A Real Parent Story: Finding a New Path for Her Child's Developmental Growth Transcript

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Introduction to Connect My Brain

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And sometimes you'll say something and I'll think, there's no way I am going to able to do that, or there is no that he is going do do. That and we try it.

I wasn't so bad. OK, we can do this. Now, other people might be able to just laser focus, push in, and do it at a rapid pace. That's not our family. We have to do in baby steps.

But once I get more comfortable with it, I'm learning more, here, listening, watching, able say, okay, even if we're going in babies steps, we are still making baby step in the right direction.

Everything is connected and I'm here to tell you how. I am Dr. Laura Hanson with Connect My Brain. This podcast is for moms who are concerned about their child's development.

The brain impacts our mind, body, and overall health. I explain how your brain is wired, what happens when it's out of balance, and how early childhood development not only impacts your child but can affect you as an adult years later.

Want to know how to improve your life? Join me and learn about your amazing brain and what it can do for you. Hey everybody, it's Dr. Laura with Connect My Brain.

And it so exciting, we're actually expanding our words. We're gonna go to connect my child's brain. Because that's really what we are doing is we working on your children.

Today, I'm so excited. I have a mom who is part of our practice right now and her son is coming here. And just in conversation, I think we found that it might be really helpful if you could hear her story.

And we're going to follow this. This is not going be a one and done. It's going a few how she got into the program, why she decided to do the programme, and then what kind of pitfalls did we already run into, what are we doing now, where are going.

So I'd love to introduce you into Jessica Simon. Hey, everyone. We're so glad that you're here. Thank you and happy to be here! Good, good. So let's just dive in.

You have a son and he is here at Connect My Brain. And what was going on, and go even before Connect my Brain, what is going that he said, okay, some stuff isn't right.

I need to do something. Then what did you do? So we have been on a journey for most of Thomas's life. We noticed sort of at the very beginning that there were some signs that maybe there was a little bit of developmental differences kind of starting to be apparent.

So, we've been a track of early intervention. having going to a specialized school, working with other kinds of therapists. We went down the path of medication when it was recommended to us by our pediatrician and the school that he was attending that you might need that.

And we were just given all the things that we we're doing.

Jessicau2019s Journey and Early Concerns

We felt like there were things that weren't as far along as we hoped. It didn't feel like things were as connected and integrated as they could be. So we had some really wonderful supportive friends in your community too who had shared their stories with us along the way.

I have to admit at first I was a little bit hesitant about heading down this path. It was out of my wheelhouse. Connect my brain. Yes. Okay. I wish this less familiar and less comfortable in a way with sort of why are we doing this and what is this really all about.

But after continuing on our journey and, again, feeling like this just doesn't feel like things are clicking as well as we'd like to, especially the medication path, it was not giving us the results that we wanted, specially given the side effects that were having.

So we just really thought, okay, let's be open. Let's try something new and see where it leads. And, you know, that's a very common feeling is because, one, I'm a chiropractor and, the way healthcare is structured And for all of us is that, you know, we see a label like Doctor of Chiropractic and we frame it.

And there's no other possible thing that you could possibly be doing than cracking somebody's back, right? And let alone somebody in chiropractic who is working with children and has a full-blown developmental program.

Right, so I get that. I got that a lot and it's one of the reasons why I went after all the credentials that I did because I, over the years, I mean this is 30 years into this and I've had to really explain myself over and over again, you know.

I would say now it's getting a little bit more comfortable. People know me, they know what I've been doing for a while. They know that I have got the credentials to go with it.

But it is a fair feeling. It is. I will say when we had our initial assessment and I said, okay, I'm just going to give this a chance. And I am just gonna see what she said.

And sure enough, if you didn't say every single thing without me really sharing that much beforehand, I mean, of course you had the general idea why I was coming in, but you said a lot in that initial assessment, in the initial review where I felt like, oh, like she really sees the very things that we've been struggling with.

