More Home, Less Work

With Zipora Schuck
December 2, 2014
The Hidden Sparks Without Walls Parent Connection Series is made possible by the generosity of the Jewish Women's Foundation of New York.
Hidden Sparks Without Walls Parent Connection is a series of courses designed to bring together educational professionals and parents in order to improve the quality of the educational experience for all students, including those who struggle.

We hope that the information provided in these courses is helpful, however every child, family, and teacher is different and the strategies and techniques discussed in the seminars do not necessarily apply to every situation.

Hidden Sparks Without Walls Parent Connection does not, in any way, substitute for personal professional assistance or guidance delivered by an educational or other professional dedicated to assisting your child or family.

Hidden Sparks Without Walls, and the Hidden Sparks program in general, does not offer evaluation, recommendation, or consultation services to individual students or families.
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. The Hidden Sparks model and program is currently in 36 Jewish day schools/yeshivot in the New York, Baltimore, and Chicago areas.

More than 20 schools have received Hidden Sparks services using federal title funds.
Welcome to *Hidden Sparks Without Walls Parent Connection.* 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”** so everyone can 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.
- Feel free to use the **hand raising feature** by clicking on the little yellow hand on the right side of the screen.
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.

• For best reception, we recommend your using a landline rather than a cellphone.

• Please participate in a quiet, undisturbed room to avoid background noise if you are called on to raise a question.

• **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. During the designated Q and A times, you will be able to “raise your hand” in the sidebar, and we will unmute you for questions.

• **Identify Yourself** - When you ask a question verbally during the designated times, please identify yourself by name and school or state on-line in the chatroom.
Our Guest: Zipora Schuck, MA, MS

Mrs. Schuck is a School Psychologist from Rockland County, NY. She is dedicated to helping children find success during the school day and beyond, through her work with teachers, principals, parents and children. She holds two masters degrees, one in Special Education and one in School Psychology as well as having completed extensive post graduate work in administration.

After working for the NYC Dept. of Education, she assumed the role of Director of the Learning Center at the Beth Rochel School in Monsey, as well as founding Pathways Consulting Services LLC, a professional development agency. She has served as the permanent educational consultant for many schools in Monsey over the last decade, and presents trainings throughout the country. Mrs. Schuck is also an adjunct faculty instructor for Mercy College, teaching in both the undergraduate and graduate programs of Special Education and Psychology.

From all her responsibilities, she most enjoys her counseling and coaching sessions with children and teens, giving them the cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional tools they need to succeed in the real world.
Overview of the Session:

Is Homework time the most dreaded part of the day for you.... for your child?

Join us tonight as we learn some simple strategies to reframe the homework experience for both parents and children.
Session Goals:

To help parents reframe the homework experience by:

- Focusing on the many life skills that can be instilled and practiced
- Helping children develop good organizational strategies
- Providing empathy to deepen the parent/child relationship
- Instilling a sense of fun and excitement into a ‘must do’ time
Think about which words describe the current homework situation in your home:

- Tearful
- Excruciating
- Peaceful
- Fun
- Enjoyable
- Pleasant
- Quiet
- Cooperating
- Encouraging
- Mature
- Stressful
- Blaring
- Intense
- Threatening
Student: Would you punish me for something I didn’t do?
Teacher: Of course not.
Student: Well I didn’t do my homework.

Morah: This homework looks like your mother’s handwriting.
Student: That's because I used my mother’s pen!

Q: Why did the boy eat his homework?
A: His teacher told him it was a piece of cake.
Paradigm Shift

• What’s a paradigm?
  A way of viewing a certain situation.

• What’s a paradigm shift?
  A different view of the same situation based on new information.

• Example form Steven Covey – 7 Habits.
What's Your Homework Paradigm?

• Teachers don’t realize/don’t care how much time it takes.

• I hate it more than the kids.

• So much of it is pointless busy work.

• I’m overwhelmed doing homework with more than one child.

• I can't handle it.

• It brings out the worst in both of us for not good reason.

• I hated it as a kid and I’m hating it now.
Homework Goals According to Most Teachers:

- Review
- Additional practice
- Organization
- Help parents glimpse into child’s academics
Life Skills via Homework Goals:

Which skills are your child learning?

- Time management
- Planning
- Prioritizing
- Goal setting
- Resourcefulness
- Communication
- Task initiation
- Task completion
- Shirking
- Excuses
- Irresponsibility
- Procrastination
- Task avoidance
Location, Location, Location

Designate two locations

1. Daily homework:
   *Dining room table, kitchen table, den, near phone, parent, food, distractions.*

2. Study time:
   *Quiet location, without distractions, time limited to avoid, “I can’t concentrate – it’s too noisy!”*
Having the Right Things in the Right Place at the Right Time

Homework Supply box

- Pens/pencils
- White out/eraser
- Paper
- Post it notes
- Markers
- Scissors, glue, tape
- Shticky school supplies
- Mini water bottles
- Things to occupy younger children
Mystery Box

- Timers
- Bookmarks
- ‘That was easy’
- Digital recorder
- Jokes
- Books
- Stress/squish ball
- Cartoons
Dedicated Homework Time

- Importance of routine and structure
- Try for a mutual decision
- Food comes first
- Some relaxing comes first
- Helps with task initiation
- Parent should be available to help as needed
- Would you want your boss waiting for you in your living room when you get home from work everyday?
My child was up the whole night doing homework!

