

**This case highlights difficulties faced by children from different cultures and educational experiences, who may have significant educational needs. As you read, consider the following:**

- Analyze the student's background and social history. What is significant? What information is missing?
- Consider her performance in school and outside of the academic environment.
- Analyze and compare reports from teachers, related service providers and parents. How do the responses differ among parents, teachers, and specialists?
- Analyze the Psychological Reports, including scores and conclusions drawn by the psychologists.
  - o Consider the reliability and validity of each assessment.
  - o How are intelligence tests and adaptive behavior assessments used to measure intelligence?
  - o Consider technical accuracy in testing, characteristics of tests, and the appropriate use of tests. Is the appropriate use of tests an issue here? Discuss any issues, and support your conclusions by citing from class presentations or course readings.

Crina was born in Eastern Europe and spent most of the first 10 years of her life in an orphanage, where she looked after younger children. She was adopted shortly before her eleventh birthday by a family living in Ohio.

The only papers that accompanied Crina to the United States were her passport, baptismal certificate, and letter from the orphanage stating that Crina's parents were deceased. Crina's adoptive parents learned some of Crina's language, and Crina tried to learn English in the months before she was enrolled in the local school system. When she was enrolled in the local public school, she was placed in an age-appropriate regular classroom and received additional support from an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. Things did not go well. Crina did not adapt to the school routine, had virtually no understanding of any content area, and was viewed as essentially unteachable. She spent most of her school time trying to help the teacher by neatening up the room, passing out materials, and running errands.

Within Crina's first week in school, her teacher sought additional help from the ESL teacher, the school principal, and the school psychologist. Although all offered suggestions, none of them seemed to work; the school was unable to find a native speaker of Crina's language. Within the first month of school, Crina was referred to a child study team that in turn referred her for psychological and educational assessment.

The school psychologist administered the current Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children and the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, although both tests are administered in English. Crina did much better on tests that did not require her to speak or understand English—for example, block designs.

Her estimated IQ was in the 40s and her achievement was so low that no derived scores were available. Given her age and the extent of her needs, the school team recommended that she be placed in a life skills class with other students with moderate intellectual disabilities.

Crina's mother rejected that placement because Crina had already mastered most of the life skills she would be taught there; at the orphanage, she cleaned, cooked, bathed and tended younger children, and so forth. In addition, her mother believed more verbal students than the ones in the life skills class would be better language models for Crina.

Basically, her mother wanted a program of basic academics that would be more appropriate—a program in which Crina could learn to read and write English, learn basic computational skills, make friends, and become acculturated. For reasons that were never entirely clear, the school refused to compromise, and the dispute went to a due process hearing. The mother obtained an independent educational evaluation.

Her psychologist assessed Crina's adaptive behavior; because the test had limited validity due to Crina's unique circumstances, the psychologist estimated that Crina was functioning within the average range for a person her age. Her psychologist also administered a nonverbal test of intelligence—one that neither required her to understand verbal directions nor to make verbal responses. With the same caveats, Crina was again estimated to be functioning in the average range for a person her age.

**Source:** Witmer, S., & Salvia, J. (2016). *Assessment in special and inclusive education (13th ed.)*. CENGAGE Learning Custom Publishing, p. 85.