

**NG** NEXTGEN  
LEARNERS

*Presents:*



THINK LIKE A BRAIN!<sup>™</sup>

Bella Cerebellum's Balance Ballet

Balance, coordination, rhythm, practice

FREE SMAPLER

For: Parents, Educators, & Co-Regulators

Presented by NGL Press  
**NextGen Learners LLC**  
Written By Maisel McLaula



# THIS BOOK IS ONE PIECE OF A BIGGER SYSTEM.

## **Bella the Cerebellum is part of Think Like a Brain!™**

— a structured developmental pathway that walks children (and the adults who love them) through the brain from the bottom up. Each character is a different brain region, and each book is a different layer of how humans regulate, remember, perceive, connect, and grow.

You're not meant to piece this together on your own. The pathway is designed to build in order.

The developmental arc, from the ground up:

- Benny the Brainstem — the foundation. Survival, regulation, the automatic body. Start here.
  - Bella the Cerebellum — balance, movement, rhythm, coordination.
- Amy the Amygdala — the alarm system. Big feelings, fear, protection.
  - Hippocampus Hal — memory, meaning, and the story of "me."
  - Olly the Occipital Owl — sight, images, imagination, pattern.
  - Tammy Temporal — sound, language, and the music of a life.
  - Perry the Parietal — body maps, touch, space, and belonging.
- Luna Lefty & Roger Righty — the two hemispheres, logic and art, list-making and daydreaming.
  - Callie the Connector — the bridge that lets all of it talk. Integration. Whole-brain thinking.

Each book stands on its own. Together, they form a bottom-up, trauma-informed, neurodevelopmentally-sequenced map of the human brain — written for children who are building themselves, and the grown-ups who are building alongside them.

Why the order matters. You cannot reason with a dysregulated brainstem. You cannot bridge two hemispheres that have never felt safe. The Think Like a Brain!™ pathway follows the same sequence real children use to grow: regulation first, then relationship, then reasoning. When you read these books in order — or reach for the one your child needs in the moment — you're matching the story to the layer of the brain that's doing the work.

Bella's place on the pathway. Bella sits just above Benny because movement and rhythm are the body's first language of safety. Once the brainstem feels steady, Bella is the layer that teaches the body how to try — how to balance, catch, tie, dance, fall, and try again without shame. The cerebellum coaches every practiced move, which is why Bella is the right companion for children learning new physical skills, recovering from growth spurts or injury, or struggling with coordination and motor planning. Reach for Bella when a child has the word "can't" before they have the word "yet" — when clumsy feels like character, when practice feels like punishment, and steady needs to be rebuilt one wobble at a time.

### **Disclaimer**

A gentle note. The Think Like a Brain!™ series is an educational and emotional literacy companion, not a replacement for medical, psychological, or therapeutic care. These books are grounded in developmental neuroscience and trauma-informed frameworks but are not diagnostic tools, treatment plans, or clinical interventions. If a child in your care is struggling with regulation, mental health, trauma, sensory processing, or development, please reach out to a qualified pediatrician, therapist, occupational therapist, or school counselor. The grown-ups who love a child are always the first and best line of support — and the grown-ups who get trained help are the ones who keep getting stronger at it. Trust yourself. Trust your team. Trust the pathway.

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# A QUIET NOTE FROM Maisel McLaula

These free pages are a small taste of something much bigger. Think Like a Brain!™ began as a love letter – to the children I’ve held, taught, and grown alongside, and to the grown-ups who stay up late worrying whether they’re getting it right. Every character, every printable, every breath script, every line of read-aloud guidance was built by hand, tested with real kids, and poured full of the thing I wish every child had: someone who believed their brain was not broken, just building.

Two ways to walk the full pathway:

## **The books.**

Each Think Like a Brain!™ title is a complete story with its own resource pages in the back – read-aloud prompts, age-by-age questions, regulation tools, and the science behind the character, all tucked into the final pages. The books alone are enough. They’re available wherever books are sold

## **The Activity Packs (like this one).**

These 24-page learning expansion packs are a deeper, classroom-and-clinic-ready companion to each book – role-play scripts, sorting mats, body-scan scripts, neurodivergent-affirming adaptations, parent and educator notes, and printables built to be hung, folded, and loved. The Activity Packs are exclusive to online customers at NextGenLearners.com and are not available anywhere else right now.

