Parent Session

Organizational Styles

of

Twice-Exceptional Children

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PROJECT2EXCEL

University of St. Thomas
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*Organizational Styles*
PARENT DISCUSSION

Organizational Styles

What: Guided discussion group for parents whose children are participating in PROJECT2EXCEL

When: Day, Date, 2010
7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Where: Your School
Your School Address

Facilitators: Your choice

Preparation: Pre-reading assignment attached

Potential Topics:
• Different Types of Organization
• Accepting Different Styles of Organization
• How to Help Our Children Organize THEIR WAY

Essential Questions:
1. What does it mean to be organized?
2. What do we REALLY want when we say our children should be organized?
3. How do we help children organize in a way different from our own?

Objective: Establish an environment in which parents of twice-exceptional children can receive and provide support, guidance, and professional advice through discussion with other parents and trained leaders.
Discussion Rules

1. What's said in the group stays in the group.
2. There are no wrong ideas.
3. Stay on topic.
4. The facilitator is the guide, not the expert.
Pre-Reading & Session Activity

- To be completed prior to Parent Session, if possible.
- Readings are listed in order of relevance to the discussion.
- An “Overview of Pre-Reading” follows if you do not have time to do all of the reading.

1. Improving Memory and Organization (Chapter 3). 35-57


3. Identifying Our Own Organizational Styles

   a. Facilitator will lead activity. Each parent in attendance will take 10 minutes to complete the 10-question Personality Prototype Assessment Tool for Adults (Baum & Nicols – 2001).

   b. Facilitator will then explain that parents should look at any totals over 30 to find their organizational style. If anyone has more than one total over 30, that person is comfortable with a combination of organizational styles.

   c. Facilitator then tells parents that if they are interested, they can download student versions of this instrument for their children to complete at home. It can be found at www.internationalcenterfortalentdevelopment.com

Organizational Styles
Pre-Reading Overview


   - The first key suggested by the author is to avoid criticizing your child for lack of organization and to, instead, create supports.
   - Author suggests building structures and routines.
   - Twice-exceptional children often have difficulty starting (procrastination), doing (staying on task), and finishing (closure) a task. Parents can, and should, help out until these steps are learned.
   - Minimize the amount of “stuff” in backpacks, on desks, in work areas to limit distractions.
   - Create a system of reminders that works for your child.
   - Set up a system of cues: tactile, olfactory, visual, auditory
   - The author suggests allowing children to suffer the natural consequences of their lack of organization. They are young. Let them learn that inaction has consequences at a time in their lives when those consequences are relatively minor.


   - Scenarios are presented that use the four personality types in various combinations for parent and child.
   - Authors talk about what it means to be organized.
   - Article discusses different organizational needs for twice-exceptional children.
   - “For many talented students with learning or reading challenges, linear forms of organization actual minimize their effectiveness."
   - “For students whose emotions govern their lives, ... mood may dictate what they do rather than any predetermined schedule or organizational strategy.”
   - Strategies are presented for helping students with different organizational styles to be successful:
   - “Each organizational style has merit and can offer a unique pathway to success.”

Organizational Styles
**Discussion Questions for the Facilitator**

Prior to tackling the questions of the night, perhaps the facilitator would like to ask parents to introduce themselves and share what brought them to this discussion group.

**NOTE:** Following the Discussion Questions is a note-taking form for parents to use during the discussion.

The facilitator begins by sharing the following story with the group from one of the readings (Debunking the Organization Myth):

“Her desk is a mess, and I can’t see how she knows where anything is,” Alexa’s mom complains. “I bought her a notebook with sections and pockets, but she lost it. Instead, she stuffs papers for her different subjects in her textbooks. Why can’t she be organized like me? As an attorney, I know that life works best when there is predictability and order.”

“I wish Charles were more like Alexa,” interrupts Charles’ dad. “He has a compartment for everything. If one paper’s out of place, he practically has a meltdown. Charles’ attention to details and his precision drive me to distraction! He can’t even start his homework unless all his pencils are sharpened and lined up neatly on his desk. There’s no time for all of that. Our social schedules are so hectic that I have a hard time setting up a homework routine for him.”

“I’m even more frustrated than both of you,” responds Craig’s mother. “My son and I are kindred spirits – both out-of-the-box thinkers. We love spontaneity, but people are always telling us to get organized and get into a predictable routine. Believe me, I try; but it lasts about a week before we both feel stressed and incompetent. How can I be a successful engineer and still enjoy the mess?”

“I know what you’re saying,” Brooke’s Dad replies. “Teachers say to give kids a quiet place to do their homework, so we bought Brooke a new desk for her room, with a special lamp, and even in-and-out trays for her work. But the only use she has for her desk is to pile her clutter. When we insist that she clear off the desk, she just cries because she says she won’t be able to find anything. Her favorite place to work is the kitchen table with all her stuff spread out. My wife and I can’t understand it – we both crave solitude and quiet when we do our work. Brooke does get good grades, but we worry that she’ll never learn to be organized or independent.”
Discussion Questions

1. Do any of these scenarios sound familiar?
   a. Which ones represent your children?
   b. How are they on-target or not quite right?

2. What does the word “organization” mean?
   a. Does your definition of organization change depending upon the circumstances or is it a constant?
   b. Do you know organization “when you see it?”