- Estimated time log
- Really?
- Real time
- Prioritizing
- Big event
- Homework
- Study
- Downtime
- Family time
- Food
- Bedtime
Hard Tasks First

- Impending dread uses emotional energy
- A written **To Do list** that the child keeps crossing off
- Chunking a big assignment
- Mini breaks
- A 10 minute timer
• What are the teacher’s expectations?
• How long should it take the average child?
• What's the maximum time your child should spend on it?
• How should you contact her if it’s not going well?
• How can you help?
An Opportunity to Encourage Organization

- Checklists
- Family test/project calendar
- Embedded schedules
- The PLANNER
- The PM/AM Box – Launch pad
  - Coat/snack/lunch
  - Balls
  - Book bag packed
  - Shoes/boots
  - Tzedaka $
  - Signed notices
Some children need:

• Weekly pesach cleaning of book bag
• As needed spot checks for organization
• Supplies restocked
• The bright red homework folder
• The junk drawer folder for all items not yet returned to their correct place
“My Homework is so hard tonight!”

It’s not so hard.

Your brother has much harder homework.

I don’t think it’s so hard.

It wouldn’t be so hard if you would've been listening in class!

You always find something to complain about.

Break it down and then you'll see its manageable.

I feel so so so terrible for you.
Empathy

Sounds like your homework is really tough tonight.
It’s hard to dread your homework.
You wish your homework was easier.
Wow, hard homework is the worst. Ouch!

A post it note or love note hidden somewhere the next day!
An Opportunity to Model Coping

The Problem Solving Model

- Brainstorm options
- Evaluate all choices
- Select one
- Try it
- Follow up

- Solution oriented
- Taking it seriously but not emotionally
- Seeing adults handle stress helps children become resilient
An Opportunity to Reinforce Independence

• Make sure your child is capable of doing it
• Help child if he/she has genuinely tried to do it on their own
• Help means facilitating the child doing it
• Knowing the difference between reminders, checks and help vs. nagging, correcting, doing

Mother: *She got a B on her book report.*
Father: *That’s a good grade.*
Mother: *Are you kidding? Do you know how hard I worked on it? That was an A paper!*
Know Your Child’s Learning style

What are her/his learning capabilities?

“But the spelling words are much too hard for first graders – what was she thinking?”

• How does she process best?
  When presentation is presented orally?
  Written?
  A combination?
  With story examples, with charts?

• Teach study techniques
  Mnemonics
  Flash cards
  Songs and tunes
Sometimes It’s Too Hard

- Me and my glasses
- Unsustainable effort
- Time max
- Look for alternatives
- Plan with the teacher
- Don’t hold it against them because they did it once
911 Plans

• A high school girl
• A neighbor
• A spouse
• A tutor
• A specialized tutor
• Accommodations
• Modifications
Remember to Reinforce

- Adults build in their own treats in life
- Don’t be afraid to reward children for hard work and effort
- Praise, praise, praise:
  “Thank you for…”
  “We noticed…”
- Planned
  Individual reward
  Family rewards
- Unexpected
  Just because…
Test Preparation

- Content
- Format
- Time pressure
- Which area is difficult for your child?
- Do they have the information they need to study?
- Make sure they understand the types of questions being asked
Think about your child's homework experience:

• What area can you easily change?  
  *Start here and do it for a few weeks.*

• What's the next challenging part?  
  *Attempt a change only after some success.*
## Upcoming Hidden Sparks Without Walls Parent Connection Sessions

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<td>For Teachers and Parents: All Over the Place to Keeping the Pace: Understanding Executive Function at Home and in the School - Mindy Rosenthal</td>
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<td>Tue 2/17/2015</td>
<td>For Teachers and Parents: Are you thinking What I Think You’re Thinking? Nurturing Social Thinking in Children - Michele Garcia Winner</td>
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For more information visit: [www.hiddensparks.org](http://www.hiddensparks.org)
Hidden Sparks in schools

The Hidden Sparks program is currently in 26 Jewish day schools/yeshivot in the New York metro area, 7 schools in Baltimore and 3 schools in Chicago.

Since inception, Hidden Sparks has trained 120 Internal Coaches from 50+ ICP participating schools and has provided school-based coaching to a total of 15 Hidden Sparks External Coach Schools.

More than 1,200 teachers have received Hidden Sparks training, impacting an estimated 12,000 students.

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

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