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Graduate Programme in Teaching English To Young Learners

### **Teacher diary**

#### Meeting Łukasz

My first meeting with Łukasz took place in a public primary school in Warsaw, where I was doing my teaching practice. I was a young and inexperienced teacher who has never had any contact with children with special needs.

Clearly, there was something about Łukasz that made me wonder why is he behaving in this way, keeping the distance with peers and isolating from other children who were happily playing together. It was really hard for him to adapt, integrate with the group, make friends and his social skills seemed were inept. When I approached him to talk to him, he was very cautious and not trusting. He moved his chair to keep a distance with me and to avoid any physical contact, as he does not accept any physical contact beyond the immediate family.

It is a challenge for him to control his emotions and he finds it impossible to interpret the intentions of other children and their body language. He is emotionally vulnerable and easily stressed. Łukasz is reluctant to work in pairs or groups, prefers individual work. He does not feel good in a room full of children, because he does not stand noisy and crowded places, he feels good in safe and quiet environment. At the same time he has a desire to be a part of school life and class community, but simply does not know how to interact with peers. Moreover, Łukasz finds strip lighting very difficult to cope with, he often has headaches and gets very upset in such lighting.

When I tested his skills, he had difficulties in writing in a coherent and accurate way and his handwriting was poor. It was also hard for him to deal with fine-motor skills such as buttoning his sweater. Łukasz found it very difficult to answer simple questions about his preferences and had

difficulty sustaining focus on class activities getting distracted easily by different stimuli. His self-esteem is low and he is often very self-critical and unable to tolerate making mistakes.

He requires assistance of a special education teacher while working on some tasks and homework assignments.

Łukasz has a special interest in animals and wildlife and likes to talk about it to adults. He likes discovering new and interesting things, particularly in the field of science and nature. Moreover, Łukasz stands out with a very rich vocabulary, great memory skills for very detailed information and above average intelligence.

His parents eagerly collaborate with the class teacher and special education teacher. The special education teacher serves as a contact person for parents and educators and provides consistent communication and teamwork between home and school.