

## Creating an I.E.P. for my Son

In the preschool breakroom pictures of rainbow homes and stick figures line the walls, each the same in a different way. Across the table a post-nominal title tells my wife and I *he qualifies*, though I don't remember entering him into anything. *Emotional disturbance and risk of depression* he finishes. He tells us it's nobody's fault, which I translate as my own and why I begin to notice how small I am. In my head I hear my wife, like so many times before, *why can't you tell me how you feel?* I get that way sometimes, afraid of my voice. No one mentions the walls we can quietly erect within ourselves, how thick and high they can become. I wear my emotions like feet, always covered. See, I can't even properly use a simile. What I really mean to say is I panic when my son plays copy-cat. People say they see a lot of me in him, but he'll never understand when I tell him sorry. Selfishly, what I hope for by the end of this meeting is a plan to save myself, a neat diagram or infographic explaining the line between responsibility and abdication, between learning and ignorance. But there is no magic spell, no wand or silver bullet. The answer is always small and gradual, something barely registered in the mind. *We just need him to use his words.* Yes, let's start there.