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 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 10th year, Hidden Sparks has trained 210 coaches in 69 Jewish day schools in New York, New Jersey, Baltimore, Boca Raton, and Chicago, and 4 Israeli cities (Jerusalem, Modiin, Ramle, Ra’anana).
Welcome to *Hidden Sparks Without Walls.* The webinar will be starting at 8:30 pm

Thank you for joining the webinar. There will be no sound until we begin at 8:30pm.

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 would like to call in by phone for audio, the number is **1-650-429-3300** Access code: 731 166 532
Focusing In: Strategies for Supporting Students’ Focus

Presented by Mindy Rosenthal
March 6, 2018
Mindy Rosenthal, M.S., BCBA, is the resource director at Ilan High School and an adjunct professor at Daemen College. Her private practice, Behavior & Educational Consulting (BEC), specializes in the remediation of social skill deficits in children, adolescents and adults with ASD, ADHD, and other verbal and non-verbal learning disabilities. Mindy serves as consultant to various New York and New Jersey schools, devising and implementing social skills and behavioral programs, as well as training parents and teachers.
Overview of the Session

- Focusing Breakdowns & Repairs
- Tackling the wandering mind
- Encouraging the dimensions
- Accommodations
- Movement
- Working with Attentional Difficulties
- Fidgets
- Specific Strategies for teachers
Session Goals

1. To understand focusing with its specific breakdowns
2. To build upon and expand our repertoire of tools and strategies
3. To walk away with practical techniques that can be used with the class as a whole, individuals within the teaching time, and individuals after class.
What does Focusing Include?

- Mind Prep- arousal, alertness, initiating attention
- Persistence towards goals- sustaining attention
- Differentiating between details and the main idea
- Filtering out extraneous information
- Remaining on task/resisting distractions
- Shifting focus when necessary
- Focusing back in/task re-engagement
Mind Wandering – Cognitive Disinhibition

Internal Factors:

- Mood
- Physical Symptoms, e.g. hunger
- Memories
- Daydreams
- Future Events

External Factors:

- Computer
- Phone
- Games
- Books
- Fidgets
- Accessories
Process Repairs

**Missing Mind** → focus, proxemics, pause

**Missing the Point** → objectives, shorter intervals, recap

**Mouth Movements** → response inhibition, alternative behavior (i.e. gum)

**Motor Movements** → Fidgets, foot straps

**Mind Wandering** → bring it back, take a break, self talk
Encouraging the Dimensions

Length
Timers, Premack principle, incorporate breaks and reinforcers

Width
Model – talk out loud, emphasize the big picture or the details

Depth
Verbalize the staying focused on right target, one game at a time rule
A = Accommodations
Accommodations:

Seating
- Near teacher
- More space
- Away from distractions

Classroom Décor

Prior Personal Attention

Simplify

Write down

Physical Prompt
Movement Increases Focus
Yoga

Research

- Reduces anxiety which increases learning (Hughes, 2011)

- Increased concentration and motivation while decreasing anxiety. (June 2007 – ACSM Traci A. Statler, Ph.D., and Amy Wheeler, Ph.D)

- Children with attention problems who participate in regular yoga sessions experience “enhanced relaxation, improved self-control, do better in school, get along with others and have fewer outbursts” (The ABC-of-Yoga.com website 2009)

Practice

- Deep breathing
- Toe balancing
- Stretching
- Mediation with positive imagery,
- Yogarilla
- Poses
- Games

- Additional resources braingym, yogaed, yoga4school, yogabasics, yoga journal
Working WITH Attention Challenges

Instead of removing fidgeting, Provide fidgets.
Instead of taking away recess, Increase breaks.
Instead of crowding, Give space.
Instead of surprising, Prepare ahead.
Instead of punishing, Prevent.
Instead of bribing, Reinforce.

ABC’S

2018 Hidden Sparks
Fidgets........ use don’t abuse

Standard
• Stress balls
• Magic Cushion
• Desk buddy
• Putty
• Pin Art
• RUBBER BAND BRACELETS 😊

Subtle
• Key chains
• Coffee cup
• Jewelry/watch
• Pocket watch
• Gum
• Cell phone

Mind & Eyes on Speaker, Hands on Fidget
Strategies: M.O.V.E.R.S.

- Get students physically involved
  Open/close fist, bang on desk, stand up, touch head
- Involve all senses
  Flashlights, voice recorders, vary volume/tone, sucking candy/gum

**M – Methods** – Vary teaching methods

**O – Objectives** – Clearly state learning & assessment objectives

**V – Visual Representation** – Board and handouts

**E – Expectation** – Set fair behavioral expectations

**R – Review** Previous lesson

**S – Simplify** – Less is more; no gray
Where’s Waldo?
Here He Is!

ABC’S
Today we are going to learn about penguins. Let’s listen carefully because I will be asking some questions about penguins after the lesson to see how much you can remember.

Penguins are like people because they are warm blooded. But unlike people, penguins have insulation that lets them live in extremely cold temperatures. Insulation is something that keeps things warm. Houses have insulation to keep them warm in the winter. The penguins’ insulation is several layers thick. A layer of tightly packed feathers covers the penguins’ bodies. (Show picture of penguin feathers from Internet.) Under the feather is a thick layer of fat called blubber. Both the feathers and the blubber are insulation for the penguin. Whales and dolphins also have blubber to keep them warm, or insulated from the cold. A penguin’s insulation works so well that sometimes they get too hot. What can you do when you get hot? How do you think a penguin will cool down when it gets hot? When this happens, the penguin fluffs up their feathers to let some of the heat out.

Comprehension check:
1. What is this lesson about?
2. How are penguins like people?
3. What is insulation?
4. What is the penguins’ thick layer of fat called?
SAM the Alien

ABC’S

- **SAM**
  - Spot it
  - Address it
  - Move on

- Concretizes the abstract
- Positive affirmation practice
- In & Out
- Fight to win
  - Talk back
  - Strategies
Affecting Focus

- Too much stimulation/Too little stimulation
- Sugar
- TV, Video Games, Computer
- Learned Helplessness
- Stress
- Sleep Deprivation
Summarize

Focusing & Focusing Breakdowns

Accommodations

Strategies

Teaching: MOVERS
“TIME AND ATTENTION ARE THE MOST VALUABLE GIFT WE CAN GIVE CHILDREN. PLEASE BE GENEROUS.”
## Upcoming Hidden Sparks Without Walls Sessions

| For Teachers | Executive Assistant: Building Executive Function Strategies for Reading and Writing  
Presented by Hollis Dannaham |
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| For Parents & Teachers | Cultivating and Supporting Self Esteem in Children With Learning Challenges  
Presented by Amanda Morin |
| Tue., May 1, 2018 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

Does your school participate in Hidden Sparks? Find out about how your school can train internal faculty coaches to deepen its ability to reach diverse learners.

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Hidden Sparks would like to thank: