

Nick's Plan

My case study child is a young boy in the third grade. I will call him Nick. Nick is a student who has cerebral palsy. He remains in a wheelchair all day long while in school. Nick has poor fine motor control, for example he cannot write with a regular pencil, and even has a hard time with crayons. Nick is able to do some things with his hands, he can push larger buttons and he truly enjoys working on the computer. Nick has a hard time with talking and he talks extremely slow. It is a little hard to understand him at first, but you can make out what he is saying. Nick enjoys school and learning. He tries his best to participate in class. Something that Nick really doesn't like is being bored. He wants to participate and learn just like every other student. I believe that Nick would truly benefit from being in a full inclusion setting, however he stays in a special education POHI classroom most of the day, except for the hour that he is mainstreamed into a regular education social studies classroom.

Nick has a great personality. He enjoys interacting with his peers and school faculty. Whenever I see Nick he always has a smile on his face. He loves to say hi to everyone when he is riding down the hall in his wheelchair. He has stickers on his wheelchair and he loves it when people make comments about his "decorations". The staff and students at the school enjoy seeing and talking with him. Nick also likes to hear and tell jokes. I must admit, he has a lot of good jokes up his sleeve.

The particular classroom that Nick is mainstreamed into is set up with mostly social studies posters and decorations. There are also a lot of social studies books for the kids to read. There are a total of 21 students in this class, and their tables are in groups of four.

The school that Nick attends is a middle class school. The teachers and staff try to collaborate and seem to work well together. The staff and administrators are always positive and are doing their best to include children with special needs into regular classrooms. When Nick goes to his social studies class an aide always goes with him. This is very helpful to Nick as well as the regular education teacher. I do feel that Nick is getting information out of being mainstreamed, however the teacher does not seem to push him or really care if his assignments get done. The situation is more of “well he is in class, so that is all that I really expect from him”. I don’t agree with this. Another concern of mine is when the teacher is asking questions to the class, she seems to always overlook Nick. Very rarely does she ask Nick for a response. This bothers me. I have seen Nick raise his hand, but she doesn’t seem to notice. I have said a few times “Oh look, Nick knows the answer”, and she will pick him, but if I don’t remind her that he is there, she doesn’t call on him. My last concern is the way the room is set up. It consists of groups of table that have four to a table. That is great but where Nick is sitting his back is turned to the front of the room where the teacher stands. There are many times the teacher or his aide, forget to turn his wheel chair around so he can see the teacher and what she is doing. This particular class isn’t very big, and there is definitely enough time to let Nick participate along with his peers. The teacher of this class likes to give out a lot of ditto work, which is not always the best type of assignment for Nick just because he has such a hard time with writing. I know that I need to improve his ability to grasp

objects, but I don't want to overload him with paper and pencil tasks. He needs to have more group work and group projects that he can participate in and also communicate with his peers.

If I were teaching this class, I would allow for more interaction between Nick and his peers. I would do group work and pair him with students that could help him. I would do more activities instead of ditto work, which has to be completed by someone else because Nick has a hard time with grasping a pencil, or I would check into different types of pencils, possibly the bigger barreled ones that may be easier for him to grasp. Another option would be allowing Nick to use the computer for his assignments. I would also make sure that Nick is facing the front of the room instead of looking at the back of the room.

In terms of teaching approaches, I would do a lot vocal activities with Nick. This may require more time for the teacher to spend with him, but that is part of the teaching job. I would arrange to talk with him while other kids are doing independent work. I would also want to make Nick feel included during class discussions. I would call on him just as often as any other child in the room. I would also do more group work, where each child could take a role. This will allow for more social skills and communication.

A couple goals for Nick are (1) to improve fine motor skills and (2) to improve his speaking abilities. The objectives for the first goal are (a) participate in any activity where grasping takes place, and (b) practice holding and writing with a pencil. The objectives for the second goal are (a) participate in group discussions and (b) give oral presentations for group projects. Following is a curriculum matrix for Nick.

