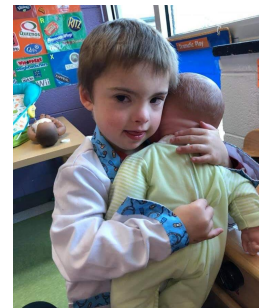




## Meet Grayson!

My son Grayson was 26 months when transitioned out of Early Intervention and into public schools. We had our meeting with the public school and Graysons Early Intervention coordinator to create Graysons IEP. It was so nice having Early Intervention there to help support Grayson and myself as we navigated through creating Graysons IEP for preschool. The Early Intervention coordinator made sure that the school knew what Graysons goals were with Early Intervention so that way we could incorporate similar goals within his IEP in the areas needed for speech and occupational therapy. Educational therapy is different from medical. I felt it was so important not to lose the progress we had made with Early Intervention. I made the decision to continue medical therapy with an outside company and have in school therapies as well. Having both in school therapy and outside would only help Grayson's development.



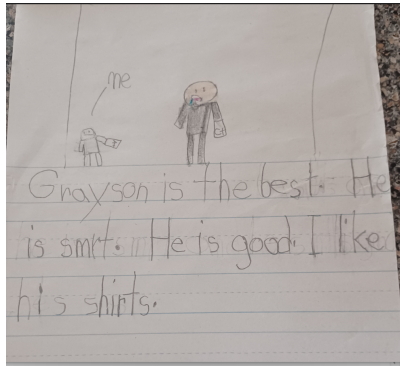
Graysons preschool class consisted of children who were typically developing and some with IEPs. It was a small classroom with about 10 to 12 kids. I saw so much growth in Graysons development throughout his years in public school preschool. He learned from his teachers, therapy workers and mostly his peers. He observed a lot of what he saw others doing within the classroom and would mimic what they did. He was given the resources and support he needed in the classroom to help grow and learn alongside his peers. Fast forward to now, he is in a general education classroom with an instructional assistant and learning alongside his peers. I feel that is so important for Grayson as he continues to learn those life skills as well as what he needs to know academically.

Grayson is in first grade in a general education setting. I feel it's so important for him to be with his peers and learn and shadow them. He may not be on the same level as his peers in ways developmentally or academically but he is with his peers and teacher. He is learning from everyone in the classroom. Every child in his classroom accepts and loves Grayson for who he is.



**This is why inclusion is SO important.**

Just recently he had a classmate draw a picture of him and Grayson and write what he likes about Grayson. Grayson talks but his articulation is not very clear at times, he chews on a sensory chewy and wears it around his neck along with his glasses daily.



The child drew a picture of him and Grayson together and wrote what he likes about Grayson. Grayson's classmate and friend saw my son for who he was not his disability. He even drew the blue chewy in his mouth. He saw Grayson for WHO he was, **all of him**.

Although this path of inclusion hasn't been easy, I will always push for it because I feel this is what's best for my son. My son deserves to learn in an atmosphere that accepts him for who he is and build those peer friendships that will help him as he grows in school and in his community.

I have attached pictures of the drawing made by his classmate, World Down Syndrome Day with his classmates where all the kids wore mismatched socks to represent the extra chromosome and the last of Grayson.

Thank you for allowing me to share this with you.  
Amanda Adams

