

To Whom It May Concern,

My 9 year old daughter attends a small school of 53 students and she's Autistic and also has Selective Mutism & also suffers from severe anxiety which causes meltdowns. These happen at school and at home quite frequently, especially if there's any unexpected changes or if she's in a situation where she can't communicate her needs. The support she gets at school is almost nothing. She gets 30 minutes a week from a teacher aide who isn't based at the school she attends, so there is no one on the school grounds who specialises in special needs and as a result, she seems to slip through the cracks. Apart from this, she receives no additional support whatsoever. She has just started using an Ipad to communicate to staff at school. She has nowhere to go where she can calm down. She's having a lot of difficulty with maths and some English components and has no assistance with these subjects apart from what the teacher gives her, but she is in a multi-age class (year 4-6) of approx. 27 students, which makes learning hard for my daughter as the teacher has 26 other students to cater for too. Essentially, she is totally ignored & has to push on through the day herself.

Her autism, selective mutism and anxiety have a huge impact on our family and I can tell she's had a bad day at school as when she gets home, she gets very frustrated and then there's arguing between her and her sister & I have to play referee most days. She also lashes out at her father and myself most days as well. There seems to be no empathy towards her or understanding from the staff of Autism, Selective Mutism and the anxiety that she deals with on a daily basis, at the school she attends. Due to her anxiety, she also doesn't like to participate in athletics carnivals, mostly races. We deal with this by not forcing her to run.

I believe that all education staff needs to participate in training in special needs when working with these kids and be monitored to ensure they are putting their training in place. I have been told that staff at her school has had training but I know they don't put it into practice.

Regards

Sue Cook

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