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[www.futurestrongeducation.com](http://www.futurestrongeducation.com); [www.brainsetformula.com](http://www.brainsetformula.com)



A Calm Brain is a Thinking Brain: Designing Calm, Engaging Early Learning Environments.

Presented by –  
Dr. Kathryn Murray – Future Strong Education Consultancy, Australia  
Creator of the Brain-SET Environments Formula™.

August 8, 2024.



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"A Calm Brain is a Thinking Brain"  
Dr. Kathryn Murray



4 + 4 + 8 = Calm Awareness

<http://www.futurestrongeducation.com/sub/marketing-for-brain-using-the-4-4-8-learning-technology/>



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Dr. Kathryn Murray, the Creator of the Brain-SET Environments Formula™



- Mother of 4
- 40+ years in the education sector as a classroom teacher, university lecturer and education consultant
- Doctor of Education; Masters in Learning Management; Bachelor of Education; Diploma of Teaching (Primary/Preschool)
- Numerous certificates in education based professional development
- Distance Educator of the Year Central Queensland University 2014, 2017, 2019, 2020
- Best Early Childhood Mentor (International) 2020
- Award for Innovation in Early Childhood Learning 2022
- Published in many parenting and teacher magazines & journals



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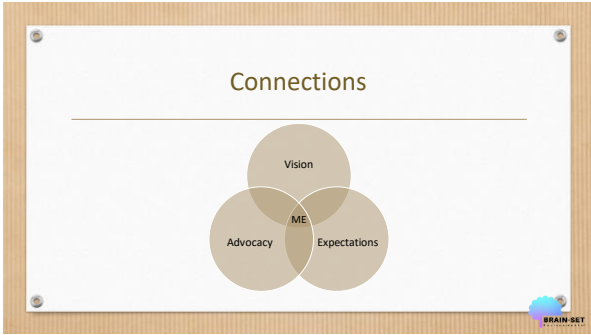
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**Expectations**

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- What are the policy maker's requirements?
- What are your requirements?
- Are you true to yourself when you are teaching?

Whose agenda are you following?  
Your own or others?

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I've got YOU!  
Your Vision and Your Expectations! 😊

- The Brain-SET pedagogy is informed by Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Steiner, Vygotsky, Maslow, Piaget, Bronfenbrenner, neuroscience, child development and peer reviewed, respected research.
- Classroom practices and environment design guides behaviours, thoughts, feelings.



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Think, Feel, Do.



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Vision, Expectation, Advocacy.  
"A Calm Brain is a Thinking Brain."  
Which environment would add to your wellbeing?



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### 4 Design Features of Early Childhood Environments

**Physical**  
Purposeful arrangement of space, furnishings, lighting, sounds, smells



**Psychological**  
Children and adults feel: safe, feel free to explore and to learn, feel valued.



**Social**  
Secure relationships with caring and responsive adults; collaborative learning groups; supporting independence and self regulation



**Temporal**  
Time for adults and children to pursue their interests and to do their work; how and when transitions occur is planned



Provision of New Scotia, Capable, Confident, and Curious: New Scotia's Early Learning Framework, 2018. BRAIN-SET

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### Linking Vision, Expectations, Brain Development and Advocacy



<https://thescienceofearlylearning.com/science/early-brain-development/>

BRAIN-SET

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### What if we designed a learning environment that supported the developing brain?

We would have children who develop skills of:		
Resilience	Creativity	Imagination
Critical thinking	Independence	Problem solving
Self regulation	Confidence	Collaboration
Communication	Literacy	Numeracy
Inquiry	Questioning	Patience
Respect	Negotiation	Risk taking

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### The Birth of Brain-SET

**Advocacy:**

- How Brain-SET began
- Brain-SET can achieve your vision, meet requirements and advocate for children.



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### The many layers of the Brain-SET Environments Formula.




Photo by [P. Scott Brown](#) on [iStock](#)

**CHILD Development, Brain Science, theory & research**  
 Image of the child/teacher  
 Identity, experience, philosophy, pedagogy  
 Relationships child/child, child/adult, child/space/materials  
 Environment — space/place, **thoughts, feelings, actions**  
 Critical Thinking, **10 components of thinking, purposeful planning**

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### The Brain-SET Environments Formula

Brain-SET Environments Formula®



- Thinking  
*Neocortex*
- Emotions  
*Limbic System*
- Survival  
*Brain Stem*

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### Survival ~ Emotional ~ Thinking