If this sampler was useful to a child you love, the full **Bella** Activity Pack is \$3 at NextGenLearners.com – and every pack you purchase keeps this small, independent press making more.



With so much love, Maisel McLaula NGL Publishing · NextGenLearners.com



# CHARACTER CARD

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## About Bella

Bella is the graceful ballerina of the Brainy Bunch. She lives in the cerebellum – the part of the brain that handles balance, coordination, rhythm, and fine motor skills. Standing. Walking. Catching. Dancing. Tying a shoe. The smooth, practiced moves that look easy, because Bella has been helping your body rehearse them all along.

Bella's personality is graceful, patient, persistent, and kind. She wears a tutu. She twirls in the west wing of the castle. She doesn't mind wobbles – she welcomes them, because every wobble is practice. She's the book every child who has ever felt clumsy, frustrated, or discouraged needs to meet – because she's living proof that their brain learns every time their body tries.

# BELLA'S

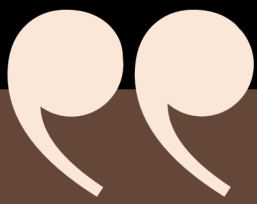


## READ-ALLOUD GUIDE

**Before reading:** Stand up together. Try balancing on one foot for 3 seconds. Then the other. Tell the child, “Something inside your brain just helped you do that. Let’s meet her.”

**During reading:** Pause after “Try by try, wobble by wobble.” Ask: What’s something you used to not be able to do, but now you can? Let them list. Don’t correct – celebrate.

**After reading:** “Bella has been practicing with you your whole life. Every time you try, she learns. Every wobble makes her better. She’ll be there tomorrow when you try again.” Then a long, slow exhale together.



## Bella's Quote of the Day

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*One day you glide, the next day  
you sway, balance can wander,  
then find its way.*

## Bella's Promise



Every child who meets Bella gets the same gift: the knowledge that mistakes are not failures, practice is not punishment, and somewhere inside them, a patient, cheerful helper has never stopped believing in their ability to learn.

They were never alone when they tried.

# Bella's Ballet Studio

Color in the place where Bella does her patient practice.



*What's the rhythm in the ballet studio?*

# THANK YOU



## WRITE TO US:

**[Inspire@NextGenLearners.com](mailto:Inspire@NextGenLearners.com)** – suggest a future book topic. Tell us what story a child in your life is waiting for.

**[Press@NextGenLearners.com](mailto:Press@NextGenLearners.com)** – for authors and creators who'd like to publish their own books with NGL.

**[Info@NextGenLearners.com](mailto:Info@NextGenLearners.com)** – general questions about other collections, products, or the NextGen Learners ecosystem.

**[Create@NextGenLearners.com](mailto:Create@NextGenLearners.com)** – send us your reviews, kid art, drawings, and creations inspired by the books. This is the “show us what you made“ mailbox, and it is our favorite one to open.

**[MaiselMcLaula@NextGenLearners.com](mailto:MaiselMcLaula@NextGenLearners.com)** – write directly to the author. Maisel reads every message.

## STAY CONNECTED

Visit the Learning Realm at [NextGenLearners.com](http://NextGenLearners.com) – free printables, book news, and the full *Think Like a Brain!*™ collection live there. Sign up for the newsletter while you're there for new resources, release dates, and the occasional gentle reminder that your brain is doing just fine.

## A NOTE FROM MAISEL

### **Thank you.**

*For choosing Bella. For sitting beside a child while they learned that their patient, persistent cerebellum has been practicing beside them all along. For reading slowly. For pausing when they asked questions. For trusting that stories can carry real science into a child's heart.*

*NGL Publishing is a small, independent imprint. Every book, printable, and free resource is made because a real child – somewhere – needed it. Your support is what keeps that going.*

### **Share the Love**

*If Bella helped a child you love, tell a friend, a teacher, a therapist. Word of mouth is how small presses grow big hearts. And if you'd like to leave a review – it truly does make all the difference.*

– With gratitude,

*Maisel McLaula*