

Lawton Elementary

PTA General Membership Meeting

Meeting Minutes
January 19, 2017

Attendees: Sign in sheet attached

1. Treasurer Report (Kamila)

- a. There has been no change in income
- b. PTA has received the September membership check from the online store
- c. Susan (front office) applied and received a Windermere check that will have families in need at Lawton
- d. The Sandwiches of Hope project has been funded for the year
- e. The Rollerama has raised @2265.00 that will fund new gym equipment
- f. Funds raised during the auction will cover operating expenses that occur closer to the end of the school year.
- g. To date, the Direct Drive has raised \$106,000.00

2. Nominating Committee (Deanne)

- a. The nominating committee is composed of: Deanne Allegro, Vanessa Gregory, Erica Jamir, Amy Sprague, Bryn Bunich
- b. The committee will align on a slate and present it at the next General Membership meeting in April
- c. Kamila motioned to nominate the nominating committee. Valerie seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

3. Art Auction Update (Terry)

- a. Event will be held on May 5, 2017 at the Ballard Bay Club
- b. Dinner will be a buffet and there will be a cash bar
- c. Ticket prices will be \$65 per person and \$130 per couple. New this year is the ability to sponsor a teacher or Lawton family. Those tickets will sell for \$35 per person.
- d. There will be a Wine Grab. Families can donate a bottle of wine or a host a Pay-It-Forward party for the Spring Art Auction. Please email Marilene at marilenebysshe@yahoo.com. The price of each bottle of wine should be a minimum \$25.
- e. Dessert Dash is in progress
- f. Laura Van Horne is leading the art projects. Every classroom has a lead volunteer and they will meet to discuss the art projects.
- g. The concept for the centerpieces was approved this month, targeting \$40-\$50/piece

- h. There are six sponsors confirmed for the auction. The committee is still looking for additional in-kind and monetary sponsors. Contact Terry at terryrichardson08@gmail.com
 - i. The Bar sponsor is Sound Associates Hearing Centers (Lawton parent)
 - j. Bid Card sponsor is Craig Allegro, John L. Scott Real Estate (Lawton parent)
 - k. Dessert Dash sponsor is Pick 6 sports (new for 2017)
 - l. In-Kind Auctioneer is Fred Northup Jr (at a reduced rate)
 - m. In-Kind centerpieces are sponsored by Swanson's nursery
 - n. In-Kind centerpieces are sponsored by Sunrise Ridge (Lawton grandparent)
 - o. Photographer confirmed for kid photos
 - p. Committee is working with teachers on sign-up parties
 - q. Procurement is in process. The wish list is as follows: airline miles for 2, concert tickets, sport tickets/suite, vacation experience/cabin rentals, Hotel in LA or NYC, Raffle Item (Jewelry or restaurant gift card)
 - r. There will be no parking space to auction this year
 - s. Committee has received approval from Boys & Girls Club to auction off a "Preschool teacher for the day" experience
 - t. Committee is looking to use funds from Raise the Paddle to pursue a new audio/video system for the commons, along with better stage audio. Looking for volunteers with expertise to support this project.
4. Fostering Empathy and Teaching Emotional Intelligence (Kassandra Bradberry, MSW)
- a. See attached document titled "Fostering Empathy: Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Coaching"
 - b. See attached Resource List
 - c. In the last 15 years, there has been a link established between social/emotional learning and academics.
 - d. Empathy is a muscle that needs to be exercised
 - e. Four parenting styles: Dismissing style (ignore the emotions/emotions aren't to be trusted), Disapproving style, Laissez faire (emotions without guidance) and Emotional coaching (teaches empathy and guidance, how to handle the emotions, teaches that emotions are ok but the behavior is not)
 - f. 5 steps to emotional coaching:
 - i. Be aware of the child's emotions and emotions of the parent
 - ii. Recognize emotions as an opportunity for connecting and teaching about emotions
 - iii. Help child to verbally label emotions
 - iv. Communicate empathy and try to understand (even with misbehaviors)
 - v. Set limits and problem solve (all feelings are acceptable, not all behaviors are acceptable). Negative consequences are about behaviors, not the emotion.
 - g. Tips and Strategies
 - i. Give children choices
 - ii. Remain calm and be patient
 - iii. Be honest
 - iv. Put yourself in your child's shoes
 - v. Be your child's advocate, always
 - h. Don't ask "why" questions, ask "what" questions

