



# Squeak

by  
TITO LIVAS



Newport, Maine

© 2023 by Tito Livas

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**

CAUTION:

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that

**SQUEAK**

being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States Of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion Of Canada, and the other countries of the Copyright Union, is subject to royalty. Anyone presenting the play without the express written permission of the Copyright owners and/or their authorized agent will be liable to the penalties provided by law.

**Script and music copies must be rented from the Publisher and Royalty must be paid to the publisher for each and every performance before an audience whether or not admission is charged. A performance license must first be obtained from the publisher prior to any performance(s).**

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the author or his respective agent(s), or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 or under the terms of any license permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency.

Federal Copyright Law -- 17 U.S.C. section 504 -- allows for a recovery of a minimum of \$250 and a maximum of \$50,000 **for each infringement**, plus attorney fees.

The professional and amateur rights to the performance of this play along with the lecturing, recitation, and public reading rights, are administered exclusively through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be made. For all other rights, inquiries may be made to the authors through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS. Any adaptation or arrangement of this work without the author's written permission is an infringement of copyright. **Unauthorized duplication by any means is also an infringement.**

**FOR PUBLIC PERFORMANCE RIGHTS YOU MUST APPLY TO THE PUBLISHER OR YOU ARE BREAKING THE LAW!**

The possession of this PERUSAL SCRIPT, does not constitute permission to perform the work herein contained, in public or in private, for gain or charity. Proper prior application must be made, license granted and royalty paid before a performance may be given. Copies of this SCRIPT and all other rehearsal materials may be rented from:

LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS  
P.O. Box 536 Newport, ME 04953-0536  
[www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com](http://www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com)  
Printed in the United States Of America

THIS NOTICE MUST APPEAR IN ALL PROGRAMS, ON ALL POSTERS AND PUBLICITY MATERIALS AND INTERNET ADVERTISING/WEBPAGES FOR THE PLAY:

“*Squeak*’ is presented through special arrangement with Première Theatrical Licensing on behalf of Leicester Bay Theatricals. All authorized materials are also supplied by LBT, [www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com](http://www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com)”

NOTE: Your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals limits you to making copies of this document for persons directly connected with your production. Do not distribute outside of your cast and crew. Following your performance run you must destroy all photocopies, preferably by shredding them. If we sent you the document in printed format, you must return that document to us. If we provided you with an electronic PDF file, simply trash that on your computer so that it cannot be recovered. The electronic document may only be on ONE computer -- it may NOT be duplicated. This is also a part of your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals.

**ORDER #3384**

**ARTWORK by Aaron Asano Swenson, courtesy of Plan-B Theatre. Used by permission.**

# SQUEAK

Characters: The play can be done with anywhere between 2-5 actors. One actor plays Squeak while the other actor(s) play the other roles. Depending on costume capability, the characters can simply be human, or they can be the animals after which they're named. Squeak is a mouse, as is their parent, Squawk is a bird, Squish is a jellyfish wearing a helmet filled with water, and Squeak's Teacher is an owl, but feel free to make them whatever animal you desire.

Actor 1- **SQUEAK'S PARENT:** - an adult

**Squawk-** a child

**Squish-** a child

**Squeak's Teacher-** an adult

Actor 2- **Squeak-** a child

Read on for details on Core Standards and Intended Learning Outcomes.

## **CORE STANDARDS & SEL OUTCOMES**

- Health Education Core Standards and SEL Outcomes are integrated into the script alongside Fine Arts Core Standards.
- The study guide provides low-prep, pre-and-post-assembly classroom activities that integrate additional Fine Arts Core Standards, as well as those in Language Arts, Health Education, and Library Media.

## **INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

After experiencing **SQUEAK** students will:

- develop a vocabulary for talking about neurodiversity, understanding that not everyone's brain works the same way.
- appreciate differences and treat others with dignity and respect.
- learn breathing exercises to calm stressful moments.
- communicate effectively to resolve conflict.

