

Meet Your Brain
Parent Introduction

Key stage 2 - Years 3-6

What is this module 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:

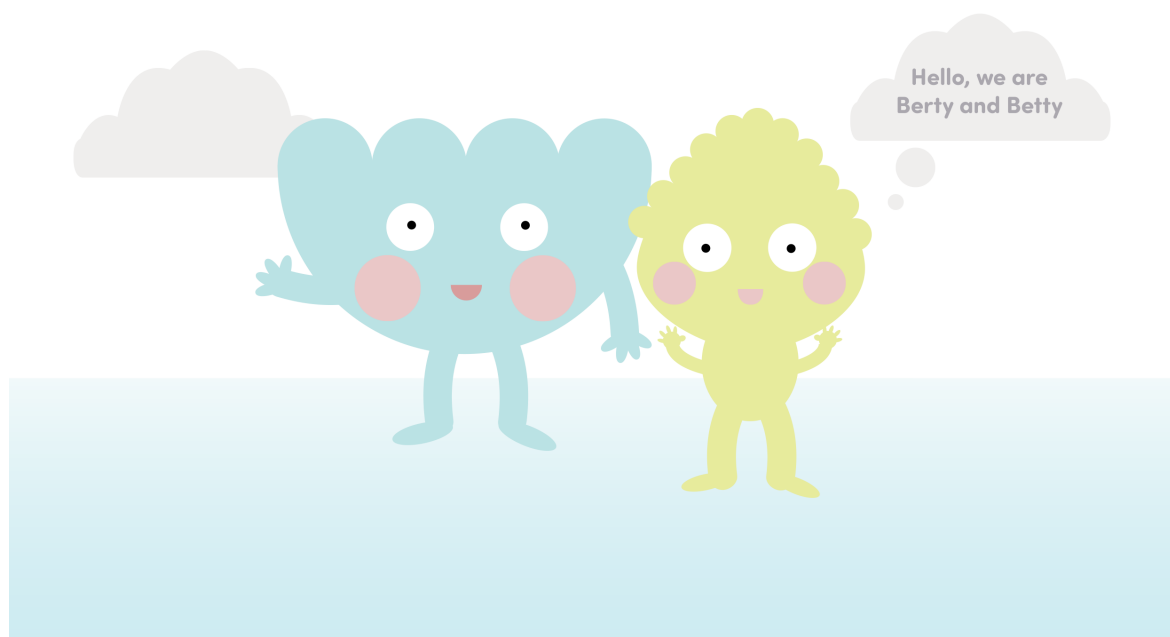
Your brain and your mind are different:

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:

