



*I wish to give  
Katie's Treatment  
Buddies to kids  
facing cancer*

**Kate, 20**  
lymphoma

# *Wish Kids*

A GUIDE TO VARIOUS AGES

Make-A-Wish.



*I wish to have an  
Action Trackchair*

**Klara, 8**  
neuromuscular disorder

## Interacting with Wish Kids

Each wish kid is truly unique, and the recommendations contained in this guide may not apply to each child. As a Make-A-Wish® volunteer, you should consider the impact of medical treatment, developmental delays, restrictions based on the medical condition and guidance from the family and chapter staff when working with a wish kid.

### Here are some tips that can help you build trust with a wish kid and their family:

- ☆ As exciting as the wish process is for a child and their family, remember that children, especially those who have spent a lot of time in the hospital, can become very nervous around strangers.
- ☆ Introduce yourself and why you are visiting using simple explanations such as, “I am here to play with you and learn about what makes you happy.”
- ☆ Always try to meet the child at eye level or below. Speaking up to an adult can be daunting. When appropriate, get on the floor or kneel when speaking or playing with your wish kid to make them feel more comfortable.
- ☆ Be aware of your tone of voice, as your wish kid may have a heightened awareness of your tone and body language.
- ☆ Instead of ending a sentence with “OK?,” to which the response may be “no,” give the wish kid a chance to make a choice between two things.
- ☆ Don’t over-explain. Simple explanations may be more effective than long discussions.
- ☆ Tell your wish kid that you liked playing with them, that meeting them made you happy or that they make you smile.



*I wish to have  
a backyard  
playhouse*

**Sultan, 6**  
nervous system disorder

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# Intro to Young Kids (2 to 5 Years Old)

*I wish to be  
a chef*

**Forrest, 5**  
leukemia



## WISH DISCOVERY STRATEGIES

- ☆ Come prepared to play. Play is how a child best communicates at this age and creates a safe space to build your relationship and give you insights into the child's likes that may help in determining the most appropriate wish choice.
- ☆ Ask the caregivers about how to best interact with the wish kid prior to meeting. Check with chapter staff to determine if a Communication Profile was completed for a wish kid who is non-verbal.
- ☆ Prior to the wish interview, ask the caregivers to have a few of the child's favorite toys or activities accessible. There may be a certain activity (e.g., dance party, jumping, singing songs) that can give you a starting point to interact with your wish kid.
- ☆ If possible, coordinate a meeting that fits with the wish kid's schedule to ensure the visit is not disruptive to the child's regular routine.
- ☆ Ask your wish kid to act out their wish and join in! If the parents and child allow, try and take a video of them playing out their wish.
- ☆ Bring drawing materials to allow the child the opportunity to illustrate their wish. Make note of the exact words they use to describe their drawing, as children this age may associate an unrelated word to a certain action or item.
- ☆ Some children may have lengthy answers for each question, making it difficult to determine their one true wish. If this is the case, look for common themes within each category to help determine the wish.



*I wish to have  
a playset*

**Alexa, 2 1/2**  
respiratory disorder

## Working with Toddlers (2.5 YEARS OLD)



### KEYWORD: INDEPENDENCE

Toddlers regularly move back and forth from relying on their caregivers to expressing a need for more independence.

#### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

- ☆ Enjoys independent play as well as playing alongside someone without directly interacting
- ☆ Shows independence from parents by wanting to do things on their own
- ☆ Enjoys having a sense of personal control over their abilities
- ☆ Wants to be successful while playing, during activities and interactions, which is directly linked to the child's self-esteem
- ☆ Often assumes that what other people see, hear and feel are exactly as their own (egocentric)
- ☆ May frustrate easily when they cannot fully express verbally what they want or how they feel
- ☆ Does not understand the concept of sharing
- ☆ Age where stranger anxiety peaks

#### LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- ☆ Begins to use more complicated sentences but may not understand all words and abstract concepts
- ☆ Speech is becoming more accurate but may still leave off ending sounds
- ☆ Strangers may not be able to understand much of what is said
- ☆ Uses three-word sentences such as, "Me want ball."
- ☆ May say "no" frequently to assert the growing desire to be independent
- ☆ Answers simple questions, such as, "What do you do when you are hungry?"
- ☆ Names pictures
- ☆ Knows descriptive words, such as "big" or "happy"
- ☆ Often wants to know "why"

## TIPS FOR INTERACTING

- ☆ Speak to the wish kid at eye level. If the child is anxious, let them see you engage with the people they trust, such as parents or siblings, as this can help them feel more comfortable.
- ☆ Give your wish kid a choice between two things being mindful that open-ended questions may be hard for this age to answer. For example, “Do you like pink or blue?” versus “Would you like to try this now?”
- ☆ Due to stranger anxiety, keep in mind how you present yourself. Is your tone of voice too loud? Are you too close for comfort?
- ☆ Children at this age begin to show an interest in television. If your wish kid is interested in a specific show, ask them about the characters, the show and what they like about the show.
- ☆ Read picture and story books.
- ☆ Sing songs, play children’s music and dance with your wish kid.
- ☆ Play “follow the leader” games.
- ☆ Let your wish kid put stickers on paper to make a design or share wish ideas.
- ☆ If it’s nice outside, kick a ball back and forth or go to the park to run and climb on equipment.

## ICEBREAKER AND WISH ENHANCEMENT IDEAS

- ☆ Items that encourage body movement or noise, such as pop-up or musical toys
- ☆ Items that promote activity such as pegboard puzzles, nesting cups or blocks, buckets with holes for different shapes or simple puzzles with big pieces
- ☆ Activities that involve balancing, climbing, running, jumping, throwing, catching, playing with sand or pushing and pulling wheeled objects
- ☆ Toys such as soft balls, modeling clay, stacking rings or blocks
- ☆ Items that require simple screwing actions, large hooks, buttons and buckles
- ☆ Hardback books and picture books



*I wish to have  
an orange bike*

**Matt, 3**  
brain tumor

## Working with Preschoolers (3 YEARS OLD)



### KEYWORD: MAGICAL THINKING

This is the age of magical thinking, when a child believes that an action they take or an idea they have can directly influence what really happens – even when the outcome is completely unrelated. Pretend play is becoming more prevalent, allowing these children to make sense of the world while acting out certain behaviors they see.

### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

- ☆ Unable to see a situation from another point of view as the wish kid is often absorbed in their own world
- ☆ Engages in play alongside someone without directly interacting (aka parallel play)
- ☆ May have imaginary playmates, pretend to be someone else, copy adults and friends and/or role play with props that symbolize real-life objects
- ☆ Shows a wide range of emotions and may have fears of certain things (e.g., darkness, a monster under the bed or going down the drain)
- ☆ Learning to take turns

## LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- ☆ Saying “no” becomes a common word to help a preschooler claim their space.
- ☆ Saying “why” on a regular basis provides a way for a preschooler to understand the world around them.
- ☆ Progresses to four- to five-word sentences and is easily understood by others
- ☆ Answers simple questions such as, “What do you do when you are hungry?”
- ☆ Very literal and uses concrete language when speaking
- ☆ Can concentrate on tasks for eight or nine minutes
- ☆ Repeats sentences and likes to hear about and describe the same event over and over
- ☆ Remembers certain events, simple rhymes or lyrics
- ☆ Can point to the correct picture when asked a simple question about it
- ☆ Enjoys poems and recognizes language absurdities, such as, “Is that an elephant on your head?”

