

Case Study Joey

Joey is a high school freshman who receives English Language services. He has missing assignments, incomplete assignments, and is doing poorly on tests and quizzes. Teachers feel that an Evaluation for Special Education services might be appropriate. He is very easily distracted by social interactions in class.

Joey was born in China with a heart anomaly. He was adopted at 5 years old. Upon arrival he had surgery to repair his heart condition. He was also identified as having developmental delays.

- In Kindergarten, he received daily EL support. He tested as Non-English Proficiency (NEP)/ Level 1 (out of 6 levels).
- In 1st grade he made progress in English Language Proficiency (Limited English Proficiency/ Level 3. At this time, his parents brought up concerns around Reactive Attachment Disorder. An Rtl plan was developed for him.
- In 2nd grade he remained at LEP/Level 3. He was moved to a Level 3 on his Rtl plan and was identified as having Dyslexia.
- In 3rd grade he moved within District to another school. His teacher noted a potential gifted ability in Art. His language proficiency went up to an LEP/Level 4.
- For 4th grade he transferred to an online homeschool program.
- In 5th grade Joey moved back to the school he attended for grades K-2. His language proficiency test continued to show progress. He went back on an Rtl plan because he tested at a 3rd grade level for spelling and was exhibiting the need for support with organization and study skills. Parents would not sign consent to evaluate for Special Education services.
- Over the next two years his language proficiency seemed to plateau.
- By 8th grade his language proficiency decreased slightly (Writing). During this school year, his parents divorced.
- In 9th grade Joey had a 1.8 GPA. Teachers described how he would often “flip a switch” midway through an assignment, drastically changing the quality of his work. His classroom behavior was unfocused, chatty and disrespectful of classroom norms and instructions. He had a very hard time turning in assignments on time and completed. There seemed to be an entire lack of academic motivation.

Case Study Abby

Abigail is a second grader with a diagnosis of Autism. She had struggled in her previous environment and was new to public school this year.

- Autism Diagnosis Age 3
- Preschool through First Grade were completed at a private parochial school. Abby struggled increasingly in this environment. By the early part of first grade, parents were contacted several times per week to pick their daughter up early from school due to behavior.
- Parents decided to reach out to the school district in early Spring of her first grade year to find out what their options might be. They were very reluctant to contemplate a move to public school despite becoming increasingly aware that Abby needed a different environment. Parents had been told by their current school that they could no longer meet Abigail's needs.
- Parents were fearful of public school influences and perceived dangers. Several elementary schools were taken into consideration before deciding on one that they felt would most closely meet their needs.
- At the beginning of second grade Abby was immediately referred for an evaluation for special education. Behaviors included inattention, disruption, attempting to leave the premises, attempting to board a school bus that was not hers. She had a very strong imagination and spent a lot of time inhabiting that realm.
- She qualified for Special Education Services under Autism. Testing also revealed a very high full-scale IQ.
- Parents felt the need to continually apologize for Abigail's behavior and were reluctant to accept Special Education services because they viewed that as an entitlement and didn't want their daughter to receive special consideration or be enabled in her behavior.

Case Study Cayden

Cayden is an 8th grader who is on a 504 plan. His academics are very good, but he struggles with peer interactions and behavior in school.

- Cayden was on an IEP starting in Kindergarten. He struggled with classroom routines, peer interactions and physical aggression towards peers and teachers.
- By second grade he was increasingly unsuccessful at school and parents were becoming very frustrated. An alternative placement was discussed, which parents ruled out of the question. They opted to remove Cayden from school and he received homebound services for the remainder of the year.
- At the beginning of 3rd grade, Cayden transitioned to a center based highly specialized program at another elementary school.
- Over the next few years, he made good progress and became increasingly successful in the school environment.
- By the end of Elementary School, Cayden was in the general education classroom greater than 80% of the time.
- Parents have always been very supportive of their son and like to be involved in processing any incident that may have occurred at school. They were concerned in anticipation of the transition to Middle School.
- In Middle School Cayden was placed on a 504 plan. Parents were strongly in favor and felt that he did not need direct Special Education services, but would benefit from robust accommodations around behavior and social interactions.
- He continued to struggle with behavior in school and peer relationships and missed having a connection with his former Special Education teacher.
- Parents are concerned about a transition to High School next year.

Case Study Ally

Ally is a 5th grader who was adopted from a Russian orphanage at the age of 3. During the first few years after her adoption she received a number of different and conflicting diagnoses before ultimately being diagnosed with Complex Trauma.

- Ally entered preschool shortly after being adopted towards the end of the school year. Her behavior included aggression, self-harm and the inability to interact appropriately with peers and adults both at school and at home.
- Parents were not happy after her brief tenure in preschool.
- Parents were reluctant to enroll Ally in school and opted to homeschool her for a period of time.
- Behaviors continued to be of great concern to parents. They sought outside assistance to help them address behaviors they were seeing at home.
- Parents decided to re-enroll her in school for first grade. An evaluation for Special Education eligibility was started immediately. Parents were reluctant to label their child as having a disability. They felt that her struggles were not the result of any disability but rather a result of the trauma she sustained while living in the orphanage.
- During 2nd grade, Parents became increasingly unhappy with the notion of Special Education as a whole, and decided to revoke Special Education services and homeschool Ally again.
- While at home, parents elected to focus on relationship and to limit exposure to academics.
- During 4th grade, they began accessing enrichment opportunities at the school and ultimately decided to re-enroll Ally at the beginning of 5th grade.
- An evaluation for Special Education was initiated toward the end of first semester and she was found eligible for services.
- She attended school with relative success and had periods of very good days along with some struggles that were successfully resolved at school. During this time, her behavior at home began escalating to a level that put the family in crisis. The family felt that her attendance at school was causing the change in behaviors at home and elected to keep her home indefinitely.

Case Study Jason

Jason is a 14 year old 8th grader with a diagnosis of ADHD who moved here from out of state shortly before the beginning of this school year with his mother and step-father.

- He had over 50 discipline referrals in his previous school and had disenrolled at the end of last school year to avoid expulsion.
- He had been evaluated for Special Education eligibility at his previous school and did not qualify at that time.
- His transition to a new environment and culture was difficult. He felt like he did not fit in with his peers at his new school and missed his home he had left behind.
- He immediately started accruing discipline referrals at his new school.
- Jason had several incidents outside of school, as well. One involving law enforcement.
- The new school put a number of interventions in place that, in their opinion, were not successful.
- Testing for Special Education eligibility was initiated. He did not qualify for services.
- Jason was placed on a 504 plan to give him access to accommodations
- His behaviors in and out of school continued to escalate.
- While most of his behavior consisted of being habitually disruptive, several of his discipline referrals were due to physical aggression toward peers and staff.
- After several suspensions, it was determined at a Manifestation Hearing that his behavior was not a result of his documented disability of ADHD.
- The school initiated an Expulsion hearing and Jason was expelled.
- The family had experienced a number of setbacks and his mother has had some serious health challenges.
- Mom then sought an outside Neuro-Psychological Evaluation in the hopes that any new information would help Jason be more successful in school.