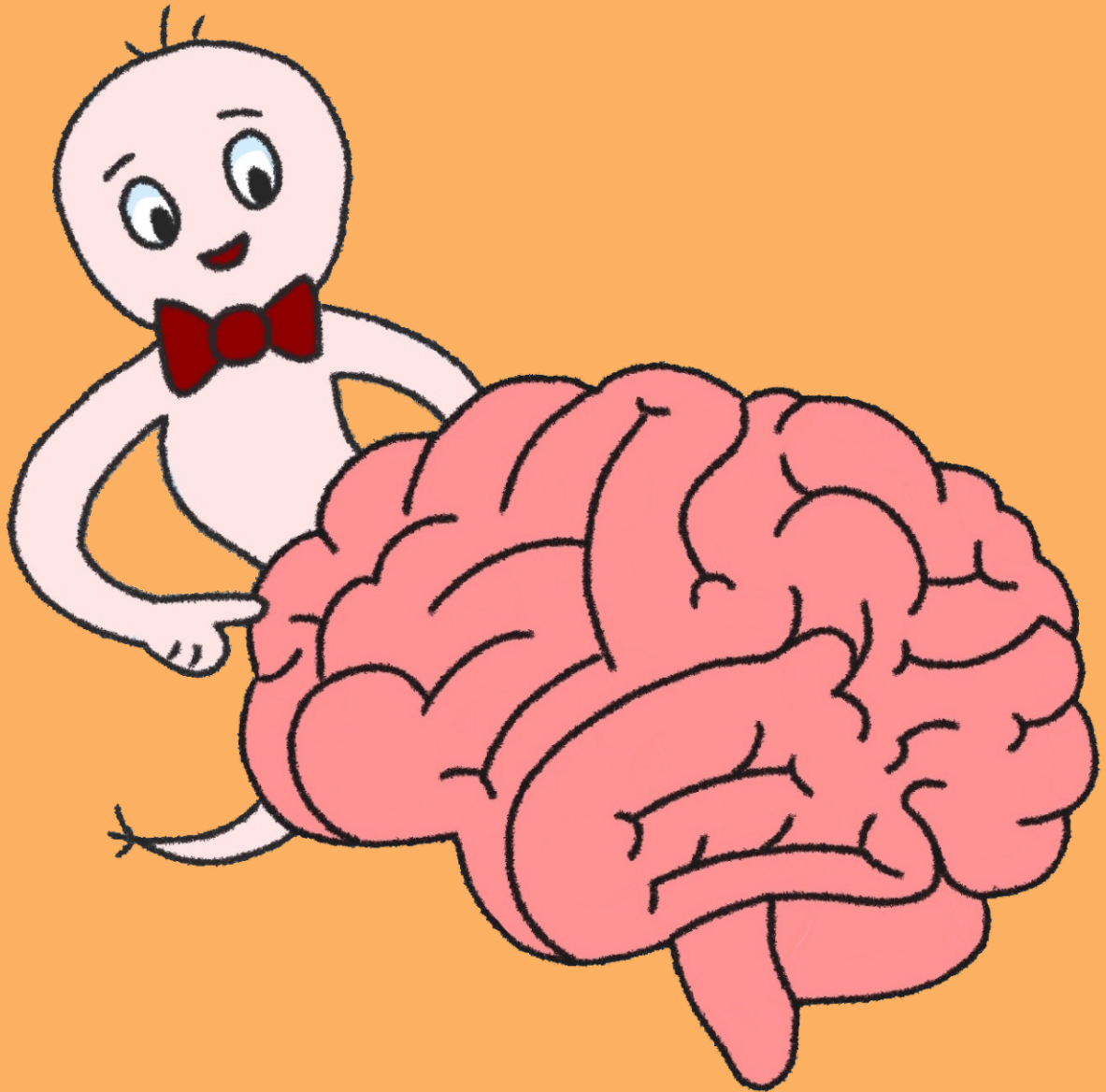


# NIKKI THE LITTLE NEURON

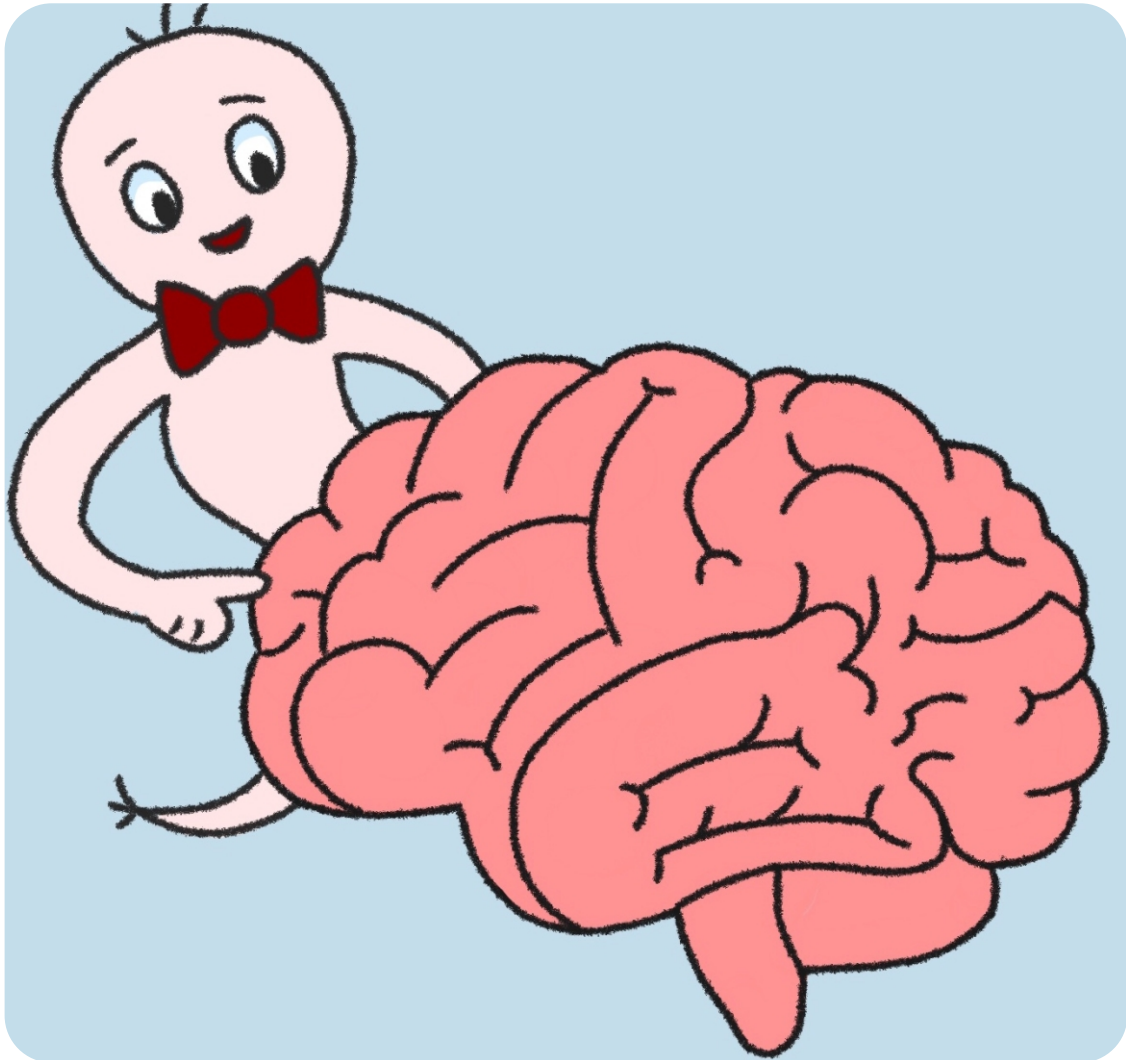


By Dr. Brian Hunt

Illustrated by  
Paige Brock

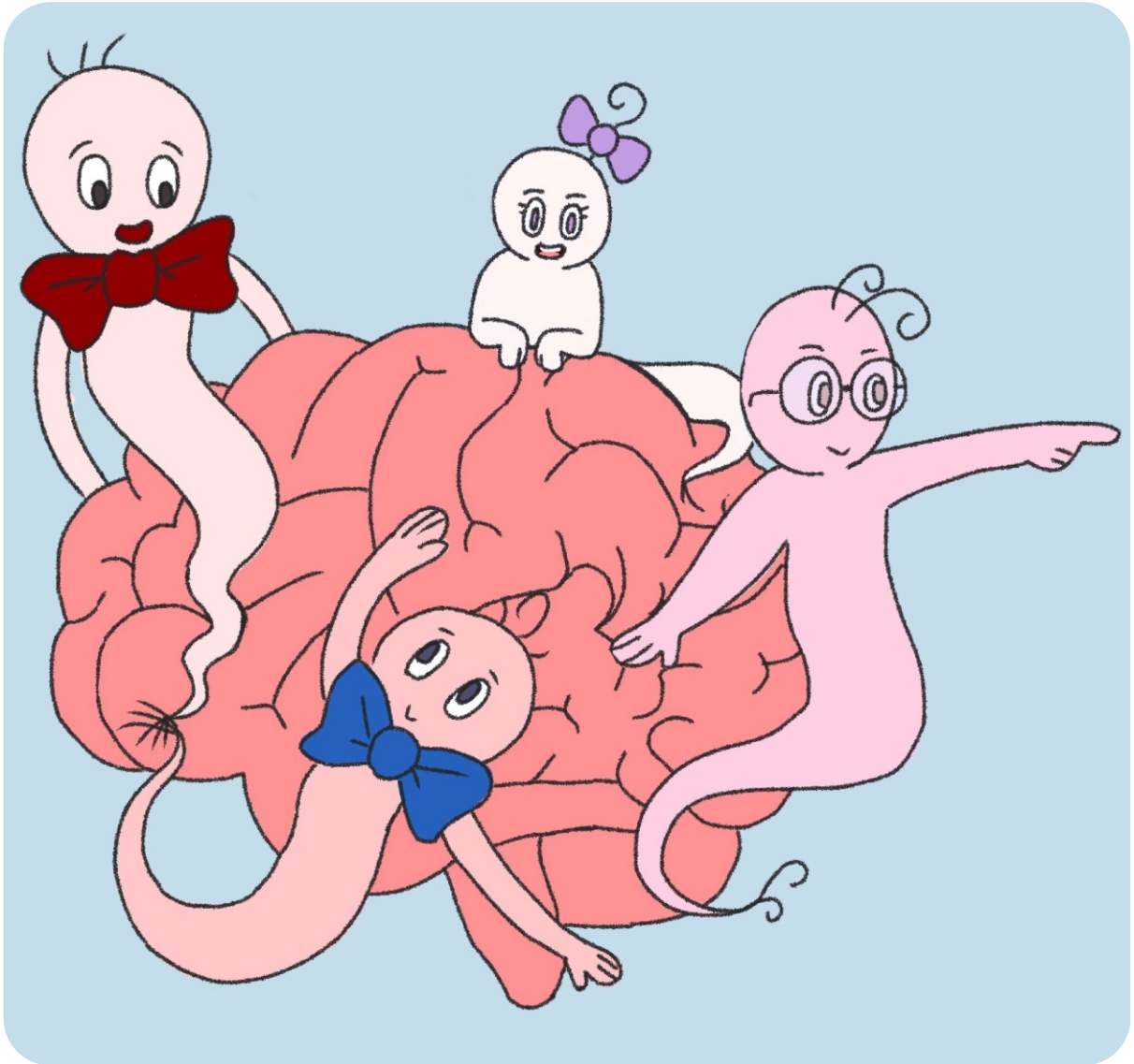


My name is Nikki and I am a little neuron. I live with my family and neighbours