

Parent Workshop 2

The childhood brain and motivation

- I. Introduction to brain research
 - a. Video – Brain development
 - i. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLiP4b-TPCA>
 - ii. Review of ages for sensory, language, and cognitive development
 - iii. Genetics and environment – both matter
 - iv. Cognitive and social/emotional development – need to be equally important. Focusing on just the cognitive leads to problems.
 - v. Discussion – what does this mean to you?
 - b. Video – Dan Siegel – The Whole Brain Child
 - i. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGUEDtGSwW4&list=PLeE6SEu5P6di1LGOG5tO3NajNelgDDL4g>
 - ii. Remember the ages of development for the various skills/areas of the brain – younger children aren't seeing the peak in higher functioning skills until adolescence, they are primarily focused on the right-brain.
 - iii. Busy parenting creates a society focused on left-brain skills – what happens to empathy/feelings?
 - iv. Make connections, “name it to tame it”
 - v. Overall concepts lead to brain integration
 - vi. Additional videos chosen by parents (same You Tube link has various topics)
 - c. The Teenage Brain
 - i. Peak of physical health, strength and mental capacity, however:
 - ii. Pre-frontal cortex (high order thinking, organizational and decision-making skills) doesn't fully mature until mid-twenties
 1. Thought and memory based in cortex
 2. Areas developing first include – processing information from the senses, controlling movement
 3. Areas developing last include – controlling impulses, planning ahead
 4. Brain-based changes in regulation at sleep contributing to tendency to stay up late – may lead to irritability, depression, increase in impulsive behavior
 - iii. Hazardous age - high rates of death, crime, alcohol abuse
 - d. Application of Brain Research for Motivation
 - i. Reward = release of dopamine, brain begins to see a pattern and anticipate the future
 1. But remember for teens, impulse control develops last and pleasure is at the top of the list...
 - ii. Parents create motivation by focusing on emotional development and encouragement
 1. Research shows that moms criticize their kids 10 times more than saying a positive response
 2. High correlation between emotional insecurity and inability to learn in the classroom

- iii. Applying concepts – if child does worse than hoped, praise efforts and preparation. If child does great, praise effort instead of just intelligence (praising intelligence only may lead to reduction in effort)
 - iv. Teen specific guidelines
 - 1. Stay connected
 - 2. Be patient – they may lack your motivation, so be their cheerleader, but don't push too hard
 - 3. Set expectations for acceptable behavior
 - 4. Don't overreact – they are still figuring out how to accurately assess emotions and may misinterpret your reaction
 - 5. Discuss risks – sex, drugs, alcohol, etc
 - 6. Talk short-term – they will respond better to consequences they see as an immediate threat or reward
 - 7. Think long-term – allow them to make mistakes as a learning opportunity (depending on the severity of the mistake). Allow room for exploration and experimentation within a safe environment.
 - 8. Discussion – How can these guidelines be applied?
 - v. Momentum is important – don't slack off!
 - e. Various quotes from Zig Ziglar article to discuss
 - i. "Motivation gets you going but habit gets you there. Make motivation a habit and you'll get there more quickly and have a lot more fun on the trip. "
 - ii. "I truly believe that you can have everything in life you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want."
 - iii. "For motivation to be permanent we must have balance in our lives by dealing with the physical, mental, and spiritual."
 - f. Handouts with resources
- II. Wrap-up/Evaluations/Door Prizes