

# About Hidden Sparks

**Hidden Sparks** is a non-profit whose purpose is to help children with learning differences reach their full potential in school and life. Hidden Sparks generates and supports professional development programs for Jewish day schools to help increase understanding and support for teaching to diverse learners.

Guided by a philosophy that helping schools meet the needs of children with learning and behavioral differences will ultimately benefit all students, Hidden Sparks' programs combine professional development in learning and positive behavioral support, guided classroom observation and one-on-one coaching.

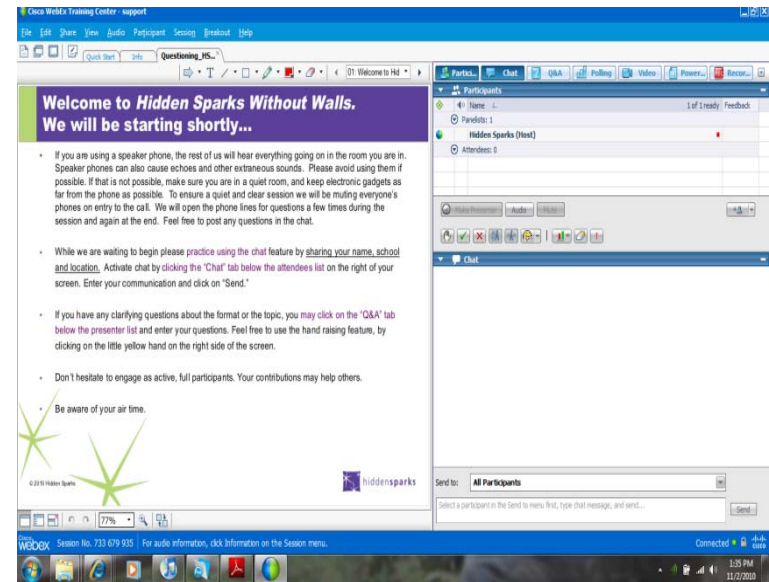
# Welcome to *Hidden Sparks Without Walls* Parent Connection. We will be starting shortly...

To alleviate background noise and ensure a quiet session, your phones have been automatically muted. Questions and comments can be submitted via the **CHAT FEATURE**.

While we are waiting, go to the chat feature by clicking the “Chat” tab that is located below the attendees list on the right of your screen.

## When chatting, please remember:

- Select “**All Participants**” so everyone can see your message .
- If you have any clarifying questions about the format , or the topic, you may click on the “**Q&A**” tab located below the presenter list and enter your questions.
- Feel free to use the **hand raising feature** by clicking on the little yellow hand on the right side of the screen.



# Promoting Social Skills and Social Growth

Rona Milch Novick, PhD



**hiddensparks**<sup>®</sup>

helping children reach their potential<sup>SM</sup>

## Our Guest:



Rona Novick, PhD is the Co-Educational Director of Hidden Sparks, Director of the Fanya Gottesfeld Heller Doctoral Program at the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education at Yeshiva University and a member of the voluntary attending staff in Child Psychology at North Shore Long-Island Jewish Medical Center. While serving as director for the Medical Center's Alliance for School Mental Health, she authored the BRAVE bully prevention program for schools.

Dr. Novick is the author of *Helping Your Child Make Friends*, and editor of the book series *Kids Don't Come With Instruction Manuals*. As the mother of three sons, Dr. Novick credits much of her knowledge and skill to on the job training.

A consideration of how  
adults can facilitate  
social skills development and  
children's social growth

# Goals of Session

- Appreciate the importance of social skills and growth, and role of adults in promoting it.
- Understand how social skills develop.
- Develop tools and techniques to assist children in developing social skills

# When Did You Last Use Your Skills?

**Think of the last time you were in a social situation (with at least one other person in your age group). What social skills did you need to succeed?**

**Use the chat room to share the social skills you had to use.**

# What Are Social Skills?

Socially acceptable, learned behaviors that enable children to interact with others in ways that elicit positive and avoid negative responses.





# What Social Skills Can You Name? Identify?

Jonah asks to share Moshe's pail in the sandbox. When Morah Jill says it is time to come in, Jonah looks at her and brings over his pail. He tells Daniel it is time to go inside.