in a happy and very busy neighbourhood called the FRONTAL LOBE.

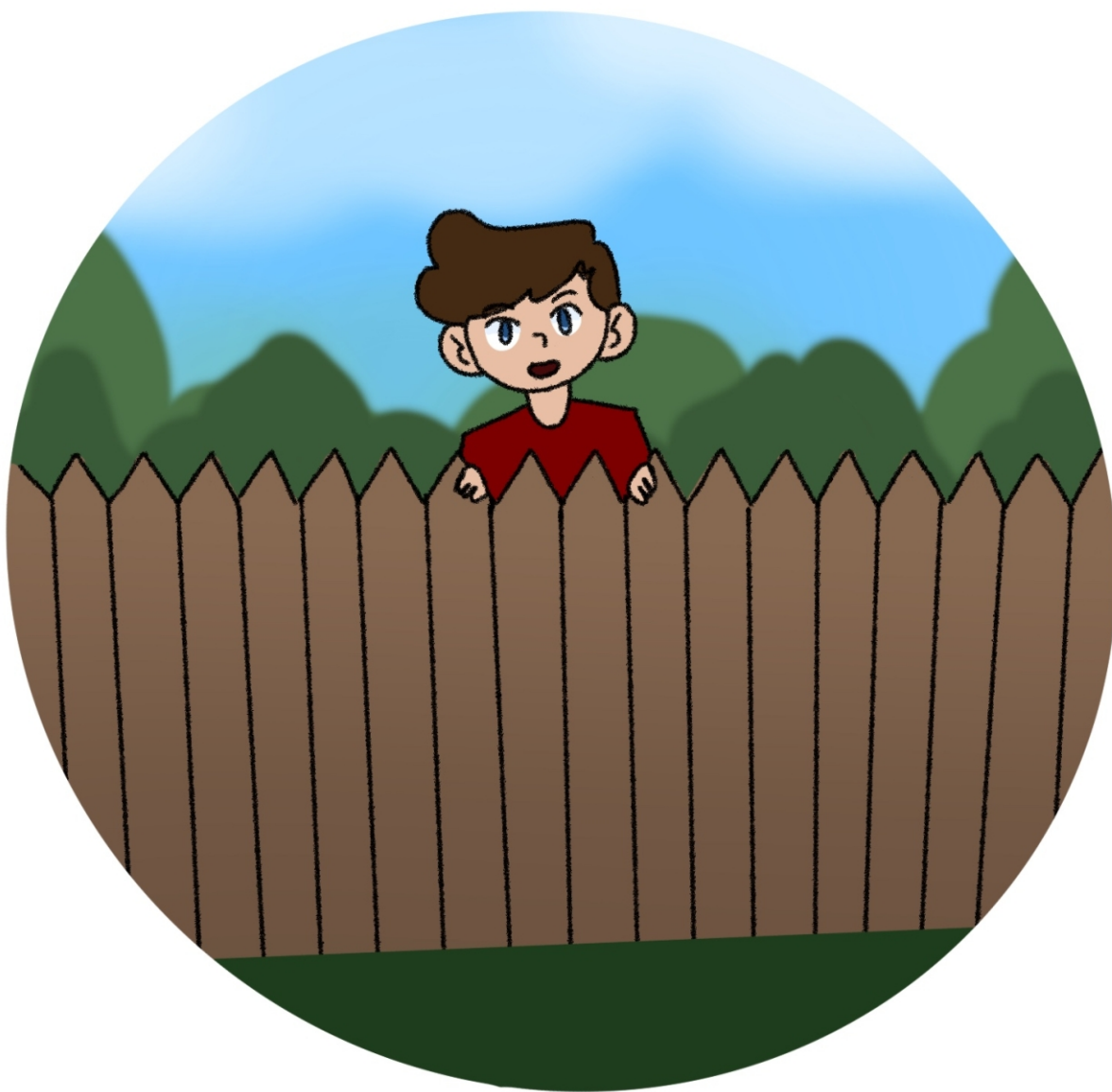


Our whole world is really Johnny's brain. Johnny has many friends, like Sara, who lives next door. Sara, like Johnny and all their friends, have brains where other neurons live.

