



## 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.



## 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. Sequential instruction with intentional encouragement is very important for Tessa's success.



## 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.

A complication in achieving this priority is the fact that Marisol, based on a thoughtful referral from her first-grade teacher, has been identified as having a specific language impairment, which is reflected in delays in her receptive and expressive language in both English and Spanish. Now 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.



## 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.