hiddensparks
without walls

Friendships Are a Skill: How Parents Can Help

PRESENTER

Rachel Tuchman, LMHC

Wednesday,October 14, 2026 @ 8:30



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Our Programs & Offerings

Hidden Sparks helps educators and Jewish day schools nurture the Hidden Spark within each student, facilitating professional development to increase the understanding and support for the broad range of learners in the classroom.

Learning Lenses

Award-winning course on understanding learning and behavior in the classroom.

1:1 Teacher Coaching

Individualized coaching for teachers to enhance instructional practices and support.

Faculty & Peer Mentoring

In-school mentoring programs for faculty and trained peer coaches.

Differentiating Instruction

Interactive workshops designed to help teachers differentiate learning effectively.

Hidden Sparks Without Walls

Ongoing national webinar series for educators and parents.

Parent Learning Center (PLC)

Dedicated guidance and workshops for NYC yeshiva and day school parents.

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FREE PARENT COACHING

For families in the yeshiva and day school community - free, confidential one-on-one skills training.

Learn practical strategies to:

- Promote positive connections
- End parent burnout
- Manage screen time
- Improve sibling relationships
- Advocate for academic support
- Establish flexible routines
- Help your child make friends

Sessions are Available **Virtually** and by **Phone**



HIDDEN SPARKS PEC

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About the Presenter



Rachel Tuchman is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) with over ten years of experience. She has worked with many diverse populations including incarcerated women at Riker's Island Correctional Facility, kids and adults with developmental delays, kids with behavior issues, overwhelmed parents looking for skills and support, teens struggling with the pressures of adolescence and life in general, adults going through difficult life circumstances (divorce, infidelity, phase of life challenges), individuals struggling with their relationship with food and their bodies and women experiencing infertility. Rachel is HAES (Health At Every Size) aligned clinician and dedicates a lot of her time out of office to educating parents and kids on the importance of body respect and the behaviors that truly honor our health.

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Friendship involves skills.

Not just personality. Not just popularity. Not just luck.

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Making friends takes practice.

Initiating, joining, showing interest and taking social risks.

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What does friendship require?

- Initiating and responding
- Reading social cues
- Compromising
- Managing disappointment
- Repairing after conflict
- Speaking up

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Friendships require perspective taking.

Reading cues, empathy, recognizing others preferences

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A good kid can still struggle socially.

Kindness and friendship skills are not exactly the same thing.

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Social success isn't the goal.

Healthy, mutual, respectful relationships are.

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“Nobody likes me.”

What do you hear when your child says this?

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Validate the feeling.
Get curious about the story.

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Help them separate...

What happened?

The observable facts. What would a camera have seen?

What did you feel?

Left out, embarrassed, angry, jealous, disappointed.

What did it mean?

The story they told themselves about what happened.

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Sometimes our child is being treated badly.
Sometimes our child is contributing to the problem.

Sometimes both are true.

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Curiosity > Defensiveness

Feedback about a social skill is information, not an indictment of your child.

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Look for patterns.

- Does this keep happening?
- Does it happen with different children?
- Does it happen in different settings?
- What tends to happen right before things go wrong?

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Don't solve what they can learn to handle.

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A simple intervention ladder

LISTEN

Understand before fixing

COACH

Help them think through options

FACILITATE

Create support or opportunity

INTERVENE

Step in when adult help is needed

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Not every painful friendship experience is bullying.

Conflict • exclusion • meanness • rejection • bullying: They are not interchangeable.

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When adults do need to step in

- Persistent targeting
- Threats or physical aggression
- A significant power imbalance
- A major impact on school or daily functioning
- A child who cannot reasonably navigate it alone

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We can create opportunities.
We can't manufacture chemistry.

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Friendships change.

That doesn't always mean something went wrong.

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Whose feelings are these?

Am I responding to what is happening to my child right now...
or to what their experience brings up in me?

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The goal is NOT…

- Never being excluded
- Always being invited
- Having a best friend
- No friendship drama
- Never getting hurt

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The goal is...

- I can make and maintain friendships.
- I can handle conflict and repair.
- I can tolerate rejection and disappointment.
- I can speak up without controlling.
- I can let go when a friendship isn't working.
- I can handle hard social things.

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Stay close enough to guide them.

Step back enough to let them grow.

Friendships Are a Skill

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Upcoming Webinars

Wednesday, October 21, 2026
Beyond Generic Remediation: Practical Strategies for Dyslexia Subtypes in Hebrew
Presented by Dr. Scott Goldberg

Tuesday, November 17, 2026
Building Partnership: Navigating Difficult Conversations With Parents
Presented by Jane Taubenfeld Cohen

Tuesday, December 1, 2026
Understanding and Supporting Executive Functions in the Classroom
Presented by Monica Werner

More Info & Registration:

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Contact Us

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