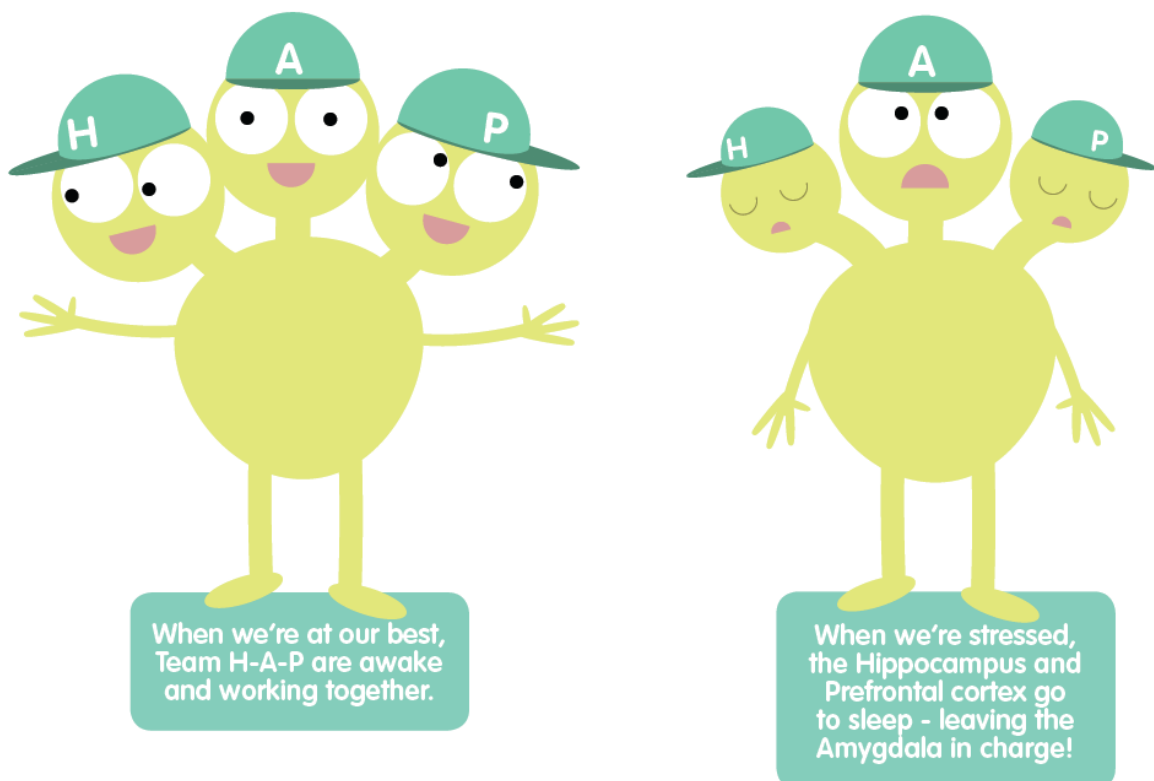
Hippocampus - is like a scrap book storing our memories and things that we learn.

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 fighting!

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.



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.

What we're giving you:

2. Habits at Home

Habits at Home

Try and challenge yourself to practise Happy Breathing with your child at least once a day. This can be particularly nice before bed time as a winding down activity.

Try and ask your child how they felt afterwards and maybe try it yourself too. You can use this handy checklist to capture your thoughts!

YES NO

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How did the Happy Breathing feel?

YES NO

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How did the Happy Breathing feel?

YES NO

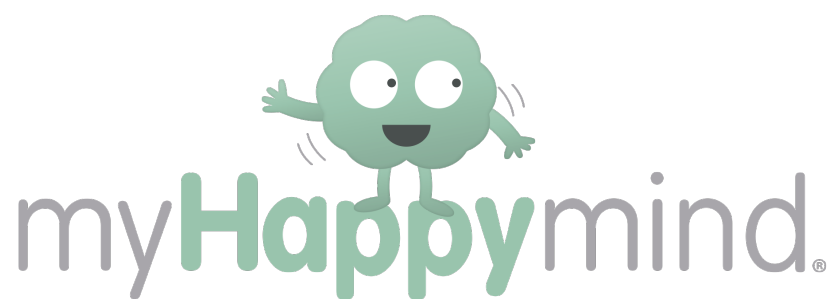
DAY 3: Did we do Happy Breathing today?
How did the Happy Breathing feel?

YES NO

DAY 4: Did we do Happy Breathing today?
How did the Happy Breathing feel?

