



## PARENTING FOR ACHIEVEMENT

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## YOUR QUESTIONS???


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What I really want to know is...

What I'm puzzled about it...

My child.....


# KITES



Kites fly, (11 yr old boy, CN)  
But they need an anchor.  
Kids roam,  
But they need a home.  
If a kite loses its anchor,  
It falls.  
If a child loses his home,  
He declines.  
As a kite goes higher and higher  
You give it more string.  
As a child grows older and older  
You give him more freedom.  
But here  
The similarity ends;  
For kites,  
Even with the most string imaginable,  
Crash sooner or later.  
But kids,  
(if they are old enough),  
Adjust safely  
And create new homes.

## What is Giftedness?

### More than a test score!

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- Intensity: spirit, thought, purpose, emotion, soul
  - Greater awareness, greater sensitivity
  - Achievement, Knowledge, Skills, & Abilities
  - Insight
  - Uniqueness
  - Difference from age peers
- (Delisle 2000)



## Do You Know Your Child?

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- Greatest strength?
- Greatest interest?
- Biggest weakness?
- Personality type?
- What do you like best about your child?
- What expectations do you have for your child?
  - NOW? HS? COLLEGE? WORK? LIFE?



## Definitions Matter!

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- How do we define achievement?
  - Definition we use impacts how we support and nurture it.
- How do we define underachievement?
  - Definition we use impacts how we avoid or reverse it.



## What do we know about Underachievement?

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- Begins around middle grades (4<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup>) **WHY??**
- More common in boys than girls and starts earlier in boys
- Some believe nearly 50% of gifted individuals underachieve at some point
- Motivation's role in underachievement?
  - Selective Achievement: Kids v. Adults



## Underachievement 2

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- Possible inappropriate fit of educational/academic options
- Possible denigration of school and teachers by parents
- IQ is no guarantee of “success”
  - Life accomplishment is more correlated to grades than to IQ
- Nonproducers – just choose not to do the work because the “gifted” label is enough



## Perfectionism and Underachievement

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- If you don't do it, it can't be imperfect
- Anxiety interferes with performance – academic and/or creative
- Excellent v. Perfect
- Perfectionism limits risk-taking and curiosity
- “Specialitis”



## Signs of Underachievement

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- Drop in grades
  - Discrepancy between expectation and actuality, between “what is” and “what might be”
- Not submitting or completing assignments, projects, homework
- Disengagement
- Domain specificity emerges in adolescence and may be confused with underachievement



## Rimm's Trifocal Model: Student, Home, School

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- Assessment of skills, abilities, reinforcement contingencies, and types of underachievement
- Communication
- Change the Expectation of Important Others
- Role Model Identification
- Correct Skill Deficiencies
- Modify Reinforcement: Home & School



## Executive Function: Parents and Teachers

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- Foundational skills for school and life
- Decreases stress and anxiety and being “overwhelmed”
- Components (Dawson & Guare)
  - Response Inhibition
  - Emotional Control
  - Sustained Attention
  - Task initiation
  - Flexibility
  - Goal directed Persistence



## So How Can Parents Help?

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- Stimulate & support children's interests
- Renegotiate interdependence frequently
  - "The V of Love"
  - Danger of too early disengagement
  - Security and Support + Exploration and Independence
  - Danger of overdependence and learned helplessness
  - United Parenting



## What Works to Reverse Underachievement?

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- Varies by individual
- School accommodations/responses
- Counseling
- Self-confidence and Self-Efficacy
  - Skills
  - Support – for effort AND achievement
  - Meaning
  - Choice



## Parents' Roles

- Realistic expectations and goals
  - Excellence v. Perfection
- Family Responsibilities – builds self-worth
- School connections



## Self-Esteem, Self-Worth, and Self-Confidence



- Praise specific actions
- No “est”
- Praise effort and growth Mindset



Justin Baskin, left, Jacob Campo, and Marvin Garcia Jr., all 8, conduct an experiment with dry ice. They were learning about the states of matter at Alexander Wilson Center School in Los Angeles. (Frontline On, Los Angeles Times / October 26, 2013)





## Rimm's Ten Canons for Achievement – for Parents

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- Responsibility and Independence grow together
- Referential speaking
- United parenting – expectations, effort, and messages
- Opposition occurs when parents ally with child against school or other parent



## Rimm's Ten Canons for Achievement – for Parents

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- Learn to function in both competition AND collaboration
- Awareness of relationship between learning/effort and outcomes
- Avoid overreactions to successes AND failures
- Confront only when you can control the outcome



## Rimm's Ten Canons for Achievement – for Parents

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- More tension when kids avoid their work than when they do it – self-confidence and resilience develop through struggle
- Appropriate role modeling by parents



## YOU ARE THE ADULT! YOU MAKE THE RULES!

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Beware of Over-Empowerment!  
Help Kids Achieve Balance  
work and social life  
family and friends  
challenge of multipotentiality  
Expectations and consequences  
Monitor Media and technology

# Questions and Concerns?

