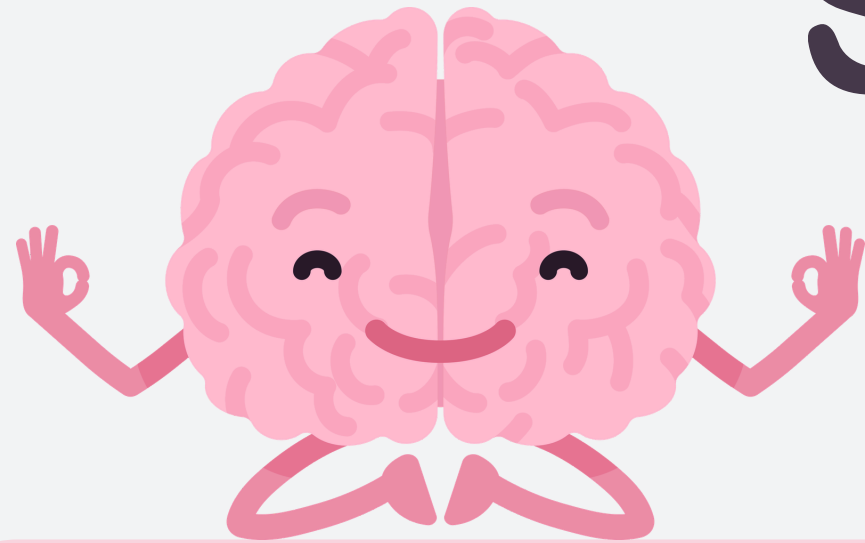
Name 3 things you can touch

Name 3 things you can smell

Name 3 things you can hear



STRESS REDUCTION



Practice Mindfulness: paying attention to what is going on inside and outside ourselves, moment by moment.

Stay present

Box Breathing: Inhale for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4, and hold empty for 4.

Name thoughts and feelings

To develop an awareness of thoughts and feelings, some people find it helpful to silently name them:

"Here's the thought that I might fail that exam" or: "This is anxiety".

We can train ourselves to notice when our thoughts are taking over and realise that thoughts are simply "mental events" that do not have to control us.



