



hiddensparks
without walls
PARENT CONNECTION

Is This Typical?

***Understanding Variations
in Child Development***

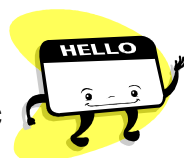
**With Dr. Rona Novick
October 23, 2012**



Welcome & Conference Etiquette

Below are some tips that will help make this conference call successful:

- **PLEASE NOTE:** We will be muting phones automatically, but when we open the lines for questions we will want to ensure that those questions can be heard and answered without undue background noise. We will work in time for questions during the presentation.
- **Use the right phone** - Cell phones can be included in conference calls, but some can also cause static on the lines. Try to use a landline phone if possible. Speakerphones pick up a lot of background noise.
- **Participate in a quiet, undisturbed room.** – Background noise can be heard through the phone and will disturb others in the conference. If you can't find a quiet room, use your phone's mute button until you want to speak – and avoid distracting noises such as humming, scraping chairs, tapping a pencil, etc.
- **Never Put a Conference Call on Hold!** - Participants will be forced to listen to your on-hold music or they will not know that you have stepped away and may continue to address you while you're gone.
- **Call Waiting** - The sound of your call-waiting beep can be disruptive and confusing to conference call participants. Quite often the Call Waiting function can be temporarily suspended by touching *70 prior to the call.
- **Identify Yourself** - When you ask a question verbally during the designated times please identify yourself by name.
- **Respect for privacy-** In order to be respectful and to protect the privacy of others, please do not refer to specific teachers or schools by name.
- **Chat Room & Question/Answer Box** – Those participating on line may use the chat room and question/answer box on the lower right of their screen to enter questions and comments at any time. We will offer regular opportunities for those joining by phone only to participate as well.



Our Guest:



Rona Novick, PhD, is the Director of the Fanya Gottesfeld Heller Doctoral Program at the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration at Yeshiva University and Clinical Professor of Child Psychology at North Shore Long-Island Jewish Medical Center.

Dr. Novick also serves as a Co-Educational Director of Hidden Sparks, providing consultation to day schools and *yeshivot*. Dr. Novick developed the Alliance for School Mental Health at North-Shore Long Island Jewish Medical Center and served as its director for eight years, authoring the BRAVE bully prevention program for schools. Dr. Novick is the author of the book *Helping Your Child Make Friends* and editor of the book series *Kids Don't Come With Instruction Manuals*.

Overview of the Session

Parents watch, wonder and worry about their children almost constantly. When we see our children do, or not do something that other children are doing, we can become concerned – is this typical?

Why is my child not like the other children I see? Are the differences I am seeing just part of typical development or do they hint at challenges or concerns that need parents' attention.

Today we will discuss child development along a continuum, Some behavioral and learning issues that are outside the pattern of typical development will be explored.

We will discuss the developmental tasks usually mastered at particular ages and phases AND . . .

We will consider the best plan of action for parents asking themselves . . . Is this typical?



Session Goals:

1. Understanding of development process
2. Awareness of milestone phenomenon
3. Focus on strengths and growth-supporting parenting
4. Consideration of realistic areas for concern

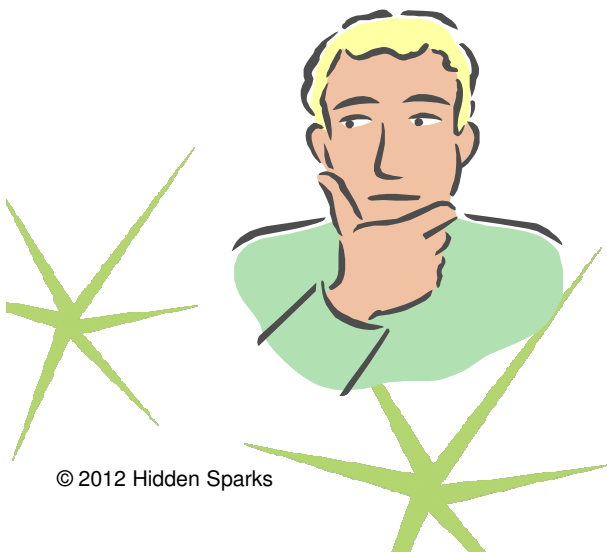


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In your experience . . .