And it just gave me a lot of hope. It gave you a sort of excitement about what we could look forward to and maybe getting away from some of the more conventionally recommended treatments that we were struggling with.

And we kept kind of thinking, well, why is this working for everyone else? Why are they succeeding? why are we not getting any better? And, it's hard to watch your child struggle and be sort seeing specialists and swallowing pills and becoming more aware and yet not having the improvements that you're hoping for.

Right. And it does. It just becomes then this long drawn out journey And kids, when they get to the place where, if you take me to one more person, right?

And as they older, sure, they got frustrated with it too, you know? Okay, so we have a program and we really try to go a step-by-step kind of a process.

Sometimes we're really successful to get that like succinct motion going forward. But life happens and I can attest to life happening. We all have life happen.

And when those moments come up, I find that sometimes it's very derailing for families and you're trying to juggle schoolwork, other doctor's appointments, and other things going on in your life.

these things that Connect My Brain wants you to do. And we try to really minimize the homework. Would you

agree? It's not that thing. No. We take the heavy, because that's one of the things I really feel.

Parents, you don't want to come to a program and then have to go home and do hours of homework, too. School's already hard. We don't need to do that. But still, sometimes it just derails.

Yeah. Do you feel like that happened to you? Oh, yes. My nature is not overly rigid and consistent. Like, I struggle with that just as a person. So when you add in life and schedules and traffic and, you know, family dynamics and having multiple children that you're trying to cater to, just life, like you said.

Even the little things, especially when it's something new and it is something that your not familiar with, it can feel harder and bigger than it really is.

So I think for me, part of going through this program and connect my brain with my son has also been myself and getting more flexible in my thinking as I'm trying to be more open to the things that you recommend.

And sometimes you'll say something and I'll think, there's no way I am going to able to do that. Or there is no that he is going do to that and we try and then like, it wasn't so bad.

Like, okay, we can do this. Now, other people might be able to just laser focus, push in, and do it at a rapid pace. That's not our family. We have to do in baby steps.

But once I get more comfortable with it, I'm learning more, here, listening, watching, I'm able to say, okay, even if we are going in baby steps, we're still making baby stops in the right direction.

Yeah. So giving myself grace, giving the process grace and saying, Okay, some people could do this really fast. And some People can't. But that doesn't mean that it's not worth trying.

to continue to do. And it doesn't mean that you're wrong. Right. You know, I mean, like you said, everybody's family is different. Yes. Things happen, and trying to bring something new in, that was a really good point, too.

Building Flexibility and Taking Baby Steps

That's not always the easiest thing, because we get into routine. We get in the patterns. Yep. Then you are like, oh, okay, throw something else into it.

Yeah. When we were talking about that, one of the things I've noticed over the years is that Sometimes parents feel like they've disappointed the provider, and that's the thing I really try to talk about, overcome.

It's one of the reasons why we decided to do this podcast, because I think a human feeling to feel that way, but we don't want anybody to. Right. It's more important, what I think I pride myself on with this program, is the uniqueness of it.

And that's why it is sometimes hard to explain because there isn't a one size fits all. You have to meet the child, you have the meet family. When I'm doing my report with the parents, I always say I am going to be part of your family for a little while.

Because I have to able to listen to you. I need to see the struggles that you are going through and try to help create a successful pathway. And not everybody can do everything.

So I really appreciate it when we get to these points that we can actually start to be in more conversation about, all right, what's going on? What are you struggling with?

And then the check-ins. Yes, absolutely. And you gave me some great feedback yesterday about how we could do some better check ins, even at Connect My Brain.

We really believe in community. we really believed in listening to our parents. Jessica gave some some ideas about maybe like on a Saturday when parents are bringing their kids here, we can have the parents come in.

And that could be a really good time for them to ask questions, get some examples. We had a good encounter yesterday with Thomas. And you could see, why don't you share that?

