# Ep 156: My Three-Tier Approach To Addressing The Root Causes Of Learning And Behavioral Challenges Transcript

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## Introduction to Connect My Brain

Hi, everybody. It's Dr. Laura with Connect My Brain. Thanks so much for tuning in. I would really like to spend this particular podcast on defining who I am as a practitioner and to really help people understand what we do here at Connect my Brain after 30 years of doing this work.

I may be taking it for granted that people truly do understand what we do. But I do, I get feedback. I got feedback from my podcast manager to really define the words that we use.

i even did a video, a professional video in the office and even in that mom's testimony she wanted people to understand that you have to really dive in to understanding everything that we do at Connect My Brain.

So I thought, you know, I'm just going to tell the story so that people really do understand what it is that do. Because sometimes I even get calls, are you a psychologist and can you do a psych eval?

And I say, no, And I'm not doing psych evals, but I absolutely am working on the developmental journey of children, which absolutely involves their brain.

And it gives me an opportunity to have a conversation with someone so that they can decide, well, wait a minute. Do I need to go put a label on something or could we first do a developmental assessment and see what the issues are?

And that's really, that at the heartbeat of Connect My Brain. So just to kind of go backwards a little bit, I actually was going to be an attorney. I was told my whole life I'm going be attorney and of course I just automatically thought, okay, i'm gonna be in attorney until I became a paralegal and worked at four different law firms in Atlanta, Georgia, and thought, there's no way in the world I could spend the rest of my life doing this.

And at that time, I was married and my husband at the time was going to chiropractic school. So I went over and got a part-time job. I just was amazed at all this information that was available through A chiropractic education and i was actually i said to myself okay there's still some sciences that i need because if you're first going after like a political science degree.

you don't get into all the sciences. And so I needed more sciences to enter the program. So I said to myself, self, if I can get through those sciences quickly so that I could step into the then I will consider that this is the path I should take.

## From Law to Chiropractic

Well that was a very fun adventure. I had to take biology two, organic chemistry one and two physics one in two. I think that's it. And I did these classes in an accelerated speed of six weeks each.

One really interesting part, and I see all of the things that I've been through and have learned, how it has led me to where I am today. But one of the things that I decided to do in organic chemistry and physics was to create flow charts.

And I mean, back then it was like really using giant Post-it notes, but these were just giant poster boards. I literally would put reactions and steps into a flow.

and they were written in different colors depending upon what step went with what reaction or what that next step

should be. So I was color coding, I putting it into a sequence, And those are neurological concepts that I was grasping even way back then in order to help my own brain get this information in as quickly as possible.

Well, it gets even more fun because everybody loved my flow charts and everybody wanted a copy and I could take my poster to a print shop And I actually made $5,000. I thought that was really great.

And then I was actually asked to do some tutoring for people. So here is a person I never thought I would have that kind of capability and I surprised myself.

And it's kind of neat even sitting here talking about this with you right now because we've recently done an executive function webinar and some of these pieces are just they're reminding me of things that I was talking.

So people could understand what is executive and we need to understand that that too is a sequence of events that occur that bring an individual into their executive function and you may want to check it out.

We still have it available for people to actually view. So even if I pause there for just a second because that was one of the things that my podcast manager Marcy talked about with me was define the terms.

Okay, do you know what the word executive functions means? So think about an executive of a corporation and that person is going to plan and reason and execute and pull things together and have an eye to know when things need to be re-orchestrated.

Well, that is your individual executive function's ability. And that executed up here in the front part of our brain by our forehead. That is where executive functions resides.

But no part our our works independently. And that is very important to understand how things come together and create circuits. So that's really what I was doing with those flow charts.

I'm was taking existing ways of the way I looked at information and I wasn't pulling from it how I would be able to remember it and make sense of it by using the circuits that were already working in my brain.

## Study Methods and Executive Function

Now just to kind of capitalize that a little bit, once I got into chiropractic school, this was my typical way of studying. So I would always sit in the front row.

I was the nerd in front in row, I wrote like a mad girl, and then I'd go home and I condense down my notes. And I continued to use different colors. Then I put it even more condensed on a flash card, And then, actually I'm going to date myself, but I record myself on a cassette, then I would put it into my exercise.

So while I was doing aerobic activity, I'd be listening to this information. The way our brain processes information, we all have the same stuff. but we might go about it in a different order.

And so I go from big picture to a smaller picture, to auditory and movement. Those are absolutely different ways of processing different information, and that's the order that works for me.

