Is This Typical?
Understanding Variations in Child Development

With Dr. Rona Novick
February 16, 2010
Welcome to *Hidden Sparks Without Walls*. We will be starting shortly…

- If you are using a speaker phone, the rest of us will hear everything going on in the room you are in. Speaker phones can also cause echoes and other extraneous sounds. Please avoid using them if possible. If that is not possible, make sure you are in a quiet room, and keep electronic gadgets as far from the phone as possible.

- While we are waiting to begin please practice using the chat feature by sharing your name, school and location. Activate chat by clicking the “Chat” tab below the attendees list on the right of your screen. Enter your communication and click on “Send.”

- If you have any clarifying questions about the format or the topic, you may click on the “Q&A” tab 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.

- Don’t hesitate to engage as active, full participants. Your contributions may help others.

- Be aware of your air time.
Welcome & Conference Etiquette

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

- **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. If you use one, mute it whenever possible.

- **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 first enter the call and when you ask a question please identify yourself by name and school or state on-line.

- **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, an Associate Clinical Professor of Child Psychology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and a Co-Educational Director of Hidden Sparks. Dr. Novick received her PHD from Rutgers University and interned at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York. She developed the Alliance for School Mental Health at North-Shore Long Island Jewish Medical Center and served as its director, authoring the BRAVE bully prevention program. She is recognized for her expertise in child behavior therapy and has published scholarly articles on school applications of behavior management, children and trauma and bully prevention. She is a licensed clinical psychologist, with specialization in child anxiety disorders, cognitive behavior therapy and family therapy. She is the author of a book for parents: Helping Your Child Make Friends, and editor of the book series Kids Don’t Come With Instruction Manuals.
Some students achieve milestones while others struggle. Are these differences part of typical development or indicators of significant challenges?

We will discuss child developmental along a continuum, considering which tasks are usually mastered at particular ages and phases.

We will focus our discussion on Pre-school through Elementary school students . . . Next week we will expand to Middle and High School students.
Session Goals

- Understanding developmental progression
- Becoming familiar with temperament, its impact in the classroom, and its relationship to development
- Recognizing the complexity of the “is this typical?” question.
In your experience . . .

- Think of a behavior, developing skill, other area of learning, behavior, or development where someone was asking about you (or you were asking about yourself) . . . Is this typical ?????

- How did it resolve? Is it still an area of concern?
Meet David

When you enter the class, David is at work. He is a handsome, neatly dressed student. He looks carefully at the work in front of him. He rocks his chair periodically, and is reminded to keep his chair still. Other students seem to have finished the assignment. David is still working. He looks over at a neighbor’s workspace, and grabs a marker. The neighbor protests loudly. David walks to the corner of the room and turns his back, facing into the corner. He begins speaking to himself.

IS THIS TYPICAL?

WHAT WOULD YOU NEED TO KNOW TO ANSWER THE QUESTION?
What Do We Know About the Process of Development?

Graph A shows a linear trend with increasing values as the x-axis increases.

Graph B also shows a linear trend, but with a slightly steeper slope compared to Graph A.

Graph C displays a more complex trend with fluctuations and a non-linear pattern.
Development Realities

- 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
The End Product of Healthy Development

Healthy, developed children, in an age-appropriate manner demonstrate:

- **Confidence and Relatedness**
  - Self-confident; reasonably trusting of others; capable of relating well; empathetic toward others

- **Self-regulation**
  - Able to constructively channel frustration and anger; able to inhibit or contain unwanted or inappropriate emotions, impulses, and desires

- **Motivation, Mastery & Resilience**
  - Motivated to master cognitive, physical, and social tasks; and able to cope with adversity.
Important Considerations in “Normal” vs. Not

• Individual differences must be examined in the context of
  • Tasks
  • Normative transitions
  • Broader ecological risks

• Normal AND atypical development are best understood when *multiple* risk factors and *multiple* developmental domains are assessed
Putting the Pieces Together

