A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SPARK

PARENTS' PROGRAM 2019



• SPARK 2019

MAR • 16-17 • 2019 CAMBRIDGE, MA • MIT ESP

SPARK@MIT.EDU

WELCOME TO SPARK

For one awesome weekend each March, thousands of high schoolers flood MIT's campus to take classes, taught by MIT students, on anything and everything. From music theory to Hungarian history to aircraft analysis, Spark offerings number over 400 every year and span a wide variety of areas.

CHRIS CHEUNG
PARENTS' PROGRAM
ORGANIZER

JULIAN ESPADA PARENTS' PROGRAM ORGANIZER

EMILY CARAGAY SPARK DIRECTOR

JENNA HIMAWAN SPARK DIRECTOR

PARENTS' PROGRAM

Overview Speakers Schedule Talks

ON CAMPUS

Official MIT Tour MIT Attractions Dining

BOSTON AREA

Freedom Trail
Other Recommendations

PARENTS' PROGRAM

OVERVIEW



During Spark, we welcome parents to participate in a program that includes campus tours, talks, and sample Spark classes. Other than official tours, no preregistration is necessary to attend any of the Parents' Program activities.

WHERE IS PARENTS' PROGRAM?

Parents' Program will be taking place in W20, the Student Center.

Classes will be held in Twenty Chimneys and the Mezzanine Lounge on the Third Floor of the Student Center. Go to the Balcony for information, and the Coffeehouse lounge will serve as an open space for parents to sit.

SPEAKERS

JOSH SHAINE AMY ESTERSOHN AIMEE YERMISH, PSYD MELISSA BILASH ROSEMARY LABEREE

SCHEDULE

DAY 1: SATURDAY DAY 2: SUNDAY

TALKS

SORTED A-Z



PARENTS' PROGRAM SCHEDULE



DAY ONE

Location: 3rd floor of W20 Saturday, March 16, 11 am-5 pm

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MEZZANINE LOUNGE

11 AM 12 PM	Please, Please, Just Write it Already
01 PM 02 PM	Ability Does Matter - Longitudinal Outcomes in the Top 1%
03 PM	The Road Ahead To College
04 PM	

How a DIY Gig-Education can Serve Your Child

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Ask MIT Students Anything!

PARENTS' PROGRAM SCHEDULE

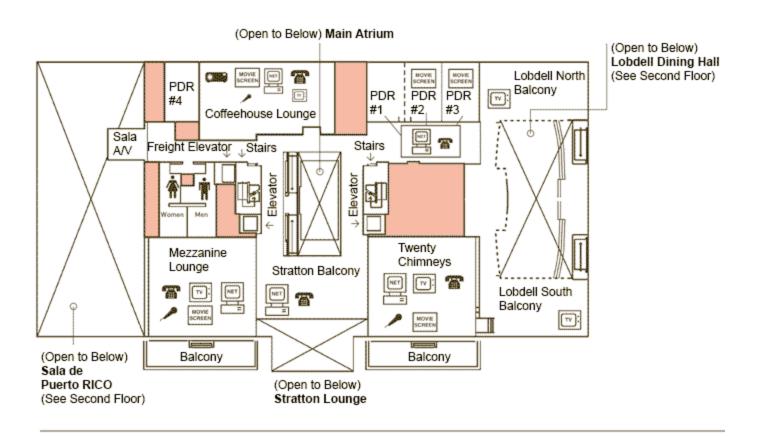


DAY TWO

Location: 3rd floor of W20 Sunday, March 17, 10 am-4 pm

	TWENTY CHIMNEYS	MEZZANINE LOUNGE
10 AM	Wired from Birth 3.0: Technology and the Adolescent Brain	
11 AM		Ask MIT Students Anything!
12 PM	You Be The Admissions Officer - Live-Action Role Play	What Does It Mean To Be Gifted?
01 PM		Magic Systems in Fantasy Stories
02 PM	What I Wish Parents Knew	Non-Traditional Students, Non- Traditional College Options
03 PM		

