

## **POSITIVE STUDENT PROFILE**

**Caleb Welin**

**Age: 7**

**1<sup>st</sup> Grade Fletcher Maynard Academy**

### **Who Is Caleb?**

- ◆ An only child, a grandchild, great grandchild, a nephew, a cousin, a much loved friend.
- ◆ Caretaker of his dogs, Copper & Barley
- ◆ A helper. He loves to have jobs and to help at any task.
- ◆ A great cook! He loves to help with cooking.
- ◆ Favorite activities in school are science activities, especially bugs and the natural world, circle time, discussing the weather and dinosaurs.
- ◆ Favorite cartoon is The Penguins of Madagascar, his favorite is Rico (who “throws up” lots of useful objects) but he loves Skipper, Private and Kowalski too. His favorite episode currently is called “Herring Impaired” and he will often quote it (Feesh!)
- ◆ Someone who loves to play chasing games on the playground and who loves to swing.
- ◆ A huge fan of elevators and trains, he is particularly fond of the MBTA.
- ◆ A little clown, he loves to laugh and to make others laugh.
- ◆ A lover of technology, he loves computers and electronics.

### **What are Caleb’s Strengths?**

- ◆ He imitates well.
- ◆ He loves to help others.
- ◆ He has a great sense of humor.
- ◆ He can follow short/specific directions (1 or 2 steps.)
- ◆ He has a very good memory, especially when it comes to how to get somewhere.
- ◆ He is very empathetic towards the emotions of others; this can also be a weakness.
- ◆ He likes to remind others of details (at home he won’t let us forget our keys, wallets, pager, to turn out the lights, etc. – at school, he will sometimes tell when others aren’t following directions or finishing tasks).
- ◆ He loves to have jobs and responsibility.

### **What are Caleb’s recent successes?**

- ◆ He is becoming more independent.
- ◆ His language is exploding; he uses new words every day.
- ◆ He attended summer classes and did very well.
- ◆ He went to “Grammy’s Camp” with his Grammy, Grampa and Auntie three times this summer, once all by himself!

### **What supports are needed for Caleb?**

- ◆ To observe and learn from “typical” peers.
- ◆ To have a routine which is structured, yet flexible, too much of a strict schedule will create stress when it must vary. We prize his ability to roll with changes and encourage people to help him practice this skill.
- ◆ To have a structured sensory diet that is always implemented, it won’t work if it’s only used during periods of hyperarousal.
- ◆ A teacher and school who believes in him and never under estimates his abilities.
- ◆ For his peers to be given a chance to understand his disability and his challenges and to feel empowered to find ways to help Caleb when he needs it.

### **What are our dreams for Caleb?**

Caleb WILL:

- ◆ Be a member of a circle of friends, he will be happy and know that he is loved and accepted.
- ◆ Have literacy skills, writing skills, understand and use time, calendar and money concepts.
- ◆ Be accepted and supported by his school system and community.
- ◆ Live as independently as possible.
- ◆ Have a job or volunteer within the community.

### **OTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION**

Caleb’s learning style is visually oriented, and he learns best through use of incidental learning, using information in ways that are functional, rather than through rote learning (for example, teaching how to add by counting apples in a store as opposed to adding numbers on a page).

It is critical that we recognize that the environment plays an important role in the way Caleb learns and behaves. Caleb works best with short breaks in-between tasks.

Usually when Caleb is over-stimulated, his left ear will turn bright red. This could happen because of excitement, anxiety or frustration, any of the three could lead to hyperarousal in which he can no longer self-manage. His ears can be used as an early warning system that it is a critical time for a break. Caleb will sometimes try to avoid stressful situations by asking to go “pee” sometimes he will escalate to “poop” or “spit” (vomit). We will honor his request to go to the bathroom but we don’t ever let him get out of the situation. We will tell him that we will go to the potty to pee/poop but that he will still have to \_\_\_\_\_. If he says it after he has just used the restroom we will simply tell him no. He will sometimes talk about his dogs, Barley and Copper being at home when he is anxious. Caleb responds best if you remain calm and let him take his time but still move toward the goal activity.

Deep pressure touch also helps Caleb by offering sensory input. It is important to remember that light touch is not comforting to him. Tight “squeeze” hugs, or touching him (on the shoulders, hands, arms, back, etc.) with some tight pressure will bring comfort to him. Caleb also chews on items for calming. Having his chewy tubes handy during challenging activities or transitions can help him receive sensory input and self soothe.

Dr. Sally Burton Hoyle, executive director of the Autism Society of Michigan, said it well when she stated, “All behavior is communication”. You can’t ask a child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder to use words, they can’t. Behavior tells us how a child thinks and/or feels; behavior tells us how the child takes in their environment. It is critical that you help Caleb develop a

positive identity. Instead of ultimatums, give choices and please don't take away the reasons he loves to go to school as a form of behavior management. Caleb loves school. He loves his friends, he loves the routine and he loves to learn. He will always learn. He starts each day looking forward to a new day – and each day is exactly that to him – a new day, a fresh start. Please remember you are a very important part of Caleb's success. Your belief in him, understanding and acceptance of his struggles and encouragement will last long beyond this school year. The values you instill in Caleb and his classmates will be life long lessons.