

One Step Ahead

“Discipline with Dignity”

For Parents of Gifted Children

Alison Brown is a registered Australian psychologist, an experienced teacher and a parent. She was a committee member and Vice President of the Victorian Association for Gifted and Talented Children over six years, and was VP of Advocacy and a member of the board of the New Jersey Association for Gifted Children for four years. She has presented at a number of state, national and international conferences in the areas of technology, gifted education, and psychology, and has provided extensive consultation and training programs to schools and Universities in Australia, Switzerland, Germany and America.

Alison brings experience from both an educational and psychological background. Having taught for seven years at Methodist Ladies' College, Melbourne and worked as a school psychologist at Kincoppal-Rose Bay, Sydney, she has first-hand experience in recognising and catering for the social, emotional, and academic needs of students. Alison established a private practice in Melbourne, in 2004, with a particular interest in the areas of parenting, counseling, and gifted children and is completing a PhD through La Trobe University looking at the benefits of using narrative therapy with children in counseling.

Alison is currently based in New Jersey, USA, working as a consultant and advocate for gifted, is an Adjunct Professor of Psychology at Seton Hall University, and a G & T Consultant for the South Orange / Maplewood School District.

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GIFTED REFERRAL ISSUES

- Social skills / friendship / peer issues
- Perfectionism / self-esteem
- Underachievement /withdrawal
- Emotional intensity
- Ethical issues - justice
- Gifted Learning Disabled
- Need for an advocate
- Organisational issues
- Case Management
- Enrichment / Extension / Goal setting

WHAT SETS GIFTED CHILDREN APART

- IQ
- Socially and emotionally ahead of peers
- Heightened intensities
- Variety of interests
- Lack of interest in “popular” / “cool”
- Lack of awareness of “popular” & “cool”
- High achievements
- Lack of shared experiences / needs / problems
- Assumed / perceived superiority
- Busy lives / schedules / commitments

IQ PREVALENCE

| Level | IQ range | Prevalence |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Mildly gifted | 115 - 129 | 1:6 - 1:40 |
| Moderately gifted | 130 - 144 | 1:40 - 1:1000 |
| Highly gifted | 145 - 159 | 1:1000 - 1:10,000 |
| Exceptionally gifted | 160 - 179 | 1:10,000 - 1:1m |
| Profoundly gifted | 180+ | Fewer than 1:1m |

(Source: Miraca Gross, University of NSW)

HEIGHTENED INTENSITY

- Anticipate possible situations and prepare
- Allow child to express/explain distress or reaction
- Acknowledge and accept that these feelings are ‘real’ for that child
- Provide ‘Time Out’ and ‘Quiet space’

WHAT GIFTED CHILDREN NEED

Gifted children need an environment in which their curiosity, preference for complexity, sensitivity, perfectionism and intensity are valued - an environment in which it is safe to be different.

(Silverman, L., What do gifted children need, 1994)

UNCONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE

*"I love you
As you are
Who you are
This is non negotiable
And non-forfeitable.
I will always love you
And be there for you in ultimate need
As your refuge
But that does not mean
That I cannot dislike what you are doing at the moment
That I cannot insist on respect for the needs of others
That I cannot make demands on your performance
And on the ethics and fairness of what you do".*

(Louise Mares)

BINGO

| | | |
|--|--|--|
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| | | |
| | | |

THE “HOT” ISSUES

- Following directions / instructions
- Playing with siblings / friends
- Competitive sports / wanting to win
- School refusal / underachievement
- Disrespectful behaviour & speech
- Night waking / sleep issues
- Pushing the boundaries / challenging rules
- Self-esteem / perfectionism
- Anger management

THE HOT ISSUES FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

- Pushing the boundaries / challenging rules
- Always having a better idea
- Becoming absorbed / distracted in a task
- Intense passion / interest in a topic
- Frustration / anger / perfectionism
- Extreme sensitivities (noise, light, touch, pain, injustice)
- Emotional intensities
- Pride – unwilling to back down / need to save face
- Controlling / manipulative behaviour
- Unwilling / unsure about joining in social situations
- Boredom / frustration at school
- Underachievement
- Self sabotage / trying to fit in
- Intolerance / don't suffer fools
- Disrespectful behaviour and speech
- Anxiety / depression

