

APPENDIX 1.4 MEET FARIHA—CASE STUDY

Fariha

5th Grade

11 years old

Fariha is a fifth grader who is extremely intelligent as supported by data from a battery of assessments. She loves to use technology as well as talk about a variety of subjects. Her favorite topic of conversation focuses on cats, a subject she knows a lot about. In fact, Fariha is adept at transforming any current conversation to somehow address cats. In third grade, she was diagnosed as having a learning disability. At that time, her parents refused services and placed her in a private school setting. After spending two years in the private school setting, Fariha continued to meet with academic failure. As well, she experienced little positive interaction with her peers and teachers due to her comments and defiant behaviors. Her parents moved her back to the public school setting and agreed to special education services for language arts and mathematics. Currently, she is undergoing the assessment process to determine whether she has Asperger's Syndrome.

In addition to her love of cats, Fariha also likes to draw and work with crafts. She is extremely creative. As well, Fariha enjoys singing and acting and has had roles in several church and community plays.

Her relationships with adults appear to be better than with her peers. She often expresses that she is sad because she does not have friends. Fariha shares that she wishes to be like her sister, Saman, who she feels is perfect in every way. Fariha states that Saman gets good grades and has a “ton” of girlfriends. She feels that her parents like Saman better than they like her. When it comes to group interactions, Fariha is the last to join and participate. If she joins the group, she then tries to take charge and becomes somewhat of a bully.

Fariha currently has an IEP with goals that focus on language arts and mathematics. Even with addressing the IEP goals, Fariha continues to experience academic difficulties and has been the focus of many teacher team meetings and teacher–parent conferences. During these meetings, the following concerns are raised and discussed:

- Fariha has little or no interactions with her peers. If she does interact with her peers, the interaction usually ends in an argument because Fariha is upset that things are, “Not going her way.”
- At times, Fariha displays bullying behaviors such as bossiness or refusing to comply with the current activity.
- She has meltdowns, temper tantrums, and screams when she is confused or frustrated.
- She perseverates about cats and often is off topic during conversations with peers and adults.
- Fariha is not a self-starter and needs several prompts before she begins a task.
- Frequently, tasks are not completed due to her skillful procrastination tactics. This behavior wreaks havoc when it comes to long-range projects.
- She enjoys playing computer games, which often results in her having insufficient time to complete homework or chores.
- When working on a task, she often loses interest and rushes to complete it. This results in inaccurate content and a sloppy appearance.
- Even when prompted, Fariha frequently forgets to write down homework assignments or forgets the necessary materials to complete these assignments.

- Her notebook is neat in appearance but pages are often misfiled, causing her problems in locating homework, worksheets, assignments, permission slips, etc.
- Many times Fariha forgets to hand in her completed homework.
- She dreads spelling tests and tries to avoid them by saying she needs to go to the bathroom.
- If she knows the answer to a problem, she shouts it out before giving her classmates a chance to respond.
- Learning her math facts is a challenge.
- She forgets the verbal and/or written steps needed to complete a task.
- Her words do not often match her body language.
- She tends to “make up” stories to cover up her misunderstandings or areas of challenge.
- Whatever pops into her head tends to blurt out of her mouth. When this happens, she often apologizes immediately and truly feels bad.
- Fariha tends to be ritualistic in how she eats food, arranges items on her desk and chooses her place in line. She becomes upset and cries if she cannot have control over such situations.
- When enjoying a specific setting or activity, Fariha cries when she needs to change to another activity.