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



Celebrate
Parent Introduction

Key stage 2 - Years 3-6

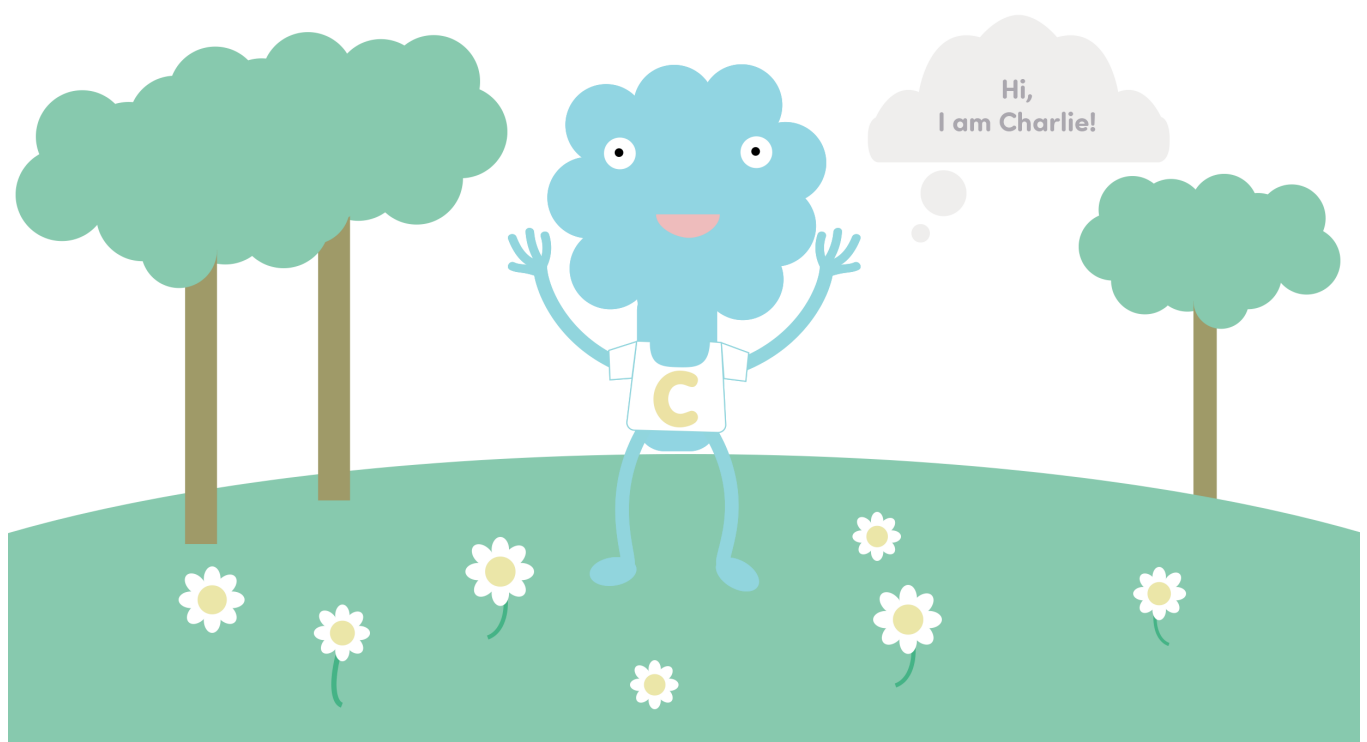
What is this module all about?

Did you know that the number one thing that builds a child's (and adult's!) self-esteem is rewarding them for their character strengths: the things that make them special or unique (e.g. humour or bravery). Constantly praising them for their achievements, such as writing or reading, does not have the same effect.

So this module is totally focused on helping you to introduce this language of character strengths into the everyday.

When we start to notice our children's character strengths we start to see them feeling better about who they are and this builds their self-esteem, or how they feel about themselves.

The activity we're providing you with will help them (and you) to start noticing and talking about character strengths much more often. We hope that this becomes part of your regular conversation with your children and helps them see just how wonderful they are.



What we're giving you:

1. Learning Activities

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1. Strengths Spotting - Your child identifies strengths in action around the home, in stories, and on TV.

What we're giving you:

2. Habits at Home

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Habits at Home

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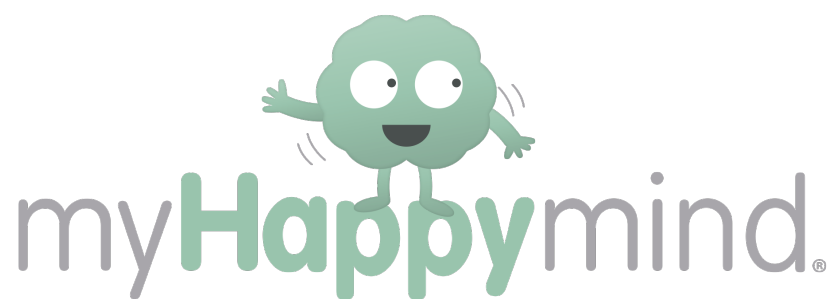
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Appreciate
Parent Introduction

