



ANNA

Anna is a first grade student at a school serving children who are deaf who has an aide to assist her. She has a diagnosis of autism and many obsessive-compulsive behaviors. However, unlike many students with autism, her intelligence test results are all in the average to above average range. She enjoys her peers and genuinely attempts to engage them in appropriate reciprocal interactions on the computer, the monkey bars and swings during recess, and during centers. Her interactions have an “odd” quality peers and adults report, but her disability is not always readily observable, especially in structured settings. Anna is quite achievement motivated and tries hard to complete all tasks assigned. She enjoys all classroom activities, both structured and unstructured. She hates APE class, however, where they are working on ball skills that she cannot seem to master. There have been occasions when Anna has needed to be physically restrained for up to 20 minutes for self-abusive behaviors such as poking her eyes, scratching herself or hitting herself hard repeatedly with her fists. On a recent occasion, she could not get the glue bottle open, and despite attempting to use some “self talk” strategies for handling frustration she progressed to self-abuse even with the active intervention of her assigned aide. At other times she handles similar frustrations with ease. There are no current observable predictors for when she will be overwhelmed by a difficult task, and when she will not. No time of day or location or activity or presence of certain people have been found to be related to her acting out. Difficulties have developed across activities and settings. She has, however, had several self-abusive bouts in APE class. After the behavior has subsided and she is released from a physical hold, Anna typically goes on with her work as though nothing has happened. On occasion adults can “predict” that a difficult day will occur based on her facial affect appearing “flat” (i.e., expressionless) when she arrives at school. On these days, Anna will occasionally hit herself or scratch one or two times when told “no” or when a command is given such as “move your chair a little closer.” These behaviors are often fleeting and brief and she complies readily with instructions. She also has these acting out episodes at home and has on one occasion awakened screaming and begun self-abuse. Anna takes medications for attention enhancement and a general tranquilizer.

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