Ep 168: Helping Your Child Navigate the Back to School Transition: A Brain-Based Approach Transcript

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Back-to-school transition and shortened summers

Hi, everybody. It's Dr. Laura with Connect My Brain. Thanks for tuning in for the podcast. This is a very special time of the year. Now, of course, it always depends on when you're listening to it, but it's actually the last day of August 2025, and the kids are going back to school.

Some of them have already been back in school a couple of weeks. And I mentioned in a truth bomb, make sure you check out those truth bombs on YouTube.

But wow, we have really shortened up summer vacation. And it really is a big deal because when I was young and went to school, three solid months before we went back to school.

A great period of time for a child to have a new experience. Unfortunately, what I see more of today is we gotta hurry and get back to school. And we have to throw a few camps in and hopefully it's enough to give the kids a little bit of a break and then we're back at it.

Around the whole calendar year, we are just rushed all the time. And I'm telling you, it's having an impact. It's not just even on the children. Its having and impact on us too, the adults, parents, caregivers.

Everybody is just going. Everyone is constantly working, going, filling up that schedule. And we must realize that whatever we practice, This is what is going to influence how this child is ultimately going develop, be able to engage in academia or social or sports.

All these things pattern the outcome. And I never want you to lose sight of that concept because we're going to go even deeper. We're gonna talk about these kids making this transition back into school.

And there's many components that are happening in our world today that really have a harsh impact on our children. So first and foremost, let's just kind of do an easy transition.

Now, when I use the word transition, I'm always going to relate it back to the moro reflex. If this is the first time you've ever heard that term, these are primitive reflexes.

Birth history and primitive reflex development

These are the reflex that go on in the womb to actually build the brain, the neuro connections, and the ability for this child to ultimately then come out and start doing something like even raising their head in gravity.

Nothing or everything, let's see how should I really phrase that, everything a child will do start back in the womb. And so how you go into pregnancy matters.

How your baby is delivered matters, how the baby presents at delivery matters everything that goes on matters and ultimately, if I had the power to really influence the medical model, I would really encourage them that when a woman, a family, brings a baby into this world and there's any type of interruption, any types of interruptions, now that means vaginal versus C-section, If it isn't vaginal, then C-section is an issue.

Now, great, we have these tools. There's no judgment. But where I'm going in this podcast and in others is I want to connect the dots and help people realize that it does have an impact on the development of the child?

What about instrumentation? Meaning, were there forceps? Was there a vacuum extraction? These play a part.

This is a very delicate structure up here on top of your shoulders called your head that holds the brain.

And, you know, we all know and have heard the baby's soft spots. Well, that soft material in between all of the cranial plates, the bones of head are called the craneal plates for the cranium.

And that tissue is just the top layer of the brain. And if we go in there forcibly, now again, no judgment, but let's just talk. Let's be real. If we just go there with an instrument and force this baby out, Most of the time, it's the head that they are using as the lever to get the baby out.

Now, you could have a breech baby and it could be their bottom. But I've heard from any of cases that I have seen and even current ones in the office right now.

when instrumentation was used, the baby looked like it had been beaten up because they're tender, they are fragile. So that matters. It matters what goes on that first year.

it matters if the cord is wrapped around their neck, their body. All of these things matter. And so that's why it's important in the histories. I just wish in our medical model that when we have these red flags in history, that somebody says to them, You know, we did what we had to do for the life of mom and the baby.

But your baby went through a lot during this pregnancy and delivery. And I really want you to follow up with somebody that does developmental care. That's me.

I do developmental. care I've dedicated my life to this. And I have lots of reasons why. Go back and listen to some of the other podcasts and I do deep dives on them.

But I'm reminding you that what goes on in the life of your child really does matter, especially as they start to embark on the learning process. And that's where we're making a transition.

We went from summer, what was summer like? Did you still do lots of things? Were the kids still on devices all the time? what really was the summer like and now we're making a transition.

The word transition goes with that moro reflex and moroe is the arousal factor of the child. Are they under aroused or over arousal? You could even put it into the captions of ADD for underaroused and ADHD for overaroused.

You can say depressed for underaused. you could say anxious for being overarroused. Lots of words still follow under those very topics. or categories.

The second thing that Morrow does is it is the balance between oxygen and carbon dioxide, CO2, okay? So if we are not getting enough oxygen, then we build up CO2 and our brains are very sensitive to this and can elicit a fight or flight because when you are in the moro reflex or using that reflex to balance out body chemistry, the very first thing you do is you take a deep breath and a very slow exhale.