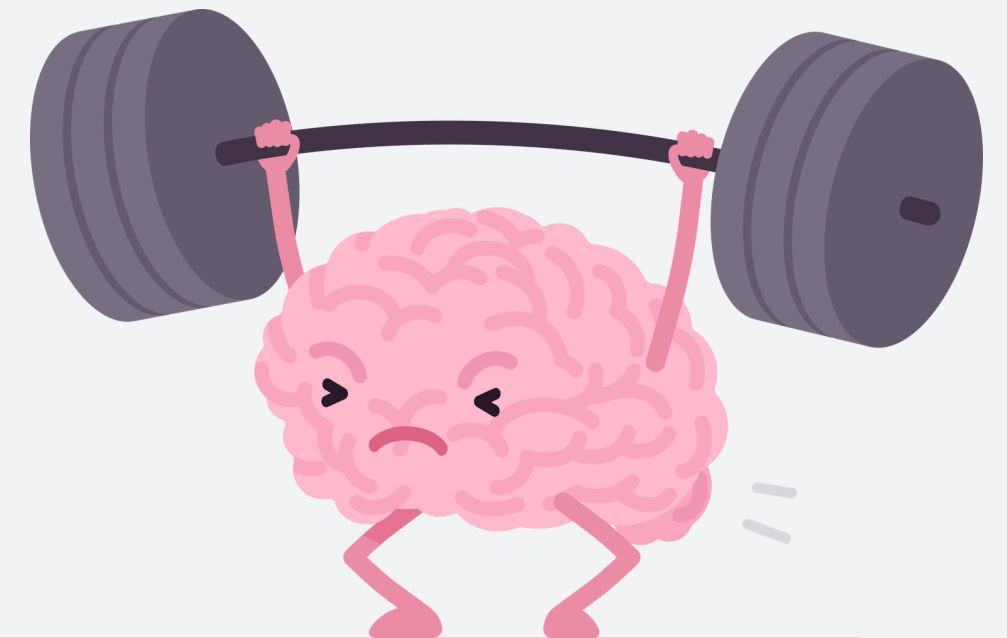
Q&A



ADDITIONAL MATERIAL



HOW TO: EXAM PREP



Starting point:
School year

Schulkalender 2025/26

2025				2026							
August	September	Oktober	November	Dezember	Januar	Februar	März	April	Mai	Juni	Juli
1. 08	1. 09	1. 10	1. 11	1. 12	1. 01	1. 02	1. 03	1. 04	1. 05	1. 06	1. 07
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Next Step:
Time balance

Time factor	Hours per day	Hours per week
sleeping	8	56
school	6	40
homework/Projects	2	10
exercise	1	5
hobby	1	7
sport/Fitness	2	5
games and fun	2	14
family and friends	1	14
remaining time	1	17

Last Step:
Study Plan

Study Plan

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Goals for this week:

Goals for next week:



FIRST STEP: ORGANIZE THE SCHOOL YEAR



Organize the school year with your child

- when are important events?
- when do B-Exams take place?
- What private appointments are already planned?

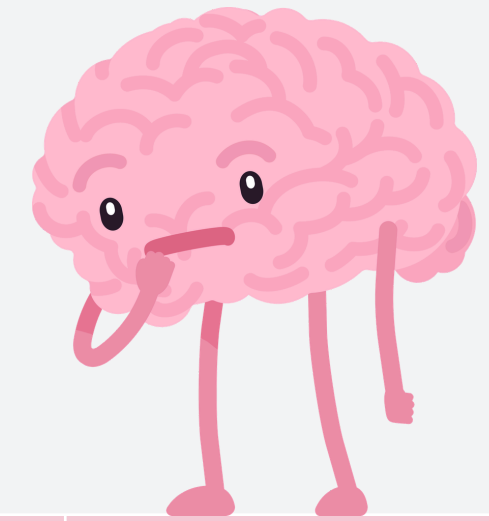
Schulkalender 2025/26

2025					2026						
August	September	Oktober	November	Dezember	Januar	Februar	März	April	Mai	Juni	Juli
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3 So	3 Mi	3 Fr	3 Mo	3 Mi	3 Sa	3 Di	3 Di	3 Fr	3 So	3 Mi	3 Fr
4 Mo	4 Do	4 Sa	4 Di	4 Do	4 So	4 Mi	4 Mi	4 Sa	4 Mo	4 Do	4 Sa
5 Di	5 Fr	5 So	5 Mi	5 Fr	5 Mo	5 Do	5 Do	5 So	5 Di	5 Fr	5 So
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8 Fr	8 Mo	8 Mi	8 Sa	8 Mo	8 Do	8 So	8 So	8 Mi	8 Fr	8 Mo	8 Mi
9 Sa	9 Di	9 Do	9 So	9 Di	9 Fr	9 Mo	9 Mo	9 Do	9 Sa	9 Di	9 Do
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16 Sa	16 Di	16 Do	16 So	16 Di	16 Fr	16 Mo	16 Mo	16 Do	16 Sa	16 Di	16 Do
17 So	17 Mi	17 Fr	17 Mo	17 Mi	17 Sa	17 Di	17 Di	17 Fr	17 So	17 Mi	17 Fr
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30 Sa	30 Di	30 Do	30 So	30 Di	30 Fr			30 Mo	30 Do	30 Sa	30 Di
31 So	31 Mi	31 Fr	31 Mo	31 Mi	31 Sa			31 Di	31 So		31 Fr

Herbstferien 27.10.-31.10.2025
Winterferien 22.12.-02.01.2026
Februarferien 16.02.-20.02.2026
Osterferien 30.03.-10.04.2026
Märferien 26.05.-29.05.2026
Sommerferien Start 06.07.2026



NEXT STEP. TIME BALANCE



24 hours a day, 7 days a week equals 168 hours per week

But how much time can your child realistically dedicate to learning?

