

ABC PEEL NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: GINA HEISZ

As the leaves are falling from the trees and the first snow flurries brush by, our kids are settling into the new school year. Hopefully you have had the opportunity to give input into your child's Individual Education Plan. You should be getting a copy of the draft IEP soon, if you have not already. Remember that the IEP is a fluid document that can, and should, change throughout the year as your child's educational needs change. If you have suggestions for the IEP, you can always drop a note to the teacher. You will get lots of great advice on IEP's if you come out to the October Parent's Night meeting - don't forget that this one is in conjunction with ABC Toronto and will take place at the Brentwood Toronto Public Library! I hope that all of our children (and all of us parents!) are having a great year so far!

CURRENT ISSUES/HOT TOPICS:

During the September parent's night, we had a casual round-table discussion with approximately 14 people in attendance. People were free to comment on any issues that they felt should be brought to the attention of the Gifted Steering Committee. Among the items that were discussed on this night were;

- 1.) Possibility of congregated gifted French Immersion classes?
- 2.) Reasons why some schools and principals might be unwilling to lose their gifted students, or have a properly run ISELP?
- 3.) Teaching the teachers and principals about consistent programming within ISELP and ELC classes, also consistent information to be passed on to parents enquiring about gifted testing and the programs available.
- 4.) Issues regarding curriculum compacting, modification of programs and acceleration.
- 5.) Location of ELC's — are they geographically logical?
- 6.) Identify best practices and gather information about which schools are doing a good job regarding ISELP and ELC.

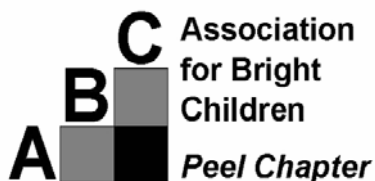
BOARD UPDATES:

Last month the Gifted Review Steering Committee was finally struck and has met two times in the last few weeks. It is comprised of 12 members in total from various areas throughout the Peel Board of Education. There are 2 representatives from ABC Peel: Gina Heisz and Lori D'Aquila, along with Principals, Superintendents, a Psychologist, Co-ordinators in Special Education, Assessment and Accountability and Library services. They are currently working on the terms of reference and will be providing updates to SEAC (special education advisory committee) each month during the regular monthly SEAC meetings. SEAC holds its regular meetings on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm. It is open to the public, and there is a question period at the end of each meeting.

MEMBERSHIP ISSUES:

We are currently looking to increase ABC's membership, and as part of this initiative, we would like to encourage all members to renew by October or November of each year. Currently your \$40 membership fee is made payable to ABC Ontario and ABC Peel receives \$15 back for its own initiatives. The membership fees that we collect help us to provide you with Parent's Night speakers, refreshments at meetings, all paper and mailing costs, photocopying, reimbursement of mileage costs for our support team and many other things.

If you know of anyone who could benefit from membership with ABC, please bring them along to this month's meeting on October 26th. Remember that it costs only \$40 per year to become a member of this non-profit organization. We need to become a stronger voice in Peel to ensure that gifted programs in Peel become the best they can be. The more members we have, the more we can **do for you!**



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BOOK REVIEW:

'How To Develop Your Child's Gifts and Talents During the Elementary Years'

By Raelynne P. Rein, Ph.D and Rachel Rein
ISBN #1-56565-165-0, Published 1994

Parents can support and help their children develop to their fullest potential, especially during the elementary school years when children are often first identified as being gifted.

This book is a how-to guide that will help parents look for and encourage the varied individual interests, gifts and talents that each child has. It also has ideas to help stimulate your children's critical and creative thinking skills. Both useful tools for the future of any child.

The Table of Contents includes an Introduction, Identifying Your Child's Gifts and Talents, The Gift of Leadership, The Gift of Creativity, The Gift of Social Consciousness, The Gift of Humour as well as Answers to Common Questions about Gifts, Talents and Interests.

By recognizing and developing your child's individual interests and strengths, you will help develop his or her critical and creative abilities and help your child lead a more fulfilling life. Most importantly, you will teach your children a crucial life skill that can be used both immediately and in the future no matter where they go, or what they do.

One of the suggestions mentioned in this book is that we should look at our children and see them for who they really are. Sometimes as parents we are really busy trying to instill manners, moral and ethical values and teaching appropriate behaviour.

It is understandable that we often forget that these little people standing in front of us are separate and distinct individuals, with their own likes and dislikes.

A trait that gifted children often exhibit is leadership. Margaret Thatcher, former Prime Minister of Great Britain is quoted as saying:

"Let our children grow tall and some taller than others if they have it in them to do so."

Leadership is a term that is often perceived as being 'loaded'. It means different things to different people. In this book leadership is thought of as the ability to influence other people's actions or thoughts in a goal – directed manner. Most people would agree that this is a quality that is needed and valued. Leadership is rather remarkable, intriguing, and some might even say a mysterious trait. The author questions, "why are relatively few children with this trait identified as "gifted"? One might argue that leadership is difficult to spot in children. However, this is untrue if you know what to look for. Leadership is as easy to recognize in children as are other qualities. Like any other signs of giftedness, the trick is to know what to look for.