- Think of a time in your childhood when parents, teachers, or others noticed something you did differently, or something you didn't do that your peers did. Were people asking themselves . . . Is this typical?
- How did it resolve? Is it still an area of concern?



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Meet David

When you walk into the den, David is doing some school work. His siblings are spaced around the room, also doing homework. David looks carefully at the work in front of him. He rocks his chair from time to time. He looks over at his sister, then goes to where she is working and grabs a marker. She protests loudly, and says she is calling a parent to “tell on him”. David pulls his chair to the corner of the room and huddles under it, facing away from everyone. He begins speaking to himself.



IS THIS TYPICAL? SHOULD THE PARENTS BE CONCERNED?



WHAT MORE WOULD YOU WANT TO KNOW?

SOME REALITIES OF DEVELOPMENT



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No Absolutes

Walking

- Michael – 11 mos.
- Shira – 13 mos.
- Dina – 12 ½ mos.
- Yossi – 14 mos

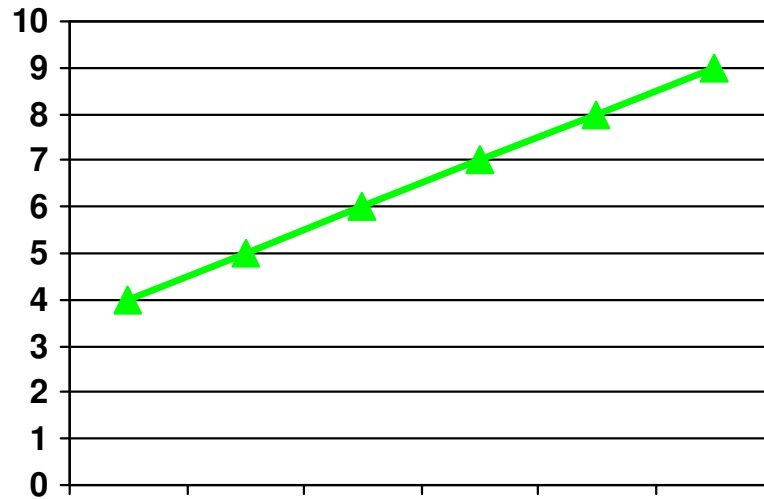
Reading

- Jenny – K.1
- Devorah – K.8
- Marc – 1.1
- Yael – N.8
- Ellie – 1.7
- Dara – 1.9

