Welcome to Hidden Sparks Without Walls. We will be starting at 8:30pm.

To alleviate background noise and ensure a quiet session, your audio connection has been muted.

Asking Questions & Sharing Thoughts:
You are encouraged to ask questions and share your thoughts on the Chat.

Please activate the chat feature by clicking in the “Chat bubble” on the control panel on the bottom of your screen.

Audio:
If you would like to call in via phone for audio, please click on the phone icon, select “I will call in” and you will be provided with the call-in number.
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 12th year, Hidden Sparks has trained 297 coaches and 465 educators in 108 Jewish day schools in New York, New Jersey, Baltimore, Chicago, Florida, Cleveland, Atlanta and 6 Israeli cities.

Please be in touch with our office to find out how to bring Hidden Sparks programs to your school!
Understanding Accommodations and Modifications and Partnering with Teachers

Presented by Amanda Morin
November 20, 2019
Amanda Morin is an author, speaker, parent advocate and former early childhood educator. Ms. Morin worked in classrooms and as an early intervention specialist for 10 years and currently works as a senior writer and in-house expert for Understood for Education and the Understood.org program.

Ms. Morin has written for and served as an expert resource for numerous outlets, including NPREd, Education Week, Associated Press (AP), The Atlantic, Washington Post, Parenting Special Needs Magazine, and more.


Morin is on the Professional Advisory Board of Matan, the advisory board of Learning Disabilities Association of Maine, and is a member of the Learning Disabilities Association of America, and the Education Writers’ Association.
Overview of the Session

Understanding the language around struggling learners can be confusing, especially when it comes to things like IEPs, 504s, accommodations, and modifications.

It’s also not always easy to know which are best for your child or what it looks like when they’re working well.

We’ll explore ways for families and teachers to partner to track progress and optimize student learning.
Session Goals

• Understand the differences between accommodations and modifications.

• Learn commonly-used accommodations and modifications.

• Know how to evaluate if accommodations are working well (or if they're not).

• Gain practical tips and solutions to partner with teachers and help your child progress.
What’s the difference between accommodations and modifications?
Accommodations vs. Modifications

• An accommodation changes *how* a student learns the material. They are changes that remove barriers to learning.

• A modification changes *what* a student is taught or expected to learn. They are changes that alter the curriculum.
About modifications

Modifications are:

• Used less commonly than accommodations because they alter the curriculum and standards

• Often provided for students who have significant intellectual disabilities

• Provided to students for whom accommodations haven’t been successful in helping them progress in the general education curriculum
About modifications

Modifications change:

• What students are expected to learn
• The content of instruction
• The expectations for a course, assignment or test
• The goals of a learning task or lesson
Accommodations are changes in:

- **Presentation** (the way information is presented)
- **Response** (the way students complete assignments or tests)
- **Setting** (where students complete assignments or tests)
- **Timing and scheduling** (the pace at which/when students complete assignments or tests)
- **Organization skills** (the tools students use to help manage assignments or tests)
Accommodations do not change:

- what students are expected to learn
- the content of instruction
- the expectations for learning
- the goals of the learning task
# The differences at a glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Modification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- A strategy used to help a student with learning needs experience the same curriculum as his or her peers</td>
<td>- A strategy used to help a student with significant learning needs experience the same curriculum as his or her peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Has the same learning outcomes as his or her peers</td>
<td>- Has different learning outcomes than his or her peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Happens in the general education classroom</td>
<td>- Happens in the general education classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tools, materials, technology, visual aides, and timing are used to help the student access the curriculum so he/she can learn the same content as his or her peers</td>
<td>- Tools, materials, technology, visual aides, and timing are used to help the student experience the curriculum but may not learn the same content as his or her peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Grading is the same</td>
<td>- Grading is different</td>
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www.theinclusiveclass.com
The difference in classroom instruction

Accommodations

A student might listen to an audio version of a book. But it’s still the same book that the rest of the class is reading.

Modifications

A student could be assigned shorter or easier reading assignments that’s different from the rest of the class.
The difference in tests

Accommodations

A student with writing difficulties may use spell-check when they take notes during class, but not during a weekly spelling test.

They may have extra time to complete the spelling test or use a keyboard if the physical act of writing is difficult.