Shira and Jennifer are testing each other on the spelling words. They take turns after each 5 words. When they are done, Jennifer asks where Shira is going this Shabbos. Shira tells Jennifer about her visit to her aunt's house and asks what Shira has planned.

Yossi, Dani, and Shlomo are listening to Rebbe Cohen's instructions to break into groups. They move their desks, and begin their assignment. When Rebbe Cohen approaches they look up and answer his questions. When he leaves, Shlomo and Dani disagree about one of the answers, and Yossi suggests they take a vote.

Use the chat room to identify the social skills you see embodied, or suggest other important social skills.

# Is This A Childhood Thing?

Mr. Samuels is asked by his boss to greet the state representative visiting the company.

Mrs. Sharstein makes a series of phone calls to arrange carpools for an ill community member.

At a board meeting, a heated argument occurs between two community members. Mr. Miller stands, suggests everyone write their thoughts on a piece of paper, and then the board will discuss. The “temperature” in the room “cools down”.

Mr. & Mrs. Newman were fortunate to recently have two of their children become engaged. They have travelled to neighborhoods outside their own for celebrations, and been introduced to dozens of new people.

# Importance of Social Skills

- Social Skills critical for life success
- Children without social skills at greater risk for emotional difficulties
- Children without social skills at greater risk for academic failure
- Friendships and relationships extremely protective and build resilience



# How Do Social Skills Develop?



- How does walking develop?
- Normal/expected part of development- requires cognitive skills
- Role of experience/ environment
- Role of temperament

# What Makes It Easier

- Desire for interaction
- Emotional awareness/literacy of self and others
- Verbal skills
- Emotional regulation
- Social experience



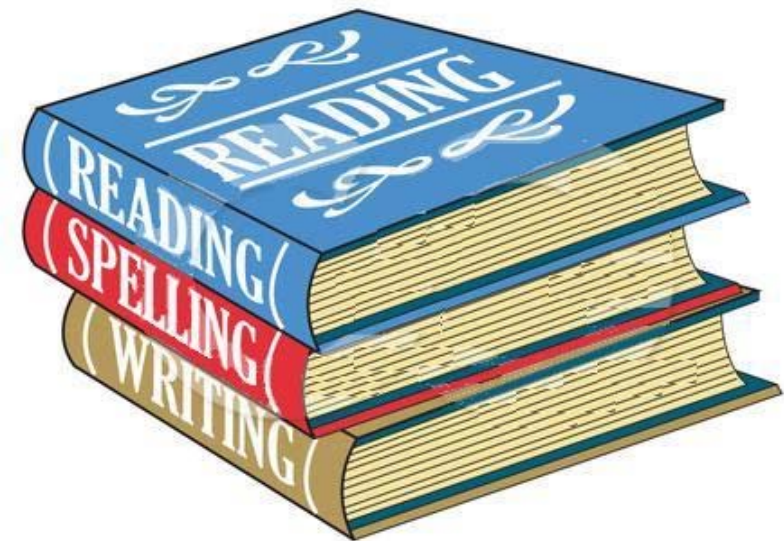
# What Makes It Harder

- Lack exposure/Limited opportunities to learn/perform social behavior
- Insufficient practice or feedback
- Struggle to process social cues
- Lack of reinforcement for socially skilled behaviors
- Interfering problem behaviors