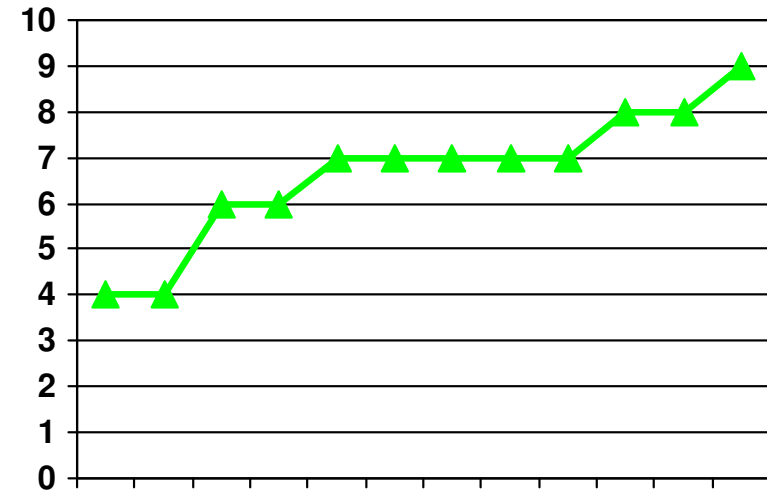
Sleepaway

- Josh – 10
- Mara – 8
- David – 12
- Ben – never
- Ilana – 11
- Chana - 8

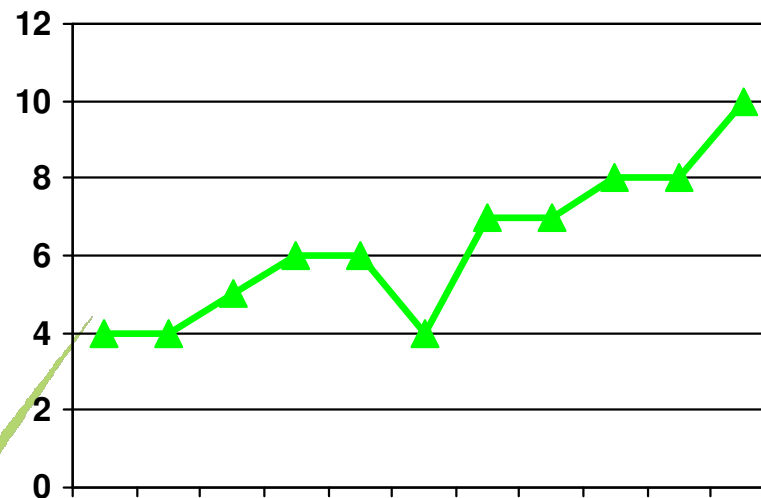
Which best represents the process of development?



A



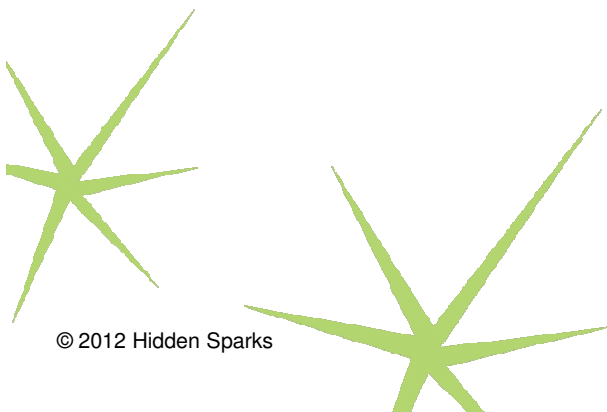
B



C

Development Process

- Irregular progression
- Unique to each individual
- May include backslides in preparation for forward movement
- Developmental “milestones” are guideposts . . .
Virtually all developmental skills have a broad range of ages at which they are accomplished



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The Same Phenomenon Looks Different at Different Ages

Physical aggression common when frustrated, can include biting, hitting, kicking, hair pulling, pinching, throwing items

*Understanding that physical aggression is not permitted in certain contexts, limited to revenge and retaliation
Biting is rare*

Physical aggression is largely replaced by verbal /social aggression. Fighting with sibs and peers still occurs

Outlets for aggression include sports. Sarcasm and other verbal aggression develops

Physical fights rare in most cultures. Playful use of aggression. May occur in disinhibiting situations i.e. internet

Infant/toddler

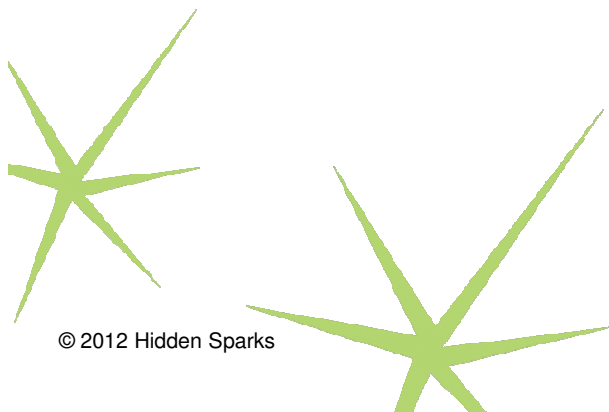
K-2

3-5

6-8

HS

The Role of Temperament



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Dispositional Factors – Considering Temperament

- Just as babies are born with their own combination of physical characteristics, behavioral scientists know that each one has patterns of behavior, or temperament, that are also part of their uniqueness.

Activity

Regularity

*Initial
Reaction*

Distractibility



Adaptability

Intensity

Mood

Persistence

Sensitivity

What Does it Look Like

Sedentary

Activity

Non-stop

Calm

Intensity

High
Strung

Needs
sameness

Adaptability

Enjoys
Novelty

Why Does Temperament Matter?

Shira

- Very “easy” baby – had regular schedule for eating and sleeping
- Took to everyone quickly
- Loved new things
- Persisted with difficult tasks
- Often calm, and easily soothed
- Seemed happy most of time

Sarah

- Colicky and never slept
- Finicky about who she would let near her
- Feared all things new, tentative in most situations
- Would not try new things, or quickly reject them
- Often upset, fussy, and hard to soothe
- Intense distress reactions frequently

What do you think each girl's parent saw at their daughter's 7th birthday party at the bowling alley?