You guys were really focused on his ability for memory. So I brought you into the movement room and I showed you some stuff. Why don't you share that?

Like what you showed me or how it impacted? Both. Do a little bit of both. Whatever feels comfortable. So it was really fun and cool for me to see specific activities that kind of look like games, you know, and Thomas is having fun doing them.

But I also got to sort of see how is he being prompted? Like, what are the instructions that he's getting and processing? And then what's he doing with it?

What's she working on? In our case, it was memory, visual processing, that sort thing. So seeing him in front of the screen, working the connecting the dots, using all of his, you know, faculties to better replicate, you know, the drawing and then also the metronome, like, working on the timing.

It was great for me to see how you target those things specifically, but also how he's doing with it. Yes. So, not that I doubted what you said in terms of, oh, I know he is having these struggles, doing something and you see them getting a little bit stuck or you where it's maybe not as fluid as you want it to be, it helps the parent kind of say, okay, this is why we're here and this what they're doing and these aren't things that I can really easily do at whole.

So it is a good reason to committed to making the drive, coming here, getting in the clinic, And it's fun. Like, Thomas was having fun, he wasn't, you know, struggling or mad or, and he was fun with it.

He was proud of what he is able to demonstrate and show some of the strategies that he's already successfully learning. So I could kind of see some the progress that's he making, which is reinforcing for him and for me.

And then another really cool thing was I got a chance to spontaneously say, hey Thomas, let's show Dr. Hansen how we're doing with our brushing. And you watched me do the brushing, but what was really great for me is that you said, hey, did you notice this?

His hands curled. That's something I would never have seen. So like when I get the email that the check-ins and you say ask for feedback, I wouldn't have even thought to say that to you because I didn't see that tiny detail.

But now I do. So now, if I have those little opportunities to say, hey, let's just show one time. Yes, absolutely. You can also be training me on just developing a finer tuned eye of what kinds of signs could indicate different things.

Now, do you remember from yesterday what side of the brain is the detail? Yes. So the details is right side? No, it's the left side. I know left-side is thinking brain, right- side is feeling brain?

And then your right is big picture? and your left side is the detail. So one of the things that she's describing, we have a therapy here called neurosensory integrator.

And one are the tools that we can use to work on memory is, the child will see a box that has 25 dots in it. There'll be an abstract picture created through lines, circles, et cetera.

We literally teach them I want you to use your imagination and I wanted to make a picture out of those lines, circles, et cetera. And then I wants you give me two to three details.

So now we're literally teaching that child what the right side of the brain is helping them accomplish, what's the left side is the brains helping then accomplish and then how to put it together.

And that was something I noticed with Thomas yesterday too. And I shared it in our power hour with the girls when we're talking about like, what are we going to do today with our cases?

Is that first round of them, it took him four tries to get the picture, but he took initiative in those encounters because he wanted to it right. Yes.

Okay. And then the second one was only like three times, but he was then executing a very fast strategy. I looked at you and I said, he's really good with numbers.

He's using a skill that he has to enhance his brain. Right. If we can tap into that, what he is naturally, innately drawn to, It makes the whole thing happen faster, but also keeps the fun in it.

And so I did, I saw drive and motivation yesterday, and that was really exciting. We can have many things for these kids to do, But once we really zero in, where are we gonna really move that needle the biggest?

We're gonna work on that and work that because you bridge it, two other things that you do, you know?

Observing Thomasu2019s Progress in Session

So now we've kind of regrouped and we're back on track and were doing most of the things. We've got some physiology stuff we are going to still get back onto track.

But now going forward, how do you feel? How do feel about When you came in, where you are now, what do you see? Where are you going? I see a path for using what's already there for Thomas and fine tuning it, strengthening it.

And most importantly, giving him the tools and the feeling that he can control it and that's the most exciting part for me is that building up that confidence, building this sort of trust in himself, that these are things that, you know, maybe need to be improved a little bit, but that he can do it.