5. Budget shortfall/Principal Update (Dorian Manza)
 - a. Lawton had two student led assemblies: Kindness assembly and a Martin Luther King, Jr. assembly. Both were a success!
 - b. Every classroom now has a Classroom Charter and a Mood Meter displayed.
 - c. Staff is working on Meta Moment, which helps the students recognize their emotions before it becomes a negative reaction.
 - d. Staff is also working on Blueprint, which helps the students manage conflict effectively and develop empathy for each other.
 - e. SPS has announced a \$74 million dollar short fall for the 2017-2018 school year. Please refer to the SPS budget website for additional information.
 - f. For the 2017-2018 school year, if legislators cannot agree on levy funding, Lawton will have 24 Full Time Employees, 450 students, 26:1 teacher/student ratio, no Vice-Principal and no Guidance Counselor
 - g. Lawton will set their budget for the 2017-2018 school year by the end of February
 - h. The BLT has asked if money from the auction can be used to fill a .5 position (VP or Counselor). They have decided to ask the PTA.
 - i. Levy funding will be used to reduce classroom size.

6. Advocacy Action Items (Valerie)
 - a. There were approximately 6500 people in attendance at the protest in Olympia
 - b. With the levy cliff going away, it cuts 10% of the budget and lays off approximately 440 staff members.
 - c. Valerie proposed we adopt a resolution “Advocating for Extending the Levy Cliff and amply funding basic education”
 - d. There was a motion to pass the resolution and was seconded. All present were in favor and none opposed.
 - e. Valerie asks that parents send personal stories to their legislators.

Attendees:

Marilene Bysshe
Bryn Bunich
Katya Adams
Pricilla Wenneman
Valerie Cooper
Kelsey Fatland
Dorian Manza
Amanda Armes
Jen Wenrick
Julie Carr
Kevin Craig
Terry Richardson
Deanne Allegro
Kamila Kilayko
Cynthia Dold
Mikelle Nuwer
Gina Craig
Kassandra Bradberry
Sara Coulter
Sarah Diehl
Emily Leedy
Stephanie Skinner

Fostering Empathy: Emotional Intelligence and Emotion Coaching

Kassandra Bradberry, MSW

Intro

First let me introduce myself. I'm Kassandra, I am a board member, and my job is getting the newsletter out to you. I have two kids at Lawton- 2nd and 5th grader and an 8th grader at McClure. I have a BA in Psychology and my Master's in Social Work with certification in School Social Work. I have worked in mental health case management and counseling, grief and loss counseling and school social work/ counseling. Currently I'm working as a substitute school counselor for Seattle Public Schools and volunteering with Swedish Hospital. I have been interested in emotional intelligence since I picked up John Gottman's Book on Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child when my oldest was a baby. As a new parent, fresh out of grad school I was particularly interested in how to incorporate feelings and emotional literacy in my parenting style.

I was involved in Co-op preschools for 9 consecutive years. What I liked best about the co-op model was the parent education piece and how it provided a place for parents to come together to support each other and grow as parents. I thought it would be a good idea to bring that to Lawton parents.

Ideally I would love to have more time to present the information and then break off into groups and come back to discuss but due to time constraints tonight I will present and hopefully have time for some discussion. If you like the idea of pulling in teachers, parents, counselors to share knowledge and you are interested in having some more parent workshops please let us know. I know that it is something I would like to see more of, which is one of the reasons I'm standing up here now.