INEFFECTIVE TECHNIQUES

- Yelling
- Sarcasm
- Teasing
- Hitting
- Ignoring
- Lecturing
- Shaming
- Criticizing
- Provoking
- Gossiping to others
- Throwing things
- Unrealistic expectations
- Nagging
- Interrupting
- Dwelling on the past
- Guilt
- Lying
- Threats
- Put-downs
- Denying / dismissing feelings
- Lecturing
- Impatience

Jeffrey Bernstein (2006)

MODIFYING BEHAVIOUR

S - R - S (Stimulus - Response - Stimulus)

It is the stimulus that follows a voluntary response (i.e., a consequence to the response) that changes the probability of whether the response is likely or unlikely to occur again.

There are two types of consequences: positive (sometimes called pleasant) and negative (sometimes called aversive). These can be added to or taken away from the environment in order to change the probability of a given response occurring again.

OUTCOME OF CONDITIONING

| | Increase Behaviour | Decrease Behaviour |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Positive Stimulus | Positive Reinforcement (add +ve stimulus) | Response Cost (remove +ve stimulus) |
| Negative Stimulus | Negative Reinforcement (remove -ve stimulus) | Punishment (add -ve stimulus) |

THE OPERANT CONDITIONING MODEL

- Positive Reinforcement
 - Stimulus presented contingent upon response
 - Increases frequency of response
(e.g. *praise for good manners increases likelihood of good manners*)

- Negative Reinforcement
 - Stimulus is withdrawn contingent upon response
 - Removal increases frequency of response – (not ideal)
(e.g. *removal of demands following tantrum increases likelihood of tantrums*)

- Extinction
 - Weakening of learned response when the reinforcement that followed no longer occurs
(e.g. *parents cease to react to sibling squabbles and they decrease*)

- Punishment
 - Frequency of response decreases when unpleasant stimulus follows or a pleasant stimulus is removed
(e.g. *Chess game is removed when child reacts badly to losing*)

- Shaping
 - Desired behaviour is taught by rewarding responses that are increasingly similar to the desired response
(e.g. *child is rewarded for picking up clothes, putting books away, making bed and keeping room tidy in gradual increments*)

10 SECRETS TO SUCCESS

1. Provide clear expectations
2. Consistency – time / place / people
3. Praise and reward desired behaviours
4. Boundaries – predictable routine & rituals
5. Involve them in decision making and setting rules
6. Immediate, inconvenient and relevant consequences
7. Tell them what TO do / not just what NOT to do
8. Make sure the ADULTS are holding the reins
9. Social stories / scripts / prepare them for new situations
10. Encourage ownership / responsibility / self-control / choices

WORKING TOGETHER AS A TEAM

- Sit down together over a glass of wine and discuss discipline strategies
- Raise issues of concern
- Suggest possible strategies to use
- Decide upon strategies you both feel comfortable implementing
- Review the effectiveness of these on a regular basis
- Add to or modify as often as necessary

DISCIPLINING THE GIFTED CHILD

- Strong sense of justice / fair play / Often rule driven
- Like to be involved in decision making
- Will respond more to reasoning
- Need boundaries & consequences (*just like any other child*)
- Will find a hole in any argument / Will push the limits & test the boundaries

NEED FOR FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE

- Will often show intense reactions to injustice
 - Not just for themselves but for others
 - May become very distressed
 - Will stand their ground & defend their case
- Rules and discipline need to be FAIR
 - Will remember rules and hold fast to them
 - May become indignant if wrongly done by

WHAT WORKS WITH GIFTED CHILDREN

- Clearly expressed expectations
- Logical consequences (fostering responsibility)
- Rules with single interpretation
- Realistic rules & expectations
- Legitimate choices / Give them responsibility
- Discussion of rules etc. (agreed upon) / Fewer number of quality rules
- Discipline them privately – allow them to save face
- Positive reinforcement