He has these experiences that help him exercise that muscle of feeling what it feels like when he gets that focus or he get that memory piece right. Yeah.

Then we talked about his cadence of speech. One of the things when children maybe sound like they can't really get their words out, it's almost like, they get grip in the words.

It's really a little form of stuttering, is really what it is, right? And don't worry about it. And that's absolutely part of the brain. It's part the basal ganglion, which has to do with how movement is going to be delivered.

Okay? And so one of things that you and I talked about after we went to neurofeedback, and i'm giving him direction on what is it that I want you to accomplish in this session.

So if you're not familiar with neurofeedback, after we do a brain map, 19 channel gold standard, really looking at the powers, the organization of the brainwaves, then the children will do, a neuro feedback session.

Adults come here and do neuro-feed back as well. So they'll wear little leads on their head, and what creates the feedback mechanism, which you are, you ARE a feed back mechanism.

When you're hungry, You get a message that says, feed me. when youre cold, like you re always cold in Dr. Hanson's office. You bring either blankets or wear a jacket.

We get blanket from me! I make it cold at hand, don't I? I like it cold. But you get feedback. And so when we're doing neuro-feedback, a filter goes over the screen of whatever it is that they're watching.

Whatever you're watch is entertaining the conscious brain. We are working on the subconscious brain, and this is a

big deal for children, okay? Because the sub-conscious brain runs a gazillion neurons where the conscious brain, to really create that contrast, think of it running at about 40. So your subconscious brain is doing the majority of the work in your lives, not just in neurofeedback.

But that subconscious brain is going to start forming the last trimester of pregnancy up until about the child's seven and a half, eight and half years old.

OK, Thomas is nine. So we have to feed into it not only where he is developmentally, but where we want him to be. So we have to teach. So when the filter goes over the screen, when a child or the person is in the correct pattern that the software is set for, the picture is going to go bright.

And there's going be a little sound. So you're using the visual and the auditory systems to get into that subconscious brain. And over time, what we do is we make sure that the child recognizes them, and they can tell us, yes, I see the picture going bright and dark.

Yes, I hear the little sound. And as they get comfortable with it, we can ask them, so how'd you do today? Oh, it did great. How do you know? Because the picture was bright most of the time.

So they learn how they are gaining that self-regulation through neurofeedback. Yesterday when I was talking with Thomas, i'm really bringing that concept to his awareness right now.

So what do you notice about the screen? What happens on the street? And his cadence of speech, you have to give him a minute. And unfortunately, a lot of times we have a tendency that we might speak for the child.

We might say, is this what you were going to say? But that too can become a repetitive pattern to the child and begin for that child to even withdraw away more from speaking.

And that'll take us back. I want to bring some layers into this. So that's going to bring us back into the right side of the brain. The right-side of brain is the need to talk.

the left- side is to the work of it. If he gets frustrated over and over again because it takes him a minute to top, that will dampen that rightside more and make it to where it's uncomfortable for him.

So I can recognize that, and I just sit and wait. I could hook up wires. And eventually it comes out. You even shared with me yesterday that when people interrupt him, that's one of his frustrations.

Yes. Right? And then we're also working on some emotional regulation. That's a big part for him. Do you want to share a little bit about what happens?

Well, he's usually a delightful child. Oh, very sweet. But he does have big feelings and he'll have certain things, triggers that can just unhinge him.

And when that happens, you can see it just come over his whole being to the point where even at nine years old, like we're still dealing with falling on the floor tantrums at whole.

He works really hard to hold that in other environments. We have seen it happen, but it's very rare. But at home, when he's in his safe place, he does tend to kind of let that roll.

Brain Function, Neurofeedback, and Emotional Regulation

And it just really disrupted to our home life. Coming back to what we were talking about at the beginning of different families, why is it harder for some families than others?

