

off the medication in the evening turned into a “crash and burn” event most nights. Helen even began to have suicidal ideation and one night did not eat dinner because, as she put it, she “could control herself” (in reference to living or dying). We of course changed medications, and the emotional outbursts tapered off. The remainder of fourth and fifth grade was an up-and-down roller coaster, ending with yet another twist in the ride. Helen’s younger sister was identified as gifted, thus creating a new set of struggles with self-confidence and self-esteem.

Currently, as a seventh grader (but the size of a third grader), she is developing new friends and her own sense of style and self. Academics continue to be a daily struggle. She tends to get lost in lengthy operations and has a great deal of trouble focusing attention and identifying pertinent information. Helen has a tremendous problem with spelling and grammar. She also has trouble transferring and assimilating knowledge from one situation to another. Helen is

very rules oriented and desperately needs structure, but she cannot provide that structure for herself. She tends to vacillate from overly focused to airhead. At times, Helen appears almost belligerent—she is unable to “shift gears” as circumstances change. We frequently see this with her schoolwork. She continues to make the same mistakes over and over again because of her unwillingness (inability) to adopt a different strategy—because, in her eyes, her way is the correct way.

Her father and I continue to try to instill the idea of effort being more important than grades, but she holds herself to a higher standard. I am not sure what the next eight to ten years hold. Helen is a very hard worker, but at this point in time a four-year college degree may or may not be in her future. Our biggest concern is that she find something she enjoys and that she can excel in. Our goal is not for her to make the honor roll or be rich, but for Helen to be a self-confident and fulfilled young woman.

—Anonymous