Now again, you have the same stuff, but you may do it in a different order. So fast forward, I was in chiropractic school for four years, president of my class for 4 years.

I am definitely an overachiever. We were really a cool class too. We had a business, we created t-shirts, We bought our equipment as a group, and we were always saving money.

And we had some classmates that had pretty horrific events happen to them while they were in the program and were able to financially help them and their children at that time.

So, it was an amazing experience. Then we step out, we graduate, and I go into practice. The first practice that I was in, It was a big eye-opener because when you're in school, you think if you get to adjust four or five people a day, You're on a roll.

When I, the first Practice that i stepped into it, was like seeing 30 to 40 people A day. I remember just feeling like, oh my gosh, I'm just crawling home because it's very, very physical.

I also remember that I was in a farm town and the average person weighed 300 pounds. They're farmers. And in order to put these people in side posture, they literally came up to my shoulders on their side.

So the community was very sweet. They actually built me a platform so that I could be taller, so I can make that adjustment. That's a very fond memory.

Another really fond memories in my early years is I did a lot of work with the Amish community. And they literally brought horse and buggy to the office.

And then I was like, you know, let me come out to your farm. They did. That's not very common. I can remember trudging in the snow, bringing my table to my farm, and bringing chiropractic care to our community.

and they would pay me in chickens and sweet rolls and you know those those are just memories that I will always have of the early years of me as a chiropractor.

Now if I shift forward a little bit more I immediately had all kinds of children coming into the office and that Truly got my attention because I feel like we could use more pediatric education.

## Early Chiropractic Practice

A lot of the education is geared towards very gross pathology in chiropractic school for that population. And so I decided to zero in. And that began the journey of really starting to get this specialty of pediatrics.

So I went in and became a diplomat in chiropractic clinical pediatric care. That was another three years. Then I was invited to speak for that group, and I still do today.

and teach neurology. And of course, that was like very daunting at that time because in school, it was really just learning, okay, the vestibular cochlear nerve.

It goes from the vesibula to the cochlea inside of the ear. Nobody got very excited about it. I know that I would want to do a very good job in teaching.

So that dove me in to another step. And this is where I became a neurodevelopmental therapist and learned about primitive reflexes. And that was the biggest eye-opener I had ever had because there was information that actually describing how this nervous system, how the central nervous systems actually gets wired up.

I can just remember just feeling like, wow, this is the greatest piece of information I could ever find. And I really started diving very deep into the world of reflexes.

Now, if that's not a familiar term for you, let me use terms like withdrawal reflex. If you were to step on something, burn your arm, you immediately recoil off, okay?

everybody probably knows the term fighter flight that goes with your sympathetic nervous system even if i just stay with those two so withdrawing away from something that is a reflex it's the first set of reflexes that actually get laid down in the baby, in of amniotic fluid around that baby.

And so it's our earliest defense system where if somebody comes up and they could just be an inch away from you, you really do feel them. It's as if all the hair on your body is standing up.

This is so far reaching. Because this defense system, if a child gets stuck in early development, they lock into that defense They do not have a very extensive library.

And what I mean by that is think about all of the experiences that you have had as an adult. You can certainly go all the way back to your childhood in remembering some of those things.

Some of them are pleasant and some are not. That too has an impact on how the brain is going to perceive its environment. Now, when you are four, six, eight, ten, you've only got the experiences that you have had.

Now I do believe there is cellular energy.

## Pediatric Focus and Primitive Reflexes

I believe that mommies and babies are so intimately entangled that there's many things that can be going on for that mother while she is pregnant with her baby that then can become engrammed on that baby.

I also believe the father's role, the fathers connection, father presence, and support will have that same kind of impact. So when I talk about library, that's what I'm talking about.

I am talking anybody that began to influence that child. And in fact, the way that we are influencing that is not from just a cellular component, but it's also driving their subconscious mind.

The subconscious mind begins the last trimester of pregnancy and goes all the way to about eight and a half years old. This is where that term, the acorn didn't fall too far from the tree, comes from because this is what our children do.

They follow us. That is the building of their library. Now it's not just about the mind part, it is not about just the cellular part. It is also about sensory part so your sensory system, your eyes, ears, taste, touch, for example those withdrawal reflexes are also influencing the peripheral vision.

And that peripheral is huge in how you see. So I'm not talking about visual acuity, that's actually central vision, and that is only 6% of your vision The peripheral vision is 94% and it literally encompasses that cone of central vision and then coming all the way back behind your ears.