Moro reflex, arousal, and school readiness

The third thing that ties to transition and moral reflex is the sympathetic nervous system. Now, if you've never heard that word before, maybe you have heard the word fight or flight.

Fight or is the sympathetic nervous system, okay? It arouses the system. Pay attention. We are not getting enough oxygen, we do not feel safe, We're highly distracted because our peripheral vision, our scanner is on.

we just don't feel okay. Ooh, there's a lot in that little sentence. So let's break that down and how it relates to kids transitioning back to school.

Does your little one, are they hesitant in going into the classroom? Are they clingy? are they 180 degrees the opposite? Are they a daredevil? So when we think of actions that children take, and we're trying to figure out the

neurology of that, it's not always a revved up state.

it can be a very slow down state as well. And that's why it's not a conveyor belt about how you approach the situation. Unfortunately, in our model of health care today, it is dominated by what's called the Diagnostic Statistical Manual.

If you walk into a medical provider and you tell them a bunch of symptoms, they're going to go and use that manual to see. And, you know, by the time somebody's been practicing, and they've got it all in their head anyway, but they are going funnel it into a diagnosis, into label.

Under that manual, it tells them in this label, this is what you can do for that diagnosis. Well, That's exactly what I see all the time when people do just the traditional model.

Let's say my child is having trouble focusing, easily distracted. So then you're going to tell somebody those symptoms. And the very first thing that anybody ever tells a parent in that model is your child has attention deficit.

And it is, to me, one of the most misrepresented diagnoses that is hitting our children. Another one is emotional dysregulation. That one drives me crazy because it's all represented in the model that is traditional, it's only related to having trouble with reading and writing, and that's the furthest thing from it.

Reading and reading are higher brain functions. So as your little one goes back into school, or maybe they're just starting it, some of the first things that go on is there's a lot of observation.

There's a lot of observation that's saying, how does this child perform in a classroom? And today, for many reasons, we are looking for an incredible amount of order.

And we're also preparing children for very serious events, like you can remember the fire drills, you remember intruder, And now there is even a gunman drill.

And I did this on another truth bomb. One of the things that is really flying off the shelf is bulletproof backpacks. Now, I am so sorry for things are going on and they're terrible.

But when a child is so young, And we are putting them in an environment and we're practicing something. What did I say at the beginning of this podcast?

Whatever you practice is going to impart into that child. And we're wondering why our children are so anxious. Now, on the other side of the coin, I guarantee you we have to have safety.

There's no question. And things that are going on today are terrible. What just happened in Minnesota is terrible! and we have to find better ways to not allow people from the outside to enter into the schools.

But we must be aware of the impact if we are calling these things intruder drills, gunman drills. Children are actually expecting that to happen because you're practicing it and you are talking about it.

Why anxiety affects attention and vision

And it is going to create an unbelievable amount of anxiety and worry. Now, let's just, I've used a lot of terms, okay? And I guarantee you, every single one of those terms there's a podcast.

Go over to my podcast, go into the search bar, put dyslexia. Put ADD, put ADHD, and you will have a podcast on it. Put primitive reflexes in there. You're going to have podcast.

I think I'm close, maybe 150 to 160, 65 podcasts. There is so much information. Of out there that i'm trying to provide to parents To teachers to therapists to medical providers.

I have an opportunity This coming week i'M going to another maps conference and that maps acronym is The medical academy for pediatric and special needs I learned recently that there's another acronym called maps this is a highly polished program.

And honestly, there are many medical providers going to this particular conference and the one that I went in March as well, because people are realizing that the typical model, the traditional way that we've been handling things is not working.

And we have to look outside of that box. And that's what kind of provider I am. I'm an outside-of-that-box kind- of-provider. because we are designed to pay attention.

There's a why when it comes to a child having trouble paying attention and what I'd like to kind of connect dots to is what i want to talk about with anxiety This will give you one of the biggest reasons why children have trouble paying attention, because it interferes with the development of their ability to learn how to see.

And when I use that kind of a phrase, learning how to see, it's not just visual acuity, okay? Visual acuity is what a traditional optometrist is going to do and ask you to read the smallest line of print and then make a prescription so that you can see it better.

Well, guess what? That's 6% of your vision. Your peripheral vision is 94% and that peripheral is literally tied to the earliest set of reflexes called the withdrawal reflex.

