



Simon

Five-year-old Simon was adopted at birth by his moms, Ellie who Simon calls mama and Martha who Simon calls mommy. Simon is on the autism spectrum, a diagnosis that was made when he was 18 months old.

In PreK, Simon received early childhood special education services at his inclusive child care program. With great support from his teachers, therapists, and family, Simon made significant progress.

In Kindergarten, Simon's teachers report that he excels in all academic areas. His teachers and family both identify outdoor play as Simon's favorite activity. After time to run, jump, and climb, Simon is reported to return to the classroom calmer and more ready to learn.

In interactions with adults, Simon often avoids eye contact. His responses in social interactions with adults are often curt and inconsistent. When there are changes in the classroom routines or other unexplained occurrences, Simon's teachers report that he becomes agitated and angry.

Ana

Ana is a newly arrived immigrant from Georgia (a country in Western Asia formerly part of the Soviet Union). She is five years old and has just been placed in Ms. Lamarre's Kindergarten classroom. Ana is very scared and has been crying every day. She has an older brother who Ms. Lamarre will have come down to the classroom to comfort Ana. Both Ana and her brother can only speak their native Georgian language. Their mother speaks Georgian and Russian and their father speaks Georgian, Russian, and English.

After a few weeks, Ana has started to settle into the routine in the classroom. Ms. Lamarre has observed Ana likes to look at books, especially books with animals. Ana has also become friendly with some girls in the class who are kind to her and take care of her needs. Ms. Lamarre is worried, though, that the peers are interrupting Ana's English language learning because they often speak for Ana, help Ana with her class work, and don't give her the chance to struggle.

At home, Ana's family is encountering issues with getting their life set up in the United States. Because of language barriers, Ana's mother does not often communicate with Ms. Lamarre. Ana's father is happy to facilitate communication but is also very busy and distracted with other pressing priorities.





Angeles

Angeles is a five-year-old Kindergarten student in Mr. Ogbonna's classroom. She lives with her mom and two older brothers who speak Spanish in the home. Her father is a migrant worker who only sees Angeles occasionally. Also, her mother and father separated when Angeles was a baby. Her mother, Yolanda, is very involved in her children's schooling. She attends all open houses, conferences, and family nights. Yolanda is always asking Mr. Ogbonna for additional things she can do at home with Angeles.

In the classroom, Mr. Ogbonna has observed Angeles being very friendly with classmates. She likes to organize cooperative games with the blocks and Lego figures. After reading books, Angeles likes to draw pictures of the characters. She adds details to his pictures such as facial features, character accessories, and setting. Mr. Ogbonna has also noticed that Angeles thrives on positive attention from adults. Angeles will welcome any adult who enters the classroom warmly, and want that person to sit by her. Yolanda has shared that because Angeles is the youngest of her children, she thinks she is more eager for adult attention to compete with her older brothers.

Although Angeles likes to play with her friends, she can have trouble sharing. She likes to set up games the way she wants and doesn't want others to "mess up" her game. When Angeles thinks her classmates are not being fair to her she uses her hands to hit them. Another area of concern is when Angeles gets frustrated she often gets up and leaves the classroom saying, "I'm not doing this anymore." Yolanda and Mr. Ogbonna want to find ways to help Angeles express her frustration and feelings.



Dillion

Six-year-old Dillion lives with his father, Matt. His mother is someone Matt describes as "not part of our lives." Matt is a contractor who worked his way up from carpenter to crew chief, and ultimately started his own company. Dillion stays with a neighbor after school where he gets a snack and engages in lots of rough and tumble play with other children, most of whom are older than he, until Matt gets home.

On the weekends, Dillion loves to be his father's helper in different projects around the house. Matt is adept at finding ways to reinforce math skills through measuring ingredients during food preparation or counting the number of items needed for a particular project. During the most recent parent-teacher conference, Dillion's math and motor skills were described as exceptional. Reading was an area in which Matt was encouraged to spend more time with Dillion, building his vocabulary through language and literacy activities.

Recently Matt got a call from Dillion's first-grade teacher, Ms. Gardner, in which she expressed some concerns about his behavior. She reported that Dillion has been running around the classroom during worktime and has been aggressive with classmates during recess. Ms. Gardner has tried gentle redirection with Dillion but Dillion has started "talking back" to her which makes his friends laugh.

Matt is worried about Dillion becoming a "problem child" in the classroom but isn't sure how to support his son.

Joseph



Not Joe, Joseph, he will tell you, as he is the third Joseph in his family, and using his full name is a tradition. With a younger sister coming behind him, he is continuing a family tradition of learning and education. Joseph's mother and father both completed advanced degrees and are eager to understand how they can support him in achieving his full potential.

Joseph's family can trace their roots back several generations to the era of slavery. They take pride in sharing the stories of both their roots and their aspirations. In fact, carrying the stories of the past forward is a commitment Joseph's family shares both at home and in their place of worship.

In his Kindergarten classroom, Joseph is quick to raise his hand when he knows the answer. He is fascinated with any aspect of science – animals, planets, dinosaurs, etc. But reading is not Joseph's favorite thing. When it's time to focus on reading, Joseph tunes out. When his family has asked him about this, his response has been that reading is "boring" and doesn't relate to him. Joseph's teacher is very concerned about his lack of interest in the reading curriculum.

How might you use Joseph's interest in science to support his literacy development?

What can you learn about evidence-based practices that support literacy in young black children?

What might you like to ask Joseph's family about books and reading in their home?

If you were the teacher in Joseph's classroom, what would your next steps be: 1) in terms of coordinating and collaborating with Joseph's family; 2) in terms of implementing practices within the program that support Joseph's needs? (and the needs of other children?)

