

## **2016 MIT Splash! Parents' Program Schedule**

Sat. 10:30 - 11:00	<b>Campus Tour:</b> limited capacity; sign up at <a href="#">this link</a>	
Sat. 11:00 - 12:00	<b>Seven Common Flawed Assumptions About College Admissions</b> By: Amy Estersohn	<b>Ability does matter: Longitudinal outcomes in the top 1%</b> By: Melissa Bilash and Jill Williford Wurman
Sat. 12:00 - 1:00		<b>Cleared for Launch: Helping Gifted Kids (and Adults!) Learn to Take Risks and Build Independence</b> By: Aimee Yermish
Sat. 1:00 - 2:00	<b>Lunch</b>	
Sat. 2:00 - 3:00	<b>From College to Job With ANY Major</b> By: Amy Estersohn	<b>STAND - Real Stories about the Success &amp; Failures of Young Adults</b> By: Alec Lai
Sat. 3:00 - 4:00	<b>Gerrymandering: Theory and Practice</b> By: Ben Kraft	<b>What Can We Learn from the Common Core?</b> By: Valerie Samn
Sat. 4:00 - 5:00	<b>These are a Few of my Favorite Books</b> By: Amy Estersohn	
<b>Sunday</b>		
Sun. 9:30 - 10:00	<b>Campus Tour:</b> limited capacity; sign up at <a href="#">this link</a>	
Sun. 10:00 - 11:00	<b>"Just Keep Swimming": Keeping Your Child Engaged During the High School Years</b> By: Melissa Bilash and Jill Williford Wurman	<b>TINY - How the Smallest Details Affect Your Child's Growth</b> By: Alec Lai
Sun. 11:00 - 12:00	<b>Informal Common Core Q&amp;A/Chat About Education</b> By: Valerie Samn	<b>Household Chemistry for the Biologist</b> By: Riley Drake
Sun. 12:00 - 1:00		<b>"Superman/woman" and Science Fiction/Fantasy</b> By: Josh Shaine
Sun. 1:00 - 2:00	<b>Lunch</b>	
Sun. 2:00 - 3:00	<b>MIT Admission Office Info Session</b> By: Ariel Dulcidia Leitao	<b>Underachievement - Changing Your Perspective</b> By: Josh Shaine
Sun. 3:00 - 4:00	<b>ESP: Who we are, what we do, and how we do it</b> By: Ahaan Rungta	<b>Does Being Gifted Matter Beyond School?</b> By: Josh Shaine

## ***2016 MIT Splash! Parents' Program***

While your kids enjoy Splash, join us in the Tang Center (E51) for a selection of talks and sample classes. You'll also find tea, coffee and a space to work, relax, or chat with other parents. Tours will leave from the third floor of the Student Center (E51-1).

Please note that most parents' program presenters are speaking as individuals, and not on behalf of MIT ESP. Thus, MIT ESP as an organization does not necessarily endorse the views our speakers contribute through their talks. Thank you for your understanding.

### **Saturday**

#### **Seven Common Flawed Assumptions About College Admissions**

*Amy Estersohn*

*Saturday 11:00 - 1:00, E51-145*

A former admissions officer will thoroughly and systematically debunk (or, in some cases, re-bunk) common misconceptions about how college admissions works. We'll discuss why you should be skeptical when you hear about merit scholarships, where public schools perform better than the Ivies, and why there is no one-size-fits-all approach to thinking about colleges.

*Amy Estersohn is an English teacher in New York. When she is not teaching, she is reading (about 150 children's and teen books a year), writing (not 150 books a year), and knitting scarves year-round. Amy is serving as a judge for the Graphic Novels category of this year's CYBILS book awards and is a frequent contributor to book review and teaching blogs. She co-wrote an article on engaging teen readers for Publisher's Weekly and received a scholarship from the National Council of Teachers of English for her teen literature outreach.*

*Before becoming a teacher, Amy was an Assistant Director of Admissions for her alma mater, the University of Chicago. Amy works with families on college admissions and early career issues on a limited basis.*

#### **Ability does matter: Longitudinal outcomes in the top 1%**

*Melissa Bilash and Jill Williford Wurman*

*Saturday 11:00 - 12:00, E51-149*

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. Isn't one child just as likely to develop into a person of eminence as someone else? The answer is simple: no. Using data and conclusions from the Study for Mathematically Precocious Youth, 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.