We neurons are always talking, - first to our friends and neighbours in our little world of Johnny's brain. We also talk to other neurons in the brains of Johnny's friends.



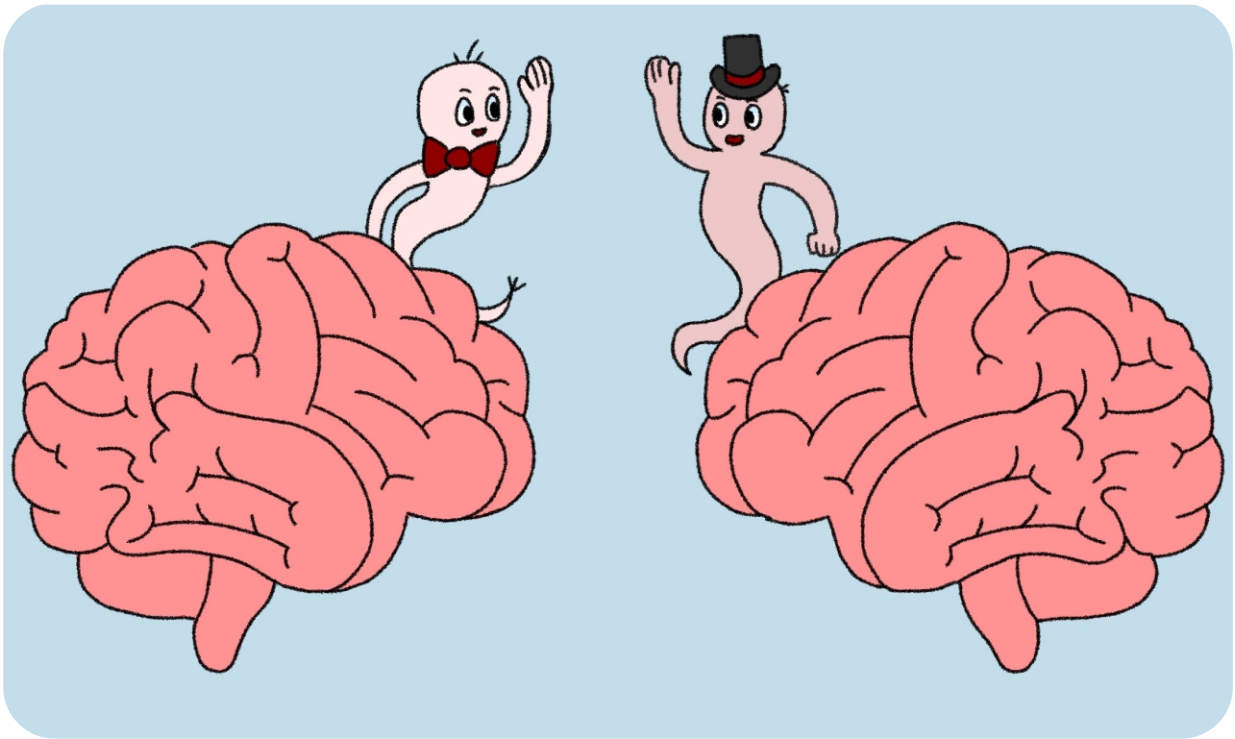
Older and wiser people use a big word called **COMMUNICATING** when they refer to talking, but I prefer to keep it simple and call it 'talking'.



When Johnny wants to tell Sara to come out and play, he opens his mouth and shouts across the fence,

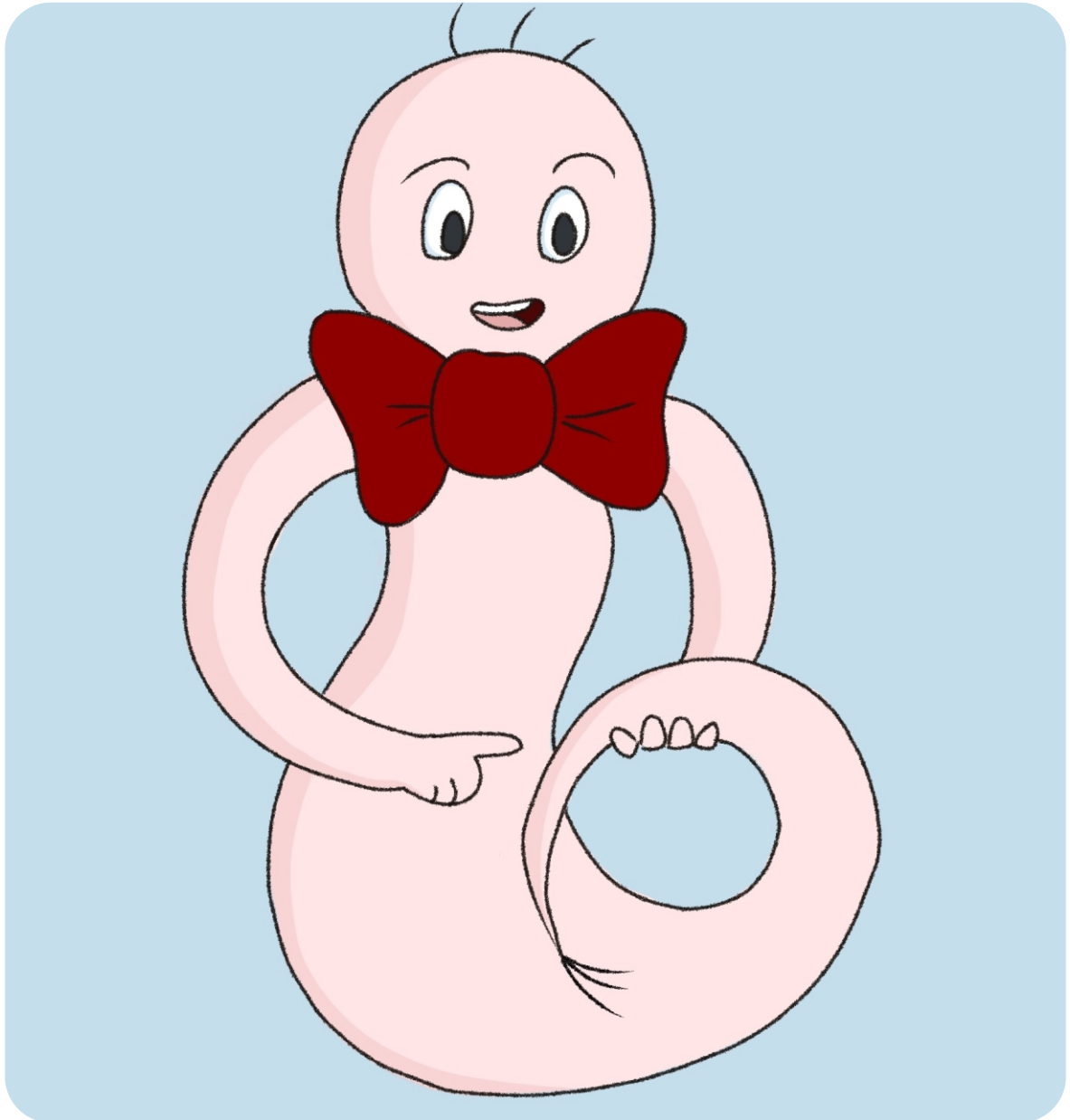
“Sara, it has stopped raining.

Let’s go to the playground!”



