



Parent & Community Network Newsletter



“DON’T! The secret of self-control” by Jonah Lehrer, The New Yorker, May 18, 2009 (Stanford University marshmallow experiment—a worthwhile read on self control issues)

Focus on
Self-Management

Issue #2 September 2011

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On the topic of self-management: “No one knows what he can do till he tries.”

-- Publilius Syrus

Message From the Editor

Increasingly, parents are taking on more management responsibilities for their children’s lives. This issue will focus on the ways in which you can transfer some of that responsibility to your children.

Teaching our children to be more self-directed is not always easy, but will benefit them for a lifetime. Here we will provide some tools for self-management (both for parents and children). We also will debut a new column “A Parent Perspective” in which a parent will share personal stories relevant to the focus of the month.

As always, I encourage all members to submit articles for future issues, suggestions for making the newsletter more effective, and feedback. Remember, this is YOUR newsletter. If you are interested in submitting an article for publication, next month’s topic will be “Motivation.” All submissions should be sent to nancyarey@mac.com.

Nancy Arey Cohen

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Meet Mariam Willis, NAGC Parent Outreach Specialist



Q: Could you tell us a little something about yourself?

A: This summer my family moved to Gainesville, FL, where I also work as adjunct faculty at University of Florida in The Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication. Prior to Gainesville, I spent one year teaching at Florida International University in Miami. My family moved to Miami from Boone, NC, where my husband and I co-directed Appalachian State University's nationally awarded collegiate debate team from 2006-2010. Prior to 2006, I taught high school English in Germantown, TN for one year, and otherwise, worked part-time at various colleges in the area, while I cared for my first child full-time. My husband continues to coach nationally competitive debate at UF, and I am so pleased to be working with the gifted in this capacity now.

In 2001, I graduated from Arkansas State University with my Master of Arts in Speech Communication and Theatre Arts. In 2000, I received my Bachelor of Arts in the same area, with a minor in business. In the years that have followed, I have taken courses in education and public policy. I was identified as gifted at a young age and went to college with a GED after my sophomore year of high school because there were no other organized options within my school structure to meet my needs. Hindsight, I can see I was quite an intellectual challenge for many of my teachers, and my emotional intensity was overwhelming for most (and for me too!). So, it is with passion and personal meaning that I approach this position.

Q: How long have you been a member of NAGC?

A: I was introduced to NAGC in 1997, when I visited the convention held in Little Rock, AR. Jean Peterson, author of *Talk with Gifted Teens* among other books, introduced me to the organization. From then, I was on the periphery for many years, soaking up available resources and using gifted research to further inform my own professional development. I formally joined NAGC in 2008 and presented at the 2009 and 2010 conferences on the lived experience of giftedness.

Q: Have you raised (or are you raising) a gifted child?

A: Yes. My nine-year-old daughter, Ava, is highly gifted, with pronounced intellectual and emotional over-excitabilities. My five-year-old son, Ben, is twice-exceptional, gifted with severe speech delay.

Q: What is your experience with the gifted community?

A: For the last decade I have had the privilege of being involved with many different types of academic and community organizations. The gifted community is unique in that there is the opportunity to create a comprehensive picture for thinking about not only giftedness, but education and development as a whole. We have a rich community because of the demographic and psychographic crossovers: parents, teachers, academy professionals, clinical professionals, entrepreneurs, philosophers, psychologists, counselors, educators, scientists, mathematicians, etc. When needed, this community seems especially poised to shift public thinking.

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Q: What piqued your interest in the position with NAGC?

A: I stumbled upon this position through a Facebook posting, and my imagination ran wild with excitement for the possibilities for NAGC and gifted families.

Q: What are your responsibilities with NAGC?

A: In this position, I will write articles for our Parenting for High Potential publication, for the Compass Points Newsletter, and for other publications. When requested, I am available to do columns for networks. I will be facilitating our social networking sites for parents, such as the Parenting for High Potential page on Facebook. Soon you will be seeing our new Parenting for High Potential blog, which will provide a new venue for parents to find like minds, good conversation, and relevant information.

Q: How do you see your position interacting with parents?

