

RIDDC/JROTC Service Learning Project: Portfolio assessment/Essay

The children I worked with in my service had communication problems. They couldn't pronounce most words properly, which held them back when trying to verbally communicate with others...The first day we met the kids, they were very shy. We knew they had speech problems, so we didn't expect them to speak much, but when we began, we couldn't get them to be quiet again...The boys were very active. Since they were always jumping around, it was challenging to do activities with them, especially their speech therapy. ..The last thing was that they had a short attention spans for most things. They would jump from one activity from another...They are very anxious and since it is hard for people to understand them a lot of the time, they would get annoyed say something like, "Oh, forget it", (rather than keep trying to be understood).

My perceptions/feelings about people with developmental disabilities has changed vastly as a result of my service learning project. Working with these great kids has made me want to take more time to get to know people. For example, I have a neighbor that has brain damage. He can walk a bit, but his speech is very impaired and he has a pretty short short-term memory. I know his whole family. We hang out all the time but he was usually in the house watching TV so I never really bothered to get to know him. But while I was doing my service, I learned how to communicate and understand people with speech problems better and I began to talk to him. Through conversations, I found out that he was just like me. We like to do the same things, listen to the same music and hang out with pretty much the same people. I'm glad that I learned what I did during my project because if I didn't I probably wouldn't have the good friend that I have now.

I think my involvement with the kids at my service site helped them a great deal. They really got used to us and looked forward to our visits. I think that they can probably get better at making relationships with people. If more high school students did service, it would better them as well as the school and the community. It would be a win-win situation.

Two of my academic areas that have improved with the service learning project are Civics and Psychology. I learned about the ADA and just basically human rights. In psychology I learned about child relationships, human interaction and personal interaction. I also learned quite a bit about career awareness such a human service options and therapeutic professionals.

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