*Melissa Bilash founded The Grayson School, Pennsylvania's only independent school designed specifically for gifted learners. She serves on Legislative Committees for both PAGE (Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education) and NAGC (National Association for Gifted Children) and on NAGC's Special Schools Committee. Her practice, Advocacy & Consulting for Education, has served thousands of students and their families across Pennsylvania by securing critical educational services, accommodations, tuition, and settlement funds. One of only 78 federally-trained Special Education Advocates, she has testified before Congress and met with Senators, Representatives, and U.S. Dept. of Education staffers regarding best practices in gifted education. She has been awarded Special Congressional Recognition, was PAGE's 2010 Parent of the Year, and was named a Philadelphia "Stellar Startup" in 2016.*

*Jill Williford Wurman is The Grayson School's Director of Research and Development, a position which requires her to be familiar with gifted education scholarship relevant to the Grayson community, including academic performance, parenting, pedagogy, social-emotional development, longitudinal outcomes, and best practices in gifted education. She has co-presented on giftedness at SENG's national conference and at MIT's SPARK and SPLASH programs and also to the American Psychological Association's national convention regarding summer programs for the gifted. Ms. Wurman holds an M.A. in English Language & Literature from the University of Pennsylvania and an A.B. in English from Princeton University, whence she graduated Phi Beta Kappa; she has also studied literature at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities in England.*

### **Cleared for Launch: Helping Gifted Kids (and Adults!) Learn to Take Risks and Build Independence**

*Aimee Yermish*

*Saturday 12:00 - 1:00, E51-149*

Many gifted folks struggle to move into adulthood, to become the captain of their own ship. No one just wakes up one day magically knowing how to run their life and get their laundry done: this curriculum begins in infancy. We will discuss practical strategies for developing skills over the course of childhood so that when it's time to take flight, they're ready. Bring questions!

*Aimee Yermish, Psy.D. (<http://www.davincilearning.org>) is a clinical psychologist and educational therapist. She works with clients who manifest giftedness or multiple exceptionality, offering consultation, therapy, and assessment. Drawing on her analytical background as a scientist (and MIT alum) and her 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 scheduled to be released summer 2017 from Great Potential Press.*

### **From College to Job With ANY Major**

*Amy Estersohn*

*Saturday 2:00 - 3:00, E51-145*

This session will give you tried-and-true advice for high school students, college students, and other early career professionals. I'll tell you how an anthropology major find a job in government, how a cinema studies major started working in business consulting, and how any job candidate can improve their prospects in any industry.

*See Amy's bio above*

### **STAND - Real Stories about the Success & Failures of Young Adults**

*Alec Lai*

*Saturday 2:00 - 3:00, E51-149*

We take a look at one small and short word: "STAND". It is plentiful with meanings, and each one is filled with its own set of narratives. Dive with me into real stories of courage, of support, of apathy, of perseverance, and more. Learn and analyze the concepts and science behind these stories. Together, I'll show you that a few unique stories can teach you much more in one hour than any instructional seminar!

*Alec Lai is a talent recruiter, innovative speaker, and entrepreneur, and he travels and talks to people from all backgrounds to gather inspirational stories for everyone to learn from. With educational backgrounds from both MIT and Harvard on business management and innovation in education, Alec strives to bring new and unique perspectives to enhance the day-to-day life of students, adults, businesses, and communities. For a full biography and additional offerings, visit [www.aleclai.com](http://www.aleclai.com)!*

### **Gerrymandering: Theory and Practice**

*Ben Kraft*

*Saturday 3:00 - 4:00, E51-145*

Gerrymandering: America's favorite political power play since 1812. We'll learn how and why parties draw congressional districts with nicknames like ""The Pinwheel of Death"", ""The Mistake by the Lake"", and ""The 8 Mile Mess"", and why it's hard to outlaw such madness. Then you'll get to try your hand at gerrymandering, to see if you can do better than Splash students at getting more seats for your party.

