



## What to do TODAY Grade 4 (🌍 A Brain Health Story)

The world of a 4<sup>th</sup> grader is complex and has the potential to be frustrating and stressful. This is a time when children need to focus on taking care of their SPEC health, so that their brains can help them navigate through the challenges they are facing.

- 🌍 Understanding that we have a reciprocal relationship between our brain and our behaviors will help us to face these challenges to our SPEC health. We need to take care of our brain, so that our brain can take care of us.
  - 🌍 As a 4<sup>th</sup> grader you are facing lots of challenges to your SPEC health, it can be a virtual jungle out there.
  - 🌍 Just like the animals in the jungle, we need to learn how to live in a world that is always changing. Focusing on SPEC health will allow how to survive and thrive our world.
- 🌍 For this presentation, you need to have the “It’s a SPECTacular Jungle Out There” Story Video (~23 minutes). You will also need to load the following Mirror (mark) test video, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0\\_gie0HRTdQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_gie0HRTdQ) (~3.22 minutes). Be sure to have a copy of the Self-Reflection Guide for each student (copy double sided, so it is one page).

You will also need to load the video “Like Humans, Chimps Learn Behavior From One Another” - <https://youtu.be/BjMhSfxL1sw> (~3.27 minutes).

- 🌍 Start the story video and stop after the title slide.



So far, we have been learning a LOT about our brain and how to take care of our brains.

This is important, because the world we live in can be like a JUNGLE with LOTS of challenges for us to face.

Ask...What do you think are some challenges that animals in the jungle face? (finding food, avoiding being food, finding shelter, etc.)

There are LOTS of challenges that YOU also are facing that can affect your Brain Health...Ask...What are some of the challenges that you as 4<sup>th</sup> graders face? (Get responses and then show how they fit into SPEC health.)

**Social Health** – relationships with your peers are getting more complex

**Physical Health** – gym class and sports teams are getting more competitive

**Emotional Health** – all of the challenges are causing you to be stressed out - and  
**Cognitive Health** - school is getting harder.

As humans, which are animals, we face LOTS of challenges that affect our SPEC health AND this is why we have been talking to you about your brain and how to take care of it – so let's look one more time at our SPEC health.

🎨 Continue playing the Story Video and stop after the following slide.



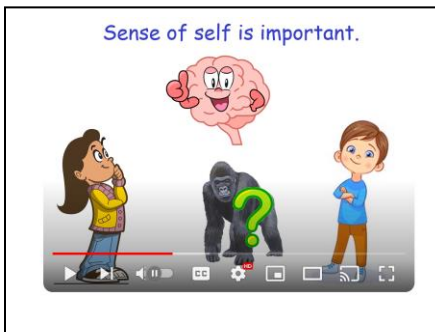
Ok...so our we have a **reciprocal relationship** with our brain. In a reciprocal relationship - you help me and I help you and we both win!!!

**OR...We help our brain** to stay healthy and **our brain helps us** do the behaviors that we need and like to do.

Your brain needs food for energy so it can do all the things that it does...but, can your brain get food all by itself? NO, it needs your body. So, you need to help your brain.

Ask...What are some of the things that you like to do? (Get a few responses – and after each describe how they could NOT do any of these things without their brains. Brain controls, movements, thoughts, emotions, etc.) So, your brain needs to help you.

🎨 Continue playing the Story Video and stop at this point in the slide with the question, “What does a gorilla have to do with that?”.



Ok...so what can we learn from the gorillas???

Our Social Health depends on us being **aware** of who we are and being able to **recognize** ourselves.

Did you know that animals – like gorillas and a few other species of animals...like ELEPHANTS – that have to live in groups and have social structures. And, it turns out that for these animals they also need a **sense of self**.

Let's see how we know this...(there is ~15 minutes left in the Story Video)

🎨 So, in order to exist in a complex social group – like on the playground or classroom – you have to have a **sense of self** – you have to recognize yourself and be aware that you are you and you are different from others.

It turns out that there are a small number of animals - only gorillas, chimpanzees, orangutans, bonobos, dolphins, magpies and elephants seem to possess this sense of self like humans do.

But...How do we know this?

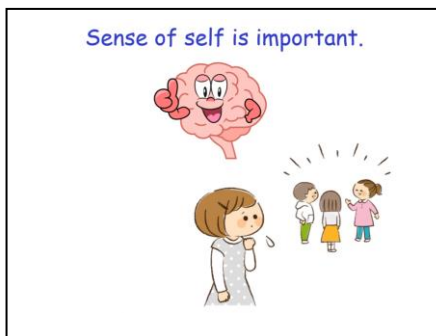
Let's play a video that explains the **Mirror (or Mark) Test** -

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0\\_qie0HRTdQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_qie0HRTdQ) . (About 3:22 minutes)

After the video, discuss the video. (You can use these questions or come up with some of your own.)

