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 develops 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.

Since inception, Hidden Sparks has trained 190 coaches in 65 Jewish day schools in the New York Metro area, Baltimore, MD, Boca Raton, FL, and Chicago, IL, and 3 Israeli cities (Jerusalem, Ramle, Ra’anana)

Hidden Sparks Without Walls Parent Connection is a series of courses designed to bring together parents and educational professionals in order to improve the quality of the educational experience for all of our students and children, including those that struggle.
Dyslexia 101: Clarifying the Facts and Dispelling the Myths

With Karen Kruger
April 5, 2016
Karen Kruger is the Director of Curriculum & Professional Development at the Charles Armstrong School in California, a school that serves children with language based learning disabilities. Prior to that position, Ms. Kruger was the Director of Education at Hidden Sparks, and served as Hidden Sparks’ Internal Coach Program school-based mentor, a regional facilitator, and the lead trainer for Title funded workshops. Ms. Kruger also served as a field facilitator and course instructor for Schools Attuned, teaching courses offered by All Kinds of Minds, developed curricula for workshops, and mentored and supervised teachers in grades K-12. A former adjunct professor at Bank Street College of Education, where she received her Master’s degree, Ms. Kruger has taught in elementary and middle schools.
Overview of the Session

During tonight’s session we will dispel common myths regarding dyslexia and deepen our understanding of what is dyslexia and what can be done to support students with language based learning challenges. We will also learn about current dyslexia research and how a research center can partner with a school.
Session Goals:

1. Understand what is dyslexia and what to do if you think your student has a language based learning challenge.

2. Discover some excellent resources for educators and parents to deepen their understanding of available interventions and accommodations to support children with language based learning struggles.
Raise your hand...

If you know someone who is dyslexic
1. Dyslexia is when people see letters and numbers backwards and/or upside down.
2. Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin.
3. Albert Einstein was dyslexic.
What is Dyslexia?

“Dyslexia is a neurodevelopmental disorder that potentially responds to biomedical, psychosocial, educational and alternative treatments.” UCSF Dyslexia Center

“Dyslexia is a language processing disorder that causes difficulties with multiple language skills that leads to problems learning to read. Trouble with sounding out words (decoding) and inaccurate word recognition are the primary difficulties. These challenges can result in problems with reading fluency, comprehension, spelling, and writing.” A Parent’s Guide to Dyslexia
Facts about Dyslexia

• It is a neurobiological disorder that affects approximately 1 in 5 individuals and it is NOT a sign of low intelligence
• It is a lifelong condition that is not outgrown
• It occurs equally among boys and girls
• It can be genetic – often runs in families and it can be mild, moderate or severe
• It is not caused by a vision problem
• Quick fixes to dyslexia do not exist
• Science cannot predict who will respond to instruction
• October is National Dyslexia Awareness month
What can Dyslexia look like?

Important consideration:
The following slides list possible signs and symptoms that may be indicators and *not proof* of dyslexia. If your child/student shows some of these signs of possible dyslexia, talk with your child’s teacher and pediatrician.

The only way to diagnose dyslexia is through appropriate comprehensive testing.
Possible early indicators of Dyslexia

In Pre-school and kindergarten children:

- Hearing, language or speech problems
- Difficulty recognizing letters of the alphabet
- Difficulty learning new words
- Difficulty learning the names of colors, shapes, letters and numbers
- Difficulty with rhymes
- Mispronouncing or mixing-up words (mawn lower instead of lawn mower)
- Trouble with learning to count, saying days of the week, other word sequences
Other signs of Possible Dyslexia:

In Early Elementary Students:

- Difficulty learning the names of letters
- Trouble connecting letters to sounds
- Confusing or substituting words
- Difficulty decoding (sounding out) single words
- Making consistent errors
- Using the pictures in the book to “read”
- Dislike of reading
- Trouble with reading comprehension
- Trouble with copying or spelling
- Frustration with schoolwork and homework
- Reluctance to go to school
- Problems with attention
Signs of Possible Dyslexia:

In Older Students:

- Reading below grade level
- Slow reading
- Numerous reading errors
- Avoidance of reading – especially out loud
- Persistent difficulty decoding/sounding out new words
- Difficulty understanding prefixes, suffixes & root words
- Difficulty with non-literal language (jokes, idioms, poetry, proverbs, slang)
- Trouble with reading comprehension
- Poor or erratic spelling
- Difficulty learning a foreign language
- Poor recall of facts
- Difficulty with writing
- Difficulty with planning, organizing and time management
- Difficulty telling time
Other Problems associated with Dyslexia

- **ADHD** – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
  20 - 40% of dyslexics also have ADHD

- **Anxiety Disorder and Depression**
  approximately 20% of dyslexics have anxiety struggles  
  approximately 20% of dyslexics may have depression

- **Auditory Processing Disorder (APD)** Children with APD typically have normal hearing. But they struggle to process and make meaning of sounds. It’s not fully understood where things break down between what the ear hears and what the brain processes. Students with APD can have trouble making sense of what other people say.
What can help with ADHD

1. Important to get diagnosed by a professional – some anxiety symptoms can resemble ADHD and misdiagnosis can occur.

2. “Brain breaks” – after 20 minutes of instruction, students will stand up, stretch, do some calisthenics, run the stairs, run a lap – all in 30-90 seconds.

3. Classrooms have standing desks, ball seats, wiggle cushions, “fidgets”, gum – all are introduced as “tools” and not toys. Students understand people learn differently and they learn how to advocate for what they need.

