

Sample Child Letter #1 – “All About Bobby”

• General Notes

- Update the note as it pertains to the current status of child (as symptoms wax and wane over time with no measure of predictability)
- Use colorful paper to be easily distinguished from other papers teacher receives
- Place in a pocket folder so additional info can be added as needed
- Add M & Ms-- Chocolate is always helpful
- Include a “Have a Great School Year” card to the teacher
- Include pertinent information from TSA packet, e.g., TS Fact Sheet, Q&A and Teacher letter. Do not enclose too much information initially, as teacher may be overwhelmed and delay reading.

Bobby – Symptoms at a Glance

Tics: (Motor)

- Twirling around
- Jerking his arm, neck, fingers, stomach
- Stretching his mouth
- Taking a skip backwards with his feet, while walking
- Hitting his hand, elbow, or head on desk

Tics: (Vocal)

- Making “Mmm” noises
- Saying “Excuse Me” or “Sorry” repeatedly, other words
- Loud sniffing
- Clearing throat
- Loud “Whoop” sound

OCD:

- Difficulty with changes in routine
- Difficulty transitioning, gets “stuck” on thought or task

ADHD:

- Easily overwhelmed and frustrated
- Impulsive or restless
- Trouble with social cues
- Disorganized, forgetful
- Trouble staying on task

Dysgraphia:

- Difficulty with paper and pencil tasks
- Writing very slow and laborious
- Trouble keeping up with taking notes

Other:

- Drowsiness from medicine
- Headache when frustrated, overwhelmed, tired
- Writing varies, sometimes not very legible

Ways to help him cope:

- Giving a brief time for Bobby to tell the class about his TS and allow for class questions
- Drink of water from a water fountain or water bottle in backpack
- Breath of fresh air, quick outside walk
- Quick walk in the hall or to the bathroom
- Deep breaths
- Rubbing neck or back
- Distraction of some sort
- Change in task for a brief time, then back to the task at hand
- If absolutely necessary, trip to the clinic

*Nurse might allow a 10-15 min. rest, and then return to class

**Important to let him know what he may have missed while out of class. **

Sample Child Letter #1 – “All About Bobby” Continued

Dear Teacher:

This is a little information to help you get to know Bobby this year.

Bobby loves animals, riding horses, drawing, playing guitar, riding bikes, swimming, and video games. He is involved in our church youth group and mission teams, FFA, and the Tourette Syndrome Support Group. Since the age of six, Bobby has been diagnosed with Tourette’s syndrome. Bobby also has an older brother with TS who graduated from XX High School in 200X.

***What Tourette’s syndrome is:** Tourette’s syndrome (TS) is a neurobehavioral (brain-based) movement disorder characterized by motor and vocal tics. Beginning in childhood, it causes those affected to make movements and noises they cannot control. Additionally, many are plagued by obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), attention-deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), oppositional behavior, and other disorders. Although medications may help control the symptoms, as of yet there is no cure.*

Bobby takes a variety of medicines to help control the symptoms associated with his condition. Unfortunately, drowsiness, stomachaches, and headaches are common side effects of most of these medicines. Drowsiness will usually be noticed more in the morning classes or after lunch time. Bobby is currently under the care of a doctor and medicines are constantly observed and adjusted as needed. Tics do change often and can intensify during stressful times or when attention is drawn to them. Tics will usually increase when Bobby becomes upset, frustrated, tense or anxious. It is difficult to make it through a school day when teased, mocked, or even bullied. It proves very helpful for X Bobby to have the opportunity to explain his TS to the class and even to allow for questions. It is best to ignore the tics unless it becomes too great a distraction for the other students.

In many cases, students with Tourette’s syndrome are immature for their age. As much as we have encouraged and worked with Bobby, he is still quite disorganized, forgetful, has trouble focusing, and has difficulty staying on task. He will forget to write his daily assignments, test dates, information from a board, etc. It would be a tremendous help for Bobby to be reminded and also checked to see if he has all of the needed information so that homework may be completed at home. Setting up an email system for communication so that we both can encourage him to keep up with his daily work and studies is great. You’re always welcome to phone as well.

Bobby also has dysgraphia – a mechanical difficulty with paper and pencil tasks. This causes writing to be extremely slow at times and extremely laborious which causes him to have difficulty ore even makes it impossible to keep up the pace with note taking. While always encouraged to try to write his own notes, he should be provided with hard copies which will aid him in his daily homework, studying for quizzes, tests, etc.

You are a very important part of Bobby’s life. We know that you are concerned with not only the academics but the self-esteem of each of your students. It is a great privilege and challenge to teach and reach every individual in your classroom and encourage them to reach for their full potential. We will support you fully and encourage Bobby to do his best in all things. Through the TSA of Texas, we have access to videos, DVDs, and more detailed information if you are interested in learning more about Tourette’s syndrome.

If we can be of any assistance to you, please feel free to contact us at any time. We are looking forward to working together with you to make this a great year.

Parent’s name
Include all phone numbers and Email address