Temperament points to remember

- What is typical for each person relates to temperament.
- Extremes of temperament often appear outside the norm to others.
- Temperament is malleable or avoidable. . . But not without significant effort.

**When you think of
children who have
been challenging . . .
Which
temperamental
factors were an
issue?**

Should We Worry?



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Returning to David

David's dad comes into the room and encourages him to go back to his homework. He asks David about his science book, and David jumps around his dad, giggles and flaps his arms while describing the gravity experiment they did. When Dad asks questions David interrupts virtually every sentence with facts about the solar system and universe.



IS THIS TYPICAL?



WHAT WOULD YOU NEED TO KNOW TO ANSWER THE QUESTION?



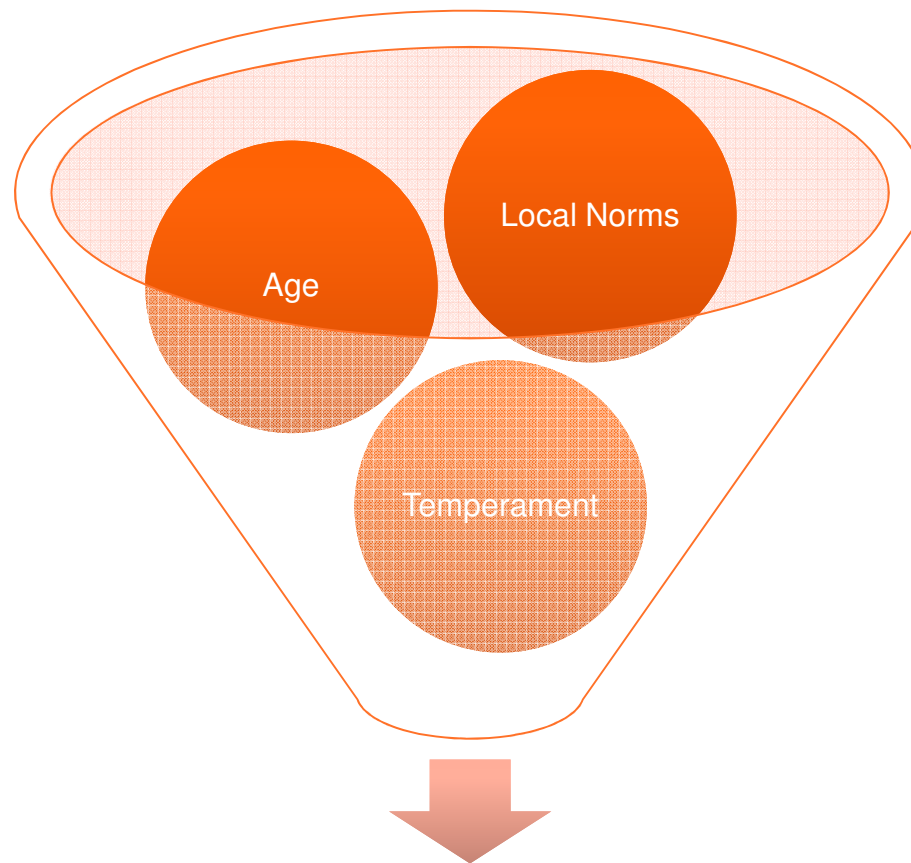
ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT DAVID?

OTHER CHILDREN TO CONSIDER...

- Miriam cries when she does not get her way. She frequently crumples up her work saying “I’m stupid” or “This is terrible”. She asks many clarifying questions about each request or direction. She is very close to her sister Sarah and is rarely seen without her.
- Jonathan gets very angry when asked to stop doing things he enjoys, or to engage in tasks that are challenging for him. He has frequent arguments at home, at recess, and at least once each week is called out of recess because he has hit or punched someone.



Contributing Factors – Is it typical?