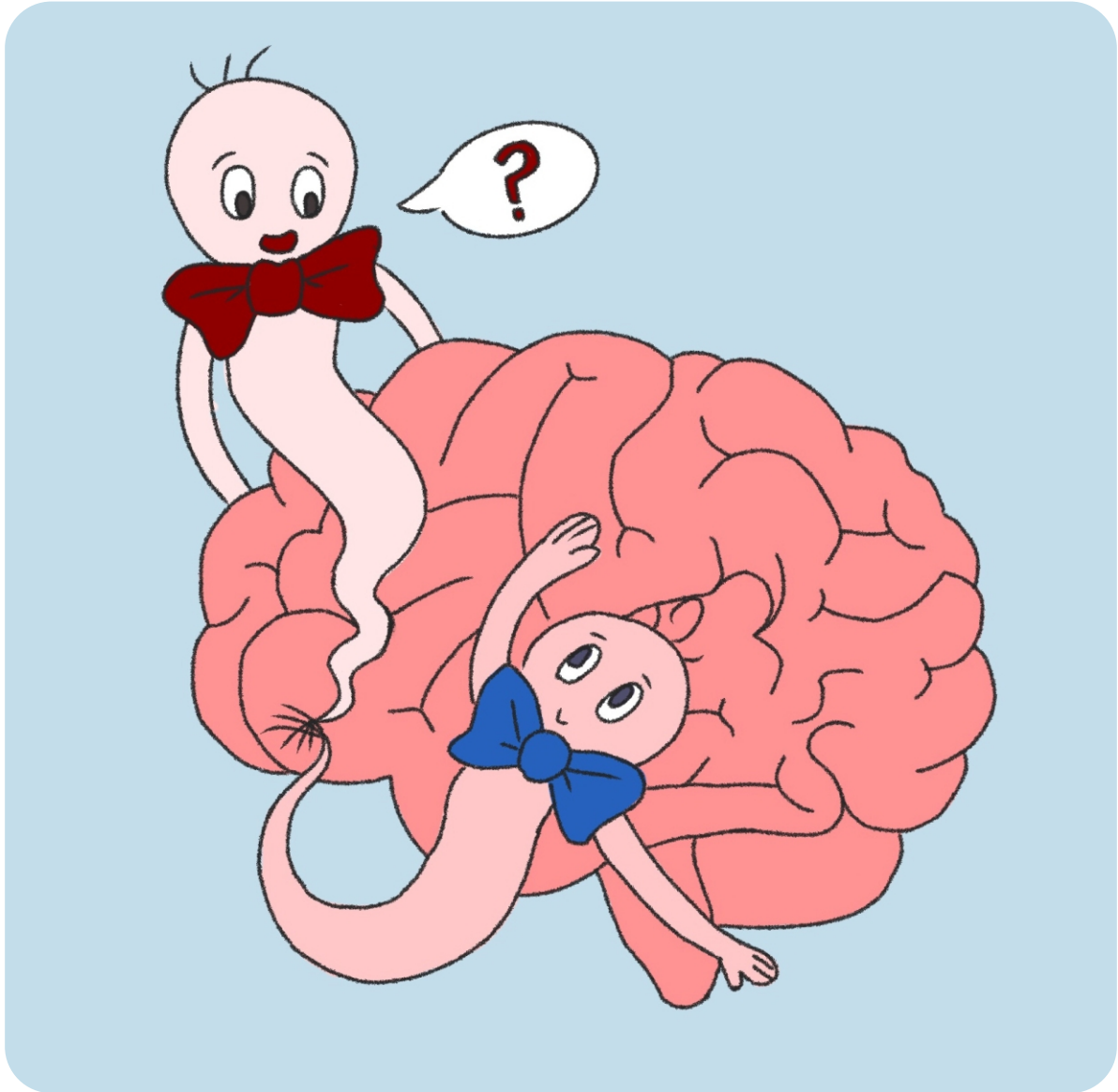
That is how we neurons get to meet and talk to other neurons who live in other brains. When Johnny shouts, we all hear him, and all the little neurons living in Sara's brain also hear him.

Not all neurons are the same. My family and my neighbours in the **FRONTAL LOBE** have very long tails.



When I want to talk to a friend like **TEMPI**, I wriggle the very tip of my tail.

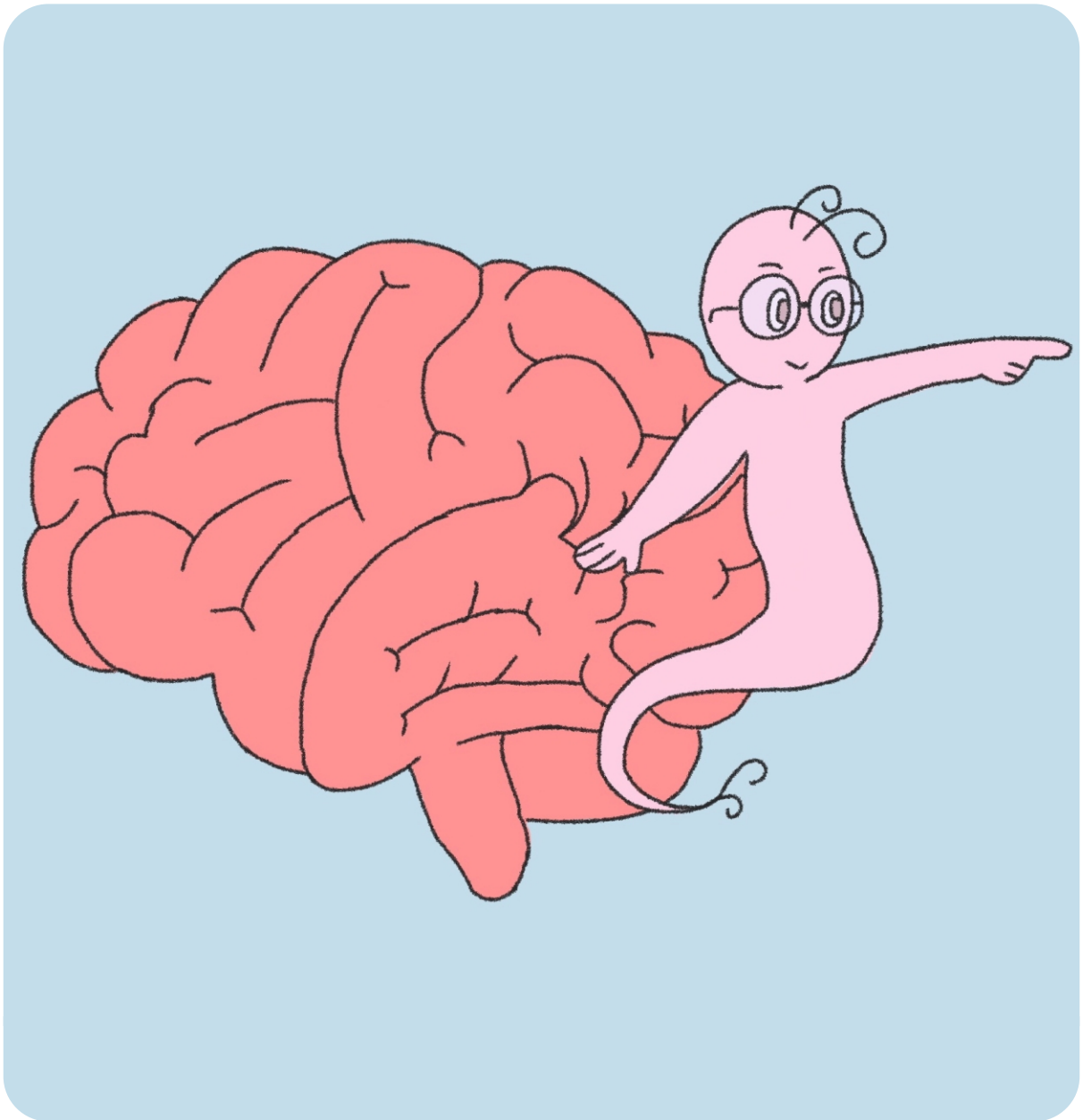
TEMPI lives in a different neighbourhood at the side of Johnny's brain called the TEMPORAL LOBE. Tempi's tail feels my wiggle and then I ask him a question.



