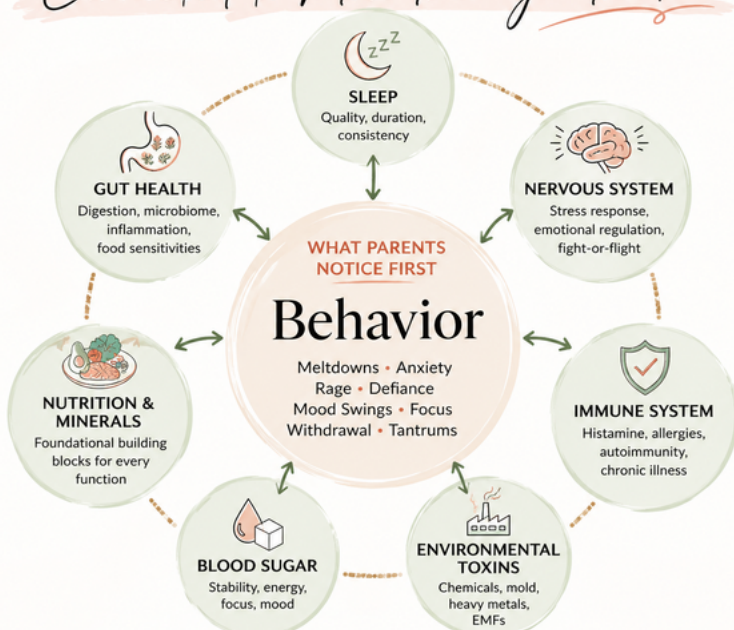


Understanding the Gut-Brain Connection

Why gut health matters, but isn't the whole story

Your Child's Behavior Is *Connected to More Than You Think*



When **one** system struggles, the **others** often do too.
That's why behavior is often the **last symptom** we notice, not the first. ❤️



Hi! I'm Leslie.

For more than 15 years, I helped children and families as a behavior consultant.

Then everything changed when it was my own son. Like so many parents, we spent years searching for answers. We tried behavior strategies, therapy, specialists, and eventually collected diagnoses including ADD, ODD, anxiety, adjustment disorder, and later PANS/PANDAS.



While those diagnoses helped validate what I had been seeing all along, they still didn't explain why my once happy little boy had become so anxious, explosive, and overwhelmed.

While those diagnoses helped validate what I had been seeing all along, they still didn't explain why my once happy little boy had become so anxious, explosive, and overwhelmed.

As both his mom and a behavior consultant, I knew there had to be more to the story.

That search led me to functional medicine and back to school to become a Functional Diagnostic Nutrition Practitioner and Board-Certified Holistic Health Practitioner.

Through comprehensive functional lab testing, we finally uncovered what no one had been looking for: mold exposure, gut dysbiosis, parasites, heavy metals, mineral imbalances, and other hidden stressors affecting his brain, nervous system, immune system, and overall health.

For the first time, everything made sense.

Today, I combine my experience as a mom, former behavior consultant, and functional health practitioner to help families uncover what's driving their child's meltdowns, anxiety, emotional outbursts, and other symptoms. Together, we use comprehensive functional lab testing, personalized protocols, nutrition, lifestyle changes, and ongoing support to help children become calmer, happier, and more regulated.

More than anything, I want you to know this:

You're not crazy.

You're not failing.

And your child's behavior may be telling a much bigger story.

I hope this guide helps you feel a little less alone and a little more hopeful about what's possible for your child.

Leslie



Dear Mom,

If you've found this guide, I'm guessing you've already heard someone say,

"Everything starts in the gut."

While there's truth to that, but I also think it's incomplete.

After walking this journey with both of my boys, and now hundreds of other families, I can confidently say this:

The gut is incredibly important. But it isn't the only piece of the puzzle.

Let's talk about why.



What Is The Gut-Brain Connection?

Did you know your child's gut and brain are constantly talking to each other?

In fact, scientists often call the gut the "second brain."

That's because the gut and brain communicate all day long through:

- The vagus nerve
- The immune system
- Hormones
- Neurotransmitters
- The microbiome (gut bacteria)

When the gut is healthy, those messages help support:

- Emotional regulation
- Focus
- Mood
- Sleep
- Learning
- Stress resilience

But when the gut is inflamed or imbalanced, the brain feels it too.



Why Can Gut Problems Affect Behavior?

When the gut isn't functioning well it doesn't just affect digestion.

It can also affect:

Mood

Anxiety

Emotional regulation

Sleep

Attention

Sensory processing

Irritability

Immune function

This is one reason many parents notice behavior changes after antibiotics, stomach bugs, illness, or periods of constipation.

The gut and brain are connected.



Signs The Gut May Need Support

Some clues I commonly see include:

Constipation
Loose stools
Belly pain
Bloating
Reflux
Food sensitivities
Eczema
Dark circles
Bad breath
Frequent antibiotics
Sugar cravings
Picky eating
Emotional outbursts
Anxiety
Sleep struggles



But Here's What I Wish Someone Had Told Me

For years I thought if I could just "heal my son's gut"
everything else would fall into place.

It didn't.

Supporting his gut absolutely mattered. But it wasn't
enough.

Because his gut wasn't struggling by itself.



The Gut Doesn't Work Alone

Your child's body is one connected system.

The gut is constantly interacting with:

The nervous system.

The immune system.

Minerals.

Blood sugar.

Sleep.

Environmental toxins.

Mitochondria.

Hormones.

Stress.

When one system struggles the others often do too.

That's why I rarely see a child whose gut is the ONLY thing needing support.



The Biggest Mistake I See

Many parents are told "Let's fix the gut."

So they start probiotics.

Antimicrobials.

Special diets.

Supplements.

But if the nervous system is stuck in fight-or-flight...

If minerals are depleted...

If the body is overwhelmed by inflammation...

The gut often struggles to fully heal.

Healing has an order.



My Approach

Instead of chasing one symptom, or one lab I ask a different question.

"What is your child's body trying to tell us?"

That means looking at:

Gut health

Immune function

Nervous system regulation

Mineral balance

Environmental stressors

Digestion

Blood sugar

Sleep

Nutrition

Because when we connect all the dot our plan becomes much clearer.



Three Things You Can Start Today

You don't need to overhaul everything overnight.

Start with these foundations:

Support Blood Sugar

Aim for protein, healthy fats, and carbohydrates at every meal. Stable blood sugar supports both the gut, the brain, and nervous system.

Prioritize Daily Bowel Movements

You're either eliminating toxins or collecting them so if you're not pooping you're full of toxins.

Healthy elimination helps reduce the body's toxic burden and supports gut health.

Slow Down

A dysregulated nervous system affects digestion.

Deep breathing.

Outdoor time.

Movement.

Laughter.

Connection.

These all help tell the body it's safe.



One Last Thought

One of the biggest mindset shifts I had was realizing my son's behaviors weren't random even though they felt like it.

Neither was his constipation.

His eczema.

His sleep struggles.

His picky eating.

His anxiety.

His body had been telling one story all along. I just didn't know how to read it.

Today that's exactly what I help families do.
Not just heal the gut. But understand the whole child.



Your gut health plays a foundational role in mood regulation, behavior, and mental well-being. By addressing gut imbalances, you can improve emotional stability, reduce anxiety, and support healthier behaviors for your child.

Ready to see how we can support your child's gut-brain connection?

Let's chat!

✨ Let's dive deeper into what your child's body needs for calm and regulation. 💛

Instagram

Free Facebook community.

TikTok

Website

