

Student Portrait - Marco, Grade 2

Who is Marco? Marco is in 2nd grade and has one older sister. Both children live with their grandmother and have little contact with their biological mother. Marco was recently assessed for special education and qualified under the eligibility category of Specific Learning Disability. On cognitive and academic testing, Marco demonstrated a significant discrepancy between his ability level and his achievement in the areas of math calculation and math reasoning. This was found to be directly related to attention processing challenges. Marco spends his entire school day in the general education environment. He receives 30 minutes daily of instructional support from the resource teacher in the area of math.



What are his interests? Marco spends the majority of his free time playing video games with his friends. His current favorites are Minecraft and MarioKart8. Recently, his class learned how to edit videos with YouTube Editor, and Marco is developing quite an interest in creating and posting videos online. He has an older friend who makes money doing this and he is hoping that he can develop similar success. He is interested in making “video game walkthroughs” and has a long term interest in becoming a video game designer.

What are his strengths as a learner? Marco has strong language skills and an extensive vocabulary. He is a great storyteller, and loves to construct elaborate tales and stories using his own fictional characters and twisting story plots. He has many friends who follow his lead into new activities and interests and enjoy his sense of humor and imagination. Marco has strengths in both auditory and visual learning. He loves group and classroom discussions and will also study visuals and maps and charts in order to figure things out and make sense of new information. He does well when he recites information out loud as this helps him with memorization of new information. When refocused, he will continue to work on solving a problem or completing an activity. He does not show frustration even if it takes him several attempts or redirections to complete something.

What are his challenges as a learner? Marco’s attention challenges can be described as difficulty focusing on some activities while ignoring others. He has difficulty sustaining concentration for periods of time while resisting distraction and shifting attention among tasks. However, when the subject is of high interest (such as video gaming!) Marco is able to mitigate these challenges. Marco can solve simple calculation problems if he has visual supports or manipulatives to assist him with remembering the steps to take with the problem, or he has adult assistance to talk him through the steps. He has difficulty retrieving math facts and struggles with automaticity. He struggles with word problems, and often cannot recall which strategy to use or apply to solve a problem. Marco frequently begins working on tasks without asking for clarification on the directions. As a result, he may not be following the right directions or procedures until someone points this out. Marco puts forth a great amount of effort and he is often surprised when he finds out he’s come up with an incorrect answer.