



Student Profiles

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MaThan Nu

Background information

MaThan Nu, age 9, is a member of the Karen people and originally lived in Myanmar as a very young child. Her family farmed rice there. When MaThan Nu was older, military conflicts in her home area led to the burning of her village and the fields. Her family crossed the border into Thailand where they lived in a refugee camp for several years until they were resettled in the United States when she was five.

Home language skills

MaThan Nu speaks a dialect of the Karen language at home with her family. In everyday conversation she has excellent oral comprehension skills in her first language. She has no reading or writing skills in Karen. Although she lived in Myanmar, neither she nor her family speaks any Burmese. She has had little formal education outside of the United States.

Disability

MaThan Nu is a friendly girl who loves to laugh. She also loves school and works hard. When she entered the U.S. school system at age 5, she was diagnosed with developmental delay. At age 7 she was reevaluated and her primary disability was changed to Emotional-Behavioral Disturbance. She displays hyperactive and impulsive behavior both at home and school. MaThan Nu uses an atypical communication style characterized by inappropriate social interaction and giving responses that do not make sense.

MaThan Nu has trouble staying on task compared to her peers. She is very social, but she displays some inappropriate behaviors such as shouting off topic comments during classroom discussions and repeatedly hugging her teachers and other school staff. She is a quick learner, if instruction is accessible to her, and she has demonstrated a great deal of growth in her academic content skills despite her limited time in the country. Still, she is easily distracted and has difficulty focusing and completing tasks. She also has some difficulty communicating the content knowledge she has to her teachers and classmates. MaThan Nu has trouble sitting still for long periods of time. She has a significant need to move that affects her ability to attend to task instructions or to maintain her focus and complete assignments.

MaThan Nu's IEP team has concerns about her sensory processing. She seeks sensory stimulation. Yet, overstimulation of her senses results in poor attention and leads to disruptive behavior. She requires continuing support in all content areas, particularly in math. In order to focus on learning she needs an adult to monitor and redirect her behavior. Her general education teachers provide her with frequent breaks to get up and move, as well as a yoga stability ball to sit on at her work table. MaThan Nu has to concentrate in order to sit upright on the ball. If classroom tasks involve multiple steps her teacher writes them down and uses visual cues to reinforce them. If the classroom is noisy MaThan works in a study carrel, which helps her focus on her work.

English language development

MaThan Nu speaks English at school and with her friends in social situations such as at the park or during after school childcare. Her English listening and speaking skills in social situations are strong. Due to her difficulties attending to classroom instruction, her academic vocabulary and comprehension of complex sentences are more limited. She still receives pull-out ESL services. Her ESL teacher uses visuals and hands-on materials to reinforce new concepts. The ESL teacher frequently presents material orally.

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