Behaviours that manifest leadership:

- Does your child often tell other children what to do in play situations?
- Do they tell adults what to do?
- Does your child like to be "the boss"?
- Is your child often accused of being 'bossy'?
- Does your child "correct" others when they think others are wrong?

These are some of the more typical indicators of leadership in children: the "bossy" child is always telling their peers what to do, how to do it, and even when and why to do it. Does this sound familiar?

The underlying behaviour to communicate the child's desires may be quite positive. He or she wants to influence others. Unfortunately, this child hasn't learned how to do this in a positive and constructive way.

Many youngsters find their beginning efforts in leadership skills squashed by well-meaning adults and their irritated peers. Often without realization, adults will reprimand this child and therefore unintentionally pun-



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Book Review continued:

ish them for this behaviour. Instead of reprimanding the child, what the parents and teachers could try to do is to shape the child's behaviour to be more socially acceptable.

What can be problematic is that the leadership qualities are not recognized and shaped into a more socially acceptable format. Rather, they are viewed as negative behaviours to be eliminated, or in the least diminished.

Once parents and teachers learn to identify leadership qualities in children, they will be better prepared to help shape those wonderful qualities more appropriately and effectively.

Children need to realize that people can be leaders regardless of their sex, their age, the country they came from, or the language they speak. Furthermore, they should also understand that leaders can be found in fields as diverse as politics, music, local community activities, schools and neighbourhoods. Once these ideas are grasped, children will be on the road to seeing the endless possibilities of being a leader.

On an ending note... Encourage debate in your home. Leaders need to have excellent verbal skills to accomplish their goals. They need to articulate their ideas in a clear and concise fashion. They need to be comfortable speaking to others and inspire those they are leading. The more children practice these skills, the better they will become.

THIS MONTH'S PARENT NIGHT:

For this month's parent night we are doing something a little different. In collaboration with the ABC Toronto chapter, we will be having a presentation on developing IEP's for the gifted child. Rosann Lacalamita and Becky Hurwitz from ABC Ontario have written a 44 page document in conjunction with the Ministry of Education on the development and implementation of IEP's for the

gifted child.

As we all know, every October your child should receive their first IEP of the new school year. In the past, these documents have not quite been up to par with what most parents would like to see. This new document can be viewed at: <http://www.abcontario.ca/gifted/iep.htm>.

On October 26, 2006 these speakers will be conducting an IEP seminar for parents of children in Peel and Toronto. The meeting will not be held at our regular location since we will have parents coming from all areas of Toronto, Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga. It was decided to have a central location for all with easy access by subway and highway. The meeting will be held at the Toronto Public Library--Brentwood location, off of Royal York Road and Bloor St. in Etobicoke a few hundred meters from the Royal York subway station. The address is 36 Brentwood Road North. It is one block west of Royal York Road and just north of Bloor St. West. There is metered parking available in the area for \$1.50 per hour. We hope to have a large turnout for this informative evening.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS:

We are currently working on a children's program with Spirit of Math, to be held in the upcoming months. This organization is a Toronto based company that helps students learn to face challenges, work with others and develop confidence. They have campuses in Brampton and Mississauga West along with 4 others in Ontario, and 1 in Manitoba. If you wish to learn more about their program please visit their website at <http://www.spiritofmath.com>

Please note that we are always in need of volunteers to help with our children's programs. If you have any ideas about the types of programs we should have, or, if you just want to help out, please contact us at: activities@abcpeel.org.



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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:

ABC PEEL HAS A NEW PHONE NUMBER

Effective Monday October 16, 2006, ABC Peel has a new phone number with voicemail capabilities. The new phone number is **905-230-8281**, and will be replacing the old number of 905-782-0055.

There are two separate voicemail boxes associated with this new number. Sub-voicemail box #1, is the "ABC Peel Support" line. If have questions about ABC Peel, or need support about your child's testing results, IEP's or IPRC's, this is where you should leave your name and phone number to have your calls returned and your questions answered.

We also have a sub-voicemail box #2, which is the "ABC Peel Information" line. If you listen to the greeting, you will hear information about our Parent's Night, speakers and topics that will be updated each month. Any other relevant information will be listed in this voicemail box. You can also leave a message in this box if you wish.

Please tell your friends about our new phone number.

WEBSITES OF INTEREST:

<http://ocw.mit.edu/index.html>

This is a new resource from MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) that offers free open courseware at the undergraduate level for anyone that may be interested in self-directed learning. This service requires no registration and has over 1,400 courses available.

<http://www.howstuffworks.com>

A great resource for those who just have to know how everything works! The website answers questions about current issues and updates its front page articles daily.

<http://www.creativekids.ca>

This is a Canadian website that is great for children of all ages that requires a "membership". You must sign-up, but, it is free. It has games, brain-teasers, jokes, drawing activities and more. There are no chat-rooms associated with this site, so parents can feel safe about allowing their children to enjoy the website.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Telephone support: * 905-230-8281 (new number)

E-mail support: support@abcpeel.org

Membership Information: membership@abcpeel.org

Parent's Night Information: activities@abcpeel.org

Childrens Programs: activities@abcpeel.org

Webmaster: webadmin@abcpeel.org

Communication Team (Newsletter):
abcpeelnews@hotmail.com