



• **Newsletter — November 2025 Issue**

## **The Brain on Gratitude: How Thankfulness Strengthens Thinking, Learning, and Emotional Health**

Gratitude is more than good manners—it is brain training.

[Research](#) shows that expressing thankfulness activates neural pathways linked to attention, memory, and emotional regulation. For children and teens, practicing gratitude can boost motivation, improve focus, and reduce stress responses that interfere with learning.

Here are some brain-friendly ways to integrate gratitude into daily routines:

- **Start or end the day with reflection.** A quick “three good things” routine helps children shift attention from frustration to positive recall, strengthening memory and mood regulation circuits.
- **Pair gratitude with movement.** Writing thank-you notes or decorating a gratitude jar engages fine motor and visual areas, reinforcing the emotional message through multiple sensory channels.

- **Model mindful appreciation.** When adults verbalize appreciation—“I’m thankful you helped clean up,” or “I enjoyed our walk together”—children mirror that cognitive-emotional link between awareness and reward.
- **Use gratitude in therapy or class.** Journaling or sharing small wins stimulates dopamine release, building a sense of agency and resilience.

Consistent gratitude practice helps wire the brain for optimism and attention—two foundations of healthy learning and relationships.

This Thanksgiving, help nourish minds as well as hearts by making gratitude a daily exercise in brain growth.

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### Paws for Gratitude

Here’s a fun, short (<2 minutes) video to help young kids think about and practice gratitude!



“Enjoy the little things, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.”

— Charles Dickens

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Happy Thanksgiving!



**Dr. Katrina Katen**  
Clinical Psychologist



**Andrew Katen**  
Executive Director



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2530 E. Foresight Circle  
Grand Junction, CO 81505

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