- Does a human, or any of the animals that seem to have a **sense of self**, know they are looking at themselves the **first** time they look into a mirror? (Probably not – they need to have seen a mirror before.) Ask...What does happen the first time these animals see themselves in a mirror? (They are curious, they may be afraid – thinking it is another animal, etc.)
- Why is touching the mark on their *own* body (instead of touching the mirror) the key to the animal passing the test? (Remind the students that the **mark** is put somewhere on the animals (or persons) body that they cannot see unless looking in the mirror.)
- Human babies usually don't pass this test until they are about 18 months old. Why do you think it takes humans longer to "get it" than some dolphins, who pass the test at 6 months? (Remind the students that in order to have a **sense of self** the part of your brain that needed has to be developed – so it must take 18 months for a babies to develop the "sense of self" part of the brain.)
- Ask the students if they have any questions.

🌈 Continue playing the Story Video and stop after this slide.

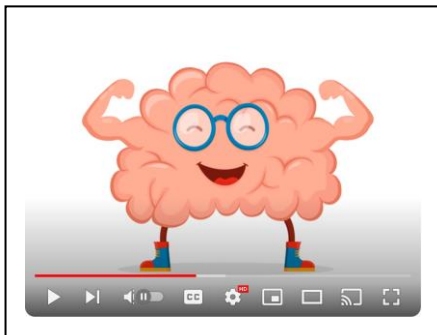


So, Social Health is MUCH more than just having lots of friends.

Social Health begins with your **sense of self** – you knowing who you are that you are different than other people, AND that it is ok to be different.

Good Social Health begins with you liking yourself and knowing what kinds of things you like to do. It will be SO much easier when you have a **sense of who you are and you like who are.**

🌈 Continue playing the Story Video and stop after this slide.



Remember, you are not alone – you have other people around you that you can talk to if you are having problems with your Social Health. These other people make up your **support system**.

Tell the students...(share with the students) I know that when I am doubting myself or I am not liking myself I talk to \*\*\* (give the name of someone in your support system and explain their relationship to you).

Ask the students...who is someone in your support system? (Get responses)

- Having a support system is just as important as YOU knowing who you are.

Ask the students...what do you like to do? (Get responses)

- When you know what kinds of things you like to do, it makes it easier to ask others to join you in doing these things. You can have fun and they can too.

Plus, did you know that your **sense of self** – changes all the time??? Yup, it changes throughout your entire life. So, it is REALLY important to always try to know yourself and like yourself. That makes it easier for you to get to know and like others – and for them to like you.

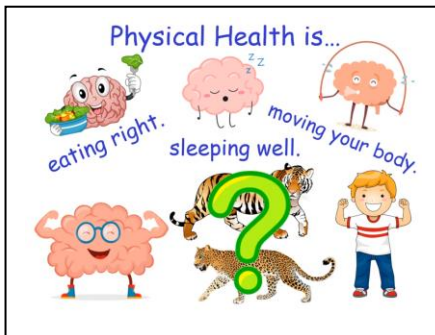
We are going to give you a Self-Reflection Guide that you can do later if you want to – you don't have to – but, this will help you to think about who you are. Because knowing who you are is important to your Social Health and to you brain health.

(Assure the students that this this activity is to help them better understand themselves. It can help others too, so they may want to share it with others in their family)

Remind the students that...

- While friends are important, it is even MORE important for us to know ourselves and love ourselves. This will make finding friends so much easier and it will help the SOCIAL parts of the brain to stay healthy.

- Continue playing the Story Video and stop after the question, "What do tigers and leopards have to do with that?".



Ask...Does anyone know what tigers and leopards have to do with our doing behaviors to take care of our Physical Health? (Get responses)

Of course, ALL animals need to eat, sleep and move their bodies to do behaviors that keep them alive.

Plus, **competition** for food is big in the animal kingdom.

- Continue playing the Story Video and stop after this slide.



So, remember you don't have to win all the time or at all to keep your brain healthy. All you have to do is move your body and **try your best**.

It is also good to **TRY** different kinds of physical activities – because you never know what you will like and what you will be good at.

Ask the students...what kinds of **physical activities** have they tried that they ended up liking?

- Continue playing the Story Video and stop after this slide of the Physical Health section.



While sometimes our competitions may seem REALLY important – always remember, that our competitions are supposed to be fun and helping us with our Physical Health.

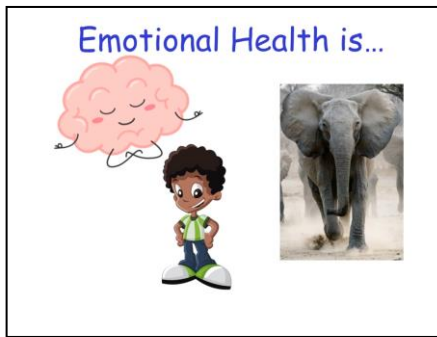
They are NOT life or death competitions – like the tigers and leopards who are competing for the same foods.

Remind the students that...

