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Australian Gifted Support Centre

Working together for the gifted



What's been happening?

The past few months since our February Newsletter have been busy with many trips out of Sydney. During March I attended and presented at the New Zealand Gifted conference in Rotorua and then later in that month was involved in The Second National Assessment Symposium in Los Angeles.

Our In-school Enrichment Days Program also continues to grow. During the past 2 terms we have conducted programs on Harry Potter, Ancient Egypt, Magical Worlds and 3rd Rock from the Sun (Space and Geology). New schools in both ACT and Sydney have taken up the programs and the feedback from the children, parents and class teachers has been very positive as represented by this email from a mum:

Just wanted to tell you that my son had a fantastic time yesterday. He hasn't stopped talking about all of the great things he learnt. He and his friend both said "...that was the best day ever."

For further information about this program visit <http://www.australiangiftedsupport.com/gpage.html>

Australian Gifted Support Centre is now a Registered Child Care Provider for out of school hours services so in future families attending weekend and school holiday programs who are eligible for Child Care Assistance will be able to apply for it for our programs.

In this issue

What's been happening - Australian Gifted Support provides an update of the year so far

Diary dates - New events and programs to put in your diary and book for

Articles - short information pieces that might be of interest about:

- Managing perfectionism
- Handling conflict

Instant fun - travelling and waiting games for children

Book Review - Diana Whitton : Educational Strategies for Gifted Children

Diary dates

June 19-21 Illoura Residential Workshop – The Quest, Morisset, NSW www.nswagtc.org.au

July 13-16 Thinking Ahead Holiday Workshops, Murdoch College, Perth www.thinkingahead.com.au

July 16 Holiday Workshops, Lindfield Public School, Sydney

July 22 Explorama Workshops, Bathurst, NSW www.nswagt.org.au

July 23 Stepping stones - short course, Seven Hills, Sydney

July 26 Educating and Managing Boys – by Ian Lillico, www.boysforward.com

Featured website

www.nswagtc.org.au

The NSW Association for Gifted and Talented Children Inc offers a wealth of information for parents and teachers of gifted children.

Stepping Stones – full Social Skills course

July 26th, Aug 2nd, 9th, 30th, Sept 13th

11.00 – 1.00pm : Junior Course 5 – 8 year olds
2.00 – 4.30pm : Senior Course 8 – 12 year olds

(parents involved in the last ½ hour each session)

Visit www.australiangiftedsupport.com for more information

Holiday workshops – early bird discounts

July 16th at Linfield Public school, Sydney

Book before July 1 2009 and receive an early bird discount

To download a flyer visit www.australiangiftedsupport.com

Please visit www.australiangiftedsupport.com for a full list of all our upcoming events





Developing potential - Essential skills

#3 Achieving goals: Managing perfectionism

For many of the gifted children and people we work with, perfectionism and the debilitating effects it can have on facing challenges and completing projects is a major concern.

Perfectionism in itself should not be seen as a negative trait, it is what can drive us to do our best, to strive for the ideal, to come up with something new or better than before. Perfectionism is only a problem when we are overtaken by the ideal we create in our mind and we become inhibited from actually getting started, or following through on our task.

There are many strategies that can be learned and used to help manage the overwhelming side of perfectionism.

There are:

Goal Setting (adapted from Learning to set SMART Goals – Maureen Neihart, 2006)
Encourage your child to set SMART Goals.

SMART goal setting stands for:

- Specific
- Measureable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Timely

All too often we come up with goals that are too vague such as "I will get my assignment finished on time!". This is quite a large task and can therefore be overwhelming.

Instead of being overwhelmed, by using SMART goal setting, an overwhelming goal could be changed to:

- I'm going to work on my assignment 3 afternoons each week – Monday Wednesday and Saturday.
- I'm going to investigate 3 reference books or web sites each afternoon
- I'm going to write a page of notes/mind map for each reference
- I'm going to prepare my first draft by XXX date
- I'm going to get dad to proof read it 1 week before it is due
- I'm going to do the final print 24 hours before it is due.

It is important that the person who needs to do the task is the one who develops the SMART goals - this ownership is vital for engagement with the task. To assist in goal setting it is also important that feedback is provided to the person setting the goals. This will help the goal setter learn to modify their efforts and should therefore improve the overall goal setting skills.

Taking Risks and Making Mistakes

If your children are reluctant to have a go, to attempt things that they may not be sure of or to work outside their comfort zone, then they are unlikely to develop their talents or meet their potential. It is only when people stretch themselves and try new things that learning actually occurs. Children must be prepared to make mistakes and accept them as a means of learning if they are to continue to develop.

Using bibliotherapy – stories of people, who children will know of and if possible admire, that describe their lives and the challenges and mistakes they have needed to experience in order to become the people they are is a good way to share the importance of this with your children.

There are classic cases of failures that are used as teaching stories: New Coke, Edison's failed early light bulbs, the Edsel, Walt Disney's pre-Mickey Mouse cartoons, and so forth. The following are quotes which could be used to help explain to children about how important making mistakes is to succeed in the real world.