*Ben studied math at MIT with a side of physics, political science, and running a few too many ESP programs. Now he's a infrastructure engineer at Khan Academy, building a free, world-class education for anyone, anywhere.*

### **What Can We Learn from the Common Core?**

*Valerie Samn*

*Saturday 3:00 - 5:00, E51-149*

The adoption of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) has been fraught with controversy, leading to Massachusetts abandoning them this past year. Despite what you may have heard, the CCLS are based on successful instructional practices, backed by decades of education research, and vetted by teachers and other experts in education as a document that outlines habits of mind that are needed to be successful in college and the workplace. So, before abandoning the standards completely, let's take a couple of hours to set aside our judgment and look at what the CCLS tell us about what our children should be able to do in order to be college- and workplace-ready.

*Valerie Samn (MIT '96) was a high school math teacher for 6 years, and a staff developer for five. She has trained teachers in alignment to standards (Common Core or otherwise). She now works in the Office of School Performance in the NYC Department of Education.*

### **These are a Few of my Favorite Books**

*Amy Estersohn*

*Saturday 4:00 - 5:00, E51-145*

Whether you live among scientists, romantics, philosophers, or ambivalent readers, there's a book (or

twenty) out there for every teen. I'll present some of my favorite books for a wide range of readers -- and hopefully audience members will have suggestions, too!

*See Amy's bio above.*

## **Sunday**

### **"Just Keep Swimming": Keeping Your Child Engaged During the High School Years**

*Melissa Bilash and Jill Williford Wurman*

*Sunday 10:00 - 11:00, E51-145*

Parents whose children are in high school can just about see the light at the end of what can feel like a very dark educational tunnel in some respects: college, and all the individual attention and acceleration and deep subject matter exploration it involves can be the most tantalizing of prospects...and you're almost there! But you're not there yet, and it's no time to take your hands off the wheel, as highly-able students can disengage from their educational environment in high school, much to their parents' dismay. Cobbling together educational programming on your own can be intimidating, to say the least, however. We will share a wide array of options — programs, camps, courses, etc. — for keeping your child's hungry brain well-fed during high school, even if the educational opportunities at their school are lackluster.

*See Melissa and Jill's bios above.*

### **TINY - How the Smallest Details Affect Your Child's Growth**

*Alec Lai*

*Sunday 10:00 - 11:00, E51-149*

Life is full of patterns, and the smallest action can cause long-term effects. Together, we will take a look at the importance of the small, the power of the weak, and the strength of the TINY. In these true, everyday stories with an innovative twist, I'll show you firsthand in this unique seminar, with narrative and demonstrations, how one small word, effort, or gesture could change everything for your child.

*See Alec's bio above.*

### **Informal Common Core Q&A/Chat About Education**

*Valerie Samn*

*Sunday 11:00 - 1:00, E51-145*

As a followup to "What can we learn from the Common Core?" come and chat about education. Bring your questions or opinions about various educational topics.

*See Valerie's bio above.*

### **Household Chemistry for the Biologist**

*Riley Drake*

*Sunday 11:00 - 12:00, E51-149*

A small Gatorade bottle full of blue liquid sat atop the counter. As if stealing a cookie from a cookie jar, the four year old child picked up the bottle and quickly drank the sweet liquid. Three minutes later, the ambulance arrived, and not a moment too soon. The child had drank antifreeze, and had to have his

stomach pumped immediately. The child had a complete recovery, but found himself wanting to learn what other toxic chemicals exist in the home, why they're toxic to cells and why he had never heard about this before. Probably you do too!

