

The multicultural aspects of this case are complicated. History shows that Koreans with disabilities, as well as other nationalities of the Far East/Southeast Asian descent, receive stigmatized treatment from their families and communities. Historically, children with physical and/or mental disabilities were shunned and frequently left to die. Peter's case is compounded due to the expectations that male children should be strong and excel both physically and mentally. Peter's father refused to recognize that Peter having Muscular Dystrophy (MD) is a debilitating disease that is not curable, will worsen with time, and will eventually cause death. Peter's father's reluctance to accept Peter for the extremely intelligent young man that he is puts an extreme mental burden on Peter. Continually dragging Peter to church to pray for a miracle, refusing to provide Peter with the tools to succeed, and telling everyone that Peter needs to try harder are examples of this. His father's heritage and religion both play a part in causing Peter to experience depression.

The advantages of Peter attending a special school for children with physical disabilities starts with acceptance. Children who have a disability are more compassionate and accepting of other students who have disabilities, regardless of the type. Having a physical disability does not necessarily accompany a learning disability. In Peter's case his teacher was recommending he be placed in a mainstream program for gifted and talented students in high school. With the appropriate IEP (Individualized Education Plan) he could be very successful in that educational environment, and it would help prepare him for what the world will be like after leaving school.

I can't think of anything more Ms. Darcy could do to assist Peter. She did a good job of addressing his educational needs, assisted with getting resources for having his home become more accessible for his disability, and tried on multiple occasions to get Peter's father to accept what the MD diagnosis actually means for Peter throughout his life span. She even went to the extent of getting a Korean psychologist to talk to his father/family. Unfortunately, educators are not always able to sway a parents' opinion and especially when the family's culture plays such a strong role.

I have actually had a student like Peter, who is now a senior and on an all-dual credit program through the local community college. Students like Peter need adaptive technology for high school and a personally assigned teacher's aide to handle his physical needs, in addition to a wheelchair accessible bus for transportation. My primary concern would be that his father would prevent Peter from receiving the accommodations/modifications needed to be successful.