**SQUEAK** by *Tito Livas*. 1m 1f. 25 minutes. Simple setting. Contemporary costumes. Squeak’s brain moves at warp speed. Sometimes that makes it hard to connect with other kids. And sometimes it's hard for grown-ups to understand. A journey across the spectrum created specifically for **grades K-3**, complete with dinosaurs, Dragon Breaths, and a new friend. “My hope is that students, teachers, administrators, and parents – anyone and everyone who watches SQUEAK – will come away with a little more patience and a lot more understanding of what goes on inside the minds of kids whose brains work a little differently.” – *Playwright Tito Livas*. **ORDER #3384**

**Tito Livas** is an actor, educator, playwright, and member of Plan-B's **Theatre Artists of Color Writing Workshop**, where he has created his plays "Organic" (which was produced as part of **LOCAL COLOR**, Plan-B’s series of audio plays during the pandemic), "American Dream," "Shine A Light" (commissioned for the Play at Home initiative and part of the COVID-19 Response Collection housed in the Library of Congress), and **SQUEAK**. Regional acting credits include Plan-B, National Theatre for Children, TheatreWorks USA, Walt Disney World, Princess Cruises, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Salt Lake Acting Company, Pioneer Theatre Company, Utah Opera, The Public Theater, and The Old Globe. He has also appeared in many Hallmark movies, industrials, and print and television ad campaigns. Tito lives on an urban farm in West Valley with his husband and two sons.

## SQUEAK

*(SQUEAK enters carrying their shoes and doing some sort of activity, spinning, dancing, jumping, etc. They plop in the center of the stage loudly “blowing out candles” on their fingers. When they’ve blown out their final finger they take a big deep breath.)*

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** *(OS)* Squeak...have you blown out your candles? Are you calm now?

**SQUEAK:** Yes!

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** *(OS)* Are you ready to cooperate and get ready for school?

**SQUEAK:** Yes!

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** *(OS)* Ok. Thank you for doing that. Can you please put your shoes on and grab your backpack and meet me at the front door?

**SQUEAK:** *(looking at the shoes and investigating them/playing with them)* Why do we have to wear shoes?

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** *(OS)* “Why do we have to wear shoes?” Because they protect our feet. Did you put them on? It’s time to go!

**SQUEAK:** But I hate wearing shoes, I like being barefoot. I like my toes to be FREE!

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** *(OS)* Well your toes can be free AFTER school. Shoes, please.

**SQUEAK:** *(throwing shoe and pulling their sock off and examining a foot)* Hey! Where do feet come

from? Why do we have ‘em? Toes are so weird.

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** *(OS)* Squeak! We don't have time for this, it's time to go can you please put your shoes on and get out here?

**SQUEAK:** But why do we have toenails? What are they? Why are they there?

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** *(OS)* I don't know why we have toenails, Squeak, but we can talk about it later, get your shoes on! Please!

**SQUEAK:** But why do my toes smell like chips? **THEY SMELL LIKE FRITO CHIPS!**

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** *(OS)* Like Frito Chips? Ok, well at least they don't smell like broccoli yet. When they smell like broccoli that's when you really need a bath.

**SQUEAK:** Like broccoli?!

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** *(OS)* Yup. Like broccoli. Now put. On. Your. Shoes. Please.

**SQUEAK:** Ugh! Ok!

*(SQUEAK looks around their immediate space for the other shoe, forgetting that they threw it. Then they get on all fours and start searching around the whole space. After 5-10 seconds of searching they pretend to be a puppy and start barking and bouncing all over the stage making sure to bark at the audience like they're a danger.)*

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** *(OS)* Squeak, what are you doing? Are your shoes on?

**SQUEAK:** *(still on all fours they look down and back at their feet)*...one is.

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** *(OS)* Well put both of them on, please!

**SQUEAK:** But I don't know what happened to my other shoe. I can't find it.

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** *(entering)* What do you mean, you can't find it? You came in here with both shoes.

**SQUEAK:** Well, I did, I did come in with both but now I only have this one.

*(Holding up shoe.)*

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** So where's the other one?

**SQUEAK:** I 'on't know.

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** You don't know?! HOW CAN YOU NOT KNOW?! YOU-

*(Stops themselves from losing it and takes a deep breath then with a finger draws lines from each fingertip to center of palm on each hand. SQUEAK approaches during this exercise and notices the breathing)*

**SQUEAK:** Are you practicing your breathing?

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** Yup. Because even grown ups have a hard time with their emotions sometimes.

