Parenting Bright Kids Newsletter

INTRODUCING TO OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER!

SEPTEMBER 2005

We have many exciting things to announce. Our new 2005-2006 Calendar has been released. We are bringing back our Thinking Fun Sessions topics from last year, Bubbleology: Become a Bubble Scientist, Geometry Goes Wild: Cool Shapes, Polygons and Tessellations and Geometry Goes 3-D. Our monthly Parenting Bright Kids Teas start on Sept. 22nd at 10am, mark your calendars! Exciting events are planned for the Spring, starting with a brand new Parenting Bright Kids Workshop and three programs at the Beczak Environmental Center. Our website has been updated this summer with lots of great information on where to go and fun things for bright kids. Visit us on the web for more information on where and when our events will be held.

Kings, Castles, Dukes and Illumniated Manuscripts. Our next Thinking Fun Sessions are going back to Medieval Times.

THINKING FUN SESSIONS BEGIN THIS FALL

Are your kids looking for some fun things to do after school? Come join our Thinking Fun Sessions. We've scheduled Bubbleology: Become a Bubble Scientist on Oct. 25th at 4pm, Geometry Goes Wild: Cool Shapes, Polygons on Nov. 15th at 4pm and Tessellations and Geometry Goes 3-D on Nov. 29th at 4pm! We are currently developing our next exciting sessions revolving around the theme of Medieval Times. Children will design castles and siege engines, paint illuminated letters with egg yolk and crushed gemstones. Read our feature article, "The Renaissance Approach", below regarding enrichment. Thinking Fun Sessions are an easy way to enrich your child after school.

WELCOME

The Bright Kids Resource is the only place in Westchester where you can find places to go, things to do, support and information for gifted and talented children. Come visit us on the web or call for more information.
www.brightkidsresource.com

PARENTING BRIGHT KIDS EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

Parenting Bright Kids support group is in full swing, we will have our first Parent Tea on September 22nd at 10am. Parent Teas are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 10am. Coming this January we will start our first Parenting Bright Kids Workshops. This 10 week series will cover topics such as Motivation, Discipline, Stress Management, Peer Relations and Sibling Rivalry and more. This workshop is based on the SENG Model developed by leading gifted children specialists, James T. Webb, Ph.D and Arlene DeVries, M.S.E. From their words on the importance of these workshops: "Virtually always, parenting proves to be far more important than teaching in the long-term outcome of gifted children. Although teaching is important, parenting that nurtures, guides, and supports gifted children often can help a child overcome mediocre, poor or even awful school experiences."

JOIN US FOR A VISIT AT THE BEZCAK ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER!

In the Spring we have three trips scheduled to the Beczak Environmental Center on the Hudson River in Yonkers. We're lucky to have the center customize their programs for our bright kids. The first session on February 23rd at 1:30pm, is actually two programs in one, The Hudson River Estuary Model and The Great Water Mix-up. Here the children will learn about the ecology of an estuary and the hundreds of animal species that live in the Hudson and the effects on wild life when salt water and fresh water come together. On April 11th, we will have a program called "Cuckoo for Copepods" which teaches children about plankton in the river. The children will be taking samples from the river's edge and Environmental Ecologists on staff will help the children identify plankton species and see them under the microscope! On May 12th at 4:30pm, we will have an exciting program

called Seining the Hudson River. What is seining? It's a great beach activity where the ecologists will pull a giant net through the river and pull up animals from the water for the children to inspect. (All animals are returned to the river afterwards). We've picked the best time of the year when there is an abundance of wildlife to look at. Come join us for these terrific programs!

THE RENAISSANCE APPROACH: ENRICH, DON'T ACCELERATE

By Sharon Flank, Ph.D., and Sandra Flank, Ph.D. (excerpts from original article)

anilla bean is the seed pod for a certain species of orchid?

Your gifted child is already straining the resources of the classroom, zipping through the work and looking for a challenge. You certainly don't want to tell the child not to learn. But how do you satisfy his or her curiosity - without exacerbating the school problems you already have?

Look at learning as scientists do: as a physical change in the brain that creates connections between neurons and links concepts together. At young ages, those connections are created by exposure to concrete experiences (touching real things). The connections are then strengthened when the child remembers and reflects on the physical experience, perhaps extending it and generalizing it.

Your child is hard-wired to enjoy learning: the brain pulses with pleasure with each new discovery and takes advantage of existing connections to build even more. In general, learning is scaffolding, with existing neuronal connections serving as a foundation for new links and connections. If what you are trying to learn relates to something in your experience, it is easier to learn.

We propose what we call the "Renaissance approach." The core of this approach is Enrich, Don't Accelerate. That is, find out what your child will soon be covering in class - and avoid it. If your child has already mastered the material, or if you cover it at home, he or she will cover it again in school and be bored. Instead, seek out other areas of inquiry, topics that are either adjacent to what's being covered, or totally separate.

The simplest way to implement the Renaissance approach is to seek out subjects beyond the reach of the school curriculum. In the elementary grades, reading, writing and math consume most of the day. A few hours a week may be devoted to science, and special units may include history and geography. These all offer you an enrichment opportunity: science, history and geography are ideal topics for the Renaissance approach.

Following are some activities that can enhance the education of gifted children in these neglected areas.

Science

Experiment with ice: Set up a laboratory for your science experiment. You will need a container and a piece of ice. Let the ice sit for a minute or two before anyone touches it, especially with wet fingers, which will stick. Touch the ice. Is it wet? Cold? What shape is it? Is it the same shape as the container? Leave the ice there. Do you have a hypothesis about what will happen to it? Do you expect it to change? Was your hypothesis correct? What happened? Does the ice have a different shape? Is it wet? Cold? It's not a solid anymore; now it's a liquid. Taste it. (Note to junior scientists: not all science experiments may be tasted.) Take some of the liquid and pour it into a different-shaped container and put it back in the freezer.

Repeat...

Try the ice experiment again, but with four ice cubes. Again, wait a minute before handling the ice cubes. This time wrap one ice cube in plastic wrap and another in aluminum foil. Sprinkle salt on a third. Leave the fourth one plain. What effect do the wraps and the salt have? Now try sprinkling salt on an ice cube and laying a string across it.