

Chapter 7

A Will to Learn: The Experiences of a Self-Advocate in the Education System

by Marcia Marcaccio

When I was five years old, I began attending a religious program for handicapped children. My sister, Donna, was a volunteer teacher in the class I wanted to read. My sister said she would teach me. Our friend Lorraine gave Donna teaching supplies to help me read. Lorraine is a teacher.

In September I started Mounthaven School. This was a school for children who have a mental handicap. My brothers and sisters went to a different school. At Christmas time, my parents went to my school for interviews with my teachers. They told my teacher and my principal that my sister was teaching me to read. The principal and my teacher told my parents that Donna should not be teaching me to read. My parents believed the teacher and the principal. They told Donna and me to stop. My parents did this because they loved me and they didn't want me to have problems.

I was taught the same things as the other children in my class. I was taught different things from what my brothers and sisters were taught at their school. It made me feel miserable to be taught different things. It made me feel that I could not do things for myself. It made me frustrated. I felt bad about