Why are new things harder? This is a big reason why for us, even the smallest little ask, like, hey, could you just take this extra little supplement before, you know, a couple minutes before dinner?

Could you try to do the charcoal, the gut cleansing? That's a BIG deal for US. Because for him, getting him to comply, and getting to be willing, to get him do that on top of Hey come to the table.

It's time to eat dinner But he's really not that motivated to come and eat because he super picky and he doesn't like food time and eating time is Not an easy time for our family, right?

So then when you add in those extra little steps that probably aren't that big of a deal, but in our Family, that's like a whole extra layer of challenge coming back to whole emotional regulation piece so We're hoping little steps by little step as we can access some of this make him more confident and aware of his ability to control that.

Yes. Some of these new things will also become easier, they'll become more familiar, but he'll also be able to tolerate just the general minor discomfort that might come with trying something new.

See, and that is, that's a huge deal for families, it really is. So, right side of the brain is your emotional quotient, left side is the your intellectual quotients.

So now think back in our conversation, how I said he's really good with numbers, right? So intellectually, he is a very smart child. But the right side of the brain, his emotions, it would indicate that it's dampened, that we're not getting that same kind of power.

And therefore, we are going to see, I hate the word behavior, but we will see more behavior-like stuff. rather than being able to reason through it. So a lot, I think, of what began to become greater awareness to me of, what you all were struggling with, as well as, okay, so what are we going to do?

We came together and we had a meeting, you, your husband, and me. And we were able, to really talk through and start to discuss just some new ideas or old ideas reinvented, or all the ideas under new input, right?

And so we're working on that, but it also ties in with what we are talking about, like with interactive metronome, trying to make both sides of the brain work the way that they are designed to work, ebb and flow between both side.

And so that's what we do here at Connect My Brain. It's not just like one thing, it's the ability to stand back and know how neurology works and then begin to give that child an individual way to support them, not just one program that's kind of like, you know, distributed throughout all of the kids.

They've all got very unique features and you have to address it that way. So we finished up our time yesterday looking at some additional strategies that we can do at home.

That was super helpful. Great. Okay, so let's tell everybody. So as you were showing me the different programs, gangs that he's doing here at the clinic, it just led to a natural conversation about, hey, when this happens, here's something you can try because this will activate this part of the brain, which will get him back into a thinking mode versus that over emotional state.

Perfect. Boy, you said that well. I'm listening. So the ball throwing using the left hand, which actually Thomas is left handed, so it seems like that would be easy, except for when he's throwing a ball, he likes to switch to the right side.

It was a challenge for him to continually use that left-hand, but it was great to hear, hey, this is a really easy thing you can have in the house. kind of distraction, but it's also doing this very specific thing or the polar bear shake off.

Yeah. Oh, that's great. So teaching him and me together, hey, when you start feeling that feeling coming on, here's something you could do to kind shut that down before we get into kind a danger zone.

Yes, where nobody's winning. Right. And then when we were together, you, me and your husband, we actually brought Thomas into the room afterwards. Yeah.

I could then partner with the parents so that they don't feel alone and talk to Thomas. And we had a one-on-one, I held his hands and I said, hey, i'm learning that this is what's going on at home.

And you don't do it here, but I want to help you so that you're not doing it at Home too. I find that if we pull our resources together, We are a community.

We're not allowing that whatever's going on for that child or that family like in hiding, right? It's out in the light and it doesn't make you a bad person.

It is just strategy that's become a pattern. And we just have to put in enough repetition to get that pattern to go in other direction. What I want you to think about, if it relates to you or your child, is whatever habits you've done automatically, rather it's the way you tie your shoes.

It's how you think how you think about yourself, how your child thinks about themselves. Whatever that thought or mechanical that you've done over and over again, I want you to think of it as a giant tree.

And I love when I'm talking to people because I look out there at that tree and it literally reminds me what I am trying to describe. So if you have a tree that can look at, There are no branches that are all going in the same direction.

