

Christine's Chronicles: A Classroom Visit

Christine describes her visits to a general and an EC kindergarten classroom as she prepares for Luke's transition from preschool.



Christine and Luke

So a few months have passed and I wish I had more to report on our transition planning for Luke's entry into kindergarten. We still have yet to schedule the re-evaluations, or any team meetings. But in the meantime, I went ahead and visited a kindergarten classroom in our district. There were about 30 kids in the classroom, a lead teacher, an aid, and a parent volunteer. I observed morning calendar and small group activities. I was frankly amazed at everything this teacher was able to do with so many children. But at the same time, I couldn't even begin to imagine Luke paying attention and participating in these types of activities for almost two hours without a break. Of course, that's probably what the parents of all of these children would have said a year ago as well.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to observe the Exceptional Children (EC) classroom, a self-contained classroom for children with special needs, to make a comparison. The principal doesn't allow anyone to observe the EC classroom under any circumstances because this is how he chooses to implement HIPAA, the law on student confidentiality. My friend couldn't even get permission for her son's outside therapist to come in and observe when her son was having some behavioral problems in the classroom. Of course I was frustrated by this, but I couldn't think about starting off on a bad note with the principal of this school before my son was even enrolled. What a way to begin our family-professional partnership with our new school...

So instead I met the lead EC teacher after school and she gave me a tour of the school and her classroom. We talked about the typical day for the children, transition strategies that she's used in the past, and how Luke could feel comfortable in her classroom. All and all, she seemed like a wonderful and caring person. Even though I wasn't able to observe while the children were there, she put me at ease and I felt like my son would not only be safe and cared for, but challenged and

loved. She also said that it's her goal for every one of her students to spend as much time included in the regular classrooms as possible. For some children it might just be the specials, like music and PE, but for others it might be the majority of their day. So every child has his or her own unique schedule.

I talked with my transition coordinator this morning and Luke's evaluations should be scheduled by end of this month. So hopefully we'll get the ball rolling any day now.

COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

-Please share your stories and tips about transition, I am interested to hear from other parents and professionals.

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