3. Does your child’s organization style cause conflict in your household?

4. Do you attribute your child’s organizational style to his or her giftedness or to his or her twice-exceptionality?

5. Does your child often lose things?

6. Does your child often not complete assignments?

7. Do you know your own organizational style?
   a. Is it similar to your child’s?
   b. Is it different from your child’s
   c. Is it similar to other household members’?
   d. Is it different from other household members’?

8. Do you consider your child to be more linear or more spontaneous?
   a. Linear organizers are those who are the time managers and anti-clutter police of the household
   b. Spontaneous organizers are the absent-minded professors, the clutter kings and queens

9. What are some strategies you have tried to help your child become more organized? How successful have they been?

10. What are some strategies you could use to help your child be more organized?
    a. Keep in mind your child’s organizational style.
    b. Keep in mind your own organizational style.

Organizational Styles
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<th>Issues</th>
<th>Discussion Ideas</th>
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<td>Discussing various scenarios, which one most closely resembles my child?</td>
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<td>What does the word “organization” mean to me?</td>
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<td>Does my child’s organizational style cause conflict?</td>
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<td>Is my child’s organizational style attributable to his or her giftedness, twice-exceptionality, or genetics?</td>
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<td>What is my own organizational style?</td>
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**Organizational Styles**
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<th>Is my child more linear or spontaneous?</th>
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<td>What are some strategies I have tried to help my child to be more organized?</td>
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<td>What are some additional strategies I can try to help my child be more organized?</td>
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Organizational Styles
Strategies for Parents to Try
To Help Children be Better Organized

1. Build structures and routines.
2. Help children to begin and to finish tasks.
3. Brainstorm ways for your family to be organized at a family meeting.
4. Develop the piggyback habit. Simply combine something the child likes to do with something usually forgotten.
5. Regularly help child clean out unneeded papers from folders, unneeded folders, books, etc. from backpacks.
6. Make sure your child’s pencil case has items that work and help child to clean out unnecessary items.
7. Establish rules for borrowing that mimic those of “real life.”
8. Add structure with some sort of organizer: planner, cell phone, computer, note pad, calendar – whatever works for your child.
9. Create a system of reminders.
10. Access interactive learning.
11. Use software help for writing and/or editing.
12. Incorporate prompts into routines.
13. Devise a cue for your child that signals that he or she is off course (touch on the arm, whistle, secret word, silly look, musical passage – again, whatever works for you and your child.
14. Display a daily timetable, planner, or calendar.
15. Keep reminders in sight.
16. Have highlighters on hand.
17. Use charts to show progress.
18. Teach how to make and prioritize lists.
19. Buy or create checklists – make them with your child, not for your child.
20. Provide brief instructions. The message can get lost into many words.
21. Pair instructions so that your child becomes accustomed to listening for more than one item.
22. Allow child to do tasks or run errands with a sibling or friend.
23. Provide a timer to teach your child how long a period of time really is and how long it takes to accomplish tasks.
24. Avoid rescuing your child for lack of organization. Let him or her suffer the natural consequences.
25. State an instruction and then ask your child to repeat what he or she thinks is supposed to be done.

-- Adapted from “Improving Memory and Organization”

Organizational Styles
Food for Thought

"Gifted children with AD/HD have difficulty breaking bigger tasks down into smaller ones and also going step by step to build to a conclusion."
-- Deirdre Lovecky, Different Minds (2004)

"Material that is well organized is easier to learn and to remember than bits and pieces of information, especially if the information is complex or extensive."
-- Anita Woolfolk, Educational Psychology 2007

"Getting organized is basically a matter of developing good habits."
-- Author Unknown

"Organization is the enemy of improvisation."
-- Author Unknown

"In reading the lives of great men, I found that the first victory they won was over themselves ... self discipline with all of them came first."
-- Harry S Truman, U.S. President

"As the biggest library, if it is in disorder is not as useful as a small but well-arranged one, so you may accumulate a vast amount of knowledge but it will be of far less value to you than a much smaller amount if you have not thought it over for yourself."
-- Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), German philosopher

"Everything in the world must have design or the human mind rejects it. But in addition it must have purpose or the human conscience shies away from it."
-- John Steinbeck, Travels With Charley

"A place for everything, everything in its place."
--- Benjamin Franklin

"Don't agonize, organize."
--- Florynce Kennedy

"One of the advantages of being disorderly is that one is constantly making exciting discoveries."
--- A. A. Milne

"My theory on housework is, if the item doesn't multiply, smell, catch fire, or block the refrigerator door, let it be. No one else cares, why should you?"
--- Erma Bombeck

Organizational Styles
Further Reading

Books:


Articles:


Web Sites:


www.http:2newsletter.com

Organizational Styles
SESSION EVALUATION
Organizational Styles

Please take a few moments to let us know if this was useful to you or if there are changes you would like to see in the next session.

1. What were one or two techniques discussed that will be useful to you?

2. Was this session what you expected it to be? In what ways was it better? In what ways was it worse?

3. What subjects were broached that you would like to explore more?

4. What changes would you suggest we implement for the next session?

5. How frequently would you attend these sessions if they were offered?
## PROJECT2EXCEL

### ATTENDANCE

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