A: I think of myself as the person who holds the door open. It is my hope that I am able to extend our reach into new communities, such as special needs and pre-school communities. There are so many parents who are not aware of twice-exceptional characteristics and resources. There are too many parents and children who are suffering under faulty diagnosis because of the need for education on gifted development. I want their first step into the gifted community to feel like a warm, supportive welcome.

I am well-read, but I am not an expert. My interaction with parents will provide vetted resources and available experts, when needed. My hope is that my interaction further builds our community so that we are seeing evidence in the world of families who are growing up gifted and confident.

Q: When and how should parents contact you?

I am in the big places online: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Google+. I would like for parents to introduce themselves! Anywhere you see me, is a good place to contact me. Parents may also reach me through email at mwillis@nagc.org

Q: Will you be attending the NAGC convention? If so, will you be available on Parent Day to meet with parents?

A: Yes! I cannot wait for this year's convention. I will be at the registration desk on Saturday morning and will be available on Parent Day to meet with parents. And more, I will be a text away if any parents have questions.

Prior to the convention, I will be providing a list of my favorite sessions, people, and events for parents. This will be available through the Parenting for High Potential Facebook page.

While at the convention, I will be tweeting my location and sharing my experiences via twitter @ NAGC Convention. I hope that parents will log on to twitter and share their experiences too.

Q: What is your vision for parent involvement in NAGC?

A: My vision is that parents are empowered through attending conventions and participating in our online communities. First and foremost, I want parents to feel informed and confident that they can make great decisions about their gifted child. I hope that parent involvement with NAGC strengthens state advocacy and motivates more parents to take on community education so that we can spread the message: "Every child deserves to learn something every day, regardless of ability."





Teach Self-Direction

- ✚ Teach deficient skills rather than expecting the child to acquire them through observation or osmosis.
- ✚ Consider your child's developmental level.
- ✚ Move from the external to the internal.
- ✚ Remember that the external includes changes you can make in the environment, the task, or the way you interact with your child.
- ✚ Use rather than fight the child's innate drive for mastery and control.
- ✚ Modify tasks to match your child's capacity to exert effort.
- ✚ Use incentives to augment instruction.
- ✚ Provide just enough support for the child to be successful.
- ✚ Keep supports and supervision in place until the child achieves mastery or success.
- ✚ When you do stop the supports, supervision, and incentives, fade them gradually, never abruptly.

Dawson, P. & Guare, R. (2009). *Ten principles for improving your child's executive skills* (Ch. 5), *Smart But Scattered*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

A Parent Perspective

By Debbie Niu,

Higley Supporters of the Gifted, www.higleygifted.org

Self-control, common sense, self-management, call it what you will. In spite of their brilliance, this is one aspect that rarely comes naturally for gifted children. Intensity is not an easy thing to manage. We can manage emotions, time, space, relationships, etc. Overall, however, most types of self-management have the same core underlying characteristic – thought and choice between the stimulus and their response. Each time our children stop long enough to think in order to make a good choice, the more management “muscle” they build.

As parents, it is critical that we take the time to talk to them about how to do this. Emotion can easily wipe out their ability to use logic in tough situations. Teach them that very idea—that their emotions can indeed inhibit them from thinking clearly. Then take the time to teach them what to do instead. We have all heard about counting to 10 if you are angry. I suggest that that is too easy for our children. It won't really help them reengage their logical sense. Try having them count backwards by 3s or 4s from 100. Another strategy is to simply walk away. If emotions are high, go sit in the bathroom or bedroom with the door locked until you feel ready to handle the situation. Having said that, I also need to counsel my son not to run away every time. Sometimes you just have to stay and figure it out. Read about various strategies. Educate yourselves about them so that you can first apply them yourselves, then help your children do the same.

Time management will require other solutions. Help to provide your children with structured time, taking care to include down time. Don't over-schedule them, either. I have recently discovered that one of my children is motivated to do many things, and tends to be successful at whatever he tries. However, he is also easily overwhelmed. As his parent, I need to help him narrow his efforts so that he can be successful at the things he wants most (allowing him time to actually become very capable at a few things instead of fairly capable at many things) while still having “down time” to process life.

