Britney’s Story: A Case Study

Britney is an 8-year old child with a diagnosis of Down Syndrome. Britney is a vocal child who loves to spend time with her two sisters Jan and Sally. She enjoys reading books, going to the school library, music, and playing on the computer. Britney communicates most of her wants and needs verbally. She does have some difficulty with language. She currently attends speech and language therapy at her school and is working on how to express herself appropriately.

Britney is fully included in a regular first grade classroom. She participates in all classroom assignments and activities. Britney is very aware of her surroundings and insists on doing paper and pencil task like her peers. Although these tasks are difficult for her, she gets very upset if she cannot do them. Since fine motor tasks cause her to be frustrated, the team has Britney use an alpha smart computer. Britney will complete the task like the other children and then do the task a second time on her alpha smart. Britney has a difficult time staying on task for long periods of time. She often becomes frustrated with her assignment and will say no, run around the classroom, throw herself on the floor, or hit the classroom assistant. While the classroom assistant can easily redirect her, the school is concerned about her behaviors in the classroom and how it affects the learning environment for the other students. Britney’s teacher has a difficult time giving her the same assignments as the other students because she knows that it causes her to be frustrated. On the other hand, Britney’s parents have requested that she receives the same activities and work as her peers.

Britney is fortunate to have a very large and supportive family. Her parents are very involved and always follow through with interventions and strategies that benefit Britney. The school-based team is also very supportive and has Britney’s best interest at heart. They believe in the value of inclusive environments and are always making an effort to make Britney’s placement the best it can be. There are some disagreements when it comes to Britney’s IEP. The family has requested that every 1st grade regular education benchmark be written on her IEP as a goal to work towards. Britney’s IEP is a total of 37 pages long. The school is concerned with the IEP, feeling it is unrealistic and sets Britney up for failure if she does not meet those goals. Britney’s family has also refused any psychological assessments (IQ test) be administered to Britney. Therefore, the school-based team has no information on her developmental and cognitive level.

Mrs. Smith, Britney’s mother says her behaviors do not occur at home. However, in several meetings with the team, Mr. Smith has indicated that Britney does hit her sisters at home. The family would like for Britney to engage in socially appropriate behavior. Specifically they would like to see her seek out peer attention, as she has no problem seeking adult attention. Her mother describes her as a “loner” because she will play by herself and not seek out the other children. The children in her classroom like her and try to interact with her, but she doesn’t pay much attention. They are also concerned that she depends too much on the classroom assistant. They feel like she is doing most of the work and that Britney is not learning what she should. They would
like to see her stay in an inclusive environment, but fear that if her behaviors are not controlled the teacher will want her removed.

Britney was invited to the PCP meeting and was asked in advance who she wanted to attend the meeting. In accordance with her wishes, her teacher and parents were invited to help with the planning. Also included in the meeting preparation through contacts and surveys were Britney’s sisters, teacher’s assistants, school administrator, speech therapist and grandparents.