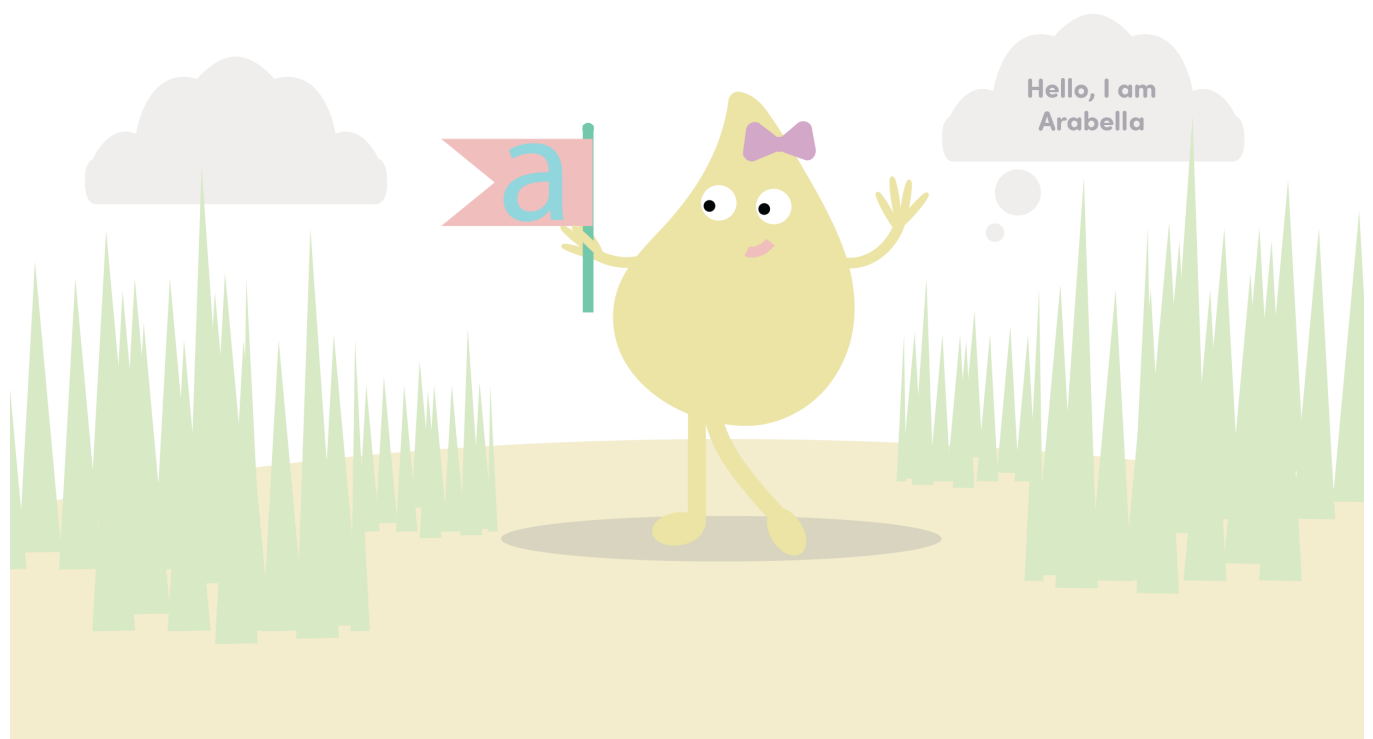
Key stage 2 - Years 3-6

What is this module all about?

There is so much research that exists telling us that gratitude is one of the most powerful ways to impact our mental wellbeing - it also has physical wellbeing effects too. Those of us who take time to be grateful each day tend to be happier, can better manage stress and become more resilient.

In this section, we will be helping you to embed a gratitude culture in your home by thinking about and capturing things that you are grateful for each day. This small segment of your day may well become your favourite! Taking even just a few minutes each day to think about the things that have been good in your day can really lift your mood and that of your children.

You may be surprised at the things they are grateful for and the things that you become grateful for too! The main focus here is on noticing and expressing these things.