Again, it occurs in the womb. It's our first defense system. We learn how to survive before we learn to thrive and go towards. And it's going to impact the peripheral vision.

The peripheral goes from the central vision directly in front of you and then all the way around behind your ears. And I'm so excited because there is a whole group of ophthalmologic professionals that are really trying to educate this profession that there's more to seeing than just putting glasses on somebody.

It's part of the developmental sequence. When I get a child in here, and it's always part But the eyes are so important. It's the only piece of neurology outside of your skull.

But, the visual cortex where you put all this information together is in the back of the brain. And therefore, it's got to go all the way through the So it influences.

It influences how the brain is going to work. it's going influence how it is gonna develop. And that's the idea. We've got to get out of these traditional models.

we've been around in this and we're at an absolute epidemic of children that are not thriving. and they need help.and we need to give them something else.

And if you come to somebody like me who looks at development, I'm going to look at even the state of health the mother and father are in at the time of conception.

The state health is everything. I talked about that in a podcast. We have to look at the whole blueprint. So how does this tie back into anxiety? Because today, there are so many children that are suffering from anxiety, little kids already on prescriptive medication.

And that can play a part in how the brain is going to mature. Again, whatever is present, what ever is practiced is gonna influence how that brain will develop.

And every time I've had an opportunity to work with an adult who comes in, which is very common, anxiety, PTSD, depression, just failing to get going, failure to launch, when I go back and I ask them questions, When was the first time you ever felt this way?

Most of them don't even have to think about it.

Safety drills, school anxiety, and modern diagnoses

And every one of them have said it was either when I was in grade school or I remember it all the time or when was I in high school. And now this is an adult.

That's why when talk about this stuff, yes, the majority of this practice is pediatrics, but we do see adults as well because you went through the same process.

And whatever you're doing right now, if it's out of balance, If it is not a good well-rounded lifestyle, you are practicing things. Yesterday I had a wonderful conversation with a retired teacher.

She was just so excited to hear all this information that we were having a conversation about with primitive reflexes and things like that. And she shared with me that there is a woman in her 80s, and she had really gone through a very significant trauma in our teenage years.

And, she kept it together, but all of a sudden, She is having everything surface. And she's even having to retire from the educational world because it is impacting her life that much.

Now, there's an emotional one. I can remember also meeting another woman in her 80s. She was so depressed. When we go through the history, She had been on so many rounds of antibiotics over the course of her life.

I believe the number was around 60. And the dysbiosis that had created in the gut over time And now what had happened is that there was so many problems in her belly.

Dysbiosis, which means that, there is an imbalance between not only good and bad bacteria, but all the species of good bacteria that your life would have exposed you to.

And when we get out of balance, we make neurotransmitters in our belly. We make neuro-transmitter in your liver. What are neurotranmiters? Neurotransmetters are the brain's chemistry that make you feel good, that help you go towards things and see the reward in it.

So we can have people that really strive their whole life to hold it together. We can have others that break down even quicker. But at the end of the day, it's about how this body and the brain and your emotional well-being, your spirituality, how balanced are you?

And it is very easy for things to impact our life that could change how you're going to be able to function. I believe what I've seen over the years, 30 years working in this.

that it is just happening to our children so early. I have more little toddlers in here than I've had in a long time, and these are the children that were born conceived during COVID.

And even talking to the teacher yesterday, she's a phonetic teacher, trying to teach sound with a mask on your face, And that was a big thing that happened to those little kids.

And it impacts how their hearing is going to develop. You come into this world, you hear low frequency sound, You acquire middle and high over the first three years of life.

If it's skewed, you are not going to develop correctly. And what was that a part of? The peripheral vision. Why is that important? Because the outcome of peripheral visual means that I know I'm safe.

I am safe in my environment. I'm sitting here doing my podcast. I am in my office all by myself.

Developmental roots of anxiety and trauma

But I can still see the things that are around me. And I would know if somebody is coming in and I will be able to respond rather than react. That's where the growing up of peripheral vision, what it's going to do for our children, it is going help them feel safe.

So all these little kids that are constantly being told your child is just incredibly distracting, well, maybe they don't feel save and it isn't that you've done something to them, but rather something occurred in the developmental journey and its impacting how they feel.

Now let's tie it into anxiety. So if you have an event in your life, and it can be subconscious and conscious, so you may not have known about it, but it could still impact your wellbeing, okay?