Tempi is best at remembering all kinds of things! Our tails touching is almost like holding hands, ever so lightly.

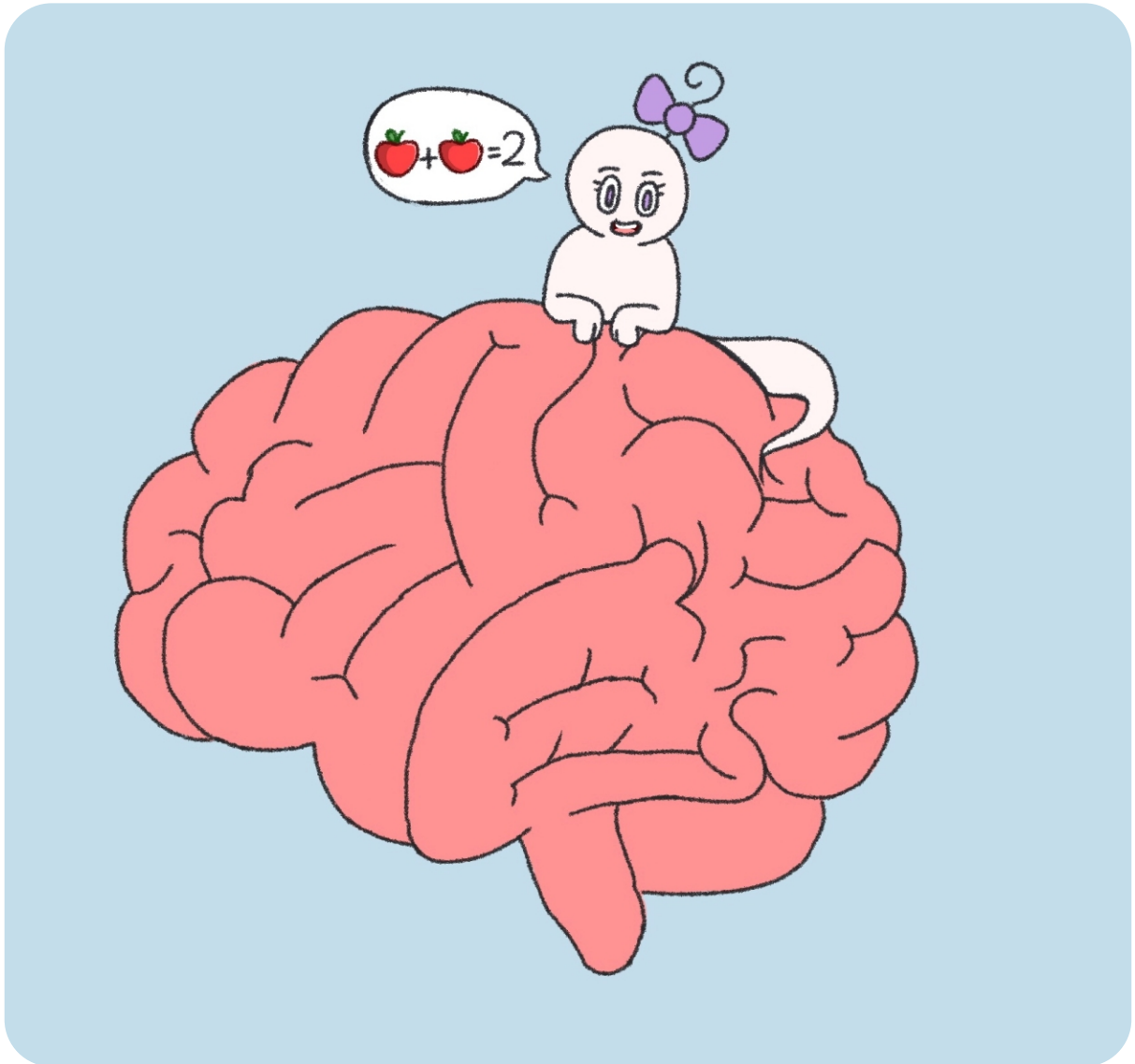


All through Johnny's brain, we have many friends..  
OCCI lives at the back of Johnny's brain and tells us  
what Johnny is looking at.



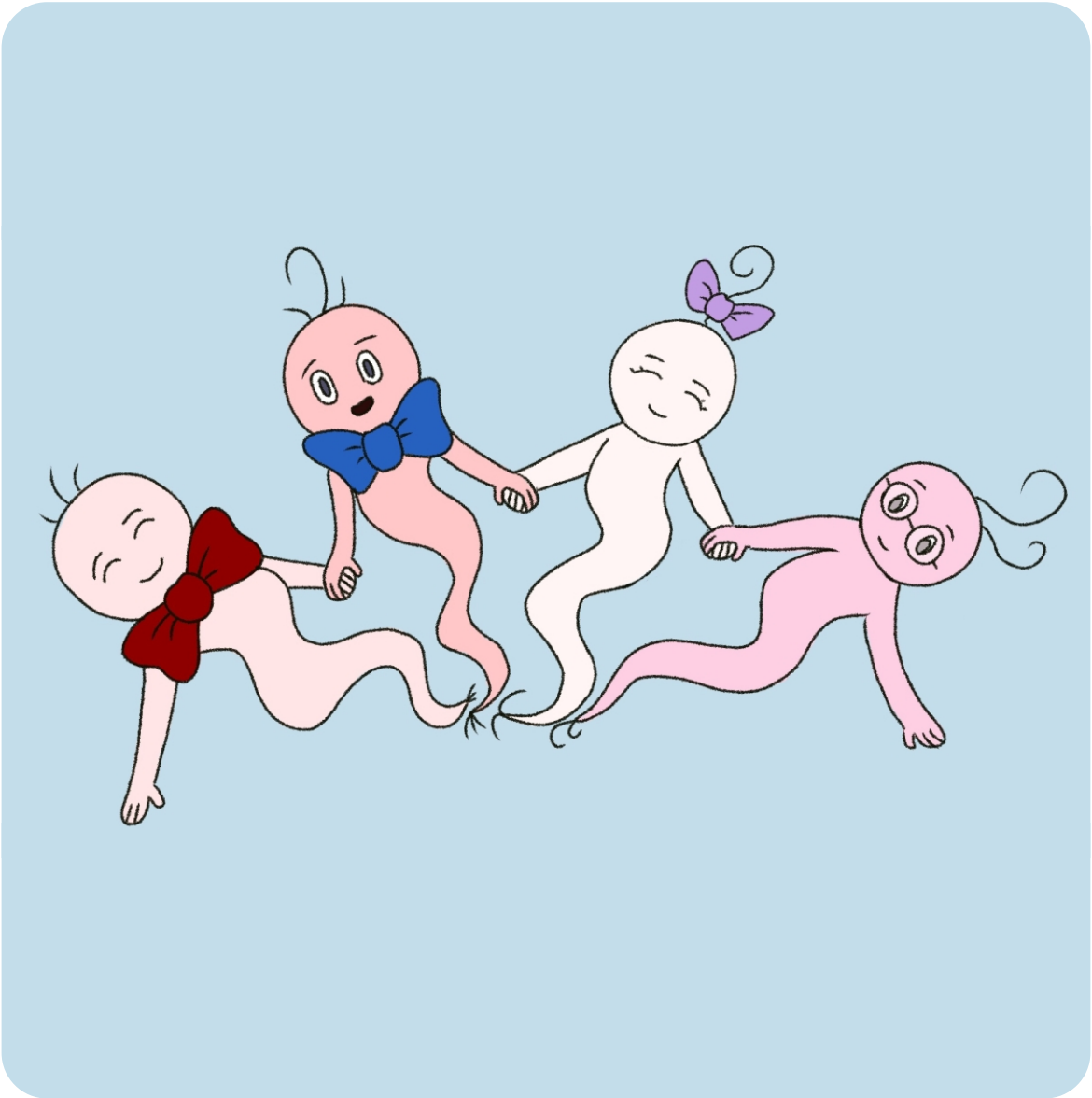
OCCI'S neighbourhood is the OCCIPITAL LOBE.

