

The Story of A

Autism and behavioral problems

This letter comes to you in regard to the impact Dr. Maria Serrano has had on my child and consequentially my family. Twelve years ago my son A was diagnosed with Autism, his biggest hurdle being impulsivity and behavioral abnormalities. When I say we tried everything to help, this would still be an understatement: play therapy, ABA therapy, cranial sacral therapy, sensory integration, music therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, behavior modification, medication, dietary changes, environmental changes, chelation therapy, therapeutic horseback riding, dolphin experiences, private schooling, home schooling...the list goes on and on.

Finally, after thousands and thousands of hours and dollars we felt defeated and decided that the only thing we had yet to try was public school. After much soul searching we decided to give it a try, what did we have to lose it was free and offered much of what we were doing already during the school day. A's first years in public school were uneventful and somewhat unfulfilling.

His time at school felt like child care with a curriculum consisting largely of coloring pages and little progress. In grade four A matriculated to a new classroom and to a new teacher, Dr. Serrano. Immediately, Dr. Serrano took time to get to know A, his quirks and idiosyncrasies, and the overall gestalt of his being. We had never experienced a professional in the field who bothered to take the time to know him this way. She was able to pin point his needs and intuitively worked to build his strengths and learn why he selected the unusual behaviors he exhibited. Over the course of the year she tore down many walls that separated A from our world and slowly brought him into our world. Although A was not supposed to have Dr. Serrano as a teacher in grade five there was some force of nature that allowed it and A again has the fortune of attending Dr. Serrano's class. Her hard work with A continues today and we have now a boy who looks us in the eye, tells us what he needs, is enjoying playing with other children, and is engaging in pretend play, something we never thought he would be able to do. The curricular materials A uses are meaningful and relevant to his existence and although we still see coloring pages on occasion, they are appropriate and related to the content he is actually learning about in school.

While A is not "cured" we are now hopeful that with continued hard work on the path Dr. Serrano has paved Asher will have the opportunity to live a more typical life than we could have imagined.

While Dr. Serrano's methodologies may seem avant guard at first glance to some, as a parent, and doctoral candidate in education, who has tried all things traditional, I can confidently say that sometimes you have to work outside of the box to release your child from the box he is in trapped within. Any parent with a child in the spectrum hopes to find the magic key that will release their child. The key is different for every child. We seem to have found our key in Dr. Serrano, her methods, her mind set, her patience, and her wisdom. All parents should be so lucky as to find a key such as her.

Sincerely,

A Eskan, (OBD) Ed.D. (Miami FL)