## TIPS FOR INTERACTING

- ☆ Their imagination is soaring. This is a great time for the wish kid to do things such as:
  - Read or tell stories
  - Play with crayons, markers or chalk, or create things using playdough or clay
  - Build things out of blocks or boxes or put puzzles together
  - Go to a park, throw a ball or make chalk designs
- ☆ Give your wish kid instructions with two or three steps maximum (e.g., “Go to your room, get your favorite toy and bring it to me.”)

## ICEBREAKER AND WISH ENHANCEMENT IDEAS

- ☆ Pretend play items (e.g., kitchen items, superhero toys) or clothes for dress-up to pretend being a mom, dad, doctor, cowboy, chef, etc.
- ☆ Simple puzzles (24 pieces or less) or “busy” boxes with knobs, buttons or levers
- ☆ Hardcover books, books with large pictures, fun storylines or rhyming sounds
- ☆ Items to encourage creativity, including cutting, pasting, stickers, modeling clay or playdough
- ☆ Items and games that encourage activity, such as balls to kick and catch, Simon Says, hopscotch, climbing toys





*I wish to have  
a playset*

**Serayah, 4**  
genetic disorder

## Working with Preschoolers (4 YEARS OLD)



### **KEYWORD: CURIOUS EXPLORER**

Preschoolers begin to become more social and interact more with others. They want to explore and ask about the things around them even more. Their idea of what is real or pretend is still developing and with that, their imagination is soaring.

### **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS**

- ☆ Begins to enjoy the participation of another child in their games and “let’s pretend” becomes more important
- ☆ May have imaginary playmates
- ☆ Very independent, wants to do things on their own
- ☆ Shows a wide range of emotions and may have fears of certain things (e.g., darkness, a monster under the bed or going down the drain)
- ☆ Believes that almost everything is alive and has a purpose
- ☆ Begins to understand concepts and compares abstract ideas
- ☆ Becomes less aware of only one’s self and more aware of people around them
- ☆ Talks about interests



## LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- ☆ Uses specific words to say what they mean, and they are beginning to realize that their own words can make a difference
- ☆ May still have difficulty understanding the differences between fantasy and reality, inventing complex and dramatic make-believe scenarios
- ☆ Can start to understand complex questions
- ☆ Will ask many questions
- ☆ Very literal and uses concrete language when speaking
- ☆ Repeats sentences and likes to hear about and describe the same event over and over
- ☆ Strangers can understand most of what is said
- ☆ Enjoys poems and recognizes language absurdities, such as, “Is that an elephant on your head?”

## TIPS FOR INTERACTING

- ☆ Do a scavenger hunt throughout the wish kid’s home by asking them to find things that will help you understand their interests and potential wish ideas.
- ☆ Encourage your wish kid to ask questions. Answering any “why” questions your wish kid has helps build trust.
- ☆ Read a book to your wish kid or sing songs.
- ☆ Play board or card games with your wish kid.
- ☆ Play make-believe with your wish kid.
- ☆ Play your wish kid’s favorite music. Dance with each other, letting the wish kid copy your dance moves and vice versa.
- ☆ Play outdoor games with your wish kid such as Tag, Follow the Leader or Duck, Duck Goose.

## ICEBREAKER AND WISH ENHANCEMENT IDEAS

- ☆ Pretend play items (e.g., kitchen items, superhero toys) or clothes for dress-up to pretend being a mom, dad, doctor, cowboy, chef, etc.
- ☆ Simple puzzles (24 pieces or less) or “busy” boxes with knobs, buttons or levers
- ☆ Books with vivid pictures and fun storylines
- ☆ Items to encourage creativity, including cutting, pasting, stickers, modeling clay or playdough
- ☆ Items and games that encourage activity, such as balls to kick and catch, Simon Says, hopscotch, climbing toys
- ☆ Basic board / family games with simple scoring methods



*I wish to play  
in the snow*

**Paloma, 5**  
cancer

## Working with Preschoolers (5 YEARS OLD)



### KEYWORD: SELF-RELIANT

Five-year-olds are becoming more independent and beginning to focus on adults (and children) outside of the family unit. Their interactions with family and those around them shape their personality and their way of thinking and moving.

### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

- ☆ Children begin to enjoy the participation of another child in their games. “Let’s pretend” becomes more important.
- ☆ Shows more independence (e.g., visiting next-door neighbor by themselves)
- ☆ Believes that almost everything is alive and has a purpose
- ☆ Eager to please others and make them happy
- ☆ Can be very particular on what they want or don’t want to do and other times are very cooperative
- ☆ Has good manners
- ☆ Can tell what is real and what is make-believe
- ☆ As the wish kid enters school, they may become more attached to a parent.

### LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- ☆ Uses specific words to say what they mean
- ☆ Realizes that their own words can make a difference
- ☆ May put together six to eight words to form a sentence
- ☆ Engages in conversation, talking frequently and clearly
- ☆ Understands complex questions
- ☆ Answers “why” questions
- ☆ Can understand commands with multiple instructions
- ☆ Understands time sequences (e.g., what happened first, second or third)
- ☆ Describes objects
- ☆ Uses future tense: “Grandma will be here”
- ☆ Uses imagination to create stories

### TIPS FOR INTERACTING

- ☆ Do a scavenger hunt throughout the wish kid's home by asking them to find things that will help you understand their interests and potential wish ideas.
- ☆ Use the Make-A-Wish Idea Book to help understand various ideas the wish kid may have thought of for their wish.
- ☆ Read to your wish kid, sing songs and talk with them.
- ☆ Encourage your wish kid to ask questions.
- ☆ Bring crayons, paper, paint, child scissors and glue to create projects with your wish kid.

### ICEBREAKER AND WISH ENHANCEMENTS IDEAS

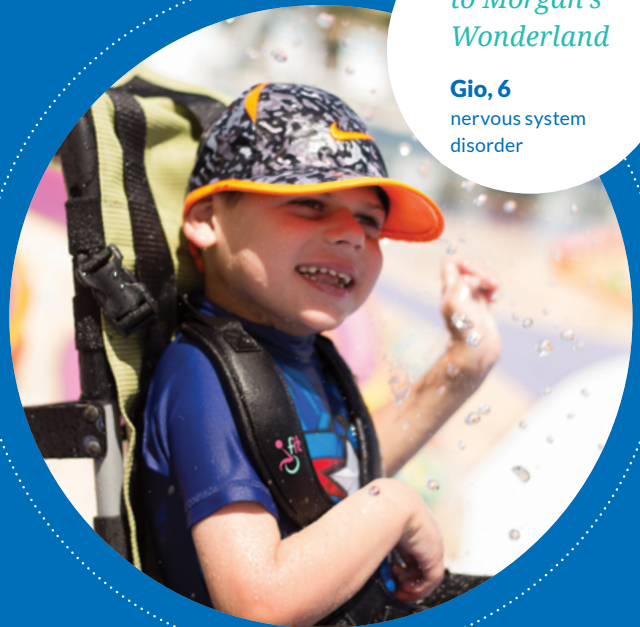
- ☆ Simple board games or puzzles
- ☆ Books with identifiable words (e.g., cat, dog)
- ☆ Items that encourage the imagination, including blocks and construction sets, trucks, books or action figures
- ☆ Items to encourage creativity, including craft kits, paint, modeling clay, playdough, string beads or puppets
- ☆ Activities that encourage trips outside, such as running climbing, hopping, chasing and throwing balls.





*I wish to go  
to Morgan's  
Wonderland*

**Gio, 6**  
nervous system  
disorder



# Intro to School-Aged Children (6 to 11 Years Old)

## WISH DISCOVERY STRATEGIES

- ☆ Ask the caregivers about how to best interact with the wish kid prior to meeting. Check with chapter staff to determine if a Communication Profile was completed for a wish kid who is non-verbal.
- ☆ If possible, coordinate a meeting that fits with the wish kid's schedule to ensure the visit is not disruptive to the child's regular routine.
- ☆ Be sure to capture exactly how the child expresses their wish – not an interpretation.
- ☆ Use the Make-A-Wish Idea Book to help understand various ideas the wish kid may have for their wish.
- ☆ Use reflective questioning to help ensure you understand the wish kid's statement. For example, "Am I getting this right that you want your wish to be ... ?"



