



## The Three Areas of the Brain

### **Lower Area of the Brain or Alarm Center**

A baby is born with this area of its brain developed. The brain stem takes in information from the outside world via sensations from the body and perceptual system (except smell). The lower area of the brain activates instinctive behavior related to survival and controls essential bodily functions required for sustaining life, including:

- Digestion/elimination • Breathing
- Heart rate
- Sleep and arousal
- Body temperature
- Movement, posture, and balance • Territorial instincts
- Fight, flight, or freeze
- Hunger

### **Middle Area of the Brain or Emotional Center**

The middle area of the brain is in charge of processing emotions and our response to stress. This area is the focus of development in young children.

This part of the brain activates:

- Rage
- Fear
- Separation distress
- Caring and nurturing
- Contextual memory
- Social bonding
- Explorative urge
- Lust in adults/sexual behavior • Hormone control

### **Higher Area of the Brain or Decision Making Center**

This area is also known as the neocortex, or frontal lobes. It amounts to about 85 percent of the total brain mass. This area has a significant spurt in development around age six and then continues to grow. Its functions and capacities include:

- Creativity and imagination
- • Problem solving
- Reasoning and reflection
- • Self-awareness
- Kindness, empathy, and concern