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.
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 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).
Being a Sensory Smart Teacher: Helping Students with Sensory Challenges

With Chaye Lamm Warburg
May 18, 2016
Our Guest: Chaye Lamm Warburg

Chaye Lamm Warburg, DPS, OTR/L, is the founder and director of Pediatric Occupational Therapy Services in Teaneck, NJ. She is certified in the Sensory Integration & Praxis Tests, Interactive Metronome, Therapeutic Listening, The Listening Program®, and MEDEK, and is trained in Floortime. She lectures extensively to parents, teachers and therapists and teaches a pediatric occupational therapy lab at NYU. She believes in a two pronged approach to treating children with sensory processing dysfunction (SPD): providing strategies to help the child (parent and teacher) survive day to day, coupled with intense clinic-based therapy to eliminate or minimize the underlying problems.
Overview of the Session:

- Do you have “sensational” students whose needs overwhelm your classroom?
- Learn to view your student’s behavior through the lens of sensory integration and develop a toolbox of strategies to utilize during the most challenging times of the day.
- Note: This is an educational opportunity and is not a substitute for an evaluation and treatment by a certified occupational therapist.
Session Goals:

- Identify the sensory challenges driving your student’s behavior
- Develop a sensory toolbox to help you navigate the most difficult times of the day
Sensory Integration

Sensory Integration is the process by which the brain takes in and makes sense of the information that we get from our senses.
The Five Senses

Tasting
Touching
Hearing
Smelling
Seeing
Two senses you did not learn in kindergarten
Proprioception

The “position sense;” the unconscious awareness of sensations coming from our joints, muscles, tendons and ligaments, that provides us with an internal map of how our body parts are related, and the effort used to move them.
Vestibular system:
The sensory system that responds to changes in head position and movement. Coordinates movements of the eyes, head and body; enables us to feel the pull of gravity. Receptors are in the inner ear.
Space
Is it “Sensory” or “Behavior?”
What is Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)?

• SPD is a deficit in the way we take in, process, and act on information from our bodies and our surroundings.

• When “all systems are go” we can attend to what we need to, filter out what is irrelevant, manage our behavior, go with the flow, easily follow directions, play with friends, and learn new skills.

• When sensory signals don’t get organized into appropriate responses, difficulty can emerge in activities of daily living, school, motor skills, behavior, and social participation. If untreated, anxiety, depression and school failure may ensue.
View children’s behavior through the prism of sensory integration
Noam
View children’s behavior through the prism of sensory integration
Two products of sensory processing

Using our senses

Detect

Filter

Motor Planning

Self regulation
Self Regulation

The ability to control one’s activity level, level of alertness, and physical and emotional responses to sensory input. The well-regulated child will go though most of his day in a calm alert state without being distracted and inattentive, and be able to smoothly transition between activities.
Motor Planning
How can teachers address sensory integration issues?

- Become a sensory detective
- Promote self-regulation & motor planning proactively:
  - Strategies for individual students
  - Classroom wide strategies
- Be prepared for the most challenging times of the day
Detective work: Systematic observation

- Note the content of behavior
- Look for patterns of behavior
- Recognize antecedents and triggers
Promote self-regulation proactively

**Individual child:**
- Acknowledge
- Anticipate
- Reassure
- Design a socially acceptable solution together
- Modify your expectations

**Classroom-wide techniques**
- Sensory breaks
  - Muscle tools
  - Movement tools
- Environmental tools
- Educational tools
- Prepare for the most challenging times of the day
Muscle Tools: Heavy work

“When in doubt, prop it out!”

Classroom wide:

• Wall push-ups; Chair push-ups; chair pull-ups
• Jumping
• Marching
• Stretching:
  • Power putty
  • Follow the leader
  • Animal walks

Individual:

• Weighted vest or lap buddy
• Compression garment/weighted vest
• Heavy backpack
• Run around the gym
• Run up the stairs
• Sensory bin
Classroom Helper

• Rearrange the furniture
• Put away the heavy toys
• Deliver books
• Door holder
• Wash the tables
• Clean the blackboards and Smart Boards
• Laptop or technology helper
 Movement Tools

- Shake your sillies out
- Head, shoulders, knees and toes
- Hokey Pokey
- Follow the leader, animal walks, races
- Jumping jacks, stride jumps, running in place
- Break dancing
- Yoga stretches
- Go Noodle.com
Environmental Strategies

- Predictability
- Organization
- Visual calm
- Noise & music
Goals:
• Clearly define space
• Enhance attention
• Postural support

