



Brain-Based Parenting: The Neuroscience of Caregiving for Healthy Attachment (Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology)

By Daniel A. Hughes, Jonathan Baylin

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An attachment specialist and a clinical psychologist with neurobiology expertise team up to explore the brain science behind parenting.

In this groundbreaking exploration of the brain mechanisms behind healthy caregiving, attachment specialist Daniel A. Hughes and veteran clinical psychologist Jonathan Baylin guide readers through the intricate web of neuronal processes, hormones, and chemicals that drive—and sometimes thwart—our caregiving impulses, uncovering the mysteries of the parental brain.

The biggest challenge to parents, Hughes and Baylin explain, is learning how to regulate emotions that arise—feeling them deeply and honestly while staying grounded and aware enough to preserve the parent–child relationship. Stress, which can lead to “blocked” or dysfunctional care, can impede our brain’s inherent caregiving processes and negatively impact our ability to do this. While the parent–child relationship can generate deep empathy and the intense motivation to care for our children, it can also trigger self-defensive feelings rooted in our early attachment relationships, and give rise to “unparental” impulses.

Learning to be a “good parent” is contingent upon learning how to manage this stress, understand its brain-based cues, and respond in a way that will set the brain back on track. To this end, Hughes and Baylin define five major “systems” of caregiving as they’re linked to the brain, explaining how they operate when parenting is strong and what happens when good parenting is compromised or “blocked.” With this awareness, we learn how to approach kids with renewed playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, and empathy, re-regulate our caregiving systems, foster deeper social engagement, and facilitate our children’s development.

Infused with clinical insight, illuminating case examples, and helpful

illustrations, *Brain-Based Parenting* brings the science of caregiving to light for the first time. Far from just managing our children's behavior, we can develop our "parenting brains," and with a better understanding of the neurobiological roots of our feelings and our own attachment histories, we can transform a fraught parent-child relationship into an open, regulated, and loving one.

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Editorial Review

Review

“The authors . . . offer salient real-world vignettes that will resonate with parents and clinicians alike. . . . [H]ighly recommended reading for anyone hoping to get a taste of the exciting new field of interpersonal biology and enrich their knowledge of parenting.” (Journal of Psychiatric Practice)

“*Brain-Based Parenting* is one in a W. W. Norton series on interpersonal neurobiology, launched by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. Neuroscience and cognitive psychology are among the most exciting new fields about the brain and behavior in a long time. This book does sound justice to these subjects and to the evolving way that science can (and must) inform and assist everyday human endeavors, including, in this case, parenting.” (The Huffington Post)

“Our authors serve as empathic and wise guides through the intricacies of both detailed brain circuits and helpful parenting strategies. We, the fortunate readers, are taken on a powerful journey that illuminates ways of improving our efficacy as parents and enhancing our pleasure in the experience itself.” (From the Foreword by Daniel J. Siegel, MD, author of *Parenting from the Inside Out* and *The Whole-Brain Child*)

“Hughes and Baylin offer an exciting, concrete, and practical new model for examining how parents behave. Their approach offers a straightforward way to maximize parenting effectiveness. This book will help you wire your parenting brain so you can not only take good care of your kids, but also enjoy them!” (Thomas W. Phelan, PhD, author of *1-2-3 Magic: Effective Discipline for Children 2–12*)

“Writing with warmth and sensitivity, Hughes and Baylin traverse the great divide between neuroscience and practice, helping both clinicians and parents understand the brain mechanisms that may disrupt and block them from loving and supporting their children. Not only does the book promote better parenting, but it provides insights into the relationship between the therapist and parent.” (Stephen Porges, PhD, Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Brain–Body Center, University of Illinois at Chicago, and author of *The Polyvagal Theory*)

About the Author

Daniel A. Hughes, PhD, is a prominent attachment specialist and private practitioner. President of the Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy Institute, he consults and gives trainings in the U.S. and abroad on issues of attachment and family therapy. He is the author of *Attachment-Focused Family Therapy*, *Attachment-Focused Family Therapy Workbook*, and *Attachment-Focused Parenting*.

Jonathan Baylin, PhD, a psychologist in private practice, offers workshops for therapists on integrating knowledge about the brain with psychotherapy.

Daniel J. Siegel, MD is a graduate of Harvard Medical School and completed his postgraduate medical education at UCLA with training in pediatrics and child, adolescent, and adult psychiatry. He is currently a clinical professor of psychiatry at the UCLA School of Medicine, founding co-director of UCLA’s Mindful Awareness Research Center, founding co-investigator at the UCLA Center for Culture, Brain and Development, and executive director of the Mindsight Institute, an educational center devoted to promoting insight, compassion, and empathy in individuals, families, institutions, and communities. Dr. Siegel’s psychotherapy practice spans thirty years, and he has published extensively for the professional audience. He

serves as the Founding Editor for the Norton Professional Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology which includes over three dozen textbooks. Dr. Siegel's books include Mindsight, Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology, The Developing Mind, Second Edition, The Mindful Therapist, The Mindful Brain, Parenting from the Inside Out (with Mary Hartzell, M.Ed.), and the three New York Times bestsellers: Brainstorm, The Whole-Brain Child (with Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.), and his latest No-Drama Discipline (with Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.). He has been invited to lecture for the King of Thailand, Pope John Paul II, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Google University, and TEDx. For more information about his educational programs and resources, please visit: www.DrDanSiegel.com.

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