

The Girl Who Can Be Anything (So long as she has access to information and appropriate accommodations)

Once upon a decade, in a town much like yours, a little girl was born. This little girl was exceptional from day one. As an infant, she quietly observed her surroundings, was talking at 5 months and was walking by the time she was nine months old. She was painting accurate representations of people and landscapes at the age of three. And could play songs by ear on her keyboard in her play room. Her parents were aware of her abilities, but wanted a “normal education” for her, so they enrolled her in a public kindergarten.

All was seemingly well with the little girl. For while she struggled with reading and writing in Kindergarten and First grade, her other abilities shadowed these struggles and she developed excellent compensatory skills. When she was supposed to be reading a simple sight word book, she embellished the words and created detailed stories based on the pictures. Because her silent reading was strong, she was able to answer comprehension questions correctly. Her teachers always noted her strong creative tendencies and she was passed along to the Second grade with no one the wiser to her struggles with reading and writing.

It was in Second Grade that a teacher noticed the young girl struggling to read non-sense words. The teacher started interventions, but these were not successful. One cool fall day, the little girl was brought up to the Special Education team to evaluate for the possibility of a learning disability. During the assessments, it was discovered that the little girl’s oral comprehension, problem solving and spatial reasoning skills were in the 95th percentile and her pragmatic reasoning, vocabulary, and general intelligence were also in the 95th percentile. However, as suspected, her basic reading and writing skills scored in the 10th percentile.

All was not lost, though. The amazing special education team created an Education Plan that was Individualized specifically to this twice-exceptional little girl. They put accommodations in place that challenged her intellectual and creative abilities, like allowing her to create works of art or illustrate fictional stories to share her knowledge. They also included accommodations to support the areas in

which she struggled, like allowing her to dictate her answers on assessments, and accessing materials visually and audibly. Technology also supported this little girl, she was able to listen to college level lectures and create animated slide shows to present this information to her classmates. She was taught to seek out and persevere through challenges and speak up when she wasn't feeling challenged enough in her classroom.

Eventually, with the proper support and services, combined with intentional and intensive instruction, this little girl grew to be a strong reader and was able to accelerate her education. She started taking college credits in her Tenth grade year and was able to influence the world with her exceptional abilities sooner and better prepared; all thanks to her Second grade teacher and well-prepared Special Education Teams.

The End