**SQUEAK:** They do?

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** Oh yeah. Everyone, no matter how young or old they are, has times when they need

to breathe before they lose control. Now...please help me find your shoe.

**SQUEAK:** Ok.

*(Doesn't move, stares at the shoe in their hand)*

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** *(slightly annoyed)* It has to be here somewhere, how many places can a shoe be in one room? Squeak, you're not helping, I really need you to focus and help me with this. We're gonna be late for school.

**SQUEAK:** *(getting a little angry)* But I don't know where it is.

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** Well help me look for it and then we'll find it.

**SQUEAK:** *(angrier)* But I already looked for it!!

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** Whoa, whoa, whoa...not ok, buddy. We do not yell like that.

**SQUEAK:** *(still angry)* But you're NOT listening to me!

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** Ok, ok. I'm sorry you think I'm not listening to you, but it hurts my feelings when you yell at me like that. So how about you blow out your candles again, huh?

**SQUEAK:** No.

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** Squeak.

**SQUEAK:** *(grunts, starts to blow out their candles and then stops after 7 blows. Looks at audience. Rushes to the front of the stage and raising hands in the air)* PAUSE!



*(Addressing the kids)*

Hi. I'm Squeak. And I have a very. active. brain. Sometimes I can't control what I do or what I say because there's SO MUCH GOING ON IN HERE and my feelings can be pretty big. I bet your feelings are pretty big sometimes too. Being a kid is hard! So when it gets too hard and my brain feels like it's going to explode I blow out my candles and that helps. Like this.

*(Hold hands up in front of face)*

These are my candles.

*(Wiggles fingers)*

Now just blow out each candle one by one.

*(Blow at each finger and as you blow bring the finger down into your palm)*

And that helps me calm down and focus. But sometimes if my feelings are just too big then I need to be a dragon and do dragon breaths to show them who's boss. Hey! Do YOU wanna be dragons and do dragon breaths with me? Ok! Sit up real straight, close your mouth and breathe in through your nose- like this. Then, open your eyes and mouth as big as you can, stick out your tongue, and breathe out through your mouth- like this. Do it three times with me! Ready?

*(Do it 3x)*

Good job! I saw some really cool dragons! How about if I need to do dragon breaths again you all help me next time? Okay? Okay, rewind!

*(Rewind motions and noises)*

Back to life!

*(Goes back and blows out all the candles)*

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** Do you feel better now?

**SQUEAK:** Yes. I'm sorry I yelled and hurt your feelings.

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** Apology accepted. And I'm sorry that I lost my cool and yelled a little bit too.

**SQUEAK:** That's okay.

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** I promise that I'll try and not yell when I'm frustrated. Okay?

**SQUEAK:** Okay. And I promise to try and not yell when I'm frustrated too.

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** Thank you. As long as we both are trying that's what counts. We won't always be able to be perfect at it, and that's okay, just as long we keep trying...because that's what matters. Okay?

**SQUEAK:** Okay.

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** Great. Now can you please help me find your other shoe?

**SQUEAK:** Sure!

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** Thank you.

**SQUEAK:** *(very quickly finding the shoe and putting it on)* Here it is!

**SQUEAK'S PARENT:** Perfect! Good Job! Now let's get you to school.

**SQUEAK:** Yay! Race you to the car!

*(They BOTH run offstage. SQUAWK enters. They are wearing a backpack, carrying a notepad and writing in it with a very brightly colored pen. SQUEAK enters, humming a song they made up. SQUAWK sits down on the ground. SQUEAK sees Squawk and walks up behind them. They want to talk to Squawk but don't know how to engage. Some shuffling ensues. They look over Squawk's shoulder at what's on the page and get very excited.)*

Hey!

*(No reaction.)*

Hey!

*(No reaction.)*

Hey Squawk! Do you like Sponge Bob?! Your drawing looks like Patrick! He's a star fish. I love Spongebob, he's so funny. He has a pet snail and I love snails, but I've never seen a snail in the ocean- only snails in the backyard, but this one time when I was AT the ocean I saw a little crab and it was running around on the rocks and I tried to catch it but it was too fast so I never got to hold it but my dad said not to scare them anyway, so I guess it's okay.

