

Roots & Regulation

SEPTEMBER 2025



Welcome

This isn't a quick-tips newsletter.

If you're here looking for "10 ways to get your toddler to eat broccoli" or a magic trick to fix your child's behavior overnight, you won't find that here. You've already been sold those solutions — and if you're reading this, you probably know in your gut that they don't touch the deeper truth.

This is a space for depth. For slowing down. For parents and caregivers who want to understand what's really happening beneath the surface — in the nervous system, in development, in family systems, in the ways we connect (or don't) with our children and with ourselves.

I don't believe in filtering myself to fit what's palatable. I write about what matters: the nervous system, attachment, regulation, reflexes, body autonomy, feeding, speech, and the family patterns that ripple across generations. It's not always neat. It's not always comfortable. But it's real.

There's no pressure here. You get to take in this work at your own pace. Maybe you're ready to sit with it now. Maybe you tuck it away and come back when the timing feels right. Either way, it's here when you are.

Because parenting isn't about more tips or more therapies stacked on top of each other. It's about presence. It's about trust. It's about choosing to listen — to your child, to yourself, and to the wisdom that's been buried beneath the noise.

This is what I offer: not quick fixes, but a different way of seeing. Not pressure, but perspective. Not survival, but the possibility of thriving.

Welcome.

In This Issue

Forget the old checklists.

This issue dives into:

- Why your child's "behavior" is really their nervous system talking
- How lining up toys reveals the deeper need for order and safety
- Why respecting resistance matters more than pushing skills — for both kids and adults

It's Not Behavior, It's the Nervous System

*Meeting a child where they are builds selfhood and the capacity to choose —
the roots of later flexibility, confidence, and connection.*



A child lines up cars — carefully, precisely.

We've been trained to gasp: red flag. But lining up isn't "bad." It's a nervous system seeking order when the world feels too big.

Adults do it, too: sorting, straightening, staying busy when life tilts toward chaos. That's not failure — it's survival.

Play Is a Mirror of the Nervous System

Play shows us where a child's system is. Lining up says, I need predictability before I can risk imagination.

As safety grows, play evolves —
from ordering → to experimenting → to creating stories.

Lining up is a bridge, not a dead end.

The misstep is treating the bridge like a failure.
When we rush to redirect, we miss the doorway into a child's actual state.

Try This:

Meeting a Child Who Lines Up Toys

1. Sit Beside Them

Share space without interrupting.

2. Join in Parallel

Line up your own toys; match their rhythm without taking over.

3. Mirror Without Taking Over

Show: "I see what you're doing, and I can do it too — in my own space."

4. Follow Their Lead

Let them decide if/when to engage or watch.

5. Notice the Shift

As safety grows, variety emerges on its own —
no forcing required.

"If a skill is at the
right developmental
level, the brain will
crave it —
if it's not, resistance
is just information."

It's Not Behavior, It's the Nervous System, ct'd

From Childhood to Adulthood: The Same Pattern

We don't age out of coping. We tidy when we're flooded, over-organize when we're overwhelmed, keep moving so we don't collapse. It works — until it doesn't.

When Sympathetic Dominance Runs the Show

In a go-go-go body, stress chemistry fuels busyness. The gap from rest-and-digest widens; tension climbs; sensitivity spikes. We ride peaks of activity, then crash. We often label the cycle; underneath, it's patterning. Patterns can shift — not easily, but meaningfully — when the nervous system finds safety again.

Haven't We Had Enough of Surviving?

Memorizing and performing belong to survival. Learning and creating belong to safety. We can't access connection, problem-solving, or genuine growth if we're stuck in high gear.

Thriving starts when sympathetic activation and parasympathetic rest can both be accessed — and the system flexibly moves between them.

Family Systems and Ancestral Loops

These patterns ripple through families. Choosing to meet a child differently — respecting their need for order, creating safety instead of shame — doesn't just help today. It changes trajectories.

Finding the Right Level of Skill

If your child resists a strategy, it's not failure — it's feedback.

The brain craves the right skill and repeats it naturally.

Pushback means we've overshot.

Watch what they do on repeat instead —
that's their nervous system showing you what it needs next.

Why Imitation Matters

Imitation is the root of almost every developmental skill — from speech to problem-solving, from motor planning to social connection.

Monkey see, monkey do is how a brain wires for learning.
If imitation isn't showing up, we go back and help the system find that step.

How I build it:

- Whole-body first_(big movements are easiest to plan),
- then gross motor (arms/legs),
- then fine motor (hands/fingers),
- and finally mouth & face (foundation for speech sounds).

Skipping these layers makes speech hard because the scaffolding isn't there.
Rebuilding imitation step by step lets communication emerge from confidence and connection.



Morgan Hickey

I'm a speech-language pathologist and integrative body-based practitioner working at the intersection of nervous system regulation, reflex integration, feeding, and family systems.

My approach is shaped as much by lived experience as by professional training — I write and practice from the conviction that development is never just skills, but safety, presence, and connection.

719-342-0246

www.morganhickey.net

Loveland
Denver Metro
Eastern Colorado
Online
