



Story General Information

Be Nice to Your Brain (🧠 A Brain Facts Story) (4th Grade – 9-10 yrs.)

Because your brain does so much for you, this story describes things that you can do to protect your brain and make sure it is healthy.

- Your brain is very squishy and needs your protection.
- Your brain needs sleep – to take out the trash.
- Your brain needs energy because there is no such thing as a fat head.

The facilitator begins by introducing themselves, neuroscience, and the program, Brain Health: It's SPECTacular. Brain Health is about maintaining a happy, healthy brain to feel good. This story focuses on the physicality of the brain, its importance, and how to protect and keep it healthy.

The children review important behaviors and tasks that the brain does (breath, pump blood, move, drink, eat, etc.). The brain does a lot of work, and it is imperative for people to “be nice” to their brain to ensure it can function properly. But, what does “being nice” look like?

To understand how to take care of the brain, the children must know about the physical features of the brain. The facilitator describes how the brain is squishy and floating. It is inside the head/skull and floats in fluid to stay safe and protected. Sometimes though the brain needs extra protection. When people choose to do activities, such as riding a bike, scootering, skiing, or roller skating, it is smart to wear a helmet.

The brain also needs the body to sleep. While the body is sleeping, the brain has a job to do. The brain will clean itself! The facilitator compares the brain to a janitor. During the day, the brain is working hard and produces a lot of trash (chemicals/proteins), so at night while the body sleeps, the brain puts on its “janitor” hat and cleans up its own mess. If the brain does not have the time (sleep) to clean up the “trash,” it could lead to diseases. Sleep helps the brain prepare for a new day and protects it by keeping it healthy over an extended period of time.

To do all this work, the brain needs energy. Therefore, making positive choices when eating will help the brain. The facilitator elaborates that *good choices* on what to eat means choosing foods that have many nutrients. Nutrients help the brain function and give it the energy it needs. The children explore the “My Plate” concept and the different categories of foods. They also discuss why some foods are not as healthy as others. Foods that include high levels of sodium, added sugars, and saturated fat do not always provide what the body needs. These foods give the body energy, but it is used up quickly! The facilitator compares this concept to burning wood versus leaves. But they are yummy, so it is okay to enjoy these in moderation.

The brain tells the body what it needs: food, sleep, movement. The brain does not store energy. Therefore, it sends out messages about what it needs. People must be diligent in listening to those signs and signals from their brain so they can make smart, healthy choices.

The facilitator and children review the three major points to remember when trying to “be nice” to their brain. First, protect it by wearing a helmet. Secondly, get sleep so it can “take out the trash.” Finally, make smart choices when eating to provide the brain with sufficient energy to perform all the behaviors it needs to do so the brain can be SPEctacular!

Story Objectives:

- Students will describe three ways to *be nice to their brain* and improve overall Brain Health.
- Students will list functions of the brain.
- Students will describe how the brain looks and feels.
- Students will explain how the body and they can protect their brain.
- Students will describe the brain’s job while the body sleeps.
- Students will define “*brain trash*” and explain how the body “throws it out.”
- Students will identify how the body gets energy and explain why energy is needed.
- Students will compare and contrast foods to determine what foods are considered *healthy*.
- Students will discuss eating in moderation.