

Oxford PTA Meeting
10/16/15

Meeting convened at 8:05. Approximately 18 people in attendance.

Betsy introduced Kristin Gross, parent and pediatric neurologist, today's speaker.

September meeting minutes approved as distributed.

Dr. Gross highlighted the following in her talk today:

Temperament is a product of neurochemistry and wiring – early researchers had to study behavior because it is what is observable

Irritability, arousal/motor activity, approach/avoidance behavior can be put into 'dimensions' (inhibited <-> uninhibited; high reactive <-> lower reactive)

Research showed that temperament is stable and has predictive power (e.g. a very anxious child is not likely to be an astronaut)

The fit between a child's temperament and their environment, birth order and parent temperament has a significant impact

Understanding a child's temperament allows us to think about their 'fit' with the environment and our parenting style – the idea that temperament should impact how we parent our children

Dr. Gross opened up for questions. Questions were asked about the following:

- how to explain later development of anxiety
- impact of birth order on early temperament
- impact of birth history (difficult vs. easy birth)
- the concern of pigeon-holing a child if you over-focus on temperamental traits
- how to use 'toolbox' type tools without sending the message that a child's feelings are too much for the parent or wrong in some way

Other topics raised include:

The notion that we are over-diagnosing/pathologizing when the real issue is a misfit with the environment

Providing tools and insight with the goal of increasing coping strategies

Talking to child about how an anxious reaction *feels* to their bodies when they are not in that state and focusing on giving them a tool to deal with that feeling can be helpful

Suggestions for further learning on this topic:

Increase parent education around the toolbox tools

Consider a parent *and* child education night

Principal Rhine mentioned her hope that a video could be made about the tools that could be shared with the community.

Principal Rhine announced a volunteer opportunity to support math intervention on Tuesdays/Thursdays 2:30 to 3:30.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00