And then,  
there is PARI who is so clever in.  
ARITHMETIC.



Her neighbourhood is way up high in the PARIETAL  
LOBE. All of us talk to each other by wiggling the ends of  
our tails.

Now, I said when our tails touch it is like holding hands. However, it is more like touching someone lightly with our fingertips.



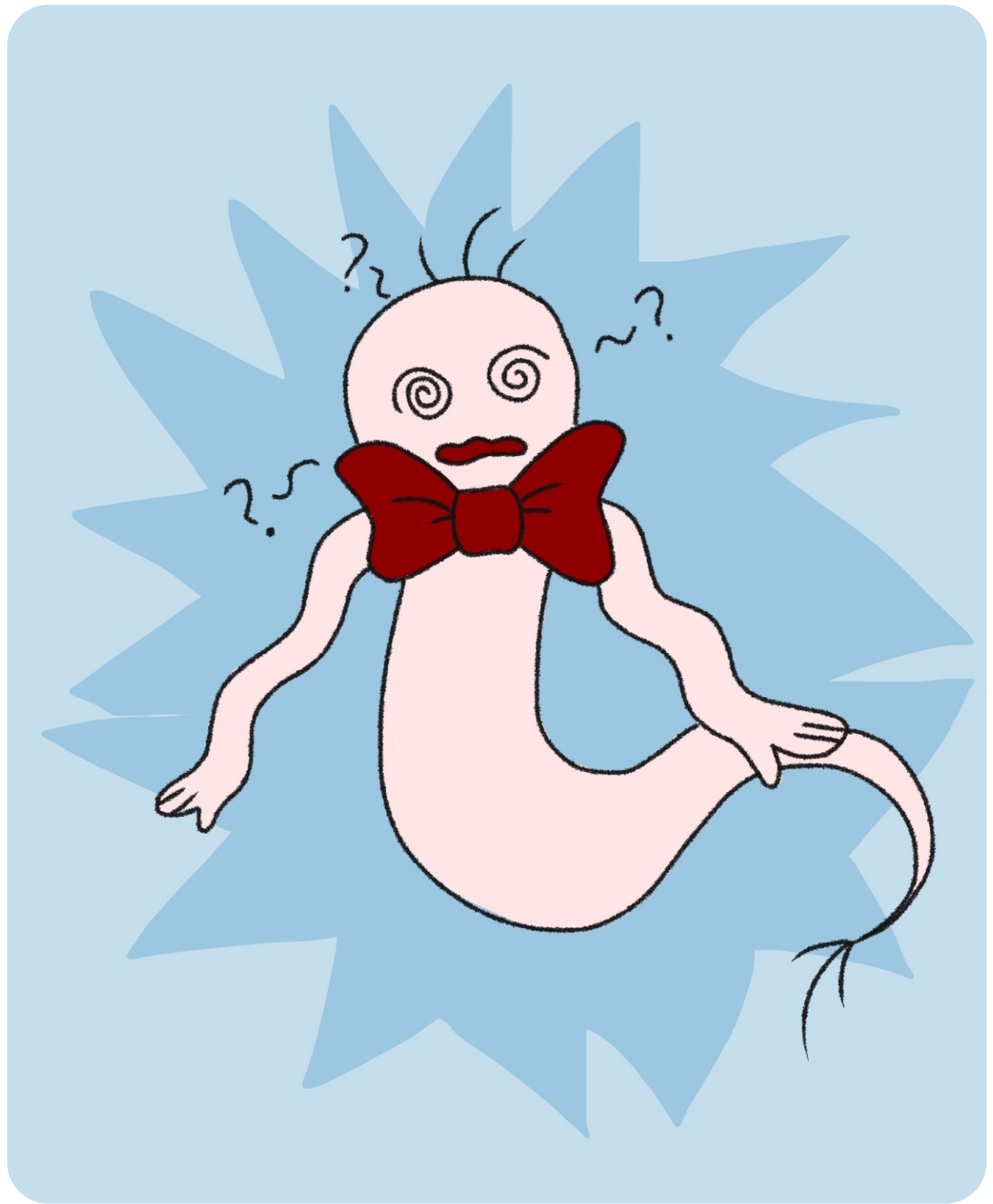
Also, I should really confess that I am very chatty and I talk all the time, even when Johnny is asleep. This way, I always know what is going on.

Johnny is like any other little boy who loves to climb trees.

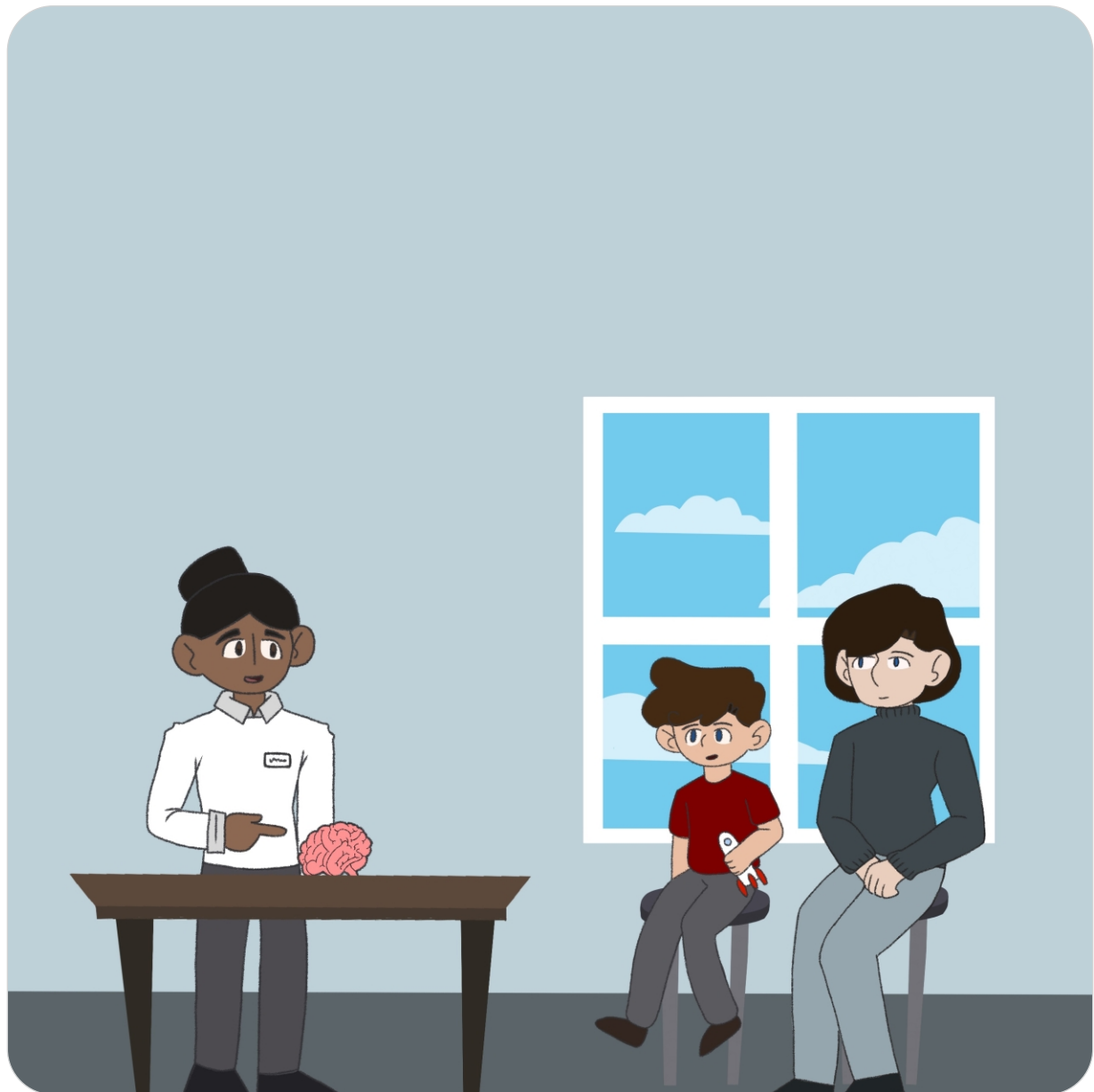


One day, he fell and bumped his head hard upon the ground.