- Moving our bodies is also important – but, even though you may be feeling the pressure to try to win all the time – it is more important for you to be trying your best and prepare for the physical activities that you may have to do. It is also important to try different physical activities to find some that you actually **want** to do. This will make the PHYSICAL parts of the brain healthy.

So, that takes care of the “S” and the “P” in SPEctacular. Next, we are going to look at our Emotional Health – which is the “E” in SPEctacular.

- Continue playing the Story Video and stop after the following slide.



So, basically for you to have good Emotional Health you do NOT want to act like an elephant!!!

You need to **understand** that it is ok to have different emotions – like getting angry or feeling sad, but you need to remember that your emotions have an effect on your behaviors.

So, when you are angry, and you just want to scream or hit something, you need to channel your emotions and use your own coping mechanisms to calm yourself down.

- At this point there is ~6 minutes in the Story Video and another 5-10 minute activity, if time permits have a discussion about things that make the students experience very intense emotions, and then discuss their coping mechanisms.

- What are some situations that make your really **angry**? (Discuss)
- What are some things that you do when you are **angry**? (Discuss)
- What are some of “your personal escapes” that you choose to COPE with the situation that makes you **angry**? (Discuss)

Depending on how the discussions go, you can then ask the same questions for things that make them **sad**.

Remind the students that...

- It is important for you to identify your emotions and to NOT let them control your behaviors. Emotions happen, and we cannot stop them – but, we can stop ourselves from behaving badly because of our emotions.

- Continue playing the Story Video and stop after the following slide.



Ok...so we can use what we learn about the world we live in to help our Cognitive Health – the “C” in SPEctacular.

All animals need to **learn** and that helps the cognitive parts of the brain.

Let’s watch some chimps and see how they learn.

- Play the video “Like Humans, Chimps Learn Behavior From One Another” -<https://youtu.be/BjMhSfxL1sw> (3:27). Discuss some the key points in the video using the questions?

- How did the chimps first learn how to get the honey from the termite hill? (one of the more inquisitive chimps used a stick.)
- How did the other chimps learn? (By watching the chimp with the stick.)
- How did the chimp who had not learned this behavior finally learn it? (The man **helped** him by showing the chimp how to use a stick to get the honey.)

Our Cognitive Health is VERY important for keeping our brains healthy. And...like the chimps we can learn from others.

- Continue playing the Story Video and stop at this point in the slide and reiterate the important concepts.



Explain how this slide tells us how we can help our “cognitive” or “thinking” brain to learn better and stay healthy.

Our brains help us to learn about the world that we live in, so that we can survive. So, **learning** is very important to our Cognitive Health.

Reiterate and discuss each of the following points with the students. For each of the statements, ask “why” the statement helps you to learn better.

1. Learning and understanding is more important than memorizing. Ask the students why? (If you understand something then you are thinking about it and it is making sense to you.)
2. You will learn better if you learn over time and not cram in information. Ask the students why? (Explain that when you cram information – you are just borrowing it. But, when you learn it over time – it is more permanent.)
3. You need to figure out the best ways for you to learn different things. Ask the students why? (Learning in a way that “fits them” helps them to feel smarter and less frustrated with having to learn.)
4. Have fun while you learn. Ask the students why? (Having fun makes your brain happy and healthy – and it will make the student happier and healthier doing something that they thought was not fun.)
5. Ask for help. Ask the students why? (It is better to ask for help when you are having trouble learning than to try and figure things out for yourself. Knowing that you are not alone will help the stress of learning go away.)

- Play the Story Video until the end (~3 minutes) or end the presentation – depending on time.

Tell the students that you had fun reminding them about how taking care of their...

- Social Health – the “S” in SPECTacular
- Physical Health – the “P” in SPECTacular
- Emotional Health – the “E” in SPECTacular
- Cognitive Health – the “C” in SPECTacular is important for their Brain Health.

Remind them that the world around us is **always** changings and there are LOTS of challenges.

Knowing how to keep our Social, Physical, Emotional, and Cognitive parts of our brain healthy is important to help us deal with those challenges.

Be sure to thank them for letting you share the Brain Health: It's SPECTacular™ program with them. Tell them that you have had fun and you hope they have had fun too!!!

Then finish with...as Dr. Gorman likes to say, learning about brain health is not just SPECTacular – it is FUN too!!!

So...say it with me... learning about brain health is not just SPECTacular – it is FUN too!!!

## Self-Reflection Guide – Getting to Know You

What are some of your talents or skills? What talents or skills give you the most satisfaction or pride?

What talent or skill do you hope to develop someday?

What are five of your strengths?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What are two of your weaknesses?

- 1.
- 2.

What are your best qualities? What qualities do you wish you had?

What are the three most important things to you?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How are “school you” and the “home you” different?

What are your three proudest moments?

List three things that you are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List three things that you are NOT:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What do you like most about yourself? What do you like least about yourself?

Be honest, do you like yourself now? If yes, GREAT!!! If not, what can you do so that you will like yourself?  
You CAN DO IT!!!