Welcome to *Hidden Sparks Without Walls.* 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, activate the chat feature by clicking in the “Chat” tab that is located below the attendees list on the right of your screen.

When chatting, please remember:

- Select **“All Participants”** if you would like everyone to see your message. Select **“All Panelists”** if you would like only the presenter and facilitator to 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.
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 supports professional development for Jewish day schools to help increase understanding and support for diverse learners.

Hidden Sparks’ programs combine school-based professional development in learning and positive behavioral support, classroom observation and coaching. Our philosophy is that by helping teachers meet the needs of struggling students, ultimately all students will benefit.

Now in its 10th year, Hidden Sparks has trained 190 coaches in 65 Jewish day schools in New York, New Jersey, Baltimore, Boca Raton, and Chicago, and 4 Israeli cities (Jerusalem, Modiin, Ramle, Ra’anana).
Parenting in the Balance: When to Intervene and When Not To

With Yoni Schwab, PhD
The Shefa School
March 21, 2017
**Our Guest:**

**Yoni Schwab**, PhD, is the founding assistant head of school at the Shefa School, a Jewish day school in New York City for children with language-based learning disabilities. A clinical psychologist, Yoni earned his doctorate in clinical psychology at Rutgers University and served as the Psychologist at The Windward School and on the faculty of the Windward Teacher Training Institute. He is an Adjunct Clinical Supervisor at Ferkauf Graduate School of Yeshiva University and has had successful private clinical practices in Riverdale and Scarsdale. Yoni conducts research, consults, and lectures extensively on social-emotional learning, progressive behavior management, and raising the achievement of students with behavioral and learning challenges. He serves on the Expert Panel of Parents.com, the website of Parents Magazine.
Session Goals

What are the goals of parenting?

What are the goals of childhood?

I propose:

To prepare children to be independent, capable, ethical, caring, happy adults.
Dangers of Under-parenting

- Children do not receive appropriate assistance with real problems (e.g., ADHD, anxiety, learning disabilities)
- Children do not feel supported
Dangers of Over-parenting

- Anxiety/emotional dysregulation
- Poor relationship with parents
- Poor self-esteem
- Poor life skills
  - Educational
  - Social
  - Vocational
  - Daily living
- Dependent adulthood (Failure to Launch)
Know Your Child

- Appreciate strengths
- Understand challenges  
  (These may also be their biggest strengths)
- Think developmentally
- Accept the things you can not change
Know Your Child

Remember:

Your child is not typical in every way.

Your child is not exceptional in every way.
Know yourself

• Know your strengths and challenges as a parent.

• Know where you are on each parenting dimension and move toward the golden mean
  • Over-involved vs. under-involved
  • Controlling vs. doormat
  • Over-empathic vs. emotionally distant
  • Pressuring vs. uninterested
Know Yourself

Remember:

No parent is perfect (and don’t try to be the first)!

Your children learn more from what you do than from all of your words combined.
8 Parenting Balancing Acts
1. Stimulate – but don’t overstimulate

- Provide interesting experiences, family activities, and age-appropriate toys
- Don’t play with or be around your children all the time
- Make sure your children are *not* always entertained
- Schedule down time
- Build tolerance for boring time
2. Empathize – but don’t protect your child from pain

- Listen to your children
- "It sounds like you feel _______ because _______. Am I right?"
- Reflect emotion with less intensity
- Help your child to problem-solve. Avoid solving the problem for her.
- Help them move on
- Carefully encourage your child to face fears

**Remember: Don’t protect children from every pain, failure or consequence of their actions.**
3. Be positive – but don’t be judgmental, controlling, condescending, or fake

• 5 positives for every negative
• Be enthusiastic, not cynical
• Minimize tangible rewards
• Praise should:
  • Be specific
  • Be realistic and sincere
  • Show interest
  • Model respect
  • Emphasize effort or process (not traits)
  • Elicit self-evaluations (not our judgments)
4. Provide the necessities – but limit everything else

