



Student Profiles

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Fatima

Background information

Fatima came to the United States with her family as a refugee and has been a student in her current district since kindergarten. She lives with her uncle, her mother, and several extended family members. Her mother has moderate intellectual disabilities. Educators in her school have found it challenging to communicate with her. Fatima's uncle attends IEP team meetings about Fatima.

Home language skills

Fatima is a native speaker of Arabic. She uses the language to communicate at home with her extended family. Her listening and speaking skills in English are proficient for a third grader. She has no reading or writing skills in Arabic.

Disability

Fatima has a hearing impairment and a severe vision impairment, for which she qualifies for special education. Prior to enrolling in the district, she had not received any medical interventions.

Fatima's family is resistant to having Fatima wear glasses. Still, the school obtained permission to take Fatima to an eye doctor. Glasses and vision exercises were prescribed for Fatima. Fatima has lost or broken three pairs of glasses that were given to her. Currently, she is not wearing glasses and she has difficulty seeing writing on the whiteboard or looking at printed text on a page. The school plans to get her another pair of glasses when she returns from spring break. Staff will create a plan so that she will wear them. Fatima mainly does the vision exercises at school since she rarely has a chance or remembers to do them at home. In class she is learning to use a screen reader to read written text to speech, but she has difficulty seeing pictures or diagrams.

Fatima also has a significant hearing loss. Most of the assistive technology suggested to help with this impairment is placed in the ears. Her uncle will not allow her to put her headscarf behind her ears, so ear-buds, headphones, or traditional hearing aids are not effective. The school did get a hearing aid that can be worn under her headscarf, but it still provides a more muffled sound than it would if her ears could be out from under the headscarf.

English language development

Fatima's teachers report that she has attained a moderate level of English speaking and listening proficiency in the classroom after three years in U.S. schools. She can communicate orally with her peers and teacher about daily activities using a limited range of everyday vocabulary. To support Fatima in the classroom, Fatima's teachers provide clarification of tasks and directions in English. Sometimes, Fatima's teachers request that she restate task directions in her own words (to demonstrate understanding).

On the state assessment of academic English proficiency she scored at a basic level in all four areas (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Because of her limited academic English proficiency, Fatima has very delayed skills in all academic content areas. Her teacher doubts she will pass the state content assessment this year. She continues to receive English as a Second Language services.

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