4. Mindfulness – breathing/visualization relaxation techniques
What can help with Anxiety

**CALM** – strategies for parents

**C** - Catch your breath – pause, think or withdraw briefly to become calm and plan response

**A** - Accept negative feelings – wait patiently and respond with “I see, uh huh, ok…”

**L** - Label emotions – “You seem really nervous…”

**M** - Model coping skills – show your child how to remain calm and collected

**General coping strategies:**

- Sleep, good food and exercise
- Connecting with family, friends, animals, nature
- Build on their strengths (strengthen +’s!) and interests
- Avoid overbooking of activities
- Leave time to “just be a kid”
- Mindfulness/visualization with breathing
Dyslexia may affect other skills

• **Social skills**: Struggling in school may cause your child to feel inferior around his/her peers. This may cause the child to stop trying to make friends or avoid group activities. They may also have trouble understanding jokes, sarcasm, and the nuances of non-verbal language.

• **Executive Function Skills**: Struggling with the ability to organize, stay on task, manage time can coincide with dyslexia.

• **Dysgraphia**: Challenges with a child’s ability to write and spell and can make it difficult to get thoughts on paper – also can be seen with dyslexia.
How can parents help their child?

• **Talk to your child** – Strong oral language development is a prerequisite for successful reading – it’s extremely important to talk to your child *before* he/she can even speak.

• **Read to your child** – Reading aloud to your child is the most important activity to prepare your child to read.

• **Be proactive** - You may be the first person to realize that your child is struggling.
What else can help?

- The earlier, the better to take steps to address speech, language and reading difficulties.
- Children who are identified early can be treated early and early intervention can be powerful.
- Technology can be very helpful – audiobooks, voice-to-text, text reader features on iPhones, tablets, computers.
- Know your child’s social, athletic and academic strengths and affinities.
- Talk to your child about dyslexia – successful students with dyslexia are self-aware, proactive, and learn to persevere.
- Look into listed resources at the end of the webinar.
How can teachers help students who may be Dyslexic?

• Be very curious about how your students learn – talk to them and LISTEN!
• Pay attention to their strongest way of taking in information – auditory, written, pictorial, kinesthetically? Combination?
• Know what are their strengths and their interests – many dyslexics improve their reading with high interest books.
• Often dyslexic students are very aware about their learning strengths – they can tell you what is easy and what is hard – Ask them!
• Observe their strongest way of expressing themselves – written, verbal, pointing, multiple choice?
• Share your observations/concerns with the parents – it’s important that they are aware of potential learning challenges
• Dyslexics often learn best with multisensory techniques – using visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile pathways simultaneously, to enhance memory and learning of written language. Many reading programs do this – Orton Gillingham type of approach
• Students with dyslexia can benefit from individualized or small group explicit instruction teaching the 5 reading skills: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension – plus writing and spelling.
• Intervention instruction needs to be tailored to address individual student skill deficits that are detected in an educational evaluation.
• There is no “One size fits all dyslexics” when it comes to remediation programs – see the list of resources.
Research about Dyslexia

• Much of the past research on dyslexia focused on cognitive output – what dyslexics were capable of doing – reading, writing, academic performance with an emphasis on where the learning challenges exist.

• fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) showed the biological existence of dyslexia. Dyslexic brains are wired differently!

• Other studies focused on the disproportionate number of dyslexics who are creative, successful, entrepreneurs, astrophysicists etc.
Dyslexia Center Objectives

• Identify Phenotypes of Dyslexia

• Early Detection & Intervention

• Translating new research into practical, classroom interventions with measureable outcomes

“The mission of the UCSF Dyslexia Center is to address and remove the debilitating effects of dyslexia while preserving, and even enhancing the strengths of each individual.”
Neurodevelopmental research
Begins with collecting data on cognitive strengths and challenges
Neural network for written language: Connections
The UCSF Dyslexia Center

- Resilience
- Environment
- Economic disadvantage
- Minorities
- Motivation
- Strengths
- Genetics
- Neural imaging

2015 Hidden Sparks
Strengths and Success stories

• “Out of the box thinking”
• “Innovative thinking”
• “Flexible thinkers who make unusual connections”
• “Visual/Spatial strengths”
• “Gifted musicians, artists, designers, scientists, athletes, educators, inventors, poets, politicians, engineers…”

In virtually any field, you will find successful dyslexics who were able to discover their passion and recognize their strengths and find a way to circumvent the obstacles that their dyslexia may have imposed.

“Not all children with dyslexia have extraordinary talents but every one of them has a unique potential that all too often goes unrealized because we don’t know how to tap it.” Maryanne Wolf
Websites

• [http://dyslexia.ucsf.edu](http://dyslexia.ucsf.edu) – information about research/labs/
• [www.understood.org](http://www.understood.org) Understood – excellent resource for parents – lots of specific strategies for school and home
• [www.parentseducationnetwork.org](http://www.parentseducationnetwork.org) Parents Education Network – another excellent source for parents and teachers
• [www.chconline.org](http://www.chconline.org) Children’s Health Council
• [www.interdys.org](http://www.interdys.org) International Dyslexia Association
• [www.dyslexiahelp.umich.edu](http://www.dyslexiahelp.umich.edu) Dyslexia Help – University of Michigan – outstanding source for dyslexics, parents, professionals
• [www.dyslexicadvantage.com](http://www.dyslexicadvantage.com) Dyslexic Advantage – another great source for parents, students, teachers
# Upcoming Hidden Sparks Without Walls Sessions

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If you are interested in bringing Hidden Sparks to your school or city, please contact us:

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