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FPSP PARENT PERSPECTIVES

This edition of our FPSP parent newsletter comes to us from Cyd Rogers, the former Affiliate Director from Texas. Cyd has been a Global Issues Problem Solving coach, Community Problem Solving coach, Scenario Writing coach, and is a certified international evaluator. She is a 41-year retired Texas educator.

We are pleased to highlight our Georgia affiliate in this issue's *Cultural Corner*, and appreciate the contribution from Argen Hicks, our current President of the Board of Trustees and the Georgia Affiliate Director. Please enjoy!

To be or NOT to be a Perfectionist?

Often, we as parents want our children to be the very *best* they can be. In order for our child to achieve success, we seem willing to provide whatever they need to fuel that success. Sometimes, without our meaning to do so, this can result in perfectionism in our child. Perfectionists can be found in any arena. Some are born with the idea of perfectionism at birth. From infancy the child is intense and demanding. For other children, the idea of perfectionism is a learned behavior. Often, perfectionism shows up when a child first experiences competition. This child responds to the competition with only one possible outcome that of "I MUST be the best!" For others, perfectionism is displayed in the way the child responds to compliments. They may respond with, "An A- is good for some kids, but it is unacceptable for me, I MUST do better!" For some children (and later as adults) struggling with perfectionism can be a life-long struggle.



Researchers believe that there are two types of perfectionism: healthy or normal perfectionism, and unhealthy or neurotic perfectionism. Healthy perfectionists want to do their best, enjoy challenges, and welcome opportunities to stretch thinking and learning as much as possible. They complete their work, practice, or study to please themselves and are delighted when their efforts are successful. They attempt to learn from their mistakes and seldom give in to disappointment. Some researchers believe that normal perfectionism is a healthy part of striving for excellence and can lead to positive competition and emotional well-being.

By contrast, neurotic or unhealthy perfectionists often set unrealistic goals. They work hard, not to please or to challenge themselves, but to avoid failure. Instead of delighting in challenges, they feel drained or depressed when they attempt new ones. Frequently, they have low self-esteem and are sensitive to criticism from parents and teachers. They believe that their parents

*** The content in this newsletter does not constitute professional advice.*

expect them to be perfect, even if we as parents have never expressed this expectation. Mistakes or failures humiliate and embarrass neurotic perfectionists. Fear of making mistakes may cause anxiety and stress, which can lead to additional emotional and social challenges. On these occasions, professional counseling may be beneficial to assisting the perfectionist with coping with the phenomenon.

Some Strategies for Coping with Perfectionism:

1. Discuss perfectionism openly with your child, its symptoms, causes, and misconceptions. ***Don't take it personally!***
2. Share stories that show mistakes can be used as learning tools. Study the lives of prominent people by reading biographies, autobiographies or simply watching TV programs like ***"Biography."***
3. Help your child determine the areas of their lives they can control and those that are controlled by others or by chance. ***Don't sweat the small stuff!***
4. Incorporate goal setting into major facets of learning. ***Match the time commitment to the value of the assignment!***
5. Help students to self-evaluate, draw attention to their strengths and accomplishments, and reinforce progress they make toward their goals. ***Focus on improvement!***
6. Be a good role model. Demonstrate that learning is a process of trial and error. Model behavior, personal evaluation, goal setting, reasonable risk taking, self-acceptance of your own imperfections. ***Nobody's perfect!***
7. Encourage and expect children to try new things. ***Enjoy the journey!***
8. Help your young person look for realistic standards. ***Know when to quit!***
9. If your child perceives that she has failed at something, wait until after the emotional tension is reduced before discussing the matter. This may help avoid defensive behaviors. Don't expect rational or logical thinking during the immediate stress period following defeat. ***Teach that failure is a part of life!***
10. Teach admiration as a strategy for handling jealousy. Notice, admire, and communicate admiration to others. Acknowledge a family member or peer when he treats another in a positive manner. ***Always look for the positive!***



Involvement in **Future Problem Solving** can be very instrumental in coping with perfectionism as the program encourages acceptance of all ideas, thinking with flexibility, creativity, and collaboration with others. In FPS there is no one right answer all the time. In addition, your child can earn a great deal of respect for themselves as well as others through learning the FPS process and through their participation in the competitive components. Each of our children can benefit greatly through this highly challenging and rigorous program! I encourage you to share what you can about perfectionism with your child and help them to reach positive outcomes. Together, we can help one another to help our children *be the BEST they can be!* ~ Cyd Rogers~

Cultural Corner - Georgia

GEORGIA

Future Problem Solving Program

Future Problem Solving began in

Georgia! In 1974, Dr. E. Paul Torrance, creativity pioneer and professor at the University of Georgia, saw a need in

schools: high-ability students needed more of a challenge, they were concerned about the future, and they loved competition. Using the Osborn-Parnes creative problem solving process, he developed what has become Global Issues Problem Solving.

The state of **Georgia** in the United States is known for many things – peaches, peanuts, Coca-Cola, the love of football, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., former US President Jimmy Carter, the beginning of the Appalachian Trail – the list could go on.

Dr. Torrance introduced FPS as a curriculum project in the Clarke County (GA) School District in the spring of 1974. The first bowl was held in the spring of 1975. **Georgia FPSP and FPSP are celebrating 50 years of Future Problem Solving in 2024!** What was it like back then?



The very first championship team (shown) was from White County (GA) High School. Pictured in their school yearbook, team members were Geleta Hunt, Robert Williams, Donna Holcomb, and Mark Sims, with alternates Jodie Fields and Shann Nix. Information with the photo says, “Robert Williams was awarded **Brainstorming Champion.**”

Back in 1974, GIPS students:

- followed the six-step problem solving process.
- had ***no limit*** on the number of ideas generated in Steps 1 and 3!
- did not have to write ideas in complete sentences!

Once these capable students got the “hang” of brainstorming, the ideas zipped out – the inspiration for the Zippyhead FPS logo!



Evaluators not only had to count all the ideas for a Fluency score but, as there was no category list, they had to make up their own way to categorize all those ideas for a Flexibility score. They also

had to determine which of those many ideas were unique for Originality scores. Beginning in Georgia in 1974 and for the next fifty years, hard-working, dedicated evaluators have been an integral part of FPSP! **Parents, you can become part of this important group!** Contact your Affiliate Director or the FPSP International Office for more information about how to become an FPS evaluator.