*Riley is currently a student in the department of Health, Sciences and Technology where she researches immunological dysregulation in HIV and Cancer in the lab of Professor Alex Shalek. Riley has held research appointments at MGH, The Whitehead Institute for Biological Research and Johns Hopkins University. She currently holds appointments in the MIT Department of Chemistry, The Broad Institute and The Ragon Institute of MIT, MGH and Harvard. Riley's undergraduate degree is from Boston College. Here, she worked with the department of History and the School of Theology and Ministry to study the History of Medicine. She focused her studies on theological and medical interpretations of mental illness during the High and Late Middle Ages. She has read the Latin Vulgate in Latin, twice. When she's not holed up in lab, Riley enjoys backpacking, kayaking, rock climbing, mountain biking, skiing, canyoneering and glacial mountaineering. She's a Wilderness First Responder and teaches best practices for safe and enjoyable excursions as a trip leader for the MIT Outing Club. Riley has worked as a bagel artisan, chef's assistant, event photographer, tutor, scientific publisher and materials scientist. Her friends know her as "squeeger" because of her tendency to respond with enthusiasm to most things.*

### **"Superman/woman" and Science Fiction/Fantasy**

*Josh Shaine*

*Sunday 1:00 - 2:00, E51-149*

Science Fiction and Fantasy have many characters who stick out compared to others because they have more magic, different powers, unique abilities.

We will look at how these characters are treated by the worlds in which they are set and reflect on what, if anything, this says about the society in which we live.

*Josh Shaine has been working with gifted students of all ages for more than 35 years, including many years teaching, administrating, advising, and sometimes directing programs for 7th – 12th graders through MIT's Educational Studies Program. He has taught at public, private, and alternative schools, as well as working with special needs students, either at home or institutionalized, for school districts in several states. He was the headmaster of a small 7th - 12th grade alternative school in Boston for gifted ""disgruntled"" students. In addition to teaching and consulting, Josh currently organizes the Beyond IQ (giftedconferenceplanners.org) conferences near Boston and serves on the board for Hoagies Gifted. He's more fun than this makes him sound!  
You can email him at [josh\\_shaine@yahoo.com](mailto:josh_shaine@yahoo.com).*

### **MIT Admission Office Info Session**

*Ariel Dulcidea Leitao*

*Sunday 2:00 - 3:00, Wong Auditorium (E51-115)*

MIT Undergraduate Admissions Information Sessions cover a variety of topics including academics, campus life, and the admissions and financial aid processes.

### **Underachievement - Changing Your Perspective**

*Josh Shaine*

*Sunday 2:00 - 3:00, E51-149*

A lot of students are told how bright they are, and yet, "Why aren't you living up to your potential?!" Parents, teachers, and even yourselves are asking just that. Maybe you really aren't as smart as they think? Join us to explore this incredibly uncomfortable place to be... I promise it will be thought provoking, if not

fun!

*See Josh's bio above.*

### **ESP: Who we are, what we do, and how we do it**

*Ahaan Rungta*

*Sunday 3:00 - 4:00, E51-145*

You are currently at Splash, a program run by the MIT Educational Studies Program! You're probably interested in learning some things about our organization. In this talk, we'll talk about how we at ESP run our programs, how we go about doing it, and what our goals are. We will probably also disprove some notions and misconceptions about our programs, so whether or not you know a lot about us, you'll probably find this useful.

*Ahaan is a sophomore at MIT hoping to major in some combination of mathematics, computer science, and physics. He is one of the admins in Splash's overarching student organization ESP. Besides ESP, in his spare time, he writes for The Tech, MIT's official newspaper, is involved in the Harvard-MIT Math Tournament, and enjoys sports.*

### **Does Being Gifted Matter Beyond School?**

*Josh Shaine*

*Sunday 3:00 - 4:00, E51-149*

If you are homeschooling, does giftedness change things? How about in college or the workplace? Is it just about the intellect? And how would you know, anyway? This will be a brief exploration of who we are - regardless of age and venue - and its implications for any and all facets of our being. With some luck, it will be entertaining, along the way!

*See Josh's bio above.*