And the subconscious mind is actually forming the last trimester of pregnancy up until about eight and a half. And I'm recently reading a book called Drama in the Womb because I was actually a twin and my twin didn't make it.

But I can tell you with 100% certainty But there was somebody else that was supposed to be walking this life with me. And so I've always been very curious about it.

Now that I'm reading this book, I believe that the subconscious mind just really begins the minute life begins. That's when the egg and sperm come together and you can actually see some videos on this that, and I'll try to find one and we'll put it in the show notes, that they have actually seen, I'm going to say that it's the light of Christ.

That the minute the egg and sperm come together, there's a light. There's light into the life of that baby. I just think that's just incredible. So we have an event.

And here's where I can tie it into myself personally, too. When I used to talk about my twin, and because I am single, I would prefer not to be, but I'm.

But I use to cry, every time I talk to them. And I don't cry anymore. I love to, that's why I'm a life learner. I, I loved to learn and I'd love then to put the sense to it.

And I know there's a bigger purpose and God is revealing those things to me and feel very blessed by that. But whenever I did talk about her and… I would cry.

That's actually PTSD. So when we talk about PTSD, we only want to think about military, but that's the way that they figured it out. So the military on the defense line, guns and bombs, and having to get all that adrenaline surge and fight for your survival.

That's a big enough event in those individuals' lives, which we should all be incredibly grateful to our freedom. And I am, I'm very grateful. But they were impacted.

And we can understand that level of intensity of how it would impact a person. Then the individual would get out of the military, come back and maybe walking down the street and hear a car backfire, but immediately hit the pavement because in their mind, there was an event that the amygdala, which is over on the temporal lobes, the sides of the brain with the hippocampus, The amygdali said threat and coded that threat.

And for simplicity, we're just going to call the code ABC. Now when the military person is out walking on street, out of or whatever military service they were in, and they have some kind of familiar sound.

It could be a smell, it could anything for your senses. And they hit the pavement, the brain. had a reaction and before their frontal lobe could kick in and say, it's just a car backfiring, they reacted because it has been laid down and it was reinforced so many times that it no longer needed the full code in order to have that reaction.

It reacted even if it remotely looked like it. Well, the same thing is true for you and me when we have an event go on in our life. Maybe it happened in pregnancy, maybe it happen during birth, Maybe It happened the first few years of life.

Connect My Brain resources and membership

Maybe, it happens day one of school. I mean, the timing can be any time. It's not always a trauma in the pregnancy or in birth. Its happening right now.

And it gets coded by that amygdala. And anything that remotely looks like it begins to create reaction. And here's the other part. We can't put severity on it for a child.

Their library is so small. You and I, we have a lifetime. They're just getting started. they don't have point of reference. Sometimes they can even tell you the why.

And when a child is still in those very prevalent developmental windows, things are getting laid down. So be sure and watch your school-age kids. How are they transitioning into this academic year?

What was summer like for them? Did they really get a break? Is everybody still just using digital stuff all the time? I know it's here. Look, I'm set up on digital, doing my podcast and things like that.

And I appreciate the tools to be able to have a platform to educate, but we're missing the mark on our children. Connect My Brain has a wonderful way for you to dip your toe in and get to know us.

Maybe you're somewhere else in the world and you are not in Atlanta. And maybe you just say, well, let me learn more. Well, you've got a free podcast to listen to, and there's several, And I have a Free App.

Everything about us is called Connect my Brain, so you'll always be able to find us But we also have what's called the CMB membership. And typically it's $19.99. But if you mention the code, September 20, or just put S-E-P-T, 2025, you'll automatically get $5 off and you can dip your toe in for $14. 99. So what is dipping my toe?

You get to be part of a community. You get lots of different pieces of information and you also get access to a private podcast. That's where I'll even do a deeper dive on things.

In our Facebook private group, it is a Private Group. You have to be a member or you have be an active patient in the office. you have what's called Ask Dr.

Laura, and you can ask any question. You can asked it to the community and ask it me. We just did a great dialogue on popcorn and why popcorn is really not the best snack we could be giving our kids.

So if you want to learn more about these things, we encourage you to go to our website, connectmybrain.com, and check us out. There's a new video on the home page.

You can go under how to work with me tab and that's where you can find our membership. And if you happen to be either a doctor or a therapist or even a teacher and you want to do a deeper dive, be on The Lookout because we're going to launching our professional program called Peds Connection.

So we have a lot of tools. We really believe in serving our community, the world, and we invite you to be part. Thanks for tuning in today.