DISCIPLINE OPTIONS

- Distraction
- Time out
- Withdraw privileges
- Additional chores
- Withdraw belongings
- Withdraw attention
- Star charts
- Stamps
- Checklists
- Introduce choices
- Provide an alternative
- Rewards
- Make it a game
- Reverse psychology
- Pre-emptive praise
- Warnings & reminders
- Change the rules
- Discuss the rules
- Explain the reasons
- Encourage empathy
- Take away audience
- Contracts / agreements

FAMILY MEETINGS

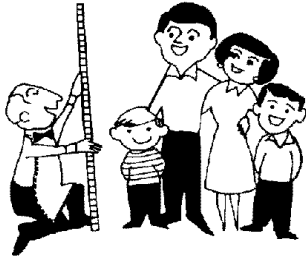
Rules:

- All people in the family are to be present
- Meetings are to be held at a regular time each week
- An agenda or plan is to be written for each meeting
- Meetings may be held during an easy meal (e.g. pizza)
- One person takes a turn each week to chair or run the meeting
- All people add to the agenda during the week as issues or ideas come up
- The person running the meeting works through the agenda/plan, one item at a time
- Whoever wrote the item on the agenda speaks about it first
- Other people have a chance to comment, directed by the chair person
- A decision must be written down, beside each issue, after it has been discussed
- Each meeting can end with an enjoyable family activity (e.g. meal / game / outing / video)

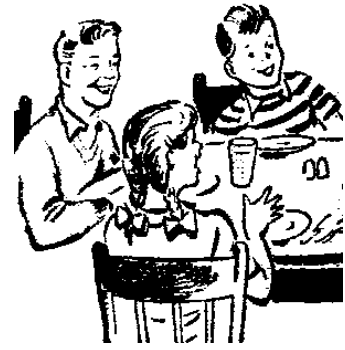


HAPPY MEETING





FAMILY MEETING AGENDA



Date: _____

Chairperson: _____

| ISSUES TO DISCUSS | DECISION |
|--|----------|
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| | |
| Great things that have happened this week: | |
| Any problems this week: | |
| Next week's activity: | |



TIME OUT

- 1 minute per year of age (until about age 7)
- Choose an isolated and uninteresting place
- Ensure there is no audience and no stimulation
- NOT the bedroom
- YOU set the time limit and decide when it is over
- Child apologises SPECIFICALLY for inappropriate behaviour

COPING WITH DISAPPOINTMENTS

- Don't try and shield them from disappointments
- Teach them to anticipate inconveniences, changes or setbacks and to prepare for these
- Plan for a "worst case scenario"
- Model good coping strategies
- Accept and acknowledge the disappointment
- Express and discuss disappointment and sadness
- Look for something good in every situation
- Cope with the disappointment BRAVELY

NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFTED

- Impatience or intolerance with people unable to 'keep up'
 - *(try focusing on personal goals and personal best, rather than looking at other children)*
- Poor self-image - perfectionism or peer rejection
 - *(accept the positive side of perfectionism, but let some things 'slide' occasionally)*
- Use of humour as a weapon to criticise or mock others
 - *(channel the humour in a positive direction – class joke board, comics etc.)*
- Inability to accept the opinion of others through arrogance or rigidity
 - *(encourage acceptance of all suggestions, then freedom to make own choice as well)*
- Frustration through not feeling challenged
 - *(encourage child to seek their own challenges – modify work tasks, individual projects etc.)*
- Feeling let down by situations that do not meet expectations of excellence
 - *(empathise, then focus on own behaviour – seek excellence there)*
- Disorganised attention to too many areas of interest
 - *(encourage lists, planning, prioritising)*
- Inability to meet unrealistic goals
 - *(set realistic priorities, focus on what is absolutely necessary, then expand if time allows)*

NEGATIVES TO POSITIVES

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| ● Instead of thinking of your child as | ● Think of her as |
| ● Hyperactive | ● Energetic |
| ● Impulsive | ● Spontaneous |
| ● Distractible | ● Creative |
| ● A daydreamer | ● Imaginative |
| ● Inattentive | ● Global thinker.... |
| ● Unpredictable | ● Flexible |
| ● Argumentative | ● Independent |
| ● Stubborn | ● Committed |
| ● Irritable | ● Sensitive |
| ● Aggressive | ● Assertive |

(Jeffrey Freed, 1996)