It's a beautiful replication of what goes on in your brain. But you get big trees on these things that you do all the time. Now, if somebody said, hey, I just need you to stop doing that, that would be like trying to glue one twig on a branch.

it's not going to change the pattern. You have to have enough time, intensity, and repetition to change that. So if I want to go in another direction, I have put some energy into what direction I wanna go.

And in about five to six days, you actually get a bud. blowing in your head. Now, adults get this feeling, oh, I got this. And then they stop doing it and the bud shrivels up and goes away.

But if we nurture it, just like we did that other pattern and habit, it's gonna grow. There's another thing that's going on. The microglia cells. If they catch wind, these are your Pac-Man and your brain that are always cleaning things up.

If the get wind women, there's less attention to the big tree. Oh, I'm gonna go start to gobble it up and take the resources, the myelin, over to new tree and now you've got momentum.

Now you're starting to see light bulbs. That's the gamma brain waves.

Home Strategies and Encouragement for Families

Light bulbs going on. And you are starting recognize what you have to do. Then it's much easier then to keep it going. So the brain will work with you.

It loves novelty. meaning new. It loves intensity, it loves frequency. So when you're thinking about, okay, well, you know, this sounds kind of good. How could I start this on my own?

I love to tell people, go look at a hamster in a wheel. They're not going very far, are they? No. They just going in a circle. Yeah. Right? So the first thing you have to do is you to step off the hamster wheel.

And you had to go another direction. That's exactly what you all did. Yep. Okay. It doesn't mean it's all going to navigate perfectly to begin with. Right.

It may not work perfectly the first time, but keep going. Keep trying. Start over. And don't be afraid to start over! That's right. I mean, there have been times you've said, like, how's this going?

And I say, you know, not great. We need to try that again, a different way. Or maybe we need whatever. So well why don't you finish it up for us and just be a mom and talk to somebody out there who might be going through some of the same things you are going with and share some encouragement and maybe you know say hey you can get some information here.

My takeaway on that note would be Don't be afraid to try something new. Even if it's out of your wheelhouse, you've never tried it before, be open, take the first step.

Just try it, try the step and don't let the idea of the whole program or the maybe long-term goal that you have keep you from just focusing on taking that first.

And you might find that, if you try a couple of things and something that was gonna be really hard turns out not to be hard. and something that you thought was going to be really easy hasn't been as easy.

You know, I think that's part of life and that part trying new things. Also, you don't know how everybody else in your equation is going respond. Sometimes you are really gung-ho, committed, but then you have other players.

There's, the rest of your family involved, there's extended family, community, and you just have to try to keep coming back to being open, keep taking the baby steps.

Sometimes they go easy, sometimes they don't. You know, maybe you're a family that you can just really make a commitment and you could push something through very, very quickly and consistently.

There are powerhouse people who can do that. And then there's people that I think, I don' want to make it like a negative connotation. It's just a different style.

Like you might just be more of a slow and steady wins the race kind of. And you might need to try something a couple different ways to find the best way for you and your child.

And I think that's been a wonderful thing about working with you is I don't feel like you ever look at a child or a family in a one-size-fits-all. Oh, good.

And you take the time to get to know people and you give grace and your like, okay, well, that's all right. Keep trying. You know, come back to it another time.

If that is not working, let's put that over here for a minute. Maybe we come to that later. I think that helps. Good. Well, I am so grateful that you are willing to do this because I moms need to hear other moms' stories, you know, because we're all trying to do really great things and sometimes it just gives us a little bit more encouragement.

Yes. So if you have enjoyed this podcast or you keep listening to these podcasts, don't keep Connect My Brain or Connect my Child's Brain a secret. share it with your community, share with friends, and reach out and help someone take that first step.

Thanks, Jessica. I hope you all have a wonderful day and be blessed. Thanks for listening. I hope today's lesson will help you or someone you love. Do you have a question or just really want to talk to somebody about brains?

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