

Letters to the Teacher Series

10th Grade

Dear Teachers,

There are a number of things you should be aware of in regard to xxxxx. She has hemiparesis which is a form of cerebral palsy. Her IEP from last year covers several items that we feel are instrumental in the coming school year for her success. If you need a copy of her IEP, please contact us.

For this semester there are a few requests we would like to make of you to ensure she will not be exhausted from simply walking to and from classes. Due to her hemiparesis she walks slower than the average student, she may need extra time between classes, please allow her to leave a few minutes before the bell in order that she will not be tardy for her next class. (For lunch she may need five minutes to be able to go to her locker and safely navigate the steps.)

We request that she receive two textbooks for each class, one to keep in the classroom and one to keep at home, her backpack weighs close to twenty pounds with just notebooks, pencils and lunch. Keeping unnecessary weight off her back will allow her to use her energy to pay attention, if she must carry additional weight she may be simply too tired for her afternoon classes.

She has trouble with taking notes, her disability makes it very hard for her to keep up with notes and stay focused. We would like another option such as borrowing another students notes to photocopy or tape recording the lecture. Both solutions will leave her free to focus on the teacher and jot down specific parts of any lecture.

Recently xxxxx has been diagnosed with a problem of her eyes "turning", at this time we have no expert opinion, and probably will not have until October on how to proceed with this. If she should ever complain of headaches, dizziness or trouble seeing, we should be contacted at once. Again, with her recent eye diagnosis, we feel it is important for her to have an option in taking notes.

It has also recently come to our attention that xxxxx may have a learning disability in regard to higher math, we are looking into possible testing for this, but if you should see her continually struggling with math concepts, please notify us. In addition xxxxx has a very strong startle reflex, a loud voice or surprise of any type (whether or not you observe her "out there") will only cause a startle response (very typical in cp kids) where she will "jump in her skin" so to speak (potentially she could fall out of a chair)—she does not need the extra agony of this, so please do not use the surprise tactic to get her attention. Once she has been startled her muscles are very tense and she is in pain for the rest of the day.

Jessica is currently taking Baclofen, which is a drug to help loosen the overall spasticity in her body. In the upcoming months her dosage may be increased (we will notify you if so) and you may see her falling more as her body adjusts. On xxxxxx, she will not be in school due to an appointment at the Medical Center to receive Botulinum Toxin (botulism toxin) in her right arm; once she receives these injections her right arm may be so loose as to offer no assistance or function for her and she may need more help in the classroom. (Last fall we attempted one Botulinum Toxin injection with no success, we truly have no idea what to expect this time, the number of injections will be at least four.)

On October xxx will not be in school due to a neurology appointment. Either of these appointments may result in further need to see her again and she may have more unexpected appointments scheduled when she returns. We would prefer that she receive all work she will miss prior to her appointments.

We would have liked to have met you all before school had started and gone over these things in person—we really hope that this letter is helpful to you in regard to xxxxx's needs. If you need more information or would like to discuss anything about xxxxxx with us we can be reached at (phone number)

Thank you for your time and consideration,