*(At some point in that monologue SQUAWK looks up at Squeak indifferently. At the end of the monologue they let out a big sigh go back to their notebook. Unsure what to do SQUEAK tries a different approach.)*

Hey Squawk! Look at this!

*(Does a weird, contorted, squished up face, dance move)*

*(No reaction. Again, unsure how to engage they try a different approach. Gets right behind Squawk and taps them on the shoulder. No reaction. Taps again. No reaction. Taps again. SQUAWK looks over their shoulder and SQUEAK takes that opportunity to reach down over the opposite shoulder and snatch the pen from Squawk's hand. SQUEAK immediately starts running around the stage giggling in joy. SQUAWK jumps up and starts to chase them.)*

**SQUAWK: SQUEAK!! STOP! GIVE IT BACK! IT'S NOT FUNNY!**

*(SQUEAK continues to run around in circles laughing and having fun while SQUAWK tries to get the pen back.)*

Squeak! I mean it, I'm not playing! Give it back!

*(More running and laughing.)*

SQUEAK! You've been at school for five minutes and you're already being a pest! Stop!

*(More cat and mouse game.)*

Squeak, the bell is going to ring, please give me back my pen!

*(SQUAWK catches Squeak and they wrestle for the pen for a few seconds with SQUEAK giggling and enjoying the "game" until SQUAWK gets poked with the pen in the hand.)*

Give. It. Ba-“SQUAWWWWWWK!!” Ahhhhh! Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow, ow. Squeak! You poked me!

**SQUEAK:** *(gasps)* I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to. I was just playing. Are you ok?

*(SQUAWK plops down on the ground and doesn’t answer, examining their hand.)*

Squawk?...Squawk, are you ok?

**SQUAWK:** *(looking at their hand)* Uhm...I think so. I don’t see a cut or anything.

**SQUEAK:** I’m sorry, Squawk. Here.

*(Hands pen to Squawk.)*

**SQUAWK:** Thank you. Why did you do that?! Why did you take my pen and run away?!

**SQUEAK:** I was just having fun. I thought it’d be funny.

**SQUAWK:** Well it wasn’t funny, it was mean. Why didn’t you stop when I told you to?

**SQUEAK:** *(shrugs)*...sometimes I don’t understand if a friend is playing along with me or not. My brain gets confused and I think we’re both having fun.

**SQUAWK:** Oh. Why does it get confused?

**SQUEAK:** Because I’m running and laughing and you’re chasing me, which is super fun, and...

*(Turns and looks at audience)*

PAUSE!

*(Runs to edge of stage)*

Hey! Do you wanna see how my brain works? Okay!

*(Led by SQUEAK- choose four kids in the audience evenly spaced apart, have them stand where they are, ask them what their favorite animal is and have everyone listen to the answers. Then split the audience into four sections—each section corresponding to the animal chosen by the student in that section. Then, go over with each section the sound the animal chosen makes. e.g. “what sound does a cat make, everyone? Meow!” And so on. If someone chooses an animal that makes a sound with which you’re not familiar-make it up! THEN, ask the question again but tell them to answer the question this time with all the students making the sound of the animal that the student in that section chose.)*

Now, did you hear the answers that time? Could you hear what their favorite animals are with all that noise? That’s what it’s like in my brain sometimes. The answers are there, the right thing to do is there, but I can’t always hear it because of all the other noise happening. Sometimes the noise is real life noise, like me laughing or the sound of my feet hitting the ground or other kids talking, and sometimes the noise is just ALL the things I’m thinking about at the same time. So it can be really hard to focus and that gets super frustrating and then my feelings get out of control and I can’t control anything! And that’s why blowing out my candles or breathing like a dragon help. Because then I focus on one thing-breathing. And my brain can calm down. Okay! Rewind!

*(Makes rewind motions and sounds)*

Back to life!

**SQUAWK:** Why does it get confused?

**SQUEAK:** Because I’m running and laughing and you’re chasing me, which is super fun, and because usually nobody plays with me unless I take something and play keep away. So that’s just how I play sometimes.

