

# MEET YOUR BRAIN

## Parent Introduction

Key stage 2 • Years 3 - 6

## WHAT THIS MODULE IS ALL ABOUT

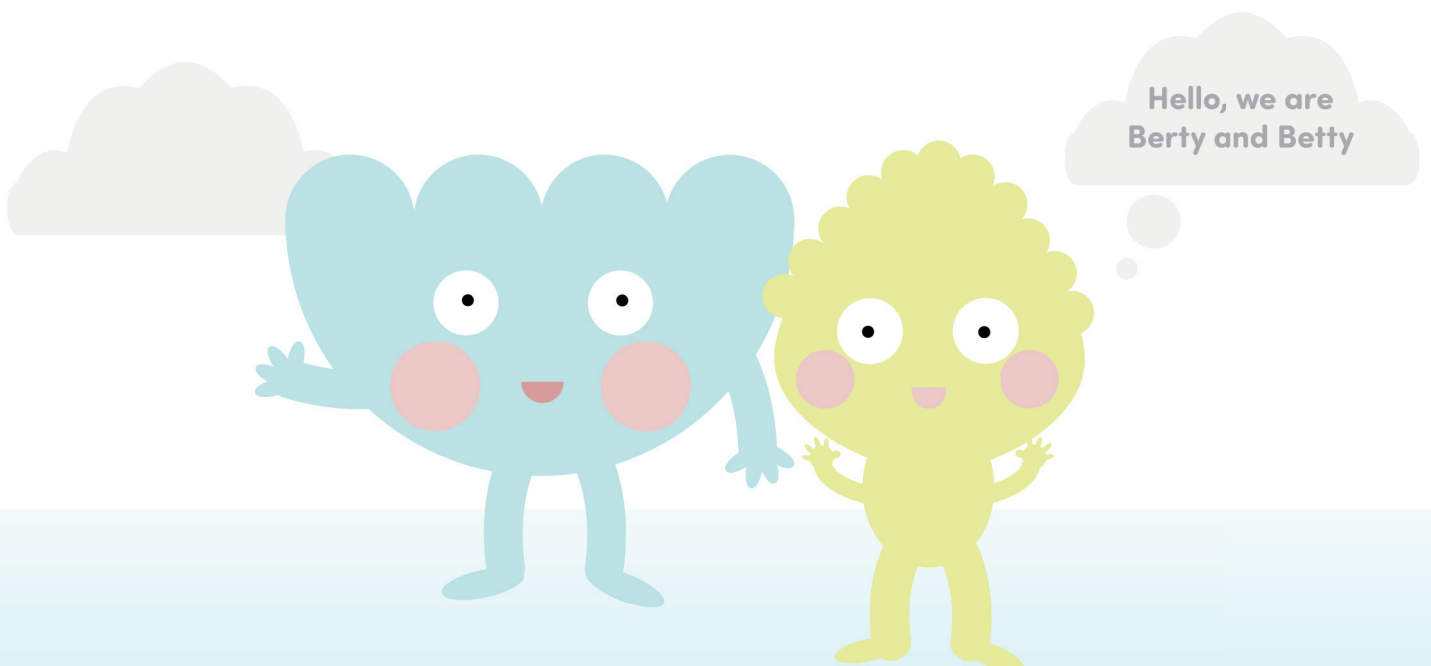
Maintaining positive mental health relies on children having an understanding of how to look after their brains. While as a society we spend a lot of time teaching our children how to look after our bodies through healthy eating, exercise and drinking lots of water, we are less focused on teaching them how to look after their minds.

This module is focused on giving your child a foundational knowledge of the brain and teaching them how they can look after their minds to be at their very best.

Here are the key concepts we focus on:

**Your brain and your mind are different:** The brain is an organ and helps us with lots of things. The brain controls most of what we do and that's an amazing thing!

**Neuroplasticity:** The brain can grow and change when you practise and work on something. When we do something or learn something new, neural pathways are created in our brain. Each time we repeat the activity, the neural pathway or connection is made stronger and it gets easier for us to complete the activity.