- Limit stuff
- Limit experiences
- Limit money
- Earn extra money through work
- Model modesty with money and objects
5. Protect from big risks – but not all risks

• Know the likelihood of risks
• Protect children from serious, foreseeable risks
• Allow children to fall
  • Injuries
  • Hurt feelings
  • Failures
• Allow risk-taking in a developmentally appropriate way
• Check with other parents and community norms
6. Promote autonomy – but make sure you are in control

Teach Self-Control

- Calm but firm
- Explain your rationale, even if they don’t agree with it
- Consequences
  - If command, follow-through
  - Give one choice (warning)
    - Minimize “no opportunity”
    - No dance
The “Dance” (MacKenzie, 1996)

**“Dance”**

- Teacher behavior
  - Asks politely (feels annoyed)
  - Repeats and reminds
  - Gives warnings and second chance
  - Reasons and lectures (feels angry)
  - Yells and threatens

- Action step
  - Sends kids outside the classroom

- Child behavior
  - Kids disrupt
  - Disruption, ignoring continues
  - Disruption continues
  - Disruption continues
  - Disruption continues
  - Disruption stops

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**No “Dance”**

- Teacher behavior
  - Gives limited choices
  - Disruption continues

- Child behavior
  - Students disrupt
  - Disruption continues

- Action step
  - Follows through with consequence

- Child behavior
  - Disruption stops
Natural Consequences

• Learn from the natural order of the world
• No adult action or interference
• No “I told you so.”
Logical Consequences

• When affects others OR natural consequence is too harsh
• Learn from the social order

3 R’s
Respectful
Reasonable
Related
6. Promote autonomy – but make sure you are in control

Promote Autonomy

- Fewer commands
- More choices – don’t imply judgment
- Allow children to experience consequences
- Increase responsibilities – and authority – every year
  - Chores (done their way)
  - Opportunities to choose or to act responsibly
- Resist the urge to manage all problems (Beware the phone trap)

*Remember: Let your children’s problems be their problems.*
7. Encourage hard work – but don’t pressure for success

• Model hard work, learning, and reading.
• Talk in a way that values education and learning new things – without implied pressure.
• Make school (and homework) their responsibility. Be a consultant, not a manager.
• Praise hard work and the process of learning something new that is challenging, not grades or competition.
• Encouragement should be specific, nonjudgmental…
8. Love your children completely – but make sure other things are in the center of your life too

- Take care of yourself
- Prioritize your marriage/relationship
- Make time for your friendships & interests
- Respect elders
Social conflicts

- Model kind, ethical, considerate behavior (including to your children)
- It’s your child’s social life. You are an advisor, not a manager.
- Have lots of playdates (with minimal screen time) – provide structure, if needed
- Model, guide, practice, rehearse
- Let them work it out
  - Unless they want your help
  - Unless they will end up in the hospital
Common Challenges

Homework

- Set a time and place without distractions
- Support your children in doing their own work and being responsible for their own work
- You may want to establish a family rule such as - fun happens after homework is done (Have-to’s Before Want-to’s)
- It may be appropriate to let them go to school with homework undone
- Talk to the teacher about expectations
Common Challenges

Food

• Model *balanced* eating without guilt
• Provide variety
• Make fruit, vegetables, water, and healthy snacks readily available
• Encourage trying new foods multiple times
• Provide regular meal & snack times
• Let them choose how much to eat
• Never reward eating healthy food with dessert
Common Challenges

School complaints

- Remember: There is probably another perspective
- Empathize, then problem-solve with the child
- If call the school, listen and collaborate – don’t dictate the solution
Questions?
## Upcoming Hidden Sparks Without Walls Sessions

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<td>For Teachers</td>
<td><em>Language and Learning: A Foundation for Success</em></td>
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If you are interested in bringing Hidden Sparks to your school or city, please contact us:

212-767-7707 or sara@hiddensparks.org
Hidden Sparks would like to thank:

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