When he bumped his head, my neuron tail lost its light touch to TEMPI's tail and for a short while, I could not ask TEMPI a question.



I was all mixed up and that made Johnny mixed up.



Johnny's mother took Johnny to the doctor  
who said Johnny had a **CONCUSSION**  
The doctor said he just needed to rest and  
soon he would be okay.

Sure enough, after a little while, my tail lightly touched TEMPI's tail. Once again, I was able to talk to TEMPI. I was no longer mixed up.



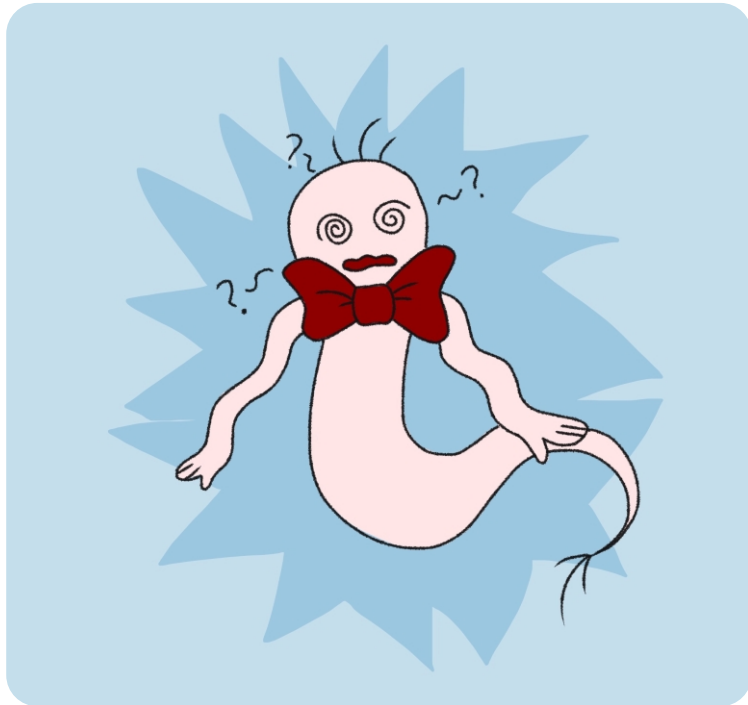
The doctor said Johnny was now allowed to go outside and play with Sara.

As Johnny grew, so did his wish to play physical games. When he played soccer, he loved to head the ball. Our **FRONTAL LOBE** neighbourhood was shaken over and over again.



It became harder for me to keep the end of my tail touching Tempi's tail.





I also wanted to talk to my **FRONTAL LOBE** neighbourhood friends, but I could not.

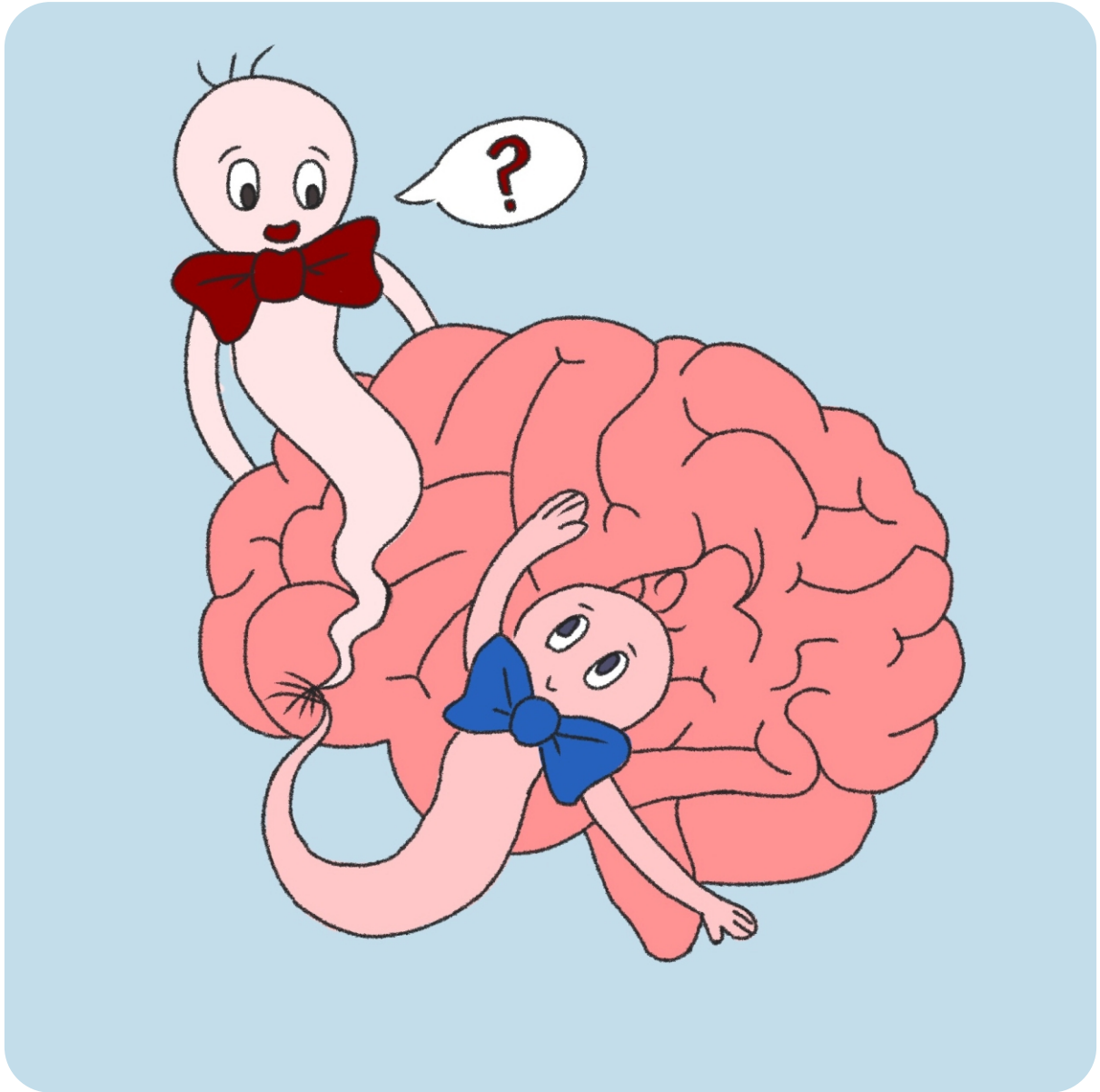
Without talking to **TEMPI** in the **TEMPORAL LOBE**, I could not even remember simple things like my sister's name.

Johnny was having trouble with his schoolwork and making mistakes on the soccer field.