Modifications

A student with modifications might only have to study 10 out 20 spelling words of them.

Or may have a different list of spelling words.
What are some common accommodations?
Common Accommodations: Presentation

• Audio instead of text
• *Content in multimedia formats*
• Fewer problems per page
• *Increased print size*
• Instructions spoken aloud
• *Record a lecture instead of taking notes*
• Shared class notes
• *Have an outline of a lesson*
• Visual presentations of verbal material
• *Written instructions*
Common Accommodations: Response

- Use spoken or written responses
- Dictate answers to someone else
- Record responses via video or audio
- Use a spelling dictionary
- Type notes or answers in class
- Use a calculator or table of “math facts”
- Draw a map, picture or other visual representation
Common Accommodations: Setting

- Work or take a test in a different or quieter room
- Sit where they learn best
- Have flexible classroom spaces
- Small group settings
- Use sensory tools
Common Accommodations: Timing & Scheduling

- Extra time to complete an assignment, project or test
- Extra time to process information and directions
- Frequent breaks
- Complete work in timed sessions or over days
- Differ the order of the sections of a test
- Take tests at a specific time of day
Common Accommodations: Organization skills

• An alarm or timer to help with time management
• Mark texts, key vocabulary or main points with a highlighter
• Planners or organizers to keep track of assignments
• Study skills instruction
Are accommodations working?
The power of partnering with teachers
Getting on the same page

1. Meet to discuss what supports look like in action in the classroom
2. Be clear which supports are needed in different settings
3. Share a vision of what success looks like
4. Have a clear timeframe of when to revisit
5. Know how data will be collected
Talk to the teacher

Set up regular communication via phone, email or other means.

Ask:

1. Is my child using their accommodations?
2. How often and which ones?
3. Do you see an improvement in work and/or confidence?
4. Are there other accommodations we should consider?
Keeping track at home

Check in

• Talk with your child about accommodations and supports. Ask your child if he’s using his accommodations. What’s working well?

Read progress reports

• Look over IEP or other progress reports to see progression or comments that show a need to revisit supports.

Watch, listen and read between the lines.

• Keep an eye on your child’s homework and classroom test scores. Is your child making progress? Listen carefully to what he says—or doesn’t say—about school and learning. Jot down your concerns.
Why won’t my child use accommodations and supports?

6 reasons why and ways to help
Reason #1

Not wanting to stand out or feel different.

How to help:

Work with the teacher to make sure accommodations/supports are readily available and subtle. Encourage teachers to consider learning variability a part of the classroom culture.
Reason #2

Worrying about how other kids might react.

How to help:

Make sure your child knows accommodations aren’t cheating. They are simply “eyeglasses” for schoolwork. Role-play responses to use if other kids say something.
Reason #3

Feeling like they’re doing something wrong.

How to help:
Assure your child that the supports are helping him show what he already knows. Talk with the teacher about letting your child “fail” if needed the first time and then succeed with the support to understand that better.
Reason #4

Not believing or understanding how it will help.

How to help:
Get your child’s buy-in by explaining how the team thinks this will help. Talk through when he thinks the support is needed and when it’s not. Allow him to explore that on his own (but let the teacher know!).
Reason #5

Not wanting to ask to use it or knowing how to ask for it.

How to help:
Talk to the teacher about what support they need to have accommodations readily available and in teaching your child how to use it. Work with the teacher and your child to come up with subtle signals everyone recognizes that your child can use to ask for what s/he child needs.
Reason #6

Not needing it in this class or lesson.

How to help:

Celebrate! Not all accommodations are necessary in all classes or lessons. For example, digital text may not be necessary in P.E. Just because an accommodation is available for all classes doesn’t mean kids need to use it in all classes.
Final Takeaway

What could happen if *all* kids had access to accommodations in the classroom, not just kids with identified needs?

Thoughts?

Answer in the chat box.
# Upcoming Hidden Sparks Without Walls Sessions

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
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| Wed., December 11, 2019 | For Teachers  
                         | Kriah Strategies for All  
                         | *Presented by Angelina Swenson* |
| Wed., January 6, 2020   | *Teachers and Parents*                      | Supporting Students in Their Transition to Middle and High School  
                         | *Presented by Zipora Schuck* |

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

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Contacting Hidden Sparks

Contact Presenter: Amanda Morin

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