

Reflective essay on students with disabilities

[Profession](#), [Student](#)



In a presentation about parents and families of students with disabilities, the Riley family came up and shared their experiences about living with Catherine, a woman who has Down syndrome. The three presenters who shared were Molly, Nola, and Catherine. Molly, who is Catherine's older sister, talked about what it was like growing up together with Catherine and how it affected her life. Nola, Catherine's mother, told what it was like bringing and raising a child with Down syndrome in this world. Catherine also shared a bit about her life and how she has been successful despite having a disability.

Molly and Catherine are sisters who spent their childhood growing up together. With Molly being only sixteen months older than Catherine, they were very close. They even shared a room together for eighteen years of their life. Molly always made sure that her and Catherine had the typical sister relationship growing up. They did everything together and had the same friends. Catherine was expected to fit in with everyone, and not be given excuses. Molly was always a competitive sister which had Catherine constantly working to get an edge.

This relationship between Molly and Catherine not only strengthened the bond, but also helped the family. With Molly helping Catherine achieve a normal life, this helped Nola out as a mother. Nola a mother of three children, who worked as a teacher for thirty-five years, always had her hands full. She was never too shy to ask people for help, with regard to Catherine, that provided help, guidance, and support. With physical therapy Catherine was able to learn the things that her sister Molly and brother John were able

to do. Besides that, Nola said that the three kids lived a normal life and all grew up just fine.

Nola learned and taught her family to be patient, help each other, to take pleasure in their 3 accomplishments, to encourage each other, to have fun, and to truly be a family. Being a teacher gave Nola an advantage as she always fought for anything that would benefit Catherine in her education. Nola had Catherine put into speech therapy which made a great difference in Catherine's life, as she can now speak clearly with little difficulty. Everything Nola did for Catherine was to benefit her in anyway and help keep her leading as normal of a life as possible.

Catherine went above and beyond that as she has excelled in many aspects of her life. Catherine has spent her whole life with Down syndrome yet did not let it slow her down and affect how she lived her life. Her family never held her back or kept her from doing the things she wanted to do. Her sister always had that tough love for Catherine which always forced Catherine to do better and develop just like any normal sibling would. She always had the support of her family while still being independent, which allowed her to grow and develop into who she is today.

Catherine has been leading a successful life, doing many things even the average woman her age would not be doing. She is employed as an elementary inclusion aid in the Hazelton Area School District where she has worked since graduating there in 1995. Catherine has belonged to a gym for fifteen years where she does things like cardio, kickboxing, and circuit training exercises. She always strives to eat healthy and maintain a good diet. Her hobbies include poetry, journaling, aerobics, computer, travel,
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reading, and dancing. Catherine belongs to a local church where she helps out at church functions and serves on the parish.

All of these activities and things Catherine does in her life help her not only achieve normalcy in life but success. Her life is probably more active and outgoing than most people her age which makes it even more of an accomplishment for Catherine. I personally was inspired by this presentation and thought it was a real eye opener. I have gone through life thinking people with Down syndrome can not achieve the same things that people without a disability can and that's just not true. Catherine has proved that she can do anything she wants and can lead a normal life just like anyone else.

In fact she probably is more active and outgoing than most women her age are. Also I thought that the presentation really showed that people with disabilities need to be given every opportunity, if not more, to help them succeed in life. Society should not hold them back or limit them just because they have a disability. People with disabilities can lead a normal and great life just like everyone else. This is proved by Catherine, who has developed into the woman she is today, a successful, loving, and friendly woman who just happens to have a disability.