**SQUAWK:** Oh.

*(Small pause)*

I’m sorry. One time when I was at my friend’s birthday party, it was a superhero party, and you were supposed to dress like a superhero, but I didn’t have a superhero costume so I just wore my Yoda shirt

from Star Wars and when they were playing a chasing game outside they said I couldn't play because I didn't wear a superhero costume. That made me real sad to be left out.

**SQUEAK:** Well...they were not being like superheroes then. Superheroes would never leave someone out.

**SQUAWK:** Yeah...you're right, they wouldn't. Anyway, I'm sorry I didn't ask you to draw with me. And I'm sorry I ignored you. And I'm sorry nobody plays with you. I'll try and do better about asking you to play so you don't feel left out. That's not a good feeling.

**SQUEAK:** Oh thank you! And I'll try and do better about listening when my brain gets confused and plays in the wrong way.

**SQUAWK:** That's a good idea.

*(Bell rings.)*

Oh! We better hurry to class!

**SQUEAK:** Okay! Wanna race?

**SQUAWK:** *(standing up)* Oh, I don't know my hand still kinda- Go!

**SQUEAK:** *(laughing)* That was a good trick Squawk!

*(They BOTH run off stage and almost immediately SQUEAK reenters with his arms crossed-pouting and pacing. Following shortly after is SQUEAK'S TEACHER. They watch Squeak pace a bit and then...)*

**SQUEAK'S TEACHER:** Squeak? Would you stop for a minute and have a chat with me, please?

*(SQUEAK doesn't stop.)*

Squeak, we need to talk about what just happened and what we can do to help you from doing it again.

*(SQUEAK doesn't stop.)*

Squeak? I understand that you're upset but would you please stop so we're able to talk about it?

*(SQUEAK doesn't stop.)*

*(SQUEAK'S TEACHER takes a deep breath, brings their hands up to their chest and with their thumbs, touches the four fingertips on each corresponding hand while exhaling. Does this three times then does a big breath out.)*

Squeak, I'm sorry that you're so upset right now. I can see that you're feeling some really big feelings. The thing is, unless we talk about what just happened those big feelings won't go away. Unless we talk about what happened with Squish so I can understand, then I can't help. And I want to help.

**SQUEAK:** But I didn't do anything!

**SQUEAK'S TEACHER:** Ok, I know that's what you think but I saw you, Squeak. I watched you hit Squish in the stomach.

**SQUEAK:** But I was just playing!!

**SQUEAK'S TEACHER:** Well, that is not how we play Squeak. That is not a nice way to play.

**SQUEAK:** But...

*(through the teeth yell in frustration)*

PAUSE!

*(SQUEAK marches straight to the front of the stage and addresses the audience with intensity.)*

I need to do Dragon Breaths, can you please help me? Show me your scariest dragons! Ready? Breathe in!

*(3 Dragon breaths)*

Okay. Thank you. Rewind!

*(Rewind motions and sounds)*

Back to life!

**10 MORE PAGES TO THE END OF THE SCRIPT**



# PLAYWRIGHT TITO LIVAS ON CREATING ‘SQUEAK’

August 29, 2023 — AT PLAN-B THEATRE COMPANY



## BY TITO LIVAS

*Tito is an actor, educator, playwright, and member of Plan-B's **Theatre Artists of Color Writing Workshop**, where he has created his plays "Organic" (which was produced as part of **LOCAL COLOR**, Plan-B's series of audio plays during the pandemic), "American Dream," "Shine A Light" (commissioned for the Play at Home initiative and part of the COVID-19 Response Collection housed in the Library of Congress), and **SQUEAK**.*

*Regional acting credits include Plan-B, National Theatre for Children, TheatreWorks USA, Walt Disney World, Princess Cruises, Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Salt Lake Acting Company, Pioneer Theatre Company, Utah Opera, The Public Theater, and The Old Globe. He has also appeared in many Hallmark movies, industrials, and print and television ad campaigns.*

*Tito lives on an urban farm in West Valley with his husband and two sons.*

If I were to share all the ideas I listed when I was commissioned to write for Plan-B's **Free Elementary School Tour**, you would see everything from dealing with thoughts and ideas that were different from those

of your parents, to having same-sex parents, to navigating life as a foster kid, to escaping into imagination when things get rough, to understanding why some of our wishes don't come true, to growing up deaf ... and that's just a sampling. Ultimately (inevitably?) I landed on a play about my oldest child.