Useful Map





Network Drop



Cable TV Drop



Telephone Jack



Projector



Microphone Jack (limited capability, except in Coffeehouse Lounge)



Movie Screen



TALKS

PLEASE, PLEASE, JUST WRITE IT ALREADY

Aimee Yermish/ Saturday 11 am

Writing is perhaps the most difficult thing we ask kids to do in school. So many different cognitive skills need to operate at the same time, often running at cross purposes with each other. Somehow, "just get it done!" doesn't work for many gifted and twice-exceptional kids. They might struggle to get words onto paper. They might write endless creative stories for fun, but spend hours or weeks getting nowhere when they have to write something structured. With zillions of ideas, they might get stuck in choosing and organizing... or they might have no ideas at all. Research papers are often overwhelming, and the required steps along the way may be confusing or unhelpful. And when they have to write about themselves, many kids become paralyzed. In this talk, I will identify the various aspects of writing, describe typical ways bright kids struggle with common school writing tasks, and offer specific concrete strategies for getting through these challenges. Bring your questions!

HOW A DIY GIG-EDUCATION CAN SERVE YOUR CHILD

Rosemary Laberee / Sunday 11 am, Sunday 1 pm, Sunday 3 pm How a DIY Gig-Education can serve your child.

- * Building your spike
- * Having more time for SAT/ACT Prep
- * Having time to work on advanced science/math
- * Working real internships
- * Elite athletic pursuits
- * World travel/language immersion
- * Ability to show distinctive high school transcript



TALKS

ABILITY DOES MATTER - LONGITUDINAL OUTCOMES IN THE TOP 1%

Melissa Bilash / Saturday 1 pm

There has long been debate about whether or not ability, as measured on any of myriad standardized tests, actually matters in life. Generally used as part of an attack on gifted education as "elitist," the idea that some people are more intellectually able than others has been assailed by naysayers for ages. Parents in particular may hear this from school administrators and teachers resisting change. After all, isn't one child just as likely to develop into a person of eminence as someone else?

The answer is simple: no.

Using longitudinal data and conclusions from the Study for Mathematically Precocious Youth — the largest study of gifted children ever done, beginning in 1971 and still going today — we will share how even students at the very top of the top 1% actually have very different "outcomes" (or life results and achievements) from children at the bottom of that top 1%. Ability does matter.

THE ROAD AHEAD TO COLLEGE

Amy Estersohn / Saturday 3 pm

This class will cover four principles for any middle or high school parent looking ahead to college for a child: Be Realistic, Ask Questions, Purposeful Living, and Worry The Right Way. There will be one hour for lecture and one hour for follow-up questions.



TALKS

WIRED FROM BIRTH 3.0: TECHNOLOGY AND THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN

Melissa Bilash / Sunday 10 am

Parents (who are mostly Gen Xers) are "digital immigrants," not digital natives like their children, so theyhunger for a deeper understanding of what we know about the ways in which technology use impacts the way our children think and learn. How do bright children's insatiable curiosity and advanced abstract thinking and vocabulary inform or alter the way they interact with technology — and how does technology affect the way they interact with each other?

CommonSense Media, the American Psychological Association, and the Pew Research Foundation have all published findings in the past 2 years that surveyed huge national samples to identify and explain trends in technology use by tweens and teens. These data also convey critical insights about how differences in our perceptions of technology affect the relationships between parents and children. Unfortunately, much of the information published about technology and children is worrisome if not alarmist, leaving adults more anxious but not necessarily better prepared to deal with this brave new world. We will cover recent research describing the cognitive and social-emotional impacts of swimming around in all that technology, and offer both concrete suggestions and resources parents can use to help them make informed decisions about use of technology in their family.

ASK MIT STUDENTS ANYTHING!

Current MIT Students / Saturday 14 pm, Sunday 11 am

Bring your questions! A panel of local MIT Students will be willing to answer any questions you may have.