**Team H-A-P:** There are three key parts of their brain; the Hippocampus, Amygdala and Prefrontal Cortex. We call them Team H-A-P for short and they each have a special role:

**Hippocampus** - is like a scrap book storing our memories and things that we learn.

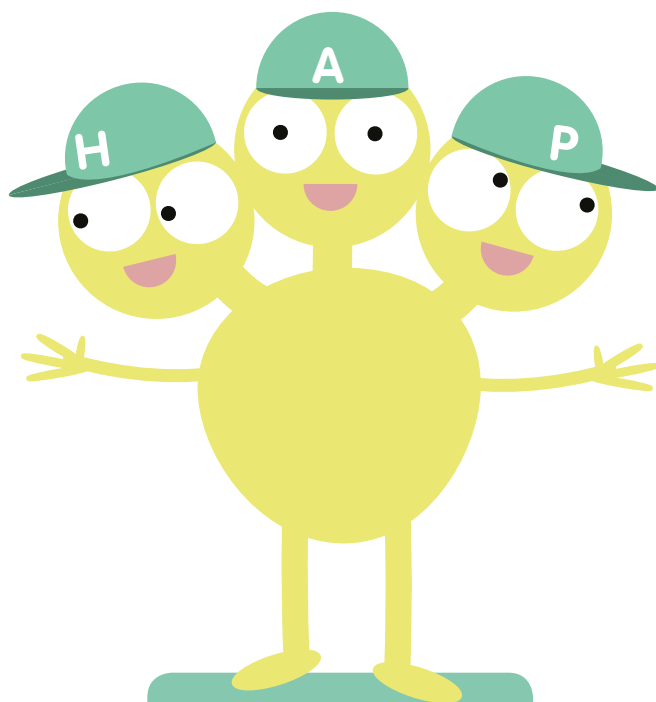
**Amygdala** - is there to react to keep us safe when there is danger. It cannot assess danger though, it can only react if it senses it by fighting, freezing or flighting!

**Prefrontal cortex** - Helps us to make decisions, understand different perspectives, solve problems, analyse and make choices.

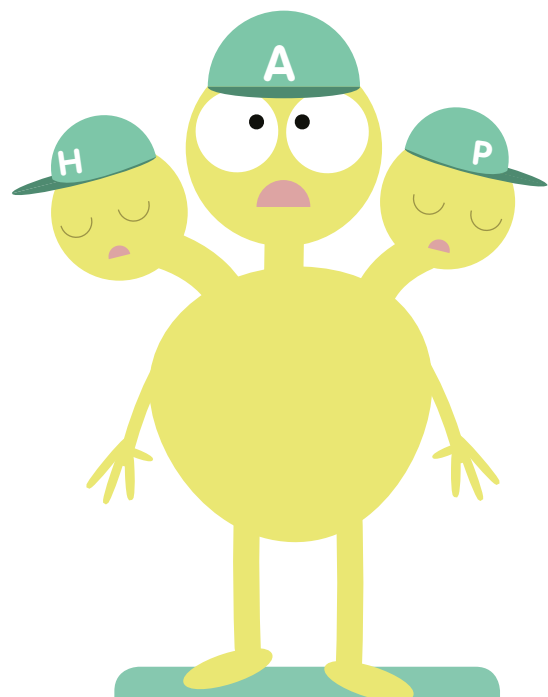
The key concept here is that we can be at our best when Team H-A-P are working together. When we feel stressed or worried, Team H-A-P cannot work well together because our Amygdala takes over and causes us to react (without thinking) rather than respond (assessing our actions before we take them) - see the image on the right below.

This happens because the oxygen supply goes straight to the Amygdala, which effectively shuts down the Prefrontal cortex and Hippocampus, and the functions that they help us to perform.

When this happens, the best thing that we can do is something called Happy Breathing, this is slow calm breathing and is scientifically proven to help calm the mind especially, the Amygdala.



When we're at our best,  
Team H-A-P are awake  
and working together.



When we're stressed,  
the Hippocampus and  
Prefrontal cortex go  
to sleep - leaving the  
Amygdala in charge!

## What we're giving you:

### 1. Learning Activities

We have provided activities to reinforce the key points of the module. You can go over these activities again and again. A detailed guide to each activity is provided in the learning activity guides and a brief summary is provided below.

#### 1. Meet Team H-A-P

Your child understands the three key parts of the brain, and what they do.

#### 2. Team H-A-P Snap

Your child understands what happens when the three key parts of the brain are working together, and what happens when they're not.

#### 3. Happy Breathing

Your child understands how happy breathing helps them.

#### 4. Team H-A-P's Meme Madness

Your child recognises stressful situations, what is happening to their brain, and that they can do something about it.

#### 4. Neuroplastic Noodlings

Your child has a basic knowledge of the concept of neuroplasticity: that the brain can grow and change when you practise and work on something.

## What we're giving you:

### 2. Habits At Home

Habits At Home is a handy checklist that you can print off and stick on the fridge to remind you to practise every day!



Visit [www.myhappymind.org/shop](http://www.myhappymind.org/shop)  
to buy myHappyMind conversation cards,  
storybooks and our famous teddy sets!

