



By Jane McBride
(Based on a true story)

“Alex, it’s time to go to speech therapy,” Miss Jenkins said.

Alex ducked his head. Speech therapy was a special class he went to. He had trouble saying some words and sounds. So he had to practice them in speech class a few times a week. Every time he left his regular class, he felt so embarrassed!

He looked up at his teacher. “Could I skip it?” he whispered. “Just for today?”

Today, Mr. Timmons was coming to Alex’s class to talk about dinosaurs. Mr. Timmons worked at a museum with lots of cool dinosaur bones. He was even going to bring a bone that was thousands of years old! Alex didn’t want to miss out.

Miss Jenkins smiled. “You still need to go to your speech class. But you might get back in time for the last part of Mr. Timmons’s talk.”



Dinosaur bones sounded a lot more fun than speech therapy.

Alex tried to smile back, but he couldn’t. He slowly walked to the speech therapy classroom. In class they practiced saying the same sound over and over. Learning about dinosaurs would have been more fun.

“I hate saying these stupid sounds,” he told his speech therapy teacher. “I feel like such a baby.”

“You’re not a baby at all,” she said. “We all need a little extra help sometimes. Did you know that I went to speech therapy when I was your age?”

That made Alex feel a little better. He worked hard for the rest of the class to practice his sounds.

When Alex got back to Miss Jenkins’s classroom, he saw his friend Courtney leaving.

“Where are you going?” he asked.

Courtney looked down. “I’m having trouble with reading. I have to go to a special reading class.” Courtney looked embarrassed.

“Hey, it’s all right,” Alex said. “I just got back from my speech class. I spent the whole time making the same sound over

and over.” He scrunched up his nose.

“You did?”

He nodded. “I’ve been going to speech therapy for the last two years.”

“How come I didn’t know?” she asked.

Alex shrugged. “I never told anyone. I was afraid they would make fun of me.”

“I would never make fun of you,” Courtney said. “I’m glad you made it back in time to see the dinosaur bone. It’s really cool!” She waved. “I’ve got to go. See you later.”

Soon Alex found out that he and Courtney weren’t the only ones who went to other classes. Tommy went to a class to help him learn better social skills.

And Bekah worked with a special teacher to help her arm get stronger after she hurt it.

Now Alex didn’t feel so bad about his speech class. He wanted to help the other kids feel better too. He practiced reading with Courtney and talked to Tommy at lunch. Everyone needed a little extra help sometimes, and that was OK! ●

This story took place in the USA.

I’m getting extra help with reading.



I’m getting extra help with social skills.



I’m getting extra help with my arm.



A Little EXTRA Help

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARK ROBISON