Student Pointers for Self-Management

Adapted from *Get Organized Without Losing It!*

- ✚ The more organized you are, the more **free time** you will have.
- ✚ Get a brightly **colored folder** with two pockets. The one on the left is for homework. The one on the right is for work you got done in school. Make it a habit to **ALWAYS** have this folder with you.
- ✚ Try an accordion file with **rubber bands** to keep everything from falling out.
- ✚ Use a clear zippered pouch for pencils, pens, erasers, but **don't overload** it. You don't really **NEED** 6 pens or 5 pencils! If it isn't overloaded, you might actually be able to find something.
- ✚ Use dividers in your 3-ring binder so that you can take notes in the right section. Put a pocket folder in each section to hold handouts from the teacher. Even better, get a **3-hole punch** that fits in a binder and immediately punch handouts and put them in your binder in the right section. Always put the newest one in the front so that you will see it.
- ✚ Put a sheet protector page or two in each section of your binder. If you have something you worked extra hard on, put it in there for **protection**.
- ✚ **NEVER** put trash or food or homework in your desk. Trash goes in the trash can. Food goes in your lunchbox, and homework goes in your homework folder. If you always **put things in the right place**, you not only will be able to find everything, but your desk will look great!
- ✚ Don't try to remember everything. Even Mom and Dad write things down. I bet they have a grocery list or an appointment book, a Blackberry, or a calendar. **USE A PLANNER**. It's not enough to just have a planner. You have to get used to using it. You might ask an adult to help you to remember at first, but after a while, it will become a habit. All assignments are written in the planner. Due dates are written in the planner. You can even break big projects down into smaller pieces and write each piece on a different day in your planner. You can put your games, practices, rehearsals, or any other extra "stuff" in your planner, too. Basically, if you have something you need to remember, put it in your planner! **TIP:** Use a pencil because you might change your mind or your teacher might change hers. Your coach might cancel a practice. You want to be able to erase things you don't need so that you can focus on those things you need to remember. Make it a habit to check your planner every morning before you go to school and check it every night before you do your homework. Check things off as you complete them.
- ✚ Ask a parent to help you fill in your planner with **out of school activities**. When you look at your planner, you should see your **LIFE**.
- ✚ Before you begin homework, number the assignments in the order you plan to do them. Then stick to your plan. **Take charge!** It's **YOUR** homework.
- ✚ Get as much done the night before as possible: set out clothes for the next day so that you don't realize 5 minutes before you have to leave that your red socks are missing. Pack your lunch or make sure you have lunch money. If you pack a lunch and put it in the refrigerator, put a sticky note on the back door reminding you to get it out of the fridge. Before you go to bed, check over your homework, check your planner, put all homework in the Homework Folder, and put both folder and planner in your backpack. You'll go to sleep knowing that you are **ready for the next day**.
- ✚ Ask a teacher or parent to help you plan out a **schedule** for long-term projects the first few times you have one. After a while, you'll get the hang of it. By breaking a big project down into smaller parts, you can celebrate each day that you are on track.
- ✚ Notice how **notebook paper** has a red line down the left side? Take your class notes in the big part of the page and write key words or questions to the left of the red line.
- ✚ Whenever you hear your teacher say that something is important or will be on a test or is something you really need to remember, **WRITE IT DOWN** and highlight it or put a star next to it.
- ✚ Make **flash cards** for yourself with note cards or slips of paper. You can do this in any subject.

Time Management

Gifted kids may find it difficult to manage time. When a child is so stimulated by her world, school projects and after-school programs can become overwhelming. Highly motivated minds may be perfectionistic and idealistic, leading many to over-commitment and even burnout.

Taking your child's style into account, share these tools and let him or her decide which works best. Remember: your child's organizational style may be different from yours.