Think of it, try to put like a green light, create a Green light that you see that goes from the wall all way to your ear. So if you and I were looking at each other right now, actively keeping our eyes right on each other, we could still see out to the side.

And depending upon how safe do I feel, do i feel grounded, where am I, who am i, is going to create the response of what you may see, feel experience if somebody's coming into that green light, that peripheral vision.

Now, I might just look and say, oh, okay, now that's one of my team members. I'll be with you in a minute. But if you're a child who has now become relying on that defense system to feel safe, to figure out where you are, and to use those components, you're going to overly react to any of those things.

This is where we can understand the concept of distraction. If anything comes into that peripheral vision and I am relying on my defense system. Those triggers of anything in your vision, anything your sound, and anything coming close to you is going to cause a reaction.

Now, most of the time we're going lose eye contact. We're not going pay attention to what's going on. But then there's another side of this and this is the chronicity of it.

And this is probably another one of the most incredible pearls that I learned through going through training for primitive reflexes was really looking at that stress response.

So when we talk about fight or flight, that's what you're talking about. You're taking about the stress-response. And you know, sometimes I think we use that word a little too easy, like I'm pulling a tissue out of a box.

But there is a physiological event that goes on when you are in stress. Your heart rate changes, your blood pressure changes. Blood flow changes You are pushing it away from the vital organs of your belly and it is being shunted to your arms and legs and not just the physical but also blood flow change in the brain.

We are taking it from the front of the brain and we are shifting it to the back of brain where the cerebellum is, where visual cortex is. Cerebellium is for balance and proprioception and coordination of many events.

Your visual cortex, how you see all that information travels completely through the brains and now all the blood flow is there and it literally the eyes so the eye can take in more visual information.

It really tunes up, brings up antennas in how we're hearing things, how were perceiving things. So that's a huge physiological event. And this little fight or flight gets triggered.

It gets trigger lots of times when children get stuck in these primitive reflexes and they're relying on the defense system all the time. They're constantly tripping back into fight-or-flight mode.

and it wears you out. If you've been through trauma in your life, if you get to be around anything that remotely reminds your amygdala, another part of your brain, hey, this could be just like that traumatic event we had, you'll get triggered too.

And the more that we stay in this triggered mode, we become exhausted. So over time, where we might be hypervigilant at first, that only goes on for as long as the system can keep it up.

And let me tell you something, these systems are very dynamic, and they're going to do everything in their power to keep you going. But, depending upon how you eat, how much sleep do you get?

Do you drink water? What kind of toxins are you getting exposed to? The more the body burden gets impacted, you are going to use up the fuel that should be there for energy.

## Nutrition, Labs, and Brain Health

It's just trying to keep you preserved. And over time, that just becomes almost sometimes impossible to keeps up with. Now that's just touching on my credential with primitive reflexes.

And then I got so excited because I did do some teaching at chiropractic schools and I didn't get my master's in sports health science with a concentration in nutrition.

That's why I really do speak a lot about nutrition and certainly in the beginning, it was a lot of a guessing game, because I hadn't had the experience yet with functional labs.

But I have been doing lab work in my practice for at least 20, 25 years, cause I got into that very early on. And I've seen many different lab companies do many things.

What it gives us is it give us data. It tells us the story of what's inside, so that you're not guessing. And I think that's a very important part. Here at Connect My Brain, we have a three-tier approach.

It's mechanical, like the primitive reflexes. It's chemical which can overlap to primitive reflexes if you're having that fight or flight all the time or you are in chronic post fight-or-flight all time because you've depleted your system.

But the body chemistry is so important, especially one of the things that I've noticed over the last five years is the kids just don't have the same level of energy as I have seen over last three decades of my work.

And if you don't have energy, we need to understand how that's gonna impact our focus. If I don' have fuel, how in the world can I pay attention? If want to play sports or am I avoiding it?

Am I irritated all the time, irritable? if my mood is like a roller coaster, these things are so impacted. by what's going on inside of our body. And so we do.

We do a thorough evaluation. Now there's another layer to that. So there is basic functional lab work of looking at MTHFR, I also look at COMT, these are two genetic snippets, looking at food sensitivity.

Food sensitivity, some people don't believe in it, and some do. The way I look it is, if these tests come back and you've got a reaction going on with everything that you eat, It's not that all these foods are terrible, it's the state of health your gut is in, and it is a great way to help parents understand you could be putting all the great food in but your child's belly health is off and as long as they stay sick, we're running into the risk of leaky gut, leky liver, licky brain.