*I wish to give food, water and toys to children and families in Puerto Rico affected by Hurrican Maria*

**Zelaya, 8**  
leukemia

## Working with School-Aged Children (6 TO 8 YEARS OLD)



### KEYWORD: RULES

At this stage, a child begins to ask more challenging questions and is becoming a more reflective thinker. School, friends and hobbies are very important to a child this age, as well as routines. Rules are important during play.

### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

- ☆ Understands more about their place in the world
- ☆ Less focus on one's self and more concern for others
- ☆ Pays more attention to friendship and teamwork
- ☆ Wants to be liked and accepted by friends
- ☆ Likes to play alone, but friends are important
- ☆ Shows independence from parents and family
- ☆ Enjoys developing skills to become better
- ☆ Develops a more sophisticated sense of humor

### LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- ☆ Ability to describe experiences and can talk about thoughts and feelings
- ☆ Gains the ability to solve problems in their head
- ☆ Uses logic to solve problems, organizes or chooses from a variety of choices
- ☆ Understands commands with three separate instructions
- ☆ Can explain what an item is and why it is used
- ☆ Reads more and enjoys reading age-appropriate books or materials
- ☆ Develops new patterns of speaking based on what they hear from friends, social influencers and TV programming

## TIPS FOR INTERACTING

- ☆ Ask specific questions.
- ☆ Offer appreciation and compliments for cooperation during the wish visit.
- ☆ Give your full, undivided attention to your wish kid.
- ☆ Play outside with your wish kid during the visit.
- ☆ Ask the wish kid about school, favorite games, favorite shows, etc., to build rapport.
- ☆ Kids this age have developed an attention to detail, which may inspire them to collect items. Ask your wish kid to show you any collections they may have.
- ☆ Speak to the wish kid in a mature fashion, acknowledging their “bigness” and ensuring you are not talking to them like babies.

## ICEBREAKER AND WISH ENHANCEMENT IDEAS

- ☆ Board or card games
- ☆ Jenga or dominos with questions from the wish paperwork on each piece, encouraging the child to answer a question while playing the game
- ☆ Items that allow the wish kid to build or create something such as Legos, model kits or science kits
- ☆ Items to encourage outside activity such as jump rope, chalk, balls, etc.
- ☆ Items to encourage creativity, such as paint, sketch pads, markers, craft kits, sewing or jewelry making
- ☆ Riddle or joke books
- ☆ Items or action figures featuring licensed characters





*I wish to play hockey against the Dallas Stars*

**Anderson, 10**  
congenital  
heart condition

## Working with School-Aged Children (9 TO 11 YEARS OLD)

### ★ KEYWORD: MASTERY

At this stage, children begin to gradually develop some independence from their parents as they begin interacting and socializing with others in various social groups.

#### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

- ★ Friends are very important; may have a best friend
- ★ Increased interest in the opposite gender
- ★ Less focus on one's self and more concern for others
- ★ Begins becoming more private about thoughts
- ★ Likes competition and games
- ★ Enjoys participating in clubs and organized groups
- ★ Sense of humor develops and enjoys riddles and jokes

#### LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- ★ Thinks about what they want and often have a plan for how to get it
- ★ Gains the ability to solve problems in their head
- ★ Desire to express more complex concepts
- ★ Asks challenging questions and becomes a more reflective thinker
- ★ Able to write more fluid letters with cohesive thoughts and structure
- ★ Reads more and enjoys reading age-appropriate books or materials
- ★ Enjoys talking to others
- ★