If you were to select children's books that might support Joseph's interest in language and literacy, what process/parameters would you use?



Tessa

Tessa's family says she wakes up every morning full of excitement for school. This six-year-old's day in first grade starts and ends with a song, as music and her younger brother Charlie are her very favorite things.

Tessa has Williams Syndrome, a rare, spontaneously occurring genetic syndrome. This makes some things more difficult for her. *"With the right supports,"* say her mom and dad, *"she is able to shine and bring great joy, empathy and perseverance to every task!"*

The ongoing health issues that are part of Williams Syndrome are under control, but Tessa has an IEP and benefits from special instruction, speech/language, occupational therapy, and physical therapy services. Tessa has a broad-based and unstable gait, which requires attention to environmental design to keep her safe.

Tessa is a visual learner who benefits tremendously from concrete language and examples, especially when the modeling is done by her peers. Sequential instruction with intentional encouragement is very important for Tessa's success.

Kelly

Kelly is a seven-year-old girl in Mrs. Bates first grade classroom. Both of Kelly's parents are currently incarcerated and she has been living with a foster family for the past 8 months. She is able to visit each of her parents 2-3 times a month but it is a long trip on the weekends. Kelly's foster parents have three biological children and Kelly's three-year-old sister, May, is also fostered in the same home. The foster family has shared with Mrs. Bates some of the trauma reactions they have observed in Kelly and May including separation anxiety, nightmares, and bathroom accidents.



In the classroom, Kelly likes to help Mrs. Bates by being the calendar leader, door holder, pencil sharpener, etc. She always raises her hand during large group instruction and likes to relate what she learns in books to her own life. Occasionally Mrs. Bates suspects that Kelly is making up stories about her life to make connections with her peers and with the text. For example, Kelly once told a story about how she went to the zoo but when Mrs. Bates mentioned this to the foster family they reported that Kelly has not ever been to the zoo. Kelly really excels in physical education class. She loves to play sports but doesn't have the opportunity to participate in group sports outside of school.

Mrs. Bates reports that Kelly often interrupts during circle time and has trouble controlling impulses. Other children get frustrated because she interrupts what they are saying and blurts out answers. Kelly can be a perfectionist in her work and when something is hard she gets angry and breaks pencils. Mrs. Bates also has observed Kelly getting out of her seat often when she finds work difficult. In collaboration with Kelly's foster parents, Mrs. Bates would like to get Kelly an occupational therapy evaluation. However they must wait to get approval from Kelly's parents before they can proceed.

Steve

In Ms. Williams' second-grade classroom, Steve is a very sweet and helpful student. Steve lives with his grandmother who has raised him after his mother gave up parental rights when Steve was a one-year-old. They live in a multi-generational community where Steve plays with multiple cousins, uncles, and aunts. His social strengths translate to school where he is always leading play during lunch and recess. In the classroom he loves hands-on learning opportunities and his favorite subject is science.

Steve is on grade level academically and does well on all of his assessments. However, in the classroom he is easily distracted by his peers and talks excessively, interrupting the learning environment for others. Ms. Williams has tried engaging him as a peer tutor in the classroom to support the learning of others which has been somewhat successful. Steve's grandmother agrees that she would like to support Ms. Williams in helping Steve control his behavior in the classroom but is unsure of how to do this.



Marisol

Marisol's mother and father came to the US 15 years ago and are now both U. S. citizens. While both parents speak English, they speak Spanish at home to make sure that Marisol is fluent in both languages. Building Marisol's language, vocabulary, and literacy in both English and Spanish is a very high priority for Marisol's family. Marisol is seven and in second grade.

Each summer, Marisol and her family spend time in Puerto Rico so she can interact with extended family members in Spanish. Her parents have shared a concern because some children have recently teased her for using a combination of English and Spanish words in her classroom conversations.

Marisol is very interested in geography. She has a globe in her room and loves playing a game where she finds a place on the globe then hears stories from her parents about that place.

Math is her least favorite subject but she struggles to keep up with her classmates. She does best when the mathematical concepts are presented within the context of a story so the context can support her understanding.



Brandon

Brandon is an eight-year-old second grade student who lives with his mother, father, and two younger sisters. His father is in the military and is currently deployed. Brandon feels a lot of responsibility in supporting his mother and younger sisters in the home. His mother reports that he helps read books to the girls, gets them changed into PJs at night, and packs lunches in the morning.

In the classroom, Brandon is a very strong math student. His mother has asked for him to be evaluated for the Academically or Intellectually Gifted programming for third grade. He also enjoys reading non-fiction books. His favorite topics are outer space, earth science, and animals. At recess, Brandon plays with many friends and is well liked by his peers.

Often, Brandon is found daydreaming in the classroom and not attending to his classwork. When given gentle reminders he is usually able to complete work quickly and accurately. He is not distracting to other children but he doodles in notebooks, reads a book from his desk, or plays with small toys instead of completing class work. When the teacher corrects

him in front of others, he easily cries.



Montgomery

Now that he's in third grade, Montgomery prefers everyone to call him Monty, so it doesn't sound like he's in trouble. He lives with his mom and his younger sister, Evelyn. Monty's dad was killed in Iraq six months ago. The family has relocated to be near Monty's paternal grandparents. Stories with fathers in them seem to make Monty sad.

Monty's family places a high priority on discussing options and solutions. Their idea of how to figure something out is to talk with others, then arrive at a decision. This sometimes means that Monty is talking with other children when given an assignment instead of doing his work alone. Often when he is asked to work independently, his attention wanders.

Monty's favorite television program is Chopped and he wants to be a chef when he grows up. His mother thinks this may be connected to Monty's strong math skills, since cooking requires a good deal of measurement and the use of fractions.