ANGER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- Act like you don't care
- Stay still – don't react
- Find a friend
- Use your words
- Walk away
- Get some help

EXPECTATIONS

- Clearly defined
- Situational specific (school / home)
- Age / child appropriate
- Agreed upon together
- Limited but all encompassing (3 – 6 year olds)
- As many as necessary (7 – 12 year olds)
- Openly discussed
- Prominently displayed
- General & specific (e.g. at all times / while we are at the doctors)

CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

- Children need clear & specific expectations
- Tell them exactly what you would like them to do
- They feel confident knowing where the boundaries are
- They enjoy predictability, routines, rituals
- Involve children in discussing expectations
- Outline expectations BEFORE the event
- Discuss possible consequences if things go wrong

SIBLING RIVALRY

- Reward them as a “TEAM” (“Operation Co-operation”)
- Encourage unique qualities / interests
- Encourage fairness
- Develop Resilience
- Acknowledge differences
 - Introverts / extraverts
 - Interests / abilities

INTROVERTS / EXTRAVERTS

INTROVERTS

- Gain energy from being alone
- Feel drained by too much contact with others
- Retreat from the world to regain sense of balance
- Require only a few trusted friends
- Take a long time to develop a friendship
- Fear appearing foolish
- Think ideas through
- Learn by watching & mentally rehearsing
- Perfectionistic

EXTRAVERTS

- Gain energy from being with people
- Have little need for privacy
- The life of the party
- Have many friends
- Make friends quickly
- Much greater risk takers
- Think on their feet
- Learn by doing
- Happy to share their growing pains

(Silverman, 1986)

COGNITIVE

- “The Terrible Twos” and why they may not happen
- Bright children will challenge you in many ways
 - Testing the boundaries / Having a better idea
 - Very rule driven / Wanting and responding well to a reason . . .
 - Strong sense of justice and fair play
 - Discipline them privately – allow them to save face
 - Give them responsibility
- Cognitive ability may mean that reasoning is effective from a very early age
- Use visual / auditory / kinaesthetic prompts
 - Checklists
 - Packing up music / song
 - Rituals – bike in shed, helmet inside, unpack bag

DECISION MAKING

- Involve children in decision making
 - When and where appropriate
 - In a respectful manner
 - Book of rights and responsibilities
 - Teenage checklist
 - Small diary in car (who sits in front)
- Encourage limited choices
 - Choose from two equally suitable options
- Encourage an “Internal locus of control”
 - Motivation / educational aspirations / persistence

FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID

<http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/KidsPyra/LittlePyr.pdf>

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

- Find their areas of interest, strength & passion
- Meet their physical and intellectual needs
- Provide a balanced day / week / lifestyle
- Don't overload them
- Give them sufficient challenges
- "Jack of all trades, master of none"
- Give them time to be kids

SELF-ESTEEM

- Children are happy when they feel secure
- Discipline issues are often children crying out for boundaries
- Understand and acknowledge their ideas and feelings
- "Catch them being good"
- Value each child as an individual
- Look for and encourage their "Islands of competence"
- Encourage independence (& hence confidence)

PRAISE

- Praise
 - As often as possible
 - Genuinely
 - Specifically
 - Publicly
 - Let them overhear you . . .
- Nothing increases confidence like the experience of success

IN SUMMARY

- Consciously plan your parenting approach / Review regularly
- If things are not working – make changes
- Seek support and encouragement from others
- Wait a few extra moments to avoid impulsive responses
- Consider your choices before acting
- Remember why you chose to have children
- Bring out their best / Enjoy your time with them

SUPPORT GROUPS & CONTACTS

STATE ORGANIZATION

New Jersey Association
for Gifted Children (NJAGC)
P.O. Box 667
Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054
(856) 273-7530 (856) 829-5074 (fax)
www.njagc.org
njagcmail@gmail.com

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

www.nagc.org

NORTHERN NJ MENSA

gcp@nnjmensa.org

HEROES (For Exceptional Scholars)

732-690-7991
www.HEROESgifted.com

GIFTED CHILD SOCIETY, INC.

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Glen Rock, NJ 07452-1736
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admin@gifted.org

NATIONAL TALENT NETWORK (NTN)

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(856) 582-7000, ext, 136
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