

# Better Behavior Starts with the Brain

## What It Looks Like in a SKILLZ Class

When kids struggle with behavior, it's easy to assume they need firmer consequences or stronger discipline.

But brain science—and what we see every day inside SKILLZ classes—tells us something different: **Behavior improves when regulation comes first.**

At SKILLZ, we don't start by trying to stop behavior.

We start by helping the brain settle—because learning and self-control can't happen until it does.

Here's what that looks like in real life.

## What's Happening in the Brain (and Why It Matters)

When a child is overwhelmed, frustrated, embarrassed, or overstimulated, their **thinking brain** temporarily goes offline.

In that moment:

- listening drops
- impulse control drops
- reasoning doesn't work

This isn't defiance. It's biology.

That's why SKILLZ instructors are trained to respond to the **state of the child**, not just the behavior they see.

### **Example: A Child Gets Upset After Losing a Game**

In many settings, this might lead to:

- a warning
- removal from the activity
- a lecture about sportsmanship

In a SKILLZ class, it looks different.

A SKILLZ instructor will:

- get down to the child's eye level
- calmly name what they're seeing:  
*"I can see you're really frustrated about losing."*

- acknowledge the feeling:  
*"That makes sense—losing can be hard."*

This simple response helps the child's brain settle.

Once the child is calmer, the instructor might say:

*"Let's take three deep breaths together, then I'll help you figure out what better choices can be made."*

Only **after** regulation comes learning.

## **Why This Works**

SKILLZ instructors are trained in **co-regulation**—the process of helping a child calm their nervous system through connection, movement, and supportive guidance.

Over time, children begin to:

- recognize their own emotions
- recover faster from frustration
- handle challenges with more confidence

What starts as adult support becomes a child's **internal skill**.

## **Discipline That Builds Skills**

This approach doesn't mean there are no boundaries.

It means boundaries are taught **when the brain is ready to learn.**

After a child is calm, instructors help them:

- reflect on what happened
- practice better choices
- repair and rejoin the group

This is how discipline becomes **development.**

## **What Parents Often Notice**

Parents frequently tell us they see:

- fewer meltdowns over time
- improved confidence
- better emotional awareness
- skills transferring to home and school

Because when kids learn how to regulate, behavior improves naturally.

## **The Big Picture**

Kids don't struggle because they want to. They struggle because they're still learning how their brains work.

At SKILLZ, our instructors don't demand those skills before kids are ready.

We help them **build them**—one calm, connected moment at a time.

Because better behavior doesn't start with consequences.

**Better behavior starts with the brain.**