Emotional Intelligence Background info

To start the talk tonight I want to give you a little background information about emotional intelligence or EI or EQ as it can be referred to. The term goes back into the 90's, it showed up in research and journal articles and then was appropriated by two researchers Salovey and Mayer in the 90's, Finally popularized by Goleman's book: Emotional Intelligence in 1996.

Since then the term has been used more widely, there are different models, many books about workplace and emotional intelligence. There has been some dispute about whether emotional intelligence is a real intelligence or not. What we do know is that in the last fifteen years a lot of research has come out that supports the importance of social emotional learning, empathy and emotional intelligence. I think what was most surprising to some was a study that showed that children who had social emotional learning programs in schools did better academically. This is why we are seeing schools incorporating social emotional learning into the curriculum more and not just as side programs or side lessons taught by volunteers or school counselors.

What is Emotional Intelligence exactly? What are we talking about?

The definition of Emotional Intelligence is: The capacity of individuals to recognize their own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different feelings and label them appropriately, to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior and to manage and or adjust to the environment or to achieve one's goals.

If we are looking at it from what is called the Ability Model we are talking about the ability to perceive, to use, understand and to manage emotions.

The definition of **empathy** is: the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

We know from research that empathy appears to be innate. It's present in children as young as 18 months. But the environment can inhibit the growth and development of empathy. Like a muscle, we need to exercise it. We know how the brain keeps developing after childhood, it's called neuroplasticity, we know that we can keep making connections in our brains stronger and improve skills. That is a concept that we teach kids, called "growth mindset". Even if it is something you are born with, you can make it stronger.

I think any one who has kids or works with kids understands the importance of emotional intelligence, or to think of it more simplistically, some self-awareness

and self-control. Children who are more in touch with and able to label and talk about their feelings are less likely to simply react and more likely to have insight and self-control. Then they can expand that outward to developing awareness of others and the feelings of others. Empathy.

I had a difficult time deciding what to call this talk. I thought about simply calling it emotional intelligence and emotion coaching and dropping the empathy in the title but I think empathy is such an important piece of emotional intelligence that I decided to keep it in the title.

I think of empathy as the foundation or the roots upon which all the characteristics of an emotionally intelligent person can grow. All your hopes and dreams for your child to have meaningful relationships, to be successful in their lives, to feel good about themselves and to be content with their lives. "Happy, healthy, plays well with others, makes good choices" Empathy can be the foundation, which all those hopes and dreams can grow.

After I had come up with a visual for these empathy roots - An idea that came to me because of the Roots of Empathy logo which is a tree with roots). I was reading about brain development and about how our primitive brain, our brain stem is also called our root brain. It is responsible for regulating all our programmed functions like breathing and things that assist with survival. I learned that from this primitive brain emerged the emotion center (or trunk in this visual) it was from this emotion center millions of years later that our thinking, rational brain or neocortex developed. With this visual in mind it's easy to see how our feelings are connected to our rational thoughts and how they work together and why emotional intelligence is so important.

Social Emotional Programs in Schools

I want to briefly talk about some of these programs that SPS use. Many are separate programs that are facilitated by a school counselor or social worker, a teacher, a parent volunteer. They are usually promoted as anti-bullying/ pro-social programs. I have facilitated the Second Step curriculum. This is a widely used curriculum that spends a lot of time teaching emotion recognition in self and others. It does this by going over scenarios and labeling feelings. The other

program I have been trained in is Roots of Empathy. Roots of Empathy is also promoted as a “pro-social anti-bullying” program. This program uses a parent volunteer to bring a baby in over the course of the school year the groups are guided by a trained facilitator. The children in the class learn about child development, brain development and recognize the feelings of the baby. Both of these programs are great, they are very useful and they work well in conjunction with each other. They can be volunteer and teacher time intensive. Over the last several years SPS decided to focus on one SEL (social emotional learning) program by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (you might notice that the term emotional intelligence is in the title). This is an integrated social emotional program, meaning it is not only integrated because it’s being taught in all classrooms but it’s also integrated into the curriculum. This you probably recognize is called the RULER program. RULER stands for: Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating. You will notice RULER bulletin boards, posters, and hopefully your children using the RULER vocabulary. Since RULER is district wide their friends at other schools will have similar knowledge and RULER will follow them to middle and even high school. Which is great! So I really recommend checking out their website and getting familiar with the RULER tools: The Charter, The Mood Meter, The Meta Moment and Blueprint. Which you can find on your resource list. I don’t want to spend too much time because most of you are probably pretty familiar and if you aren’t it’s pretty simple and easy to become familiar with (and I really encourage you to do so!).