TALKS

YOU BE THE ADMISSIONS OFFICER - LIVE-ACTION ROLE PLAY

Amy Estersohn / Sunday 12 pm

Have you ever wanted to know what working in admissions office is REALLY like? This simulation will give you an opportunity to learn the elements of a college application and understand how colleges evaluate students based on quantitative and qualitative criteria and make decisions based on institutional needs and priorities. After the simulation, there will be time for Q+A!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE GIFTED?

Josh Shaine / Sunday 12 pm

"All children are gifted." "I can't be gifted, I'm no good at math."
"Gifted kids don't need any help." "If I'm so smart, why are my
grades so bad?" "You're done? Why don't you help the others,
then?" What do we mean by gifted? What difference does it make?
Does it change who you are – or should it? Why bother with the
label, anyway?



TALKS

MAGIC SYSTEMS IN FANTASY STORIES

Josh Shaine / Sunday 1 pm

We'll spend a good chunk of this class exploring how magic is presented in a variety of books and movies, after which we will see about constructung our own, either individually or collectively, as the class prefers.

WHAT I WISH PARENTS KNEW

Amy Estersohn / Sunday 2 pm, Sunday 3 pm

This class is an opportunity to discuss, reflect, and share: what is it that I wish parents knew? What is it that you wish other parents knew? What is it that you wish you knew five years ago? A recommended reading and resource list will also be provided.

NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS, NON-TRADITIONAL COLLEGE OPTIONS

Josh Shaine / Sunday 2 pm, Sunday 3 pm

Some of these kids are not like the others! How do you help your kid(s) to figure out the best fit for their individual needs when it seems the school system's college counselors don't understand what those needs are and most only know a few colleges at all? In this session, we'll explore both the questions to ask and what some of the answers might be.



SPEAKERS

Josh Shaine, Alec Lai

JOSH SHAINE

The School that I Want, 50 min The Impact of Giftedness in High School, College, and Beyond, 50 min Non-linear Thinking in a Linear World, 50 min

Josh Shaine has been working with gifted and 2e kids longer than the label "2e" has been around. He's been a teacher in public, private, alternative, and homeschool settings. He's served as tutor, advocate, and educational consultant. Currently, in addition to teaching for various ESP programs, he works one-to-one with students from 7th grade through college, as well as teaching online courses through the Gifted Homeschoolers Forum and other places, with students 9 years old and up. In addition, he runs the Beyond IQ conferences for and about HG/PG kids, their families, and the professionals who work with them. In his spare time, he writes fairy tales and fantasies and is co-editing a book about the needs of gifted people with physical disabilities.

ROSEMARY W LABEREE

What to Actually Learn in High School, 1 hr How to Make Video Games Good for Learning 1 hr A Nerd who Figured Out the World 1 hr Influence, Motivation, and Power 1 hr

I am a 20 year home education veteran from NJ. I have spoken often at home education events, and I have been published in homeschool newsletters and articles. I retired from the business world (Price Waterhouse) to offer my kids a DIY education. I have four kids, who never attended any schools (K-12). Two are Ivy League grads, one at USNA and a 16 year old is still thriving in a DYI learning life. I enjoy helping people help their kids – whether they home educate or not!



SPEAKERS

Aimee Yermish, Amy Estersohn

AIMEE YERMISH, PSYD

Please, Please, Just Write It Already!

Aimee Yermish, Psy.D. (http://www.davincilearning.org) is a clinical psychologist and educational therapist. She provides consultation, therapy, and assessment, for clients who manifest giftedness or multiple exceptionality. Drawing on her analytical background as a scientist and practical background as a teacher, she focuses on building self-understanding, self-regulation, and range of choice in life. Her book on executive functioning coaching for smart people, "If You're So Smart," is in progress with Great Potential Press.