Strategies:
• Location, location, location
• Straddle chair
• Kneel
• Lying on belly
• Lap buddy
• “Criss-cross applesauce”
• Carpet square
• Sit against wall or book case
• Bean bag
• In-seat movement:
  • Therapy ball; Ergo chair; wobble chair
  • Standing table; pedal chair, yoga chair
  • Inflatable wedge, core disc
  • Theraband
Educational Strategies

• Multisensory
• Simple language + pictorial cues + demonstration + hand-over-hand guidance
• Break down the task
• Repetition
• Verbal rehearsal
• Take turns
• Second is the best!
• Therapeutic use of self
Managing the challenging times of the day

- Starting the day
  - Circle time or carpet time
  - Independent work
  - Centers & free play
  - Snack time

- Transitions
  - Standing on line
  - Specials
  - Recess
  - Lunchroom
Starting the day

Preschoolers:
- Immediately direct student to an activity, don’t let him flounder or wander
- Heavy back pack
- Transition objects

Older students:
- Encourage parent to bring child immediately before class starts
- Ask child to be classroom helper and organize the classroom
- Check off list on cubby or locker for morning routine
- Grounding strategies
- Alerting strategies
Circle time & sitting on the rug

Challenges:

- Sitting position
  - Postural control
  - Sense of body position in space
- Fidgeting
- Distractibility
- Sensitivity to sound, touch (proximity) and visual overload

Strategies:

- Start with movement and heavy work to organize and “ground”
- Keep it short!
- Auditory overload:
  - Cover your ears
  - Be the loudest one
- Visual overload:
  - Don’t demand eye contact
  - Be mindful of the view from the floor
- Seating options
- Fidgets
- Motor planning:
  - Warn students before they are called on
  - Send a video home for parent to pre-teach or practice
Independent Work Options

- Library
- Computer room
- Corral
- Noise cancelling headphones
- Tennis balls on chair legs
- Sports top bottle
- Velcro under desk
- Gum
- Visual Timer
Centers & Free Play

Provide:

• “Heavy work” (Play-Doh, sand/water table)
• Change content of centers every month
• For students who self-isolate, give half of the materials to each child in a dyad
• Encourage tactile avoiders to join the play without the pressure to touch

Rules:

• Visit a variety of centers to expand comfort level
• Label each center with the minimum and maximum # of students to:
  o Avoid self-isolation
  o Limit overcrowding

Crafts, projects and baking:

• Show a model of finished product
• Distribute only the materials needed for the next step
Transitions

- Children have little sense of time; provide concrete warnings that are task based
- Manage your expectations for students who have difficulty starting and stopping
- Visual/manipulatable schedules
- Clean up:
  - “Clean up necklaces”
  - Direct specific student to put away heavy items
Standing on line

- Provide calming organizing input, e.g., push out the walls
- March, jump, skip, hop
- Footprints on the floor
- Line leader
- Hold teacher’s hand
- Door holder
- Finger fidgets
- Anchor to the wall
Specials

• Why are specials challenging for kids with sensory challenges?

• Not every child is suited to every special

• Strategies:
  • Buddy up
  • Get the lesson plan to prepare the child
  • Let “special teacher” know what the challenges are
  • Modify teachers expectations for participation
  • Tell the teacher how to give directions in a way the student can understand
  • Short & successful; build up from there
  • Assigned seating can take away some of the unpredictability
  • Music: sing and clap the loudest
  • PE: second is the best, break down the skill, hand-over-hand instruction, redefine success,

• Assemblies present a unique challenge
Sensory challenges:
• Gravitational insecurity
• Overwhelmed by proximity
• Thrill seekers

Motor planning challenges:
• Can’t figure out how to use equipment
• Clumsy
• Difficulty matching movements in time and space
• Limited repertoire

Strategies:
• Pair with a good motor planner who is inclusive
• Find an activity that suits child’s comfort level and guide other kids join in
• Give thrill seeker strict limits for risky activities, and then have them move to something else
• Adult led activities
• “Practice” on playground after hours with parent
Lunchroom

A key opportunity for socialization

Challenges:

- Multisensory overload
  - Acoustics
  - Too many people
  - Too many smells

Strategies:

- One-on-one should be on the job
- Instruct aides to facilitate students in pairs, if they are unable to join a larger group
- If the lunchroom is too overwhelming, have 2-3 kids eat together in a quieter place
- “Mix it up Mondays”: Staff shuffle students in the grade so they end up socializing with new kids
- “Lunch bunch”
## Upcoming Hidden Sparks Without Walls Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6/1/16</th>
<th>For Parents and Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Giving Thanks: Cultivating Gratitude in Children and Teens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are interested in bringing Hidden Sparks to your school or city, please contact us: 212-767-7707 or sara@hiddensparks.org
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