Time factor	Hours per day	Hours per week
Sleeping	8	56
School	6	40
Homework/Projects	2	10
Drive	1	5
Food	1	7
Sport/Fitness	2	5
Games and fun	2	14
Family and friends	1	14
Remaining time	1	17



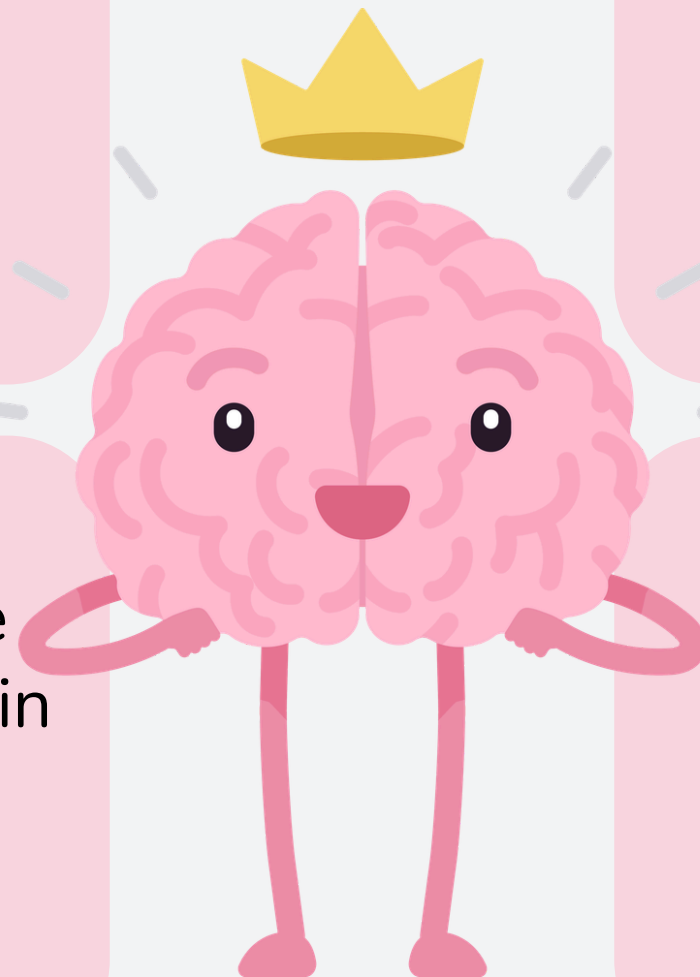
NEXT STEP: TIME BALANCE

Time balance **naturally changes** due to factors that extend over time
For example, preparing for an important exam or using the weekend for exam prep

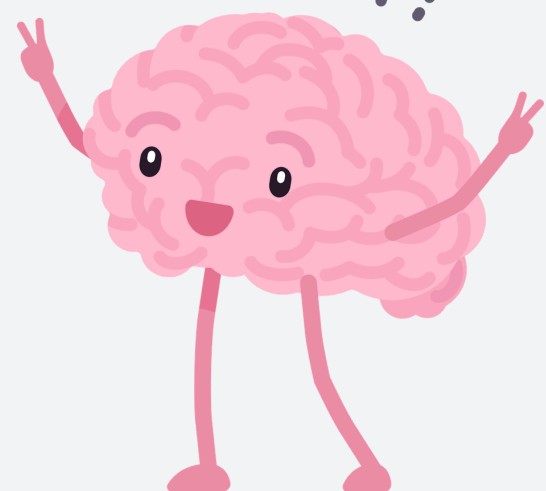
That's why it's important to **know what your child's personal time balance** looks like.

Create a plan together and visualize how much time each activity takes up in the daily and weekly schedule.

Afterwards you can create the → **Studyplan**



LAST STEP. STUDYPLAN



Study Plan

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	<u>Thursday</u>	Friday	Saturday	Sunday

Goals for <u>this week</u>	1	Goals for <u>next week</u>	1
	2		2
	3		3



THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
ATTENTION