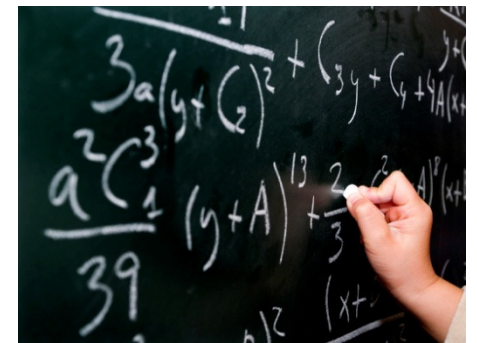


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Other Important Considerations in “Typical” vs. Not

- Individual differences must be examined in the context of
 - Tasks – what are we expecting children to do
 - Normative transitions – what changes have just occurred
 - Broader ecological risks – what stressors/supports are available in child’s life
- All development is complex and connected to many factors



Areas for Parents to Consider

Academic

Social

Affect/Mood

Behavior

Academics

- Skills
 - Content specific
 - Generic
- Learning curve/process
- Patterns of strengths and challenges



Social

Strengths:

- Friendships
- Social skills
- Social problem solving

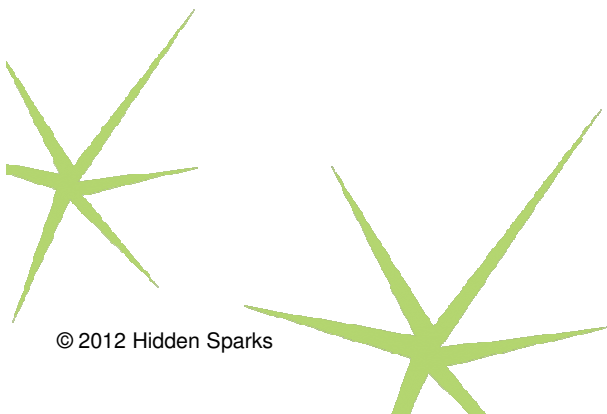
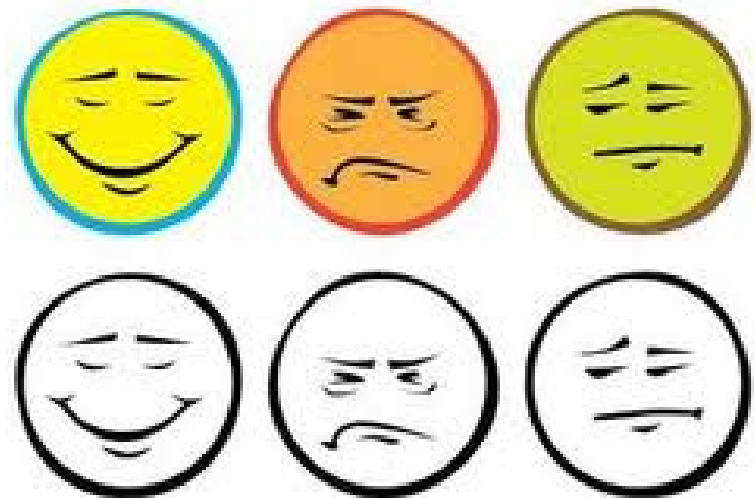
Concerns:

- Withdrawal
- Aggression
- Very specific and unusual likes
- Clinginess/struggles with separation



Affect/Mood

- Moodiness – justification (consider biology)
- Depression – justification – may be more irritable than sad
- Anxiety/avoidance/shutting down - justification



Behavior

- Aggression
- Rituals
- Tantrums
- Low motivation/responsiveness



Parental “Occupational Hazards”

- Comparison – beware of looking at what other children can do, but use some knowledge of what is typical for ages to judge
 - Worry/Panic – concern promotes action – panic paralyzes
 - Temperamental mismatch – empathic failure
-
- If it is atypical –parents are in best position to offer loving problem solving, support, and unconditional love and acceptance to their child



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Conclusions

- No one factor determines typicality
- Understanding the whole child is critical
- When concerns emerge, try providing support and encouragement.
- Worry is contagious – exude calm
- Be hopeful – “the developmental approach”
- If concerned, consider consultation to appropriate professional



Upcoming Hidden Sparks Without Walls Sessions

Tuesday 11/20/12 8:30-9:30pm	Help Your Child Get Organized! With Dr. Jane Gertler
Tuesday 12/18/12 8:30-9:30pm	Study Skills With Zipora Schuck
Tuesday 2/5/13 8:30-9:30pm	Social Skills With Dr. Bonnie Goldblatt
Tuesday 3/5/13 8:30-9:30pm	Your Attention, Please! With Kate Sussman
Tuesday 4/9/13 8:30-9:30pm	Understanding Your Child's Psychoeducational Assessment Report With Dr. Orit Goldhamer
Tuesday 5/21/13 8:30-9:30pm	Memory With Karen Kruger

For more information visit: www.hidden-sparks.org

Contacting Hidden Sparks

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