**Brain Based Environments**

- 3 Pillars of Design
- 16 Elements of Design
- Underpinned by critical thinking and learning
- Grounded in research

Kathryn Murray, 2021 ©

**BRAIN-SET**

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The environment is a living, changing system. The experience of space is individual and cultural. (Jim Greenman)

The environment is the third teacher. Spaces and materials can 'speak' to children. (Loris Malaguzzi)

**BRAIN-SET**

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The environment supports wellbeing and learning

### Survival ~ Emotional ~ Thinking

**Brain Based Environments**

- 3 Pillars of Design
- 16 Elements of Design
- Balanced spaces

Kathryn Murray, 2021 ©

**BRAIN-SET**

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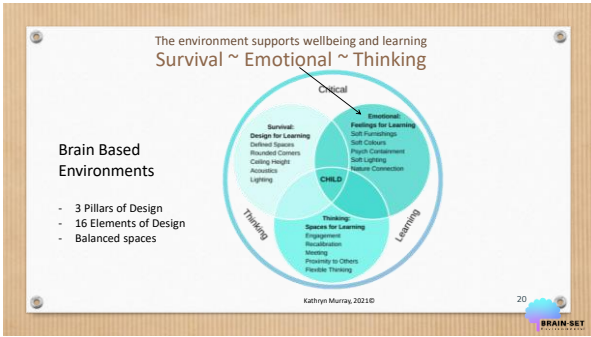
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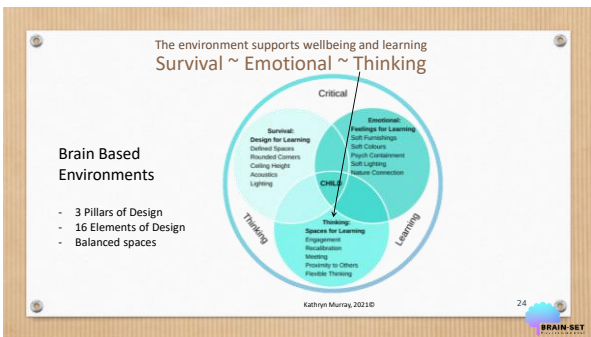
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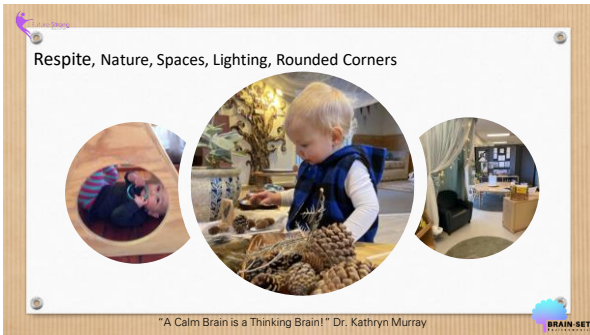
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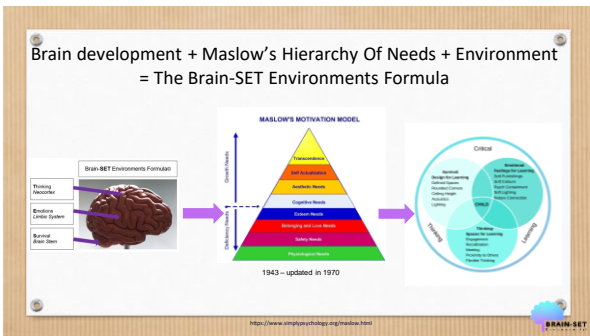
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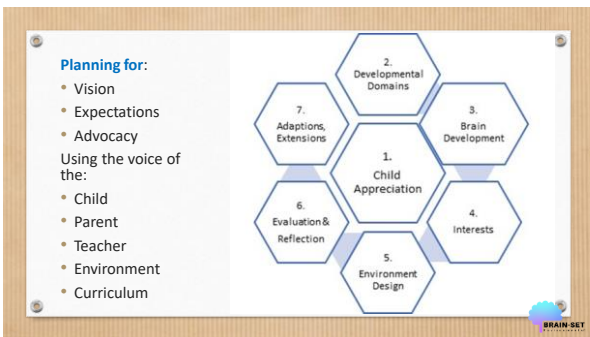
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**FINALLY...**

What does this session mean for your classroom practice?

<https://images.app.goo.gl/7H1U2U7uYkMh9Lp8>



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We are very grateful to the dedicated early childhood professionals whose images have been shared to support the Brain-SET examples and concepts.

*Thank You!*

**“Alone we can do a little; together we can do a lot!”**

Helen Keller



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