

Parent & Community Network News

October 2010



You've got a lot of choices. If getting out of bed in the morning is a chore and you're not smiling on a regular basis, try another choice.

~Steven D. Woodhull



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
Gifted Children

Focus on College Planning

Editor's Notes

The Second Piece of Paper. Getting it is important on many levels including increased earning power. The first piece of paper = a high school diploma. The second could be a diploma, certificate, license or degree from any one of a number of post secondary schools.

Though we used to insist that all gifted children should go to college, we now know that for many technical schools may be the right choice depending on their career path. It does seem critical that most, if not all, gifted learners should receive further schooling after high school.

Not all gifted children will grow up to be doctors, lawyers or engineers. Nor should they. Helping them discover who they are and what their passions are will help them find the right career for them. It is not always about making the most money. I believe it is a disservice to them when

we say, "You are so smart. You should be a _____" Instead you might want to ask, "What do you love to do?" Children with high abilities are often good at many things which makes the decisions harder.

After talking for years about furthering his education, I remember taking my son to visit several schools when he was a junior in high school. At the last one, it was easy to see that he finally felt comfortable and excited.. But he wasn't sure what he would choose as his major, debating among art, English, art history, music and others. On the five hour drive home he thumbed through the course catalog. Suddenly he said, "Mom, I figured it out...advertising. It uses all my talents And it won't be boring." It has proven to be a very good choice for him. He has been successfully employed for the 10 years since graduation. He is happy and thriving. Whew!

Table of Contents

- 1 From Your Editor
- 2 Parent Day Events
- 2 Concurrent Sessions
- 2 College Planning: Start Early
- 4 Dates to Remember
- 4 Contacts
- 5 Tech Tools

**We hope to see
you in Atlanta
November 11-14.**

Parent Day Events

Atlanta, Georgia
November 13, 2010

7:00 AM Registration Opens
Omni Hotel at CNN Center
(North Tower) International
Ballroom Pre-Function Area

7:30 - 8:30 AM Parent Day
Kickoff Bonnie Crammond,
University of Georgia
Omni Hotel at CNN Center
(North Tower) International
Ballroom

8:45 - 10:15 AM NAGC
Convention General
Session with Carol Dweck,
author of *Mindset*
GWCC Building C, Georgia
Ballroom

10:30 - 11:30 AM Concurrent
Sessions (your choice)

11:45 AM - 1:00 PM
Lunch/Exhibits Break
Table Topics

1:15 - 2:15 PM Concurrent
Sessions (your choice)

2:30 - 3:30 PM Concurrent
Sessions (your choice)

3:45 - 4:45 PM Closing with C.
Annette Eger, Program Specialist
for Gifted Education, Innovative
Academic Programs, Office of
Standards, Instruction and
Assessment, Georgia Department
of Education **Omni Hotel at
CNN Center (North Tower)
International Ballroom**

5:00 - 6:30 PM The E. Paul
Torrance Creativity Lecture
“The Gifted Empire Strikes
Back: What Role Does Gifted
Education Play in the 21st
Century?” **GWCC Building C,
Georgia Ballroom**

6:45-8:00 PM Reception Hosted
by the Georgia Association for
Gifted Children and NAGC
**Omni Hotel at CNN Center
(North Tower) International
Ballroom**

Registration Fees (includes lunch,

full access to convention/exhibit
hall, reception and program book)
\$65 Current GAGC or NAGC
member

\$110 Nonmember (includes
GAGC and NAGC parent mem-
bership)

You may register an additional
adult member of your family to
attend for just \$30

**NOTE: No children under 16
are permitted to attend.
Childcare is not available.**

Sample NAGC Concurrent Sessions for Parent Day

**Understanding Why Over-
Parenting Undermines the
Gifted Child’s Potential**

**Parenting to Prevent and
Reverse Underachievement**

**Humor, Heart and Hope:
Gifted Advocacy Tools That
Work**

**Testing 2010: A Springboard to
Effective Academic Advocacy**

**Parent/Teacher Expectations:
Crossing the Chasm**

**The Problem With Praise:
Encouraging Effort and
Motivation in Children**

**Classical Homeschooling for
Gifted Children**

**21st Century Parenting:
Optimal Mind-Body Practices
To Fully Support The Child
And The Gifts**

www.nagc.org

**Gifted Learners Through Data-
Informed Reporting**

**Interacting with the Sensitive
Gifted Child: What You Say
Matters**

**Professional Development
Model: Parents and
Professionals Working
Together**

**Nurturing Creativity at Home:
A Guide for Parents and
Grandparents**

**Be Reasonable! How To Ask
For The Possible From Your
Child’s Teacher**

**Why Didn’t the Gifted
Valedictorian Get In?**

**College
Planning With
Gifted
Children: Start
Early**
by Maureen Neihart

*(This article first appeared in PHP and is
available on the NAGC Mile Marker Series
CD-Rom.)*

Mareesha’s parents worry
about financing her college educa-
tion. They want her to be able to
go to the college that best meets
her academic and social needs, but
they wonder if they are being real-
istic about her chances for a
scholarship. Should they and
Mareesha resign themselves to the
less expensive state universities
and forego applications to more
competitive schools? How can
they reconcile their hopes and her
dreams with the financial realities?