And when you have other things going on, We don't need any more inflammation in our brain, and some of these kids from vaccination, they could have high levels of heavy metals.

If these Kids have a mutation on MTHFR, they may not be able to clear it out easily. So regardless of the decisions we make, we're also just trying to get data to see how well that child's health is.

Another big area is Strep, if these kids have had strep infection, streps can get up into the brain and this leads to all kinds of different types of problems.

It could be OCD, it could mood swings, focus issues, chronic immune dysregulation. Now the other half of that, so one part they call it pandas when it has to do with strep, and these children having what they called a neuropsychiatric event following a strept infection, that can be very drastic.

But if we don't get the high-strep antibodies out of the child, The brain is being triggered to think constantly that your immune system should stay on.

And over time, just like chronic stress, it's going to crash. When it crashes, It really derails the life not only of the child, but the family. Now the other acronym is PANS, which literally goes to any other types of bacterial or viral infections that people have had.

So Epstein-Barr pneumonia, hand, foot, mouth, these things sometimes if somebody's had what you call a neuroimmune event. The word neuro is neurology.

immune is immune system so if i've got an open window of neurological development and i have an immune event those areas can get tied together and it leads to lots of problems for that child.

It could be chronic illnesses, it could chronic behavior issues. I don't like that word behavior, but I just have never come up with another word that can really help us understand what we're talking about.

i truly believe that all of these children have a reason for why things are going in the direction that they're going. This leads me to, okay, let's look at the brain.

So with the Brain, I'm board certified in neurofeedback and I am also a diplomat in reading QEEG.

## Brain Mapping and Developmental Blueprints

which is the recording that you see when you do a brain map. In a Brain Map, you put a cap on somebody's head, it's got 19 channels, and you're picking up the electrical energy from the brain.

You're not putting anything in the Brain, but you are picking-up the Electrical Energy. I love this work. This really

gives me a picture What has this child's developmental journey been like?

When you come into this world, you are fully formed, but you're not fully functioning. You are down in your brain stem. you should be dominant right brain and the brain is going to turn on from the back to the middle to front and depending upon the foundation, will determine how that maturation process is going to happen.

Just like we've mentioned a couple of times about the executive function webinar, I really do a deeper dive into this part of it because so many people don't start to address situations until these kids are high school or college and you always hear the story well i can remember when you know he was in school this is when the school age you had trouble with this that the other thing this the part.

If there are things in your child's early development, it is going to become the role model for how that brain is gonna turn on. And if development is derailed early on, the right side really gets compromised and that is supposed to be the foundation of information that's gonna go over to the left side of the brain and become intellectual quotient.

And so if the right side being the emotional quotient, if it's dampened because something in development was derailed early on, this is the classic pattern of why so many kids have emotional dysregulation.

Or even another layer as a certified autism specialist. The other thing that I tried to explain is these kids that have been labeled, diagnosed autistic and their language is delayed being one of the classic things and socialization, those are higher brain functions.

And lots of times in the histories, you're going to pick up that there were events that went on when mom was pregnant with her baby. And that's actually the time that the brain is forming.

And so what they have found in autism is the long nerves seem to be preserved, which go to the body and we can move and walk and climb stairs. But expecting those higher brain functions to come online, become circuits and be coordinated, they're getting jumbled.

And so looking at brain maps, that helps us see, well, are the brain waves where they're supposed to be? Now your brainwaves are supposed be everywhere, but they do dominate in certain parts of our brain.

So if I get patterns of delta, theta, alpha waves, and I'll explain that in a second, If I see those coalescing in the front of the brain where the frontal lobe is, where executive function should reside, well, it's getting squashed by slow waves.

So your delta wave is one to three hertz. That's a baby wave. that's why babies sleep all the time. And then four to seven is theta. And if I have an abundance of theta, then my brain is still in a four to seven year old brain and it's lots of daydreaming.

its imagination, its subconscious, and it's the precursor to sleep. So if I'm eight, nine, ten, that's not what I want. I really want alpha, but I don't want Alpha to dominate in the front because it has an incredible phenomenon that when you close your eyes, Alpha goes up because its supposed to be in back of the brain in that visual cortex for processing and processing speed.

and being able to collect resources and lock in on them. And that's what information you can gather from doing a brain map. So that is truly the journey that I have walked on that has created Connect My Brain.

So when I talk about that we look at the developmental journey, we are literally looking at a blueprint. I want to know what went on in pregnancy. Did you actually know your state of health when you got pregnant?