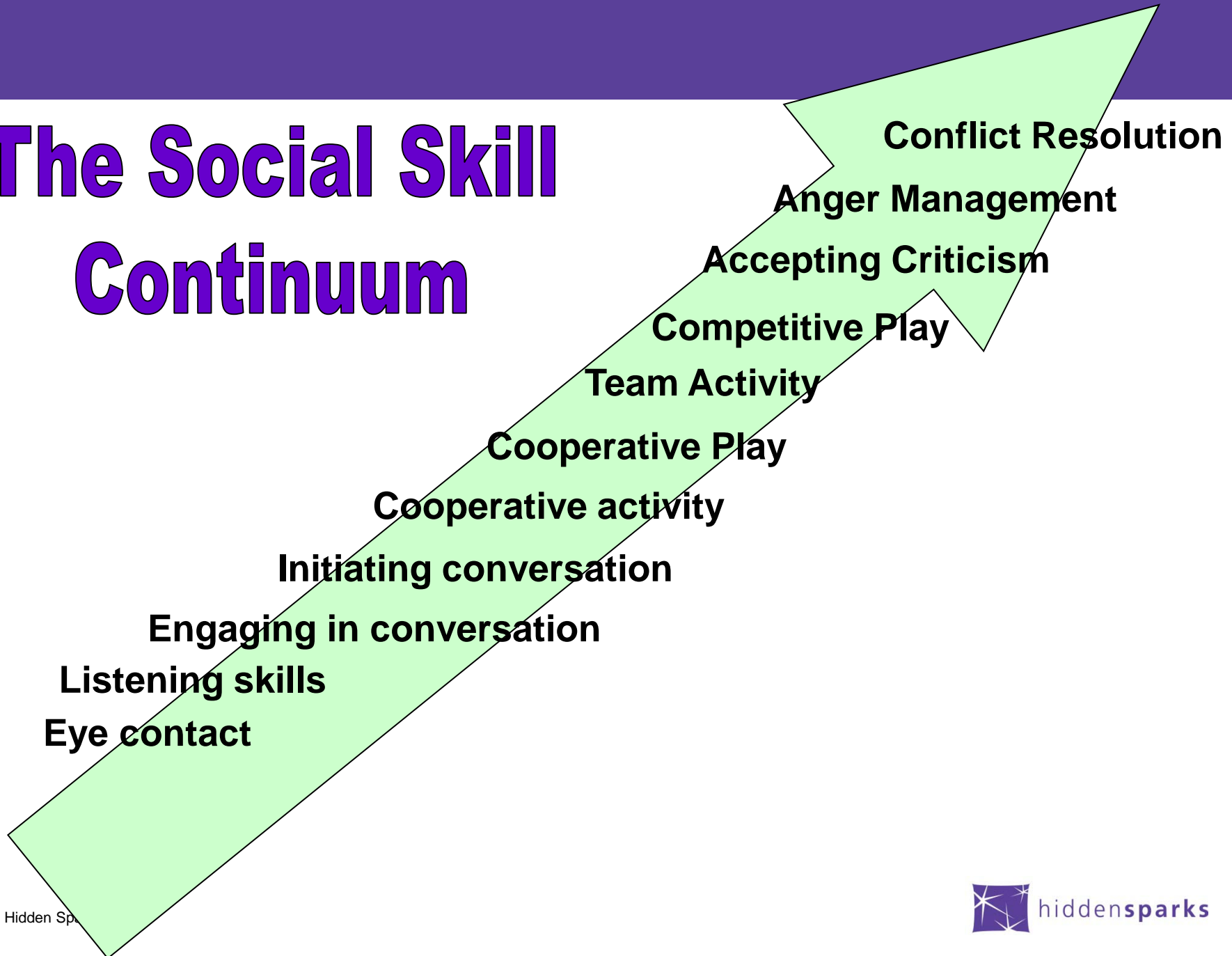


# This Can Be Taught

- Social skills are acquired through learning (observation, modeling, rehearsal, feedback)
- Social skills are interactive
- Social skill performance can be influenced by the environment