Tim is a gifted high school
freshman and is the first in his

large family to consider going to college. College planning is new ground for them all. When do they start? How do they start? The school counselors tell Tim not to worry; they'll help him figure it out when he's a junior. They don't seem to have much time for him now, but it's on Tim's mind. He wonders if he's doing the right things to get himself ready. Is there anything he should be doing now? He and his parents have so many questions!

Bobbi is talented in many different ways. She seems to excel at everything. As a seventh grader, she wonders aloud how she will ever narrow down her interests. Her parents wonder if she'll end up playing musical majors in college.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

No matter what their interests or backgrounds are, all gifted children should begin college planning early — no later than junior high school and as early as fifth grade for some children. Beginning early provides the time some gifted children need to sort out their interests and abilities, as well as the time needed to compete successfully for the big-money scholarships that are available to motivated students. Research suggests that an early start also helps maintain the high aspirations of gifted students, particularly those who are interested in specialized careers. It also affords the extra time required to prepare and apply for some of the most competitive and rewarding scholarships.

Gifted students are often thinking about their future earlier than are other students. One eighth-grade girl, eager for college information, put it this way, "No one else I know is interested in this stuff, but I think about it a lot." The best time to teach children is when they demonstrate a readiness and an interest. It is no different with college planning. Many gifted

children welcome specific information about college and career planning in junior high, and some are ready for it earlier. Unfortunately, many school counselors simply do not have the time to begin this early with students, but they can be excellent resources for information and guidance for the family that is willing to take the initiative to follow through.

FOR ALL COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS

There are many ways you can help your child begin early to plan for college. You can make occasional references to "when you're in college..." to plant the expectation in your child's mind that he or she will in fact be attending post-secondary school. You can visit college campuses with your kids when you are traveling. You can take a walk or play in a park on campus, take your child to see an interesting event happening on campus, or stop in at the student union to have a soda. You might also visit college age relatives or neighbors in their dorms. If children have experiences on college campuses, it will be easier for them to imagine themselves as a college student later on. They will also gain firsthand experience that different colleges "feel" very different from one another.

Another way you can help your children prepare now for college admission is to encourage them to maintain a portfolio of activities and accomplishments. Include dates, names of people who supervised or evaluated their work, and a sample of their work when applicable. Keeping a portfolio will make it easier years later to organize and document information for scholarship and college applications.

Sometimes gifted children are keenly interested in specialized career fields for which the course of preparation is not clearly out-

lined. There are career fields and specialty areas that are so new that there is little printed information available on how to train for them. Extra planning time is needed to determine the steps to take to pursue such career fields.

Jason, for example, has always wanted to create special effects for movies. Special effects has been his passion since he was at least 10 years old. He already knows quite a bit about various effects and, inspired by science-fiction movies and novels, he has already created quite a few of his own latex creatures. Now in eighth grade, he knows that in a few months he will be asked to outline his course of study for high school. His elective hours are limited, and like so many talented youngsters, he would like to be able to take everything. But what will best prepare him for a career in film and special effects in particular? This career interest is not something he can look up in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles. Should he take art classes? Photography? And what colleges would do the best job of launching such a career? These are questions for which neither Jason's parents nor his teachers or counselors have ready answers.

Jason is wise to be asking these questions while he is still in junior high school. One of Jason's teachers suggests that for guidance he ask a professional in the field. There is no one in this field in his state, but Jason has been subscribing to the trade journals for several years and knows "who's who" at Industrial Light and Magic, one of the leading special effects studios in Hollywood. With some persistence he is able to contact Craig Reardon, the creator of E.T. Mr. Reardon gives generously of his time and tells Jason that the way the field is changing, he will need a degree in mechanical or electrical engineering. Mr. Reardon advises Jason to forego the art classes in high school

TAKE NOTE!