"I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed." Michael Jordan

Director Bill Gates said to his team, *"You're not failing enough! Next time, I want to see four times more failures and what you've learned from it."*

The bottom line is summed up by George Bernard Shaw, *"A life spent making mistakes is not only more honourable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing."*

There are many web sites that have some useful ideas to talk to your children including <http://learnthis.ca/2008/04/the-power-of-making-mistakes/>

Next Month this section will look at *Self Talk and Mental Rehearsing as strategies to help face challenges and manage Perfectionism.*

Other websites

www.australiangiftedsupport.com
www.gifteddevelopmentcentre.com
www.thinkingahead.com.au
www.nswagtc.org.au
www.giftedresources.org



Social skills: Handling conflict

One of the most common issues that arise at the Stepping Stones Social Skills courses we run is to do with how to handle people who annoy us. This may be other kids at school, bullies or very commonly brothers and sisters.

Amongst the strategies that we teach is the use of "I" Muscles. This strategy is often identified by the students as one of the most useful.

Basically it provides a 4 step approach to handling the situation. It is broken into 4 statements and each gets a little stronger (hence the muscles)

The basic format is to state what you don't like, how it makes you feel and what behaviour you would like instead.

If the request at one level isn't responded to then the strength of the approach is to restate each of the 3 components, but make it a little more forceful – with words not volume.

For example

Level 1: I don't like it when you ignore me, it makes me feel unimportant, please listen when I talk.

Level 2: I said, I don't like it when you ignore me, I feel unimportant, so please listen.

Level 3 – add consequence: I told you I didn't like it when you ignore me, if you keep doing it I will tell dad.

Level 4 – take action: You are still ignoring me, I warned you so now I'm going to tell dad.

This is a problem solving approach to conflict resolution. It reduces the tendency to 'dob' every time something doesn't go the way the person wants and can help develop a self-sufficiency and resilience in handling situations that the person isn't happy with. It is a useful life long skill. For it to be successful, the person needs to not lose their temper – they should use a strong but not angry voice.

The next Stepping Stones course commences in July 2009 – see Diary Dates in this newsletter

Publications

The Hidden Gifts of Introverted Child, 2005, Marti Olsen Laney, Psy.D.

Speak up and Get Along, 2005, Scott Cooper

Getting on with others, 2006, John Cooper

Stepping stones – Short course

A 1 day Social Skills course is being offered on Thursday 23rd July in the Seven Hills area if there is sufficient interest.

This will look at some aspects of Emotional Regulation and Friendship development that are covered in the more comprehensive Stepping Stones course. This has been designed in response to requests from families who would find it difficult to travel to Sydney for the 5 session course. It doesn't offer the opportunity to practice and reflect on skills that the full course does, but is a good way to pick up a variety of skills to take back to school in Term 3. We will use a variety of games and activities to make this an enjoyable day while covering many of the challenging aspects of managing emotions and developing and keeping friends.

To express interest or find out more details please email steppingstones@australiangiftedsupport.com

Emotional wellbeing

A colleague of mine, Yvette Vignando, is about to publish a new parenting website all about kid's emotional wellbeing, happiness and success. Yvette publishes an emailed monthly parenting newsletter in advance of the launch of the website. Next month, the feature article is called 'Gifted and Talented Children – The Emotional Path to Success'; I was interviewed for some of the content in this article.

If you would like to see that issue and look at the information about the new website, you can visit www.happychild.com.au for more details and to subscribe to the newsletter. As a bonus for subscribing, Yvette also sends you a gift of an e-book containing other parenting articles.



Instant fun

Waiting and travelling games

Road Sign Alphabet

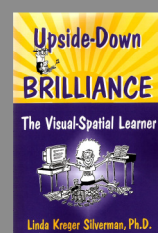
Spot and call out the letters of the alphabet, in order as you see them out of the window of the car or train. Look for them on road signs, bill boards, store fronts number plates, anything that is outside of the car. The game is finished once Z is spotted. This can be done individually, as a family or in teams. With older children each person can complete their own alphabet, racing to see who is first to Z.

Unfolded Monster Drawings (at least 2 players needed)

All you need is a piece of paper and pencil for each player. Each person draws the head of a monster at the top of their page, then the beginning of it's neck. Don't let the other players see the drawing. Then fold the head back so only the beginning of the neck is visible, pass it to another player and they now add the body that would suit their monster, fold it again with just the beginning of the legs showing, pass it on again and add the legs (but no feet). Fold it again with just the end of the legs, pass it on again and then draw the feet. Unfold it and see what has been created.

Book club

Due to the high level of demand for this unique text we have obtained permission to do a limited run reprint in Australia.



Announcement

Email group for parents, carers and teachers of young gifted children (0 – 8 years)

We have now started a yahoo group for all those interested in this area. It is a closed group, so if you would like to join us please email enquiries@australiangiftedsupport.com with you Name, ages of your children and a short introductory message to the group. We hope this virtual community will provide information and support to those interested in this very important section of the gifted population. It will be a forum to ask questions, share information and establish networks.

Services

www.australiangiftedsupport.com

The Australian Gifted Support Centre offers a wide range of services to gifted children, their parents or caregivers and their teachers.

We specialise in Gifted Children, Visual Spatial Learners and Twice Exceptional Learners by providing the following services:

- Information for parents
- Information for teachers
- Identification of specific learning needs
- Counselling for Parents
- Counselling for Children
- Advocacy and liaison with schools
- Email Support Group – Early Childhood
- Professional Development & Training Programs for: Teachers, Early Childhood Workers, Parents
- Unlocking Literacy and other teaching modules for Twice Exceptional Learners
- Social Skills courses for 5 – 14 year olds

We offer discounts for members of NSWAGTC and NSW Speld and are also registered child care providers for our out of school hours programs.