# The Social Skill Continuum





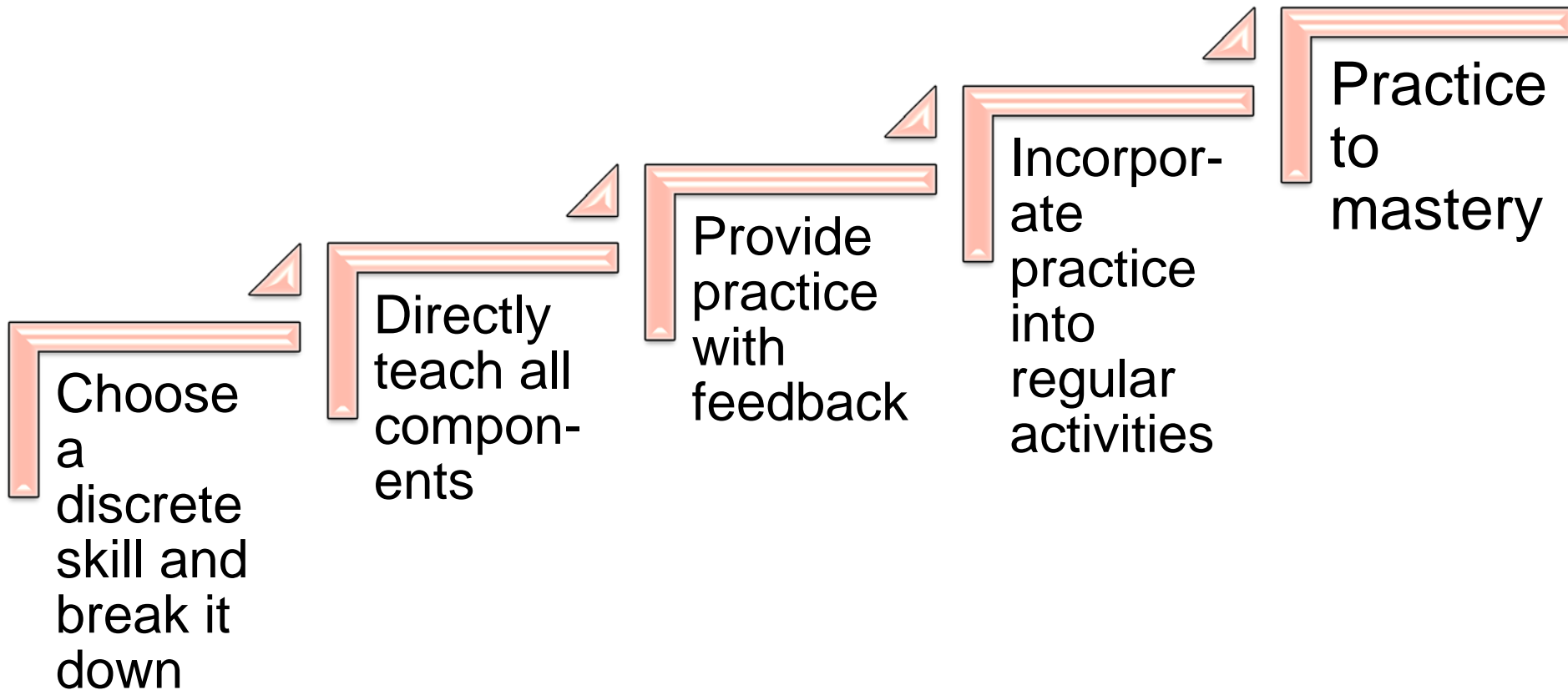
# Fostering Social Skills Development

- Direct and Indirect approaches
- Role of mental health professionals, schools, families, peers
- Comprehensive process, it takes time



**Social Skills Pyramid**

# Direct Teaching of Social Skills



# Example: Having a Conversation

- Choose discreet skill and break it down
  - Conversation requires - eye contact, ear contact, stay on topic, avoid yes/no questions, don't hog the conversation
- Directly teach all components
  - Review the above and demonstrate positive and negative examples
- Provide practice with feedback
  - Create task that allows practice – talk show
- Incorporate into on-going activities
  - Let's practice conversations in the car, can you use your conversation skills at the dinner table, let's do an interview assignment
- Practice to mastery

# How Would You Break These Down?

- Playing a game
- Being a good team member
- Dealing with conflict
- Working together on a project



Use the chat room to suggest the 3-4 components of these complex social behaviors that you would “teach”

# Ongoing/Naturalistic Teaching

- Social skill of the week
- Constant reinforcement of skill
- Create opportunities for practice
- Teach indirectly – through characters in books/videos