Were you supported? Did you go through stress? I want to know what kind of care you had during your pregnancy. I wanna know about the birth. i want a know immediately what happened after the bar i wanna now every developmental milestone that that child should have gone through and did they go threw it at the proper time this is why a few years ago our world decided to change the developmental milestones In my opinion, I believe we

normalized developmental delay.

What do you mean by developmental delayed? And it's not just about a toddler. This was another great feedback that my podcast manager, Marcy, gave me.

She said, when I hear that word, i think of little ones. But the story could be relative to any age. For example, When I talk to an adult and I try to narrow down, what is it that you want to focus on?

Well, my whole life I've had problems with concentration and focus. They have developmental delay, something in their journey. got derailed. And what we're trying to do is we are trying see how does it correlate to your brain map?

How does correlate your fuel? Are you exercising? These bodies will need to move for our entire life. Now if we talking about a child, let's take a school age child.

If that child's already been labeled dyslexic, I'll just go with that because this could run on for quite some time. But dyslexia is typically thought of only impeding reading and writing.

Well, let's take another step because it's really about developmental delay. It's about that your brain didn't get organized. Here's a simple little thing that you can do.

What is the dominant eye, ear, hand, and foot of your child? If it is not all on the same side, then there's chaos going into the brain. And if that is a picture that I have as my brain is coming up to a higher level of function, there is going to be chaos.

Yeah, it's going show up in reading and writing. But also, how do the eyeballs move? Here at Connect My Brain, we actually do a very deep assessment on eyeball movement.

It's the only piece of neurology that's on the outside of your skull. But again, remember what I said. The way that information comes in is by the way the eyeballs move with six muscles attached to each eyeball.

That information has got to go all the through your brain.

## Memberships, Intensives, and Closing

So if these pieces of my blueprint didn't go as expected, It's going to change the ultimate outcome of executive function. Now of course, little ones, boy, if we can get to a child before they're five, there's so much magic that can go on because they are so close to the beginning of time.

So that's where you could think of a little one and there's so many stories that I could tell you. Let me give you one example. I'm working with a boy who does have a genetic issue, but we started, at least when we first started together, he was not even sitting up and now he's sitting on his own.

But the other day we start talking about why is his foot having a change in its posture. Okay, He's 19 months old. He's not upright yet. He is not getting the information into his feet to begin the process of learning how to stand in gravity.

And by five years old, you will have three arches develop in your foot. So if I don't get that information, I have low tone. And the feedback to the brain is low tone.

And if you look at a structure called the homunculus, and I'll get Marcie to put a link in the show notes, this will give you a picture of the sensory motor cortex where all the parts of body are mapped out on.

When you looked at the midline, literally your lower legs and your feet are in the midline, which means that your legs connect both sides of your brain.

So this is why it doesn't matter the age. The developmental process is the blueprint that you went through, that your child went though. Now if you're listening to this and you are going, wow, there's so much information here and I'd love to get to know more.

We've got a great way for you to dip your toe in and it is our parent membership our Parent membership and I believe we're going to change the name to the connect my brain membership we are about to go through some wonderful changes on our website and how we put things together because we're always growing, we are always listening.

So if you have any feedback we'd love to hear it. What do you need as a parent? What you do need is a community. We want to take care of our community and the community is the world.

We are talking to families all over the World and we want to support you. we Want to put resources into your hands. So I really encourage you take a look what's called right now the parent membership.

This gives you access to our private Facebook group called Mom's Corner. You also get access to a private podcast where I do deeper dives into different clinical issues.

You get member pricing on assessments as well as supplements as to be part of your world, and we want to help you get the data that you need so that understand where your health is, where you child's health, is.

And as you know us, then maybe you want take that next step. What is that step? Come to the office and have an intensive if you live out of town. You literally come into town sometimes for four days or five days, sometimes two sets of five.

and we really dive in. When you see this video, once it comes out, this was the result of a young man working with us for eight days, two times a day, and listening to the mom's testimony of how much change we actually got, which was absolutely incredible.

Now, if you're local, you can just come to The Office, but I would really encourage you to understand this is summertime, when this podcast will actually air.

I don't know when you'll actually hear it, but if you are hearing it in summer 2025, or maybe even summer 2026, think about give your child a summer program.

that will allow them to have a fresh start in the next school year and get a change on their life. Hey, thanks so much for tuning in today. I've really enjoyed this time with you, and as always, be blessed.