

**NG** NEXTGEN  
LEARNERS

*Presents:*



THINK LIKE A BRAIN!<sup>™</sup>

Olly Occipital and the Lookout Tower

Vision, focus, filtering, clarity

FREE SAMPLER

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.

## **Olly the Occipital Owl 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 ask the eyes to focus when the body has 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.

Olly's place on the pathway. Olly sits in the sensory layer of the arc — above Benny, Bella, Amy, and Hal — because vision is the sense that takes in the most information and hands it to everything else. A child's eyes cannot steady until the body feels safe, the alarm is quiet, and memory knows which shapes are familiar. Once the layers below have done their work, Olly can do hers: choosing what to notice, softening what's too much, and letting the rest become a picture the child can live inside. That's why Olly is especially tender for sensitive eyes, screen-tired children, and any child whose world feels visually loud.

### **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.

**© NGL Publishing · NextGen Learners, LLC · Use freely with the children in your care.**

# 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 **Ollie** 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

---

## About Olly

Olly is the watchful observer of the Brainy Bunch. She lives in the occipital lobe – the back of the brain where everything the eyes take in becomes meaning. Colors. Shapes. Shadows. Motion. Faces. Words on a page. The small frog in the grass. The missing sock under the bed.

She's a soft, amber-eyed owl who lives high up in the Lookout Tower, with a wide view of the whole world and a gentle nest full of practice puzzles.

Olly's personality is observant, patient, deeply curious, and kind to herself. When too many visuals rush in, she blinks. She pauses. She picks one thing at a time. She doesn't get mad at her eyes when they feel tired – she rests them. She's the book every child who has ever said "there's too much to look at" needs to meet, because she's living proof that focus is a skill, not a judgment.

# OLLY'S



## READ-ALLOUD GUIDE

**Before reading:** Sit together facing a window or an art-filled wall. Ask, “How many things can you see right now?” Let them list. Then ask, “Which one do you want to really look at?”

**During reading:** Pause after “Too much to look at!” Ask: When does looking feel like too much for you? Let them name moments – bright classrooms, busy stores, too many open tabs, crowds. Don’t fix anything. Just listen.

**After reading:** “Olly has been watching the world with you since the day you were born. When it feels like too much, she knows how to rest her eyes. She’ll still be here tomorrow when you’re ready to look again.” Then three slow blinks together – eyes closed, eyes open, repeat.



## Olly's Quote of the Day

---

*When your eyes feel wobbly and the room is too bright, soften, blink three, and steady your sight.*



## Olly's Promise

Every child who meets Olly gets the same gift: the knowledge that noticing is not a weakness, that looking away is allowed, and somewhere behind their eyes, a patient lookout has always been keeping watch – waiting to show them something gentle.

They were never alone in seeing.

# Olly's Lookout Tower

Color in the place where Olly does her quiet watching.



*What can you see from the window of the Tower?*

# 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 *Olly*. For sitting beside a child while they learned that their patient, watchful visual cortex has been showing them the world 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 *Olly* 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*