# You Can Incorporate Social Lessons and Opportunities Into . . .

## School

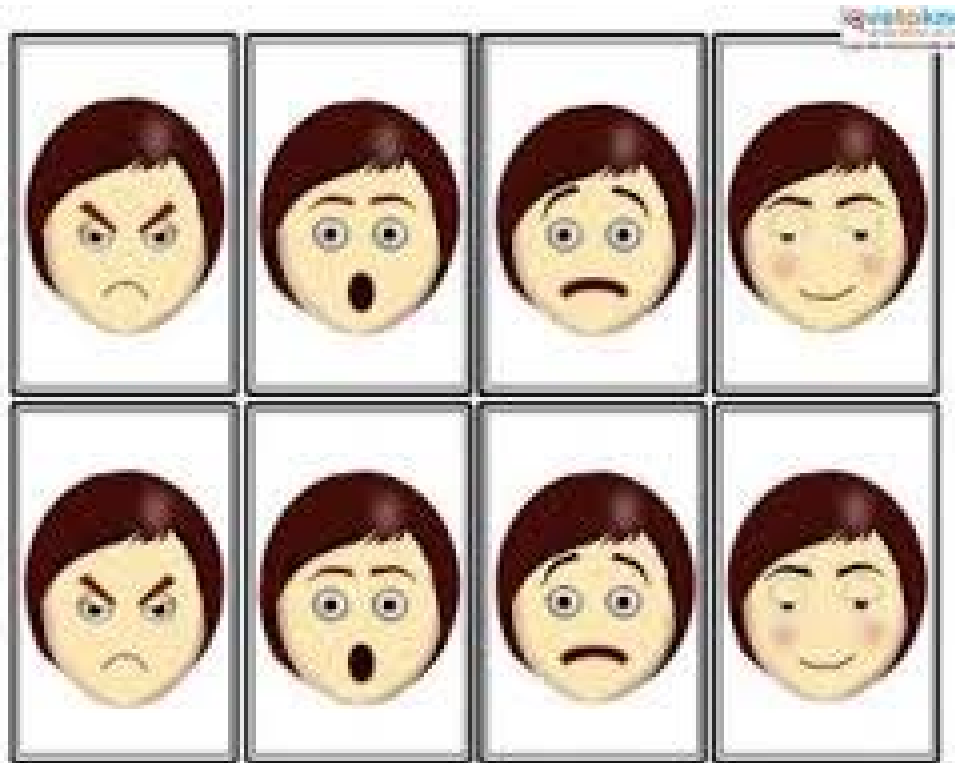
- Science
- Math
- Literature Arts
- History
- Field Day
- School Trip

## Home

- Shabbos table
- Play date
- Visit to relative
- Delivery
- Carpool

# Indirect Approaches

- Social skills bonus of the week
- Conflict resolution (peace table)
- Buddy system- cooperative tasks
- Enactments
- Jobs
- Games
- Teachable Moments



# Building Socialization

- For the unmotivated child
  - May need reasonable mandates
- For the child with challenging behaviors (aggression)
  - May need preparation and coaching
- For the child with challenges reading social cues
  - May need preparation and coaching
  - Start small





# Using Your Moral/Social Imperative

- Teach empathy . . . Always
- Inaction = Approval
- Neutrality is not required, and may be detrimental
- Hypocrisy, favoritism, and other “bad habits” are particularly damaging to your social power

More than any skill you teach children, their ability to relate to and work with others will serve them throughout their lives.

# Upcoming Hidden Sparks Without Walls Sessions

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Wed<br>February 12 | <i>For Teachers:</i><br>It's Never Too Late to Clean Up Your Act<br>With Zipora Schuck   |
| Wed<br>March 5     | <i>For Teachers and Parents:</i><br>What's Behind Children's Challenging Behavior and What We<br>Can Do to Help<br>With Claire Wurtzel |

***For more information visit: [www.hidden-sparks.org](http://www.hidden-sparks.org)***

# Hidden Sparks in Schools

The Hidden Sparks coaching program is currently in 32 Jewish day schools/yeshivot in the New York tri-state area, Baltimore and Chicago.

Since inception, Hidden Sparks has provided school-based coaching to 16 schools through its External Coach Program and has provided training and mentoring to 80 Internal Coaches from 45 Internal Coach Program participating schools.

Over 3,700 teachers have participated in Hidden Sparks programs. Of that number, more than 1,200 teachers have benefitted from Hidden Sparks training, impacting an estimated 12,000 students.

**If you are interested in bringing [Hidden Sparks](#) to your school or city, please contact us at: [212-767-7707](tel:212-767-7707) or [news@hiddensparks.org](mailto:news@hiddensparks.org)**

# Our Supporters and Partners

**Hidden Sparks thanks our supporters and partners who have made our work possible.**

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## Contact Hidden Sparks:

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