Emotion Coaching

This brings me back to Gottman and the book I picked up when my oldest was a baby. Since that time I have become more familiar with The Gottman Institute and the research and work they do around couples and couples therapy. I have taken the online course on Emotion Coaching with children as a way to increase emotional intelligence in children. I want to share with you some of what I learned through that training. I want to make sure that you know where to find more information and that I give credit where credit is due. This is not my original information and I’m not a trained facilitator for the Gottman Institute, just a parent sharing some of the readings and trainings from Gottman I found helpful as a parent and a professional. Thinking about the term emotional intelligence and how widely it is being used brought me right back to Gottman’s emotion coaching technique. Honestly, even though I loved the concept I was worried about how my execution would be. I am generally a lower intensity person, a bit introverted and not a big gusher or a hugger- I tend to be a bit dry and um, snarky. I didn’t

want to be disingenuous, I needed to find my own style within the concept of emotion coaching and there is a lot of room to really make it your own. Honesty is an important piece to emotion coaching. I found that I am an empathetic person, and inquisitive and those things fit nicely in with Emotion Coaching and the rest is something I work on and strengthen through practice. There is a misconception about emotion coaching as well, the idea that emotion coaching is the same as mollycoddling your kid and in doing so create a whiny, dependent kid. Before I start talking about what emotion coaching is, I will review what it isn't. It's not: jumping in and solving all your kids problems. It's not being over indulgent or over-protective. It's not being a saint 24 hours a day- being a perfect parent. Infact I read in Gottman's book that even those that are fully committed and do their best to be great emotion coaching parents only manage to pull it off about one third or half of the time. Back to the neuroplasticity and growth mindset- it's just a skill you keep plugging away at.

Parenting Styles

Like any good parenting advice, emotion coaching starts with self-examination. How were you raised? What are your feelings about feelings? Are you comfortable with some, uncomfortable with some? Was expressing feelings permitted in your house or discouraged? How do you respond to higher intensity emotions in your child? Are you able to pick up on lower intensity emotions? Do you have a history of abuse? What triggers you? Most parents use primarily one parenting style and were raised themselves with a dominate parenting style.

Gottman's Four Parenting Styles:

The Dismissing Style, ignoring "bad" emotions. Get over it! A parent might ignore or try to fix the child's mood or distract them. Sending the message that emotions are not to be trusted.

The Disapproving Style, "bad" emotions are punished. You shouldn't feel that way.

Emotions can not be turned on or off at will, kids can feel like there's something wrong with them.

The Laissez-Faire Style Emotions without guidance. All emotions are okay there's just no limits or boundaries, little guidance on how to deal with the emotions. Children have difficulty regulating emotions.

The Emotion Coaching Style Empathy and guidance

It begins with empathy, which means valuing and sharing a child's emotional experience. It also means teaching how to handle emotions in a positive way. Children feel valued and comforted and learn that there are limits to behavior.

Gottman outlines five steps to emotion coaching.