	SCHOOL DAY					
IEP GOALS	Math	Social Studies	Physical Education	Language Arts	Science	Art
Improve fine motor skills	X	X	X	X	X	X
Improve speaking abilities	X	X		X	X	

Nick will be working on his fine motor skills in all of the subject areas. For example in Math he will be working with manipulatives, in Social Studies he will be working with maps, in Physical Education he will be grasping balls, in Language Arts he will be writing, in Science he will be touching and grasping different types of materials, and in Art he will be using crayons, colored pencils, markers, and paint brushes. For Nick's goal of improving his speaking abilities, he will be talking in Math about problem solving, and he will be participating in group discussions in Social Studies, Language Arts and Science.

More vocal activities and group work can be classified under adaptations. Other examples of adaptations that I would make are allowing Nick more time for completing assignments and possibly, depending on the situation, decreasing the workload. I would want to be careful though, I don't want Nick to feel that he doesn't have to do the work, because he can do it, he just needs different ways of completing it besides paper and pencil tasks.

The supports that I would use are the children. I would have them help out during group activities. This is also good because friendships can be made this way. I think that it is important that Nick be able to interact and talk with his peers and vice versa. I would

also (if I was the general education teacher) collaborate with the special education teacher a bit more to see if we together could devise more activities for Nick to participate in.

Nick can participate fully in the regular education classroom as long as he receives some support and adaptations. Following is a schedule of how Nick’s day would look like if he was included fully and how he participates with the help of others.

Time	Activity	Supports and Adaptations
8:15	Arrive at school	Help from Mom
8:30	Morning Jobs/Circle Time	Teacher and students help out
9:00	Math	Peer buddy helps to get manipulatives
10:15	Language Arts	Discussion groups/group work
11:20	Physical Education	PT assists PE teacher
12:00	Lunch	Nick's friends
1:00	Science	Group work/discussions
2:00	Social Studies	Group work/discussions
3:00	Art in the classroom	Larger grip colored pencils, markers, crayons
3:30	Go home	Mom picks Nick up

Arriving at school:

Nick’s mom brings him to school, so she is the one who helps him get into the class and get settled. She is always willing to help out and offer support to the teacher.

Morning Jobs/Circle Time:

In the morning, the children have certain jobs that they need to do. For example, they need to turn in any homework that is due, and also they need to put their lunch tags in the

proper spots. During circle time, the children get in a circle and talk about any exciting news that they might have. The teacher also discusses the agenda for the day. This is a great time for Nick to work on his speaking abilities.

Math:

During math, Nick would have a buddy to work with to get different materials, or to help with anything that Nick might need. Nick enjoys math, and working with the manipulatives would be good for his fine motor coordination.

Language Arts:

During Language Arts, Nick would have another opportunity to speak, and to write. Here we would work on stories, poems, letters etc.

Physical Education:

Gym is a great time for working on Nick's fine motor skills. Most people think of Gym as working on gross motor skills, but there are things for fine motor as well. For example, Nick can practice grasping a softball, he can practice grasping a bat, he can pick up bean- bags to toss, or rings to toss etc.

Science:

Science is a great time for experiments, and with experiments come talking and handling different objects. Science is another class that Nick enjoys being in.

Social Studies:

During Social Studies class, Nick can participate in role playing and group discussions.

Art:

Art is probably the best time for improving Nick's fine motor skills. He likes to draw and color, so when it comes to these activities, he has fun. There is also no pressure to hurry to finish his project so it makes it easy for him.

I think that it is important for children to be mainstreamed if at all possible. However, if they are going to be mainstreamed I would want them to participate more than what my case study child has participated in. I would want them to fit right in the class and participate in whatever the other children were participating in. True mainstreaming means that the child is actively involved in the general education class and the schoolwork, not just a passive listener sitting in the classroom. Full inclusion means that the child is included into every subject matter, not just one or two. This is what we as educators should want for every student to ensure a fulfilling school career and future life.