

Dear Ms. Gallagher,

Hope the school year is off to a great start! Here's some background info on Charlie, hope this helps:

BACKGROUND:

We live close to Hutch over on Sixth Ave. We're his parents, Aileen and Tim. Aileen is a massage therapist after a long career at Citibank, which she left this past February. Tim works as a web designer for a healthcare startup in Manhattan. His sister Amelia ("Emmy") will turn 2 in December. Charlie and Emmy compete a bit, but in general really love each other. We live with our 2 cats, Foxy and Zaiya.

Charlie started at daycare at 3 months old. He went to Dee's Tots, a small family daycare in New Rochelle. After that, he went to Huguenot for 2 years. During that time, he was picked up from Huguenot at 2:45 and dropped off at Dee's, where he finished out his day. After Aileen quit Citibank, Charlie started coming home after Huguenot. Emmy is still going to Dee's.

Charlie is overall a very happy, sweet, smart kid who benefits a ton from environments where he can channel that energy into learning opportunities and physical/creative play.

PERSONALITY:

He has a kind heart and loves his friends, but he sometimes likes to 'direct' play which not everyone loves all the time. He stands up for himself and is no pushover. He loves imaginative play and toys, especially if the toys are part of a set (i.e. paw patrol was a recent favorite, now it's pokemon).

He's extremely talkative (which we would safely bet you have already noticed that, haha). He has been chatting and telling stories since about 10 months old and has yet to stop except to chew and sleep. It's not always 100% clear what is true and what gets embellished a bit, but he does have a great memory for detail (especially song lyrics - he loves music).

With all that energy, he can be fidgety. As far as physical skills, he has done several years of gymnastics, loves running and climbing, and is currently doing Rec soccer. He is interested in ballet and theater, so we are going to look into those too. His current obsession is Pokemon, but I'm guessing you already noticed that too.

SOCIAL SKILLS:

Charlie's high energy level applies to his emotions as well - he feels extreme emotions and gets attached to things, which can lead to some meltdowns. Often meltdowns will coincide with being hungry or tired. Aside from snacks/bedtime, our most effective technique is setting his expectations. If he does lose it, we try just being physically present with him during the meltdown, sometimes just sitting with him, sometimes reassuring/soothing him, talking it out/listening to him after he cools off and trying to get him laughing (that last part is particularly effective in turning it around). He is just starting to get a bit fresh and test his limits with us, so we are just trying to be patient and firm, but would love suggestions other than correcting him all the time,

In general, he doesn't really like talking about emotions. He sometimes struggles with accepting something is his fault / saying sorry, but he is starting to become more socially aware. Sometimes he feels more comfortable writing out Sorry in a card. In cases where he is having a hard time apologizing, we have found that it seems like he is deathly afraid that the person is mad at him and doesn't like him any more, so he is scared to approach them (that's why the card thing seemed to help turning that around)

When nervous, he can be a slow warmer. At parties, he may want to play by himself or with his parents for the first 5-45 minutes, especially if there are a lot of people he doesn't know. After that, he makes new friends easily. He also took a long time to warm to Huguenot (although Emmy was born about 3 months into his first year there).

One of his main fears is being alone; he would almost always rather play with someone. On the flip side, he doesn't like when he feels "everybody watching me" or getting too much attention right as he arrives.

He has just started recognizing social gender differentials, and sometimes make comments about things like 'boy' toys and 'pink is a color for girls', etc. It's nothing we are remotely concerned about, but when it does (rarely) crop up, we are trying to remind him can like whatever he likes and everyone else is entitled to do the same and that's fine.

He is very attached to his family, and is definitely mama's boy. He is very patient and loving with his sister, but they sometimes compete for mom's attention/lap. He gets one-on-one time after school with mom, which seems to help.

ACADEMICS AND SKILLS:

He's been writing, categorizing, counting, and following rules for several years now, so he is intellectually very comfortable for his grade. Given that his January birthday also puts him on the older end of the class, he sometimes gets bored with material he has already mastered but really enjoys extra tasks/responsibilities. He gets into units; last year he liked learning about space and different animals. He also loved his ocean life unit last year. He is curious and likes to know how things work, and will ask a lot of questions. Charlie goes through periods where he's very enthusiastic about school, but

also goes through periods where talks a lot about not wanting to go to school.

He understands that you need to practice something a lot before mastering it—over the summer he was finally able to swing by himself and whistle after lots of practice.

However, sometimes he still underestimates how much work it can be to learn something, and can get frustrated if he doesn't learn it quickly.

OUR PERSPECTIVE

He is a great kid and is excited for this year. We are very proud of him and know he will have a fantastic experience in class. If there is anything we can do to help reinforce classroom objectives at home, definitely let us know.

We would love any and all suggestions as to how to use more positive reinforcement to encourage good listening, following directions, and managing emotions. We have tried tasks and sticker charts in the past with periodic success, and are starting to think about setting regular chores to earn points/rewards. Overall, we ultimately want to encourage good behavior just for the sake of being a good person (i.e. do your chores because you are part of this family/household and we take care of our house, not because i buy you toys). Not sure if he is not quite ready for that at his age though.

We also want to begin to instill a sense of gratitude for his life - any suggestions on his welcome as well. We would be glad to participate in any volunteer events / kindness exercises. I saw online a project started in a middle school in the midwest that could be a good start. A pair of friends made 100s of "magic wands" and hid them around their town. Anyone who found one had to do something kind for someone and then hide it again for the next person to find. Would love to mention something like that to the school leaders to get their thoughts. What do you think?

Here is the story:

<http://mentalfloss.com/article/502836/tweens-spending-their-summer-spreading-random-acts-kindness>

Thanks so much for all the work you've put in so far and will do this year. We're looking forward to seeing where Charlie goes!

Sincerely,

Aileen & Tim Dosé