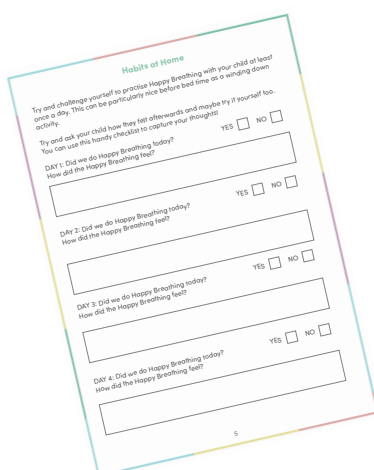


What we're giving you:

1. Learning Activities

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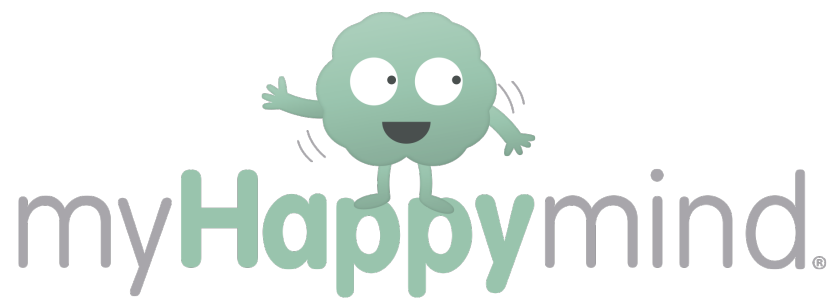
- 1. Understanding Appreciation** - Your child starts to think about gratitude, and what it might look like in action.
 - 2. Showing Appreciation** - Your child is challenged to think about how gratitude could be shown to others.
 - 3. Dopamine Doodles** - Your child learns about the Dopamine boost that we receive when we give or receive gratitude.
 - 4. The Wheel of Gratitude** - A conversation-starter to make your child think about what they might be grateful for.
 - 5. Gratitude Jar** - Taking thinking about gratitude to the next level - with a fun lucky dip activity.
 - 6. Gratitude Tree** - You and your child record gratitude, and putting it on display where everyone can see it.
- Plus: Happy Breathing for Gratitude** - In this module you'll also find two Happy Breathing mp3s for you to use anytime.



What we're giving you:

2. Habits at Home

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Relate

Parent Introduction

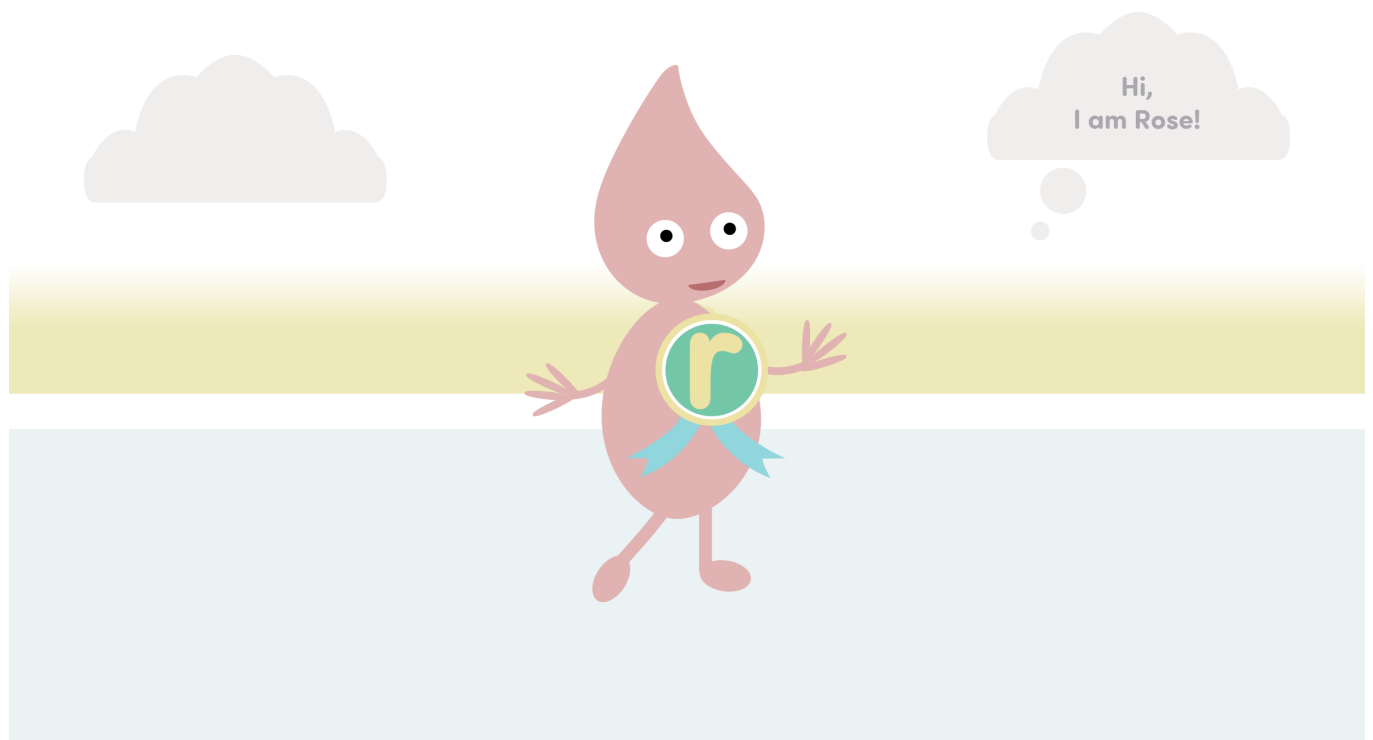
Key stage 2 - Years 3-6

What is this module all about?

Building and maintaining relationships is absolutely critical to our mental health. When we can communicate with others, share our feelings, and feel like we have back-up we feel happier.

Children can often find it hard to express their emotions or points of view and often what they're trying to say doesn't come out quite right. This is especially true during the early years and so developing their listening skills is a really fantastic way to help here.

In this module, the focus is on helping children to improve their listening skills so that you can better communicate with them. This also shows them what good communication looks like so that they are better able to build their relationship both with you and others.



What we're giving you:

1. Learning Activities

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1. Point of View Pictures - Your child is asked to think about how situations may be very different from how they appear, depending on your point of view.

What we're giving you:

3. Habits at Home

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Habits at Home

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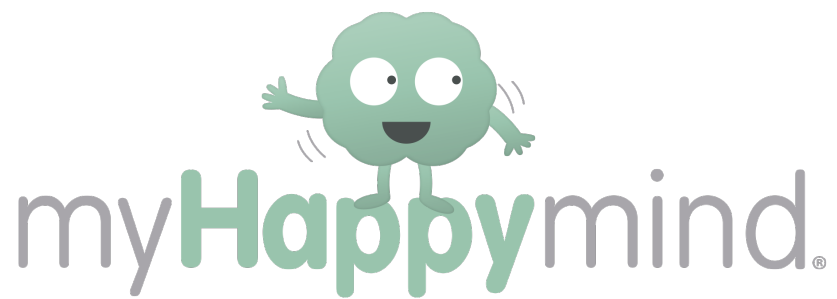
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Engage

