

**From:** Eva Mamak [mailto:[eva.mamak@sickkids.ca](mailto:eva.mamak@sickkids.ca)]  
**Sent:** March-24-14 2:39 PM  
**To:** Dr. Mitchell Parker  
**Subject:** Message of support for your program

Dr. Parker,

I am writing this email with the consent of Avraham Yehuda T.'s parents.

I wanted to take the time to commend your staff on the excellent program that I observed this morning at the Zareinu classroom at Netivot. My understanding is that this is the first year that this classroom has been in operation, and I am amazed by the structure, organization, routine, and excellent practices of your staff. This is clearly the ideal classroom for a number of students, based on a variety of factors that I hope to outline below.

To properly put this information in context, I am a board-certified neuropsychologist with my Ph.D. in school psychology. In this role, through the hospital for Sick Children, I have had the opportunity to observe many classrooms serving children with a variety of special needs, and often those classrooms serving the children with the highest and most complex level of need. I have worked in and consulted with a variety of Section 23 classrooms in Toronto, and have worked extensively in consulting with teachers and school boards to accommodate the needs of children with a variety of medical disorders.

I find myself in the unique position of having very little to recommend to Avraham's school/class.... As they are already implementing the services I would recommend. I simply am unable to think of additional supports, and am impressed that this has been achieved in the first year with this classroom.

Some of the factors that make this classroom exceptional, in my opinion, include:

- Individualization of each child's educational program. There were a variety of ages and ability levels within this classroom, all working at an appropriate level of difficulty to improve their skills in different areas, and yet not so difficult as to frustrate any child. Activities were individually tailored to include topics of interest (e.g. Cars), when promoting different skills.
- A high degree of structure and routine, such that each child was aware of what was expected of them at every time, and knew what activity they would participate in next. The classroom was exceptionally organized and I never observed a child to be at "loose ends" without a productive activity to engage them. The use of timers, visual schedules, work schedules, work bins for activities, and a routine were all essential in ensuring that the classroom day ran smoothly, and that children were actively engaged in learning for the vast majority of the day.
- This structure and routine allowed many children to be quite independent in many aspects of their learning. For example, Avraham was able to work at activities at his desk for 20-30 minutes at a time, which I have not been able to achieve when testing him at the hospital.
- Exceptional behavior management. Likely due to the organization of the classroom, children were well behaved and teachers and staff were pro-active in preventing behavioral issues.
- Integration of students into parts of the typical school program, and integrating culture (Judaic studies) into the classroom setting, at a level appropriate to the student's needs

- Promotion of positive social skills, cooperation, and excellent manners
- Design of the physical space to allow each child to have a designated work space, social spaces, circle time, group work spaces, and room for their personal belongings
- The use of high-quality, evidence-based curriculum materials (e.g., Edmark curriculum, touch math)
- A wonderful student to teacher ratio

I have already expressed my thanks and positive impression to the teachers that I met this morning, but please do share this information with them again as I would like to again repeat my thanks for their exceptional efforts in supporting the needs of these most deserving students. Every child should be so lucky as to have an educational team as caring, organized, knowledgeable, and engaged as this one.

Again, my sincere thanks and congratulations for the excellent work your team is doing. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions about this letter, or about anything else.

Sincerely,

\*\*\*\*\*

Eva G. Mamak, Ph.D., C.Psych., ABPP-CN  
Board Certified in Clinical Neuropsychology  
Epilepsy Surgery and Genetics Programs  
 [\(416\) 813-7654 Ext. 228804](tel:4168137654)

**This is a medical communication.**

The contents of this e-mail should be treated as confidential, and are for the sole use of the intended recipient. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, or this information has been inappropriately forwarded to you, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message. Please note that email may be intercepted between the sender and the receiver. Email is neither secure nor confidential. Your continued use of email communication confirms that you accept this risk. If you feel that email communication is insufficient, please contact my office or clinic directly. Thank you.