

Monday, November 7, 2016

BVPAGE Meeting Minutes – Joint Meeting with Olathe Quest Connection

Board Members Present: Tracy Elford, Amy Gallentine, Lisa Nickel, Heidi Mann, Patty Logan

Attendees 59

- I. Welcome – Jennifer, OQC and Tracy Elford
- II. Understanding the Dynamics of Gifted & Siblings, Andrea Gerry MS LMFT
 - a. Mother of two twice-exceptional children; SENG facilitator
 - b. Prevalence of Gifted within families
 - i. Siblings usually within 5-10 points in measured ability
 - ii. Parents/grandparents often within 10 points
 - iii. Howard Gardener's Multiple Intelligences
 1. Body smart
 2. Number smart
 3. Word smart, etc.
 - iv. Emotional Intelligence (EQ)
 1. Daniel Coleman, author of Emotional Intelligence
 2. John Gottman, Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child
 3. Self-awareness, regulation, motivation, empathy, social skills
 - v. EQ + IQ = thriving children
 - vi. Caution on labels
 1. When parents label children, it limits the child's confidence in other areas.
 2. Parent from a standpoint that all children are intelligent.
 3. Teach children to rise to their challenges & focus on the effort.
 - vii. Table Questions
 1. What are the gifts and talents of each of your children?
 2. What is special or unique about each one?
 3. Is one of these talents more valued than the other by your family or society?
 4. Would your child perceive themselves the same way you describe them?
 - c. Understanding birth order
 - i. Stereotypes
 1. Oldest – natural leader, ambitious responsible
 2. Middle – social butterfly, peacekeeper, fairness obsessed
 3. Baby – free spirit, risk taker, charming
 - ii. Through the lens of gifted:
 1. Firstborn or only child
 - a. More likely to be identified as gifted
 - b. Serious
 - c. Seeks adult approval

2. Middle/2nd
 - a. Less likely to be recognized as gifted
 - b. Often recognized for excellent leadership skills
 - c. Tend to focus more on sibling/peer approval than parent/teacher
 - d. Frequently the mediator of the family, hence building the interpersonal and leadership skills
3. Youngest
 - a. Lots in common with 2nd children
 - b. If labeled as “the baby”, they become dependent on the positive feedback from older siblings
 - c. May be fearful of assuming responsibilities
 - d. May feel defeated – see less likelihood of becoming as competent as older siblings
4. Special roles
 - a. What do I do well? What do I add to this family?
 - b. The creative one, the smart one, the clown, the social one, the troublemaker
 - c. Special roles can be good if they are not limiting (either/or)
 - d. Children who are not as special should still be able to do an activity
5. Caution again on labeling
 - a. Limits child’s confidence in other areas
 - b. “Jane is gifted one, so I probably can’t be in the gifted program.”
 - c. Losing your “special role” can lead to underachieving and even a loss of identity

iii. Table questions

1. Was your identified child(ren) the oldest, middle or baby?
2. Does that keep in line with Dr. James Webb’s citation that “first born (and only) children are more likely to be the ones identified as academically gifted” and “second children are less likely to be identified as gifted, though substantial data suggest that in most cases their intellectual potential is quite like that of their siblings”?

d. Sibling Rivalry

- i. Does having an identified gifted child who receives attention and recognition for their intellectual and academic accomplishments create harm for another sibling who struggles in school?
 1. 300 sibling pairs – at least one gifted, ages 8-14
 2. Discovered it wasn’t a big deal – Expected to find non-gifted siblings were more anxious and depressed, that they were poorer students (relative to their ability) and were negatively disposed toward their gifted sibling.

3. To their surprise, the groups of pairs looked very similar – it is an asset to have a gifted sibling
 - a. Fewer behavioral issues
 - b. Describe siblings in a friendlier manner
 - c. Best guess is that being gifted was a ready excuse
- ii. Is all sibling rivalry bad?
 1. Struggling with your sibling is natural in moderation
 2. Holding a different opinion is part of critical thinking
 3. Teaches being assertive enough to argue for that difference
- iii. How to have a fair row
 1. Let them work it out
 2. Resist urge to mediate or decide fault
 3. Mediation often increases rivalry – “Mom’s on my side!”
 4. Set limits
 - a. No aggressive behaviors
 - b. Noise levels
 - c. Violation ends in time apart
- iv. How to work it out (LUVÉR)
 1. Listen – curiosity, interest, fascination. Your reality is different than mine.
 2. Understand – reflect what is heard
 3. Validate – highlight thoughts – encourage them to talk more, about thoughts, “giving thoughts back”
 4. Empathize – recognize feelings – saying I can tell that made you XXX, let them know you get what they’re going through
 5. Repeat – until individual calms down – person doesn’t feel heard if they are still talking.
- v. Table Questions
 1. Because you are a parent of a gifted child, do you feel your gifted child(ren)requires or demands extra time and attention?
 2. How do you counter the imbalance of attention among your kids?
 3. Do they compete with each other?
 4. Does your gifted child use their academic advantages to outsmart his/her (gifted or not) siblings?
- vi. Recommendation – How to talk so your kids will listen, how to listen so your kids will talk.
- e. Family connectedness and belonging
 - i. “Your relationship with your child is more important to (their) long-term future than any educational or enrichment opportunities you could provide and it will suffer without good interpersonal communication” – Dr. James Webb
 - ii. Fairness
 1. Fair + equal does not equal identical
 2. Dr. Webb’s cake story – if trying to divide a chocolate cake 4 equal ways
 - a. Child on diet

- b. Child with food allergy
 - c. Child that doesn't like chocolate
 - d. Child who loves chocolate cake
 - e. Not all 4 would be thrilled with an equal portion
 - 3. What is fair being to give uniquely to each child's individual needs
- iii. Creating Connectedness
 - 1. Offer special time – one on one time with your child at least a few minutes a day
 - 2. Set an expectation of a comfortable environment – stand firm against unacceptable behavior yet avoid being overly critical or punitive – different parenting styles, get on the same page with similar expectations, balance roles so that neither parent is the “bad guy”
 - 3. Set goals that include each family member's input – each role is important and valuable – is there is a vacation you would like to save for? Staycation? Let them know that they have an important role in the family – be part of the process
 - 4. Surprise planning
 - a. one parent gets the children together to plan a surprise for the other parent or for a third child. The children get involved in cooperative planning and feel closer. An alliance with a positive goal builds unity.
 - b. The secrets of gift giving, surprises and parties seem to unite brothers and sisters and diminish arguing. Planning something special for a family member, neighbor or friend encourages a sense of togetherness that comes from joint efforts.
 - c. Parents can effectively use cooperative strategies frequently to build closeness.
- iv. Table questions
 - 1. What are some examples of goals your family has set to accomplish together? Examples include serving, planning a vacation or raising money for playground equipment for the backyard.
 - 2. Though each child may not have given to the goal equally, how did they use their own talents in achieving this goal?
- f. Questions
 - i. How did you approach the child when they were identified? I was so excited, but didn't want to be boastful – what's the best way to handle that? Depends on the family. We discussed the test, but didn't discuss test scores.
 - ii. How to balance pride vs. boastful? Don't have to be ashamed of special/unique gifts and talents – talents are different for different people. Everyone is unique.
 - iii. Gifted is not a get out of jail free card. Brain works differently – not better, different.
 - iv. How do you shape expectations for younger that they may not follow the gifted path? Make it so that gifted is not so “special”, not a goal. Balance that specialness.