NAGC Convention Atlanta, GA

Parent Day
Sat., November 13
(See details page 2)

Check out the fall
group of
Webinars on
Wednesday
(WOW)
www.nagc.org

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and instead take all the math and science courses he can. Though he is surprised with what he learns from Mr. Reardon, Jason gladly changes his high school course of study and signs up for additional math, science, and computer classes. He now has more of a focus for college. He is looking for schools with engineering programs where he can also study film. Because he started early to plan for college, Jason avoided some mistakes and prepared himself well for college.

STUDENTS WITH MULTIPLE INTERESTS

All gifted children are not like Jason with a single passion and well-defined career goals. Many talented children have the ability and interest to do a number of different things well. This ability is known as multipotentiality. The multipotential child certainly has advantages in college planning because he or she has more options than the average child. However, multipotentiality can also cause some stresses or conflicts. It can be viewed as both a blessing and a problem because while children may feel they have lots of opportunities, they may also feel torn among their diverse interests. They may need assistance in planning to pursue and integrate more than one career path or to discriminate among several strong interests.

Kaitlyn, for example, has never failed at anything. Everything she tries is a success. First she writes science-fiction stories, then she becomes an expert on mythology and is teaching classes. She loves science, and her mother keeps talking with her about the security, prestige, and economic comforts of a career in medicine. Kaitlyn excels in foreign languages, too, and dreams of a career in the foreign service. During her junior year she tries out for the school musical and lands the lead. To her surprise and delight, her character steals the show, and the following year she takes second

place in the state drama competition. As time rolls around for her to seriously contemplate college applications, she is at a loss about where to begin. What path should she pursue? There isn't one thing she likes a lot more than others. Her mother is concerned that Kaitlyn will jump from one major to another in college.

To assist Kaitlyn in understanding herself and her interests better, the school counselor suggests that she do some volunteer work in her areas of interest — in other words, that she get some real experience. Kaitlyn arranges to volunteer in the research lab at one of the local hospitals. Medical research is one career field she is interested in; maybe this experience will help her decide. Any experience that allows your child to work alongside professionals in the field of his other interest will help your child clarify interests, abilities, and goals. Encourage your child to have at least one such experience a year from grades 6 to 12.

In some cases, specialized careers are so competitive that early training is required to increase chances of job entry. Or, a gifted child may have outstanding ability and passion for a specific interest that may require atypical post-secondary training (e.g., professional schools, immediate career entry, training in professional companies). The performing arts are an example.

Alicia, for instance, has been dancing since she was 3. She has won several regional competitions and at age 14 is thinking seriously about a career in dance. Should she take a traditional approach to college and major in dance, or should she audition to join a ballet company? What would be the immediate and long-term implications of each of these choices? By starting early to explore her options, Alicia and her family have time to seek answers to those questions, to weigh her options in light of her talent,

desires, and maturity to make well-informed decisions. Talking with professional dancers and with the dance instructors at a few colleges helps her decide to audition with a company.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

There are other simple steps that parents can take now to help their gifted child begin the college planning process.

- Begin a file about private scholarship sources (e.g., The Target All Around Scholarship, MS Foundation for Women, Tandy Technology Scholars).
- Surf the net for funding sources or check out scholarship resource books from the library. Talk positively about your own college experiences if you attended or facilitate these conversations for your child with other adults.
- Communicate that you expect your child to save money toward college. Help your child develop a college savings plan.
- Encourage your child to take high school classes that prepare him or her well for college. A strong college prep transcript will include at least three years each of math, science, and foreign language, and four years of English. Students are often also better prepared if they take honors or advanced classes whenever possible. Support your child in taking the most challenging courses, even if it means he or she might not earn an "A." The more challenging classes will prepare your youngster better for college and for the college entrance exams.
- Be sure to include in your record keeping examples and references from you child's extracurricular activities. These outside projects and leadership opportunities reveal much to college admission counselors.

Starting early may be the most important thing for parents to remember about college planning with their gifted children.

Maureen Neibart, Psy.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist with over 30 years experience counseling children and families. She is a former member of the board of directors of the National Association for Gifted Children and past chair of the Counseling and Guidance Division of NAGC.

Tech Tools

Online Stickies

<http://en.linoit.com/>

Social Networks for Education

<http://www.techlearning.com/blogs/32392>

5 Online Encyclopedias for Kids

<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/5-free-online-encyclopedias-suitable-kids/>

Word Clouds

<http://www.wordle.net/>

Presentation Tool

prezi.com/

Web Site Creator

www.weebly.com

Educational Activities

<http://edheads.org/>

Algebra/Trig

<http://mathbits.com/mathbits/studentresources/algebra2/algebra2student.htm>

Create a Book

<http://batalugu.com/>

Get/Create a Timeline

<http://www.dipity.com/>

It's not
hard to
make
decisions
when
you
know
what
your
values
are.

~Roy
Disney