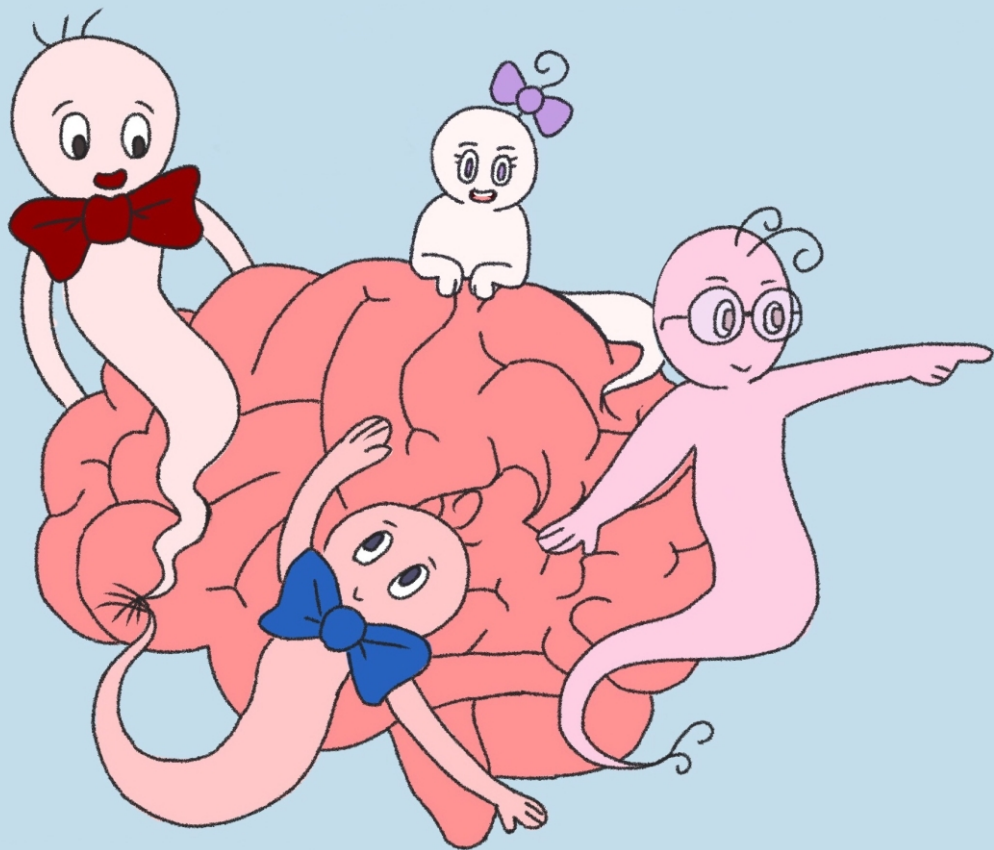
His mother took him to the doctor once more. The doctor said that Johnny should stop playing games where his head was being shaken and hopefully Johnny would get better when his neurons recovered.

After a while, my neuron tail found TEMPI's tail and we could talk to each other again.



I learned that after the shaking of Johnny's head, many of the other little neurons in Johnny's brain also had trouble talking to each other.

Fortunately, while Johnny rested, they also found each other's tails. Now, every neuron was busy wiggling their tail as they talked to each other.



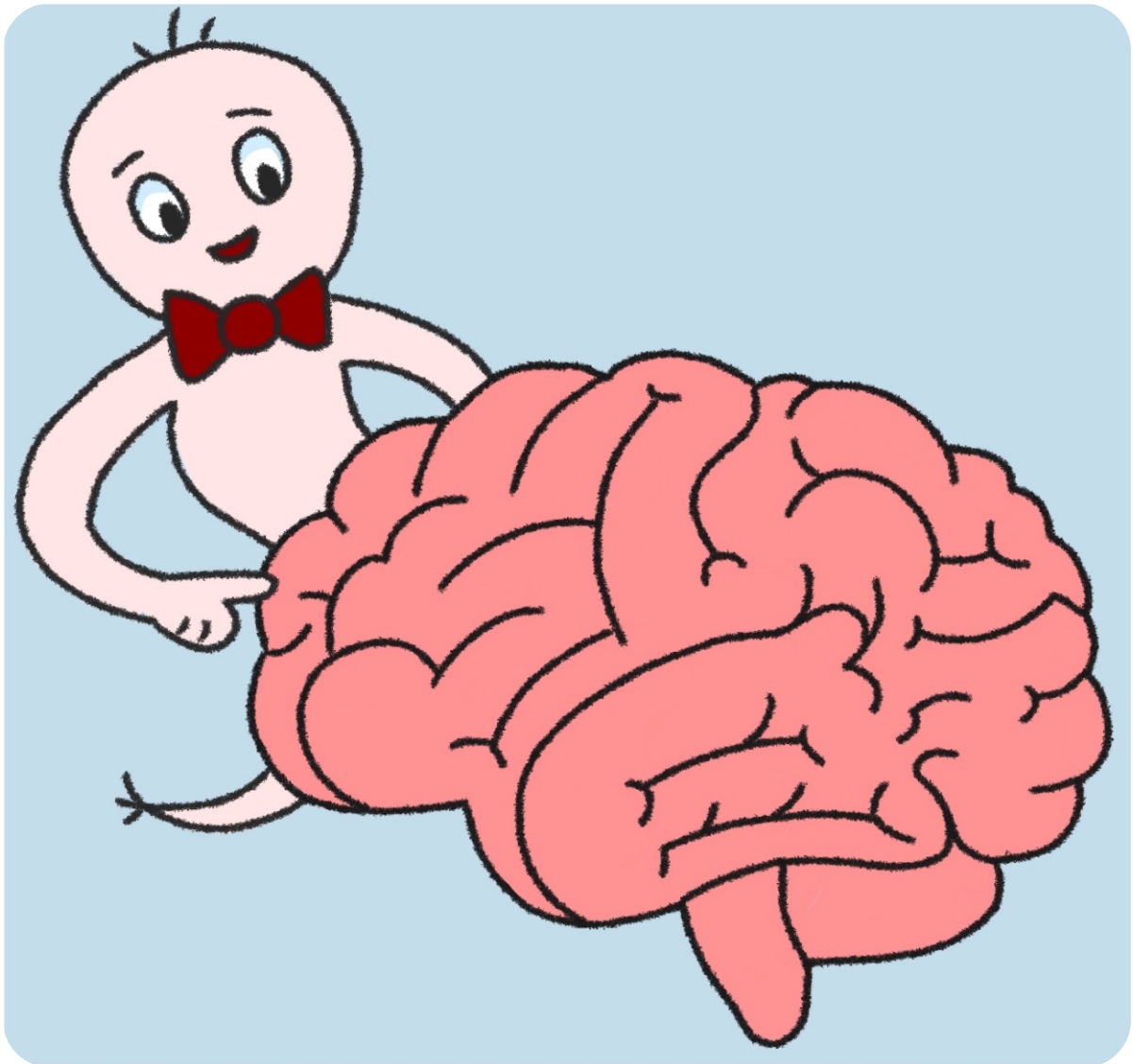


As a result, Johnny was now able to remember his school lessons and his mother and father were so happy!

Johnny still played sports but chose not to play sports that were more likely to cause his head to be bumped.

I am so happy we all got better.

I can now return to being just me... a social butterfly, without any worry of losing my constant chatter from TEMPI, OCCI and PARI, and so many other little neurons in our world that is Johnny's brain.



The End of my story

## About the Author and Illustrator:

Nikki the Little Neuron was written by Dr. Brian Hunt, a neurosurgeon who practiced in North Vancouver for many years. Dr. Hunt had a passion for teaching and his work on concussion education is ongoing.

Paige Brock is a high school student at Seycove Secondary with great artistic talent. She is interested in medicine and offered to help illustrate her grandfather's story about Nikki the Little Neuron.