

Miss Rana is the head teacher at the local preschool for at-risk children. The preschool is state funded and typically includes children ages 3 to 5 from lower socioeconomic homes, from single-parent families, and/or with developmental delays. Arriving one morning to prepare the art area for a sponge-painting activity, Miss Rana begins setting up space for pairs of children to share art materials. Miss Amber, the assistant teacher, arrives and provides the list of paired children she has prepared for the art project.

Miss Rana reads the list and says, "I'm glad to see you paired Reagan and Emily for art. Emily has been so reluctant to participate in art ever since that day when she spilled paint all over Billy's shoes."

"Yes," Miss Amber replies. I thought it would be a good idea. Reagan loves art. I just hope she can keep her hands to herself today.

Reagan, a 3-year-old, is one of the youngest children in the preschool. Unlike the parents of many of the students, Reagan's parents are married and highly educated. Reagan qualified for the preschool due to a severe speech impairment. She was very hard to understand at the beginning of the school year, but her daily sessions with the school aged pathologist have resulted in markedly improved speech over the first 3 months of the school year. Although Reagan is a generally well-behaved child, during circle time she has a habit of pinching the children sitting next to her on the rug. Reagan does not attempt to conceal her misbehavior and readily admits to it if confronted by her teachers. Miss Rana and Miss Amber first tried ignoring the behavior, but that only resulted in a number of other children pinching their classmates. They have also tried telling her to stop pinching the other children and have even removed her from the rug area a few times, with no result.

Recently, they decided to give Reagan a sticker at the end of the day contingent on no instances of pinching anyone. Stickers are typically used as special rewards when a child does something that deserves recognition. Only once during the 3 weeks has Reagan earned the sticker—every other day she has pinched at least one child. Yesterday afternoon, Miss Rana and Miss Amber discussed the issue again and decided to try yet another strategy. They hope to "catch" Reagan early in circle time, before she has a chance to pinch, praise her for keeping her hands to herself, and then every couple of minutes praise Reagan and the other children for keeping their hands to themselves.

As the children begin to enter the classroom, Miss Rana gives her usual morning greeting: "Good morning, boys and girls."

Emily enters the room and quietly walks to her space along the wall, where she hangs her coat on the hook and places her book below her name. As Emily sits down at her special spot on the rug, Miss Amber greets her. "Hello, Emily. I sure like the way you put your things away and sat down. You look ready to begin this morning."

As usual, Emily does not respond to this praise. However, a number of children who were wandering off to inspect the art supplies quickly scramble to their own special spots on the rug. Reagan has just sat down, and Miss Rana quickly says, "Reagan, I like the way you hand your hands on your lap—look, everyone—Reagan is giving a wonderful example of how to sit with our hands to ourselves during circle time. Reagan's face clearly displays her pride being a good example.

Circle time includes doing the calendar and weather, followed by Miss Amber reading the morning book. Miss Amber holds the children's attention during the story by asking them to clap each time they hear the word *leaf*. The teachers praise Reagan a number of times—along with many of the other children—

for sitting with her hands to herself and for clapping along with the story. After she finishes reading, Miss Amber says, "Yesterday, we read a different story about leaves. How is today's story like that one? How is it different from the one we read yesterday?" Several children raise their hands to share their ideas. Following circle time, the children are told who will be their partner for art that day and are sent to the space designated to them.

Miss Amber stands in front of four pairs of children, while Miss Rana stands in front of the other four pairs of children. "Eyes up here," Miss Rana says, as she notices some of the children whispering to each other. Each teacher holds up the art supplies and demonstrates how to gently put the leaf-shaped sponge into the paint tray and then gently place the sponge on the large piece of paper. Miss Rana tells the children to begin painting and quietly observes the interactions between Reagan and Emily.

Reagan asks Emily, "Do you want the red paint first?"

"Um, you pick," Emily quietly replies.

"Red is my favorite color," says Reagan. When Emily does not respond, Reagan asks, "What is your favorite color?"

Emily answers, "I don't know. I guess pink."

Emily has too much paint on her sponge and gets too much on her paper. Under her breath, she says: "I can't do it."

Miss Rana approaches and offers a few words of encouragement.

Reagan, mimicking the teacher, offers similar comments, such as, "I like it too."

The two children continue to talk and share their art supplies. As Miss Rana walks around the room to provide assistance, she notices that Reagan and Emily are talking and giggling. She thinks about how she has never heard Emily giggle during class.

Miss Rana quickly takes the opportunity to encourage Emily: "You are doing a wonderful job! You are quite a little artist!"