

Building Brilliant Brains

Dance company responds to the modern epidemic of screen overuse by parents and children

An app created by dance company Turned On Its Head is aiming to turn the modern epidemic of screen overuse by parents and young children quite literally on its head.

It is common knowledge that mobile phone and tablets are leading to a decline in family play. This month one newspaper extolled: *"Obesity, aggression, developmental delays: what tablets and mobiles are doing to our children"* (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/family/obesity-aggression-developmental-delays-what-tablets-and-mobiles/>)



And so Turned On Its Head has used neuroscience research to create its Building Brilliant Brains (BBB) app, based on the dance improvisation used in its touring shows and workshops. BBB invites young children and adults to build animated brains through physical, creative activities which are done together, helping parents and children to understand how brains grow in response to interaction, play and multi-sensory experiences - all of which are scientifically proven to be key in building children's brains.

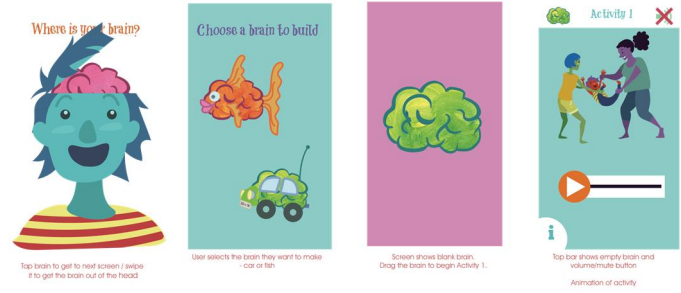
Artistic Director Liz Clark has had been working with families for over 20 years and has followed the increase in mobile usage during dance sessions and how they hinder family interaction and child development. BBB is born out of a series of research projects working with vulnerable families in the East Midlands, including families who have adopted children from the care system. Herself an adoptive parent, Clark has firsthand experience of caring for a child neglected in early life. The app responds to the 'ticking time bomb' of children and young people abandoned, isolated or uncared for during their early years. Disrupted 'attachment' is proven to contribute to pervasive anger, lack of empathy and destructive behaviour.

Although mobile phone and tablet devices are not proven to be harmful, research shows there is significant harm simply in the lack of time spent doing things in the real world which are important for development. BBB takes a mobile phone and turns it into a physically creative tool, including short animations to help users learn the neuroscience, such as brain chemistry and attachment, behind the activities. Featuring six 'brain journeys' around a theme (e.g. underwater), the app uses original music composed for each one.



NOTES TO EDITORS

Detailed app content can be accessed by contacting Natalie Cheary at Natalie.cheary@hotmail.co.uk



A child is born with up to 100 billion neurons. Multi-sensory experiences enable the brain to make around 2 million neural connections per second. The BBB app is for parents and professionals to use with children to help build:

- connection, trust and attachment
- a competent, regulated and school ready brain
- self esteem and well being

Turned On Its Head was established in 2010 and is led by Artistic Director Liz Clark. An Affiliate Company at Curve, Leicester, it makes immersive, participatory theatre for early years, influenced by neuroscientific research and practice. Clark also runs *Little Movers*, a child-led creative dance session. As with their shows, the sessions are multi-sensory and value the creativity of very young children, even before they are verbal.

Turned Its Head is currently touring its brand new show, *Sponge*, directed by **Liz Clark** and **Oksana Tyminska**, for babies, young children and families. Commissioned and produced by Big Imaginations and co-commissioned by Spark Arts, *Sponge* plays in twenty venues around the country, starting in August and concluding at the Barbican The Pit, Barbican Centre, Silk Street, London EC2Y 8DS in December.

Clark talks candidly about her own experience as a director and mother of three in her blog: <http://blog.turnedonitshead.org/building-brilliant-brains-making-an-app/> <http://blog.turnedonitshead.org/the-beginning-of-sponge-the-show/>

Previous to *Sponge*, the company performed *Shiny* in 2014, as part of Dance Umbrella, at four venues in London. Clark's improvisatory dance work with families is featured in the *Inspire Me* films of Akram Khan's Big Dance Pledge 2016. (<http://www.bigdance.org.uk/big-dance-pledge/inspired-big-dance-pledge/>).

ENDS

Press information

For further information / interviews with Liz Clark contact Natalie Cheary on 07768 261526 or Natalie.cheary@hotmail.co.uk

For further information about the Barbican residency, contact the Barbican press office: Freddie Todd Fordham, Media Relations Officer, +44 207 382 7399 or freddie.todd-fordham@barbican.org.uk

For further information about the *Sponge* tour please contact Laura Stevens, 0161 226 1912 or laura@z-arts.org

Sponge tour dates

Just So Festival, Cheshire: Fri 19 – Sat 21 Aug
Z-Arts, Manchester: Thu 29 Sept
The Egg, Bath: Sat 1 & Sun 2 Oct
Lincoln Drill Hall: Mon 3 Oct
Riverside Theatre, Woodbridge: Tue 4 Oct
South Holland Centre, Spalding: Wed 5 Oct
The Curve, Leicester: Fri 7 & Sat 8 Oct
Corby Cube: Mon 10 Oct
Lakeside, Nottingham: Wed 12 Oct
Leigh Library, Wigan: Fri 14 Oct
Barnsley Civic: Sun 16 Oct
Blackwood Miners Institute: Wed 19 Oct
North Wall Oxford: Sat 22 Oct
The Atkinson, Southport: Wed 26 Oct
Cheshire Rural Touring Arts: Fri 28 & Sat 29 Oct
Whitby Hall, Elesemere Port: Wed 2 Nov
Burney Arts Centre: Thu 3 Nov
The Citadel, St Helens: Fri 4 Nov
The Boo, Rossendale: Sun 6 Nov
Lancaster Arts: Sat 10 Dec
Barbican, London: Tue 13 – Wed 21 Dec