Self confidence  
Self-regulation  
Mastery

Tasks  
Transitions  
Ecological Risks

Goals

Means/Challenges
# The Elementary Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Confidence/Relatedness</th>
<th>Self-regulation</th>
<th>Motivation, Mastery, Resilience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tasks</strong></td>
<td>Cooperative play</td>
<td>Follow others’ rules</td>
<td>Reading, writing, arithmetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of one’s strengths</td>
<td>Negotiate conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transitions</strong></td>
<td>Increasing independence</td>
<td>Longer learning periods</td>
<td>Block print to cursive</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Peer interactions less adult influenced</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Risks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Internal issues - temperament</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genuine challenges</td>
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<td>Genuine challenges</td>
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Behavior Develops on a Continuum
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. Planful use of aggression. May occur in disinhibiting situations i.e. internet.

Infant/toddler  K-2  3-5  6-8  HS
What Might the Developmental Continuum for Distractibility Look Like?

Infant/toddler  K-2  3-5  6-8  HS
Protective Factors

External support systems

Disposition/Temperament

Affectional Ties

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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.
Why Does Temperament Matter?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shira</th>
<th>Sarah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Very “easy” baby – had regular schedule for eating and sleeping</td>
<td>• Colicky and never slept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Took to everyone quickly</td>
<td>• Finicky about who she would let near her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Loved new things</td>
<td>• Feared all things new, tentative in most situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Persisted with difficult tasks</td>
<td>• Would not try new things, or quickly reject them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Often calm, and easily soothed</td>
<td>• Often upset, fussy, and hard to soothe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seemed happy most of time</td>
<td>• Intense distress reactions frequently</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do you think each girl’s first grade teacher saw?
Temperament points to remember

- What is normal 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 students who have been challenging . . . Which temperamental factors were an issue?
The teacher asks the class to join her in the science area of the room. David seems really happy about science and begins giggling and flapping his arms standing next to his seat. When the teacher begins the Science lesson, David interrupts virtually every sentence with facts about the solar system and universe. The lesson is on life forms in swampy areas.

IS THIS TYPICAL

WHAT WOULD YOU NEED TO KNOW TO ANSWER THE QUESTION?

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT DAVID?
Also in David’s School . . .

- 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 task or assignment. She is very close to 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 recess, and at least once each week is called out of recess because he has hit or punched someone.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Affective</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skill level</td>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td>Severe and persistent depression</td>
<td>Aggression</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning curve</td>
<td>Odd social behavior</td>
<td>Rapidly shifting moods</td>
<td>Perseveration /rituals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattern of skills</td>
<td>Clinginess – Issues with separation</td>
<td>High levels of anxiety and/or avoidance</td>
<td>Persistent Tantrums</td>
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Conclusions

• No one factor determines normality

• Understanding the whole child is critical

• Be descriptive rather than evaluative

• When red flags emerge, explore, intervene, and if seriously concerned, consider referral to appropriate professional
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<td>Is This Typical? Understanding Variations in Child Development</td>
<td>Dr. Rona Novick</td>
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<td>Secondary School Session</td>
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<td>Wednesday, March 3, 2010</td>
<td>Core Classroom Practices in Judaic and General Studies that Reflect an Appreciation for All Kinds of Learners in the Classroom</td>
<td>Judah Weller, Ed.D.</td>
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<td>Wednesday, March 17, 2010</td>
<td>Helping Students Discover How They Learn</td>
<td>Kelli Pollock</td>
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<td>Wednesday, April 14, 2010</td>
<td>Reading Comprehension Strategy Instruction: Enhancing Understanding of Text</td>
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<td>Cooperative Learning: A Way to Differentiate Your Instruction and Enhance Your Students’ Engagement</td>
<td>Harriet Lenk, Ph.D.</td>
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<td>Monday, May 10, 2010</td>
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For more information visit: www.hiddensparks.org
**About Hidden Sparks**

*Hidden Sparks* is a non-profit fund 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 by helping schools meet the needs of children with learning and behavioral differences, ultimately all students will benefit. 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 21 Jewish Day Schools/Yeshivot in New York and 7 in Boston, through a partnership with Gateways: Access to Jewish Education.
Contacting Hidden Sparks

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