1. Be aware of emotions (yours and your child's and not just the high intensity emotions but the lower intensity ones as well) Get to know your child's cues, even subtle cues. In ages 7 and younger cues can often be found in fantasy play, through toys and props. Children just like adults have reasons for emotions, sometimes they just are not able to articulate them.
2. Recognize emotions as opportunities to connect with your child. Think of situations as opportunities to help your child verbalize their feelings resist trying to fix it. Send the message to your child that all feelings are okay, even negative feelings. This is one really is simply changing the way you see something, turning it from a problem into an opportunity to connect and grow the bond between you and your child. "In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or de-humanized" Ginott from Wiki
3. Help your child verbally label emotions. Labeling is the easy part, getting them to open and talk can be challenging. (Ask questions, explore, if they are not talking then you can try leading them a little by giving examples). This one is harder for me in my family. I think we all tend to be lower intensity, slightly introverted, cautious. Getting my kids to open up and talk takes time and effort. I really put empathetic listening into use. Empathetic listening is listening with your ears, collecting information with your eyes, putting yourself in their shoes, reflecting back, asking clarifying questions, being curious, being soothing, trying to draw them out gently and really staying in the moment. I sometimes have to lead by making statements and asking why questions, being careful to not criticize. Really letting them know that I want to understand. I also have to pick my time, they generally are not going to really open up and talk in front of their

other siblings, so times when we are alone are great opportunities to guide the conversation in that direction.

4. Communicate empathy and understanding. (make that connection, show them you are on their side). This one for me is key. It has been really helpful in dealing with negative behavior. The simple act of using empathetic statements, being present and finding ways to show that we are a team, we are a family, I love and care for them and that I have their back is the key to getting them to let their guard down and open up then we can move onto number five.

5. Set limits and problem solves. (negative consequences should only be about behavior never about feelings. All feelings are okay, even very high intensity feelings!). Listen empathetically, validate feelings, set limits on behavior, identify goals, think of solutions, evaluate solutions with your family values, help your child choose a solution.

Here are some good tips to remember when emotion coaching:

Give children choices (choices are empowering! -but not too many choices-overwhelming)

Remain calm, be patient, don't take over, stay in the moment

Be honest (be genuine, be real, admit when you make a mistake, if you don't understand, don't pretend to- just keep asking questions to clarify)

Put yourself in your child's shoes, look at things from their perspective.

Be their advocate, be on their side.

Goal is not to always come to an agreement but to communicate understanding.

Don't impose your solutions on their problems and ignore your own agenda for your child (try to avoid making adjustments to something you see as a problem for them but first make a connection, find the feelings behind something ignore your longer term goals for that moment and focus on making the connection).

Ask "what" questions, not "why" questions

Use instructional scaffolding and praise to gently guide your child.

Read together (and talk about what you read).

Summary :

The ability to empathize is directly dependent on your ability to feel your own feelings and identify them.

Emotion coaching can help children to:

Control impulses and delay gratification

Self-soothe

Focus Attention

Perform Better Academically

Cope Better with Life's Ups and Downs

Require Less Discipline

Remember that we don't have to be perfect parents or perfect emotion coaches. There will be benefits from your efforts. Helping strengthen your child's empathy muscle will not only benefit your connection with your child, it will help spread love to the world and the world needs a lot of love right now.

Resource List

Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child by John Gottman Ph.D & Joan DeClaire

What am I feeling? By John Gottman, Ph.D

Gottman Institute Website: www.gottman.com

Emotional Intelligence by Daniel Goleman

Roots of Empathy, Changing the World Child by Child by Mary Gordon

Roots of Empathy website: www.rootsofempathy.org

Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence Website (RULER): ei.yale.edu

Committee for Children, Second Step Website: www.cfchildren.org/second-step

The Emotional Intelligence Network, 6 seconds website: www.6seconds.org

Books for Kids:

Stand in my Shoes: Kids Learning About Empathy by Bob Sornson, Ph.D

Fill a Bucket: A Guide to Daily Happiness for Young Children by Carol McCloud

Hey, Little Ant by Phillip M. Hoose

Who We Are!: All About Being the Same and Being Different by Robbie H. Harris

Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes

The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig

Wonder by R. J. Palacio

El Deafo by CeCe Bell

Blubber by Judy Blume

Out of My Mind by Sharon M. Draper