AMY ESTERSOHN

Eight Common Flawed Assumptions about College Admissions, You Be the Admissions Officer: Mock Highly Selective Admissions Committee Writing the College Essay

Amy is a longtime Parents Program presenter and middle/high school English teacher in New York. Prior to teaching, Amy worked in undergraduate admissions at a highly selective university. Outside of teaching and admissions, Amy is an advocate for fun, free choice reading and has served on a national book review committee. Ask her about how to receive free books. Or, better yet, ask her for book recommendations.



SPEAKERS Melissa Bilash

MELISSA BILASH

Wired 2.0: What we need to know about Technology and the Adolescent Brain

Ms. Bilash is a state-wide and nationally-recognized expert on education. As one of only 78 individuals in the nation to have completed the intensive Special Education Advocates Training (SEAT) program from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), she is seasoned in educational practice and policy. For over a decade, she worked at Advocacy & Consulting for Education (ACFE) helping families across the nation. Her advocacy work has received special Congressional recognition, and most recently as a "thought leader in the field," she was invited by the White House Office of Early Learning and the Office of Educational Technology at the U.S. Department of Education to participate in a strategy roundtable for planning the way forward in supporting educators and families of young children and the use of technology to support early learning.

Ms. Bilash regularly works with prestigious national organizations and institutions serving gifted children. Most recently, she and Ms. Nance coauthored a chapter in the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)'s Guide to State Policies in Gifted Education, a document presenting detailed and research-based recommendations of best practices in gifted education across the country (published March 2016). She meets regularly with senior staff at the U.S. Department of Education to discuss priority initiatives, and she is continuously a voice for gifted learners at these meetings.

Additionally, she serves on the Legislative Committees of both the NAGC and Pennsylvania's NAGC chapter, the Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education (PAGE), which named her Parent of the Year for her work with gifted children. A much sought-after speaker, she has presented to a wide array of audiences, including the Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) annual conference, the Special Educational Advocacy annual conference, events at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Villanova University, as well as at a variety of local parent support groups, education-related expos, and local schools, libraries, and gifted education association meetings. Most recently she completed her work on reestablishing the definition of Gifted for NAGC.

ON CAMPUS

ATTRACTIONS





OFFICIAL MIT TOUR

We will be offering official campus tours. Reserve a spot on the preliminary survey.

ATTRACTIONS

MIT MUSEUM

An exciting look into engineering and research at MIT.

KILLIAN COURT

A picturesque lawn that faces the iconic big dome.

LOBBY 7

The main entrance to MIT.

INFINITE CORRIDOR

A famous hallway that connects MIT classrooms and main campus buildings.

GREEN BUILDING

The tallest building on campus, the Green Building was designed by world-famous architect IM Pei.

MIT CHAPEL

A picturesque non-denominational chapel designed by renowned architect Eero Saarinen.

STUDENT CENTER DINING

Inside the Student Center (where Parents' Program is located) there is a variety of food options!

Anna's Taqueria: burritos, tacos, quesadillas, chips, guacamole, and salsa **Cambridge Grill:** pizza, burgers, hot sandwiches, and other casual entrees

Dunkin' Donuts: Coffee, donuts, etc

La Verde's Market: Campus convenience market with a salad bar, sandwich bar,

and a wide variety of prepared food options.

Lobdell Food Court: Options include Cafe Spice (Indian Cuisine), Shawarma

Shack, Shinkansen (Japanese Cuisine), and Subway













B O S T O N A R E A

ATTRACTIONS





THE FREEDOM TRAIL

The Freedom Trail is "a 2.5-mile, red-lined route that leads to 16 historically significant sites — each one an authentic treasure. Explore museums and meetinghouses, churches, burying grounds and more. Learn about the brave people who shaped our nation."

https://www.thefreedomtrail.org/visit

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOSTON COMMON

The starting point of the freedom trail and oldest park in the country.

QUINCY MARKET

A bustling shopping/dining area in the center of Boston

BOSTON PUBLIC GARDENS

A beautiful public park with trees, flowers, lawns, ponds and art.

FENWAY PARK

The home of the Boston red sox and oldest operating U.S. ball park.

MUSEUMS

- Museum of Fine Arts
- New England Aquarium