Planning by Activity

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Hours</u>
Sleeping	8
Dressed & Ready	1
To & From School	1
School	6
Planning	.5
Snack	.5
Homework	1
Hobby (pet rabbits)	1
Sports	0
Play (friend over)	1.5
Dinner	1
Chores	.5
TV	0
Reading	1
Unscheduled	1
TOTAL	24

Planning by Time

<u>Monday Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
6 a.m.	Get Ready
7 a.m.	Travel
8 a.m.	School
9 a.m.	-
10 a.m.	-
11 a.m.	-
12 p.m.	-
1 p.m.	-
2 p.m.	Travel
3 p.m.	Snack
4 p.m.	Homework
5 p.m.	-
6 p.m.	Dinner/Chores
7 p.m.	TV
8 p.m.	Favorite Project
9 p.m.	Reading
10 p.m.	Bed

Planning by To-Do List

<u>Wednesday Priority</u>	<u>Activity</u>
1	Homework
5	Research Paper
2	Soccer Practice
4	Reading for Fun
3	Dishes
6	Clean up Room

Taken from:
<http://school.familyeducation.com/organization/gifted-education/38344.html#ixzz1YmbtmYzf>



Self-Control A Key to Success

Self-control may be the secret to success, according to a persuasive new study that followed 1,000 children from birth to age 32: children who showed early signs of self-mastery were not only less likely to have developed addictions or committed a crime by adulthood, but were also healthier and wealthier than their more impulsive peers.

To read the study results:
<http://healthland.time.com/2011/01/24/the-key-to-health-wealth-and-success-self-control/?xid=huffpo-direct>

“When coping with a problem or conflict, deal with things as they are – not as you wish they were.”

From *Tools for Life In a Jar: 101 Lessons for Getting Along*

Tools For Self-Management

If you want your child to become more self-directed, make sure that he or she has the tools needed (both physical and emotional).

Physical Tools:

- Planner of his or her choosing
- A cool pen or pencil to use just for the planner
- Highlighters or colored pens or pencils
- Post-it Notes
- Bulletin Board
- Binder with sections for each subject
- Specific place to do schoolwork that works for the whole family
- Reward system devised either by your child or together as a family
- Written contract to accomplish specific goals by a certain time
- Clock with a timer or alarm

Emotional Tools:

- Give him reason to believe that he is capable of self-management. Allow him to make certain decisions for himself. Have faith in him.
- Allow her to set up her own schedule so long as she accomplishes what she needs to accomplish. Maybe Sally NEEDS to unwind when she comes home from school before she can crack the books. Maybe Johnny NEEDS to get his homework done immediately because he WANTS to watch his favorite television shows at night and unwind then. Children need to unwind as much as adults do – and each of them does it in as many different ways as adults do.
- Try to set an example of the self-management style you wish your child to exhibit. Discuss why you are doing

things the way you are in a way that makes sense to your child. For example:

- When you take out your Blackberry to enter an appointment, make the connection that by writing down where and when you need to be somewhere, you will be there. Discuss how your child's planner fills the same purpose.
- When you put the dishes away, talk about the benefits of having a place for everything so that you know exactly where it is. The next time you need a dish, you know where to look. Similarly, the next time your child needs his Math book, he should know where to find it because it is always in the same place.
- When you apologize to your child because you can't make a soccer game because of a commitment at work, help your child to see how his or her commitments at school are equally important. Watching television has to wait until homework is done, for example.

"Self-discipline is a form of freedom: freedom from laziness and lethargy, freedom from the expectations and demands of others, freedom from weakness and fear—and doubt."

-- H.A. Dorfman

Resources:

(2011). *Tools for Life In a Jar: 101 Lessons for Getting Along*. Free Spirit Press:Minneapolis, MN.

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<http://healthland.time.com/2011/01/24/the-key-to-health-wealth-and-success-self-control/?xid=huffpo-direct>

<http://school.familyeducation.com/organization/gifted-education/38344.html#ixzz1YmbtmYzf>



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Mission Statement of Parent & Community Network

It is the belief of the Parent & Community Network that the families of gifted students and resources within their communities are a crucial part of the growth of gifted individuals. To enhance parent effectiveness and to network community resources are major goals of this Network. More specifically, this Network will strive to meet the needs of gifted individuals by: 1) building partnerships with families, schools, businesses, industries, civic and service groups, helping professionals, and other communities; 2) facilitating education, assistance, and support for families of the gifted; 3) locating, developing, and disseminating relevant resources, programs, and materials; 4) assisting educators in working with gifted students, parents, families, and communities; 5) increasing public recognition of and support for the needs of the gifted; 6) linking gifted individuals with other gifted individuals in the wider community; 7) encouraging and assisting the development of local and state organizations to support gifted education; and 8) linking with other Networks and organizations to help fulfill common goals.