**SQUEAK** is the story of what I think it's like inside his brain, the difficulties he has within himself and his interactions with others, and how to better serve his neurodivergence.

Oliver was born with methamphetamines and other drugs in his system. He was placed with me and my husband Doug as a newborn. We knew he was likely to have some sort of developmental issue, be it mental or emotional. Because meth is such a new drug, there's not much information on how it affects developing babies while in utero. The consensus from our doctors was that we might see delays in his formative years, when he hits puberty, or both.

We started testing Oliver as soon as he was old enough. Professionals met with us in our home to test his motor skills (fairly advanced) and cognitive skills (fairly behind). "Okay! We knew this was a possibility, let's proceed with a plan that will help him as best we can." And so began our search for help.

We found a Montessori school with a mantra of fostering a love of learning for every child, rather than throwing information at them to memorize. It was a place where Oliver could just play while learning from both teachers and peers. And for two years that worked great! The combination of the hard work of his wonderful teachers and what we were doing at home helped Oliver progress: he was able to better communicate and was learning how to interact with others.

But once he entered kindergarten, things got more difficult. He couldn't sit and focus on a task for longer than two minutes. (That's not an exaggeration.) The principal observed him on several occasions. Each time, over the course of three hours, she would time him to see how long it would take before he would abandon his task, stand up, and run around the classroom. Or start talking to (pestering) another child. Or leave the classroom to wander the halls.

Two minutes.

Needless to say, it was frustrating for everyone involved. Oliver was labeled "challenging" by his teachers and "annoying" by his peers. All because of something out of his control. It was heartbreaking. He didn't understand why he wasn't liked, why the other kids didn't want to play with him, why the teachers couldn't just work with him the entire day. He was great one-on-one, but without someone dedicated to guiding him, his mind would wander, his focus would waver, and he wouldn't be able to get back to center. Then his emotions would spiral. If he wasn't allowed to play with a specific something or someone, he would become a crying mess, have a meltdown, and require quite a bit of attention to calm down.

It was no surprise when his school asked us to pull him out until we figured out a way to help him be less distracting in class.

Did I cry when they told us that? Of course I did.

Did I cry on his last day? Of course I did.

Did I also make sure he didn't see me crying and pretend that everything was fine, and it was just the last day of school for everyone? Of course I did.

The following week was his first therapy session at a local agency serving neurodiverse children. Which was both disappointing and validating. Their approach with Oliver was pretty much what we were already doing, including breathing exercises involving physical touch to bring him back to center when overstimulated or melting down. It took Oliver a while to warm up to and feel comfortable with his

therapist. But after three sessions, she was able to get a sense of what Oliver is like on a daily basis, and confessed that she wasn't sure how to help us.

A children's neurodiversity therapist was unsure what to do to help our child. You can imagine our reaction.

Next up was an appointment with his pediatrician to try and get him on meds for his newly diagnosed ADHD. Because he was only five, and because they don't usually prescribe ADHD meds for kids that young, Oliver received the lowest dose possible. And the result has been incredible.

He can focus, stay on task, have a full-on conversation, and be himself instead of a puppet to the chaos going on in his brain.

But we are lucky. Now that we have a full diagnosis, we have the means to get Oliver the help he needs. We can afford the medication, we have insurance, we have a support system in place.

What happens to the kids whose families don't have that? Families can't get the help? Neurodivergence is much more common than people realize.

I hope **SQUEAK** will help students and teachers realize that "that kid" in their class who needs constant attention, can't sit down, can't focus, who seems annoying and pestering, is probably not acting that way on purpose. Chances are they can't control it.

I get it. I live with my kid 24/7. I know how frustrating he can be, I know how draining he can be, and I've lost my cool more times than I can count.

As frustrating as it is, we can't control what "that kid" does. But we can control how we react.

Dismissing "that kid" serves no one.

My hope is that students, teachers, administrators, and parents - anyone and everyone who watches **SQUEAK** - will come away with a little more patience and a lot more understanding of what goes on inside the minds of kids whose brains work a little differently.

Kids like my Oliver who, by the way, graduated from kindergarten at a different school last spring.