Parent Introduction

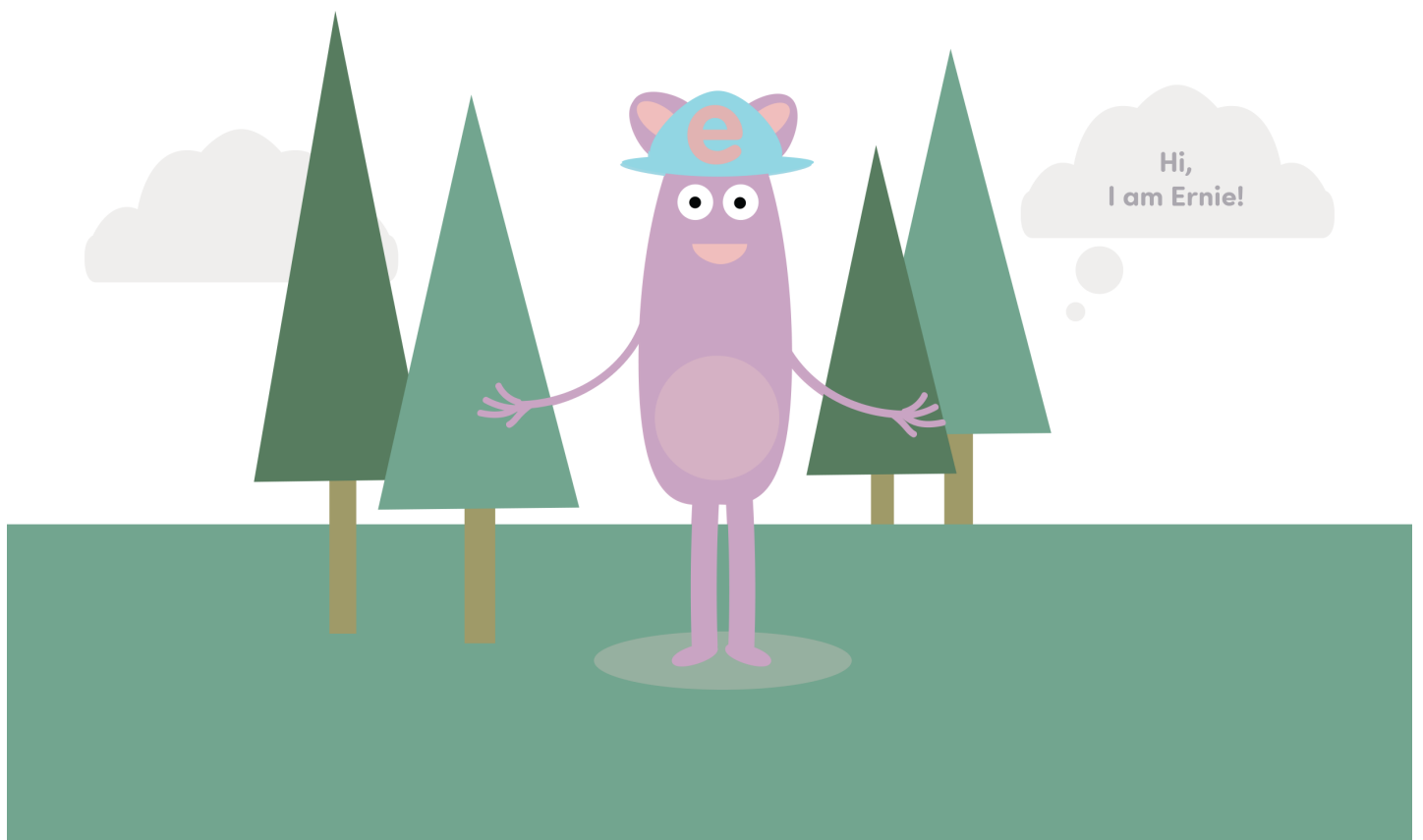
Key stage 2 - Years 3-6

What is this module all about?

Our final module 'Engage' is all focused around the power of goal setting. One of the quickest ways to lift our mood and help ourselves feel positive is to accomplish something. This doesn't necessarily need to be something huge, but it is important it is something that the child wants to achieve.

Setting small achievable goals each day is a really powerful way to keep spirits high and help children to see what they are capable of.

So in this module, we provide you with different ways to get children setting and celebrating their achievements. You may even find that you start setting your own goals and achievements too.



What we're giving you:

1. Learning Activities

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- 1. Understanding Goals** - Your child understands what a goal or a target is.
- 2. Goal Gauge** - Children learn to notice all of the things that they achieve.

What we're giving you:

2. Habits at Home

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Want to learn more about the science of happiness and wellbeing?

Why not check out the Founder of myHappyMind's best selling book, myHappyMind.

BY LAURA EARNSHAW

My Happy Mind is the first book from our founder Laura Earnshaw. The book reveals all the science-backed secrets used in our curriculum to empower and educate parents - whether your child is struggling already, or you're interested in future proofing their mental health, there's something in here for everyone.



Want to hear more about myHappyMind?
Want to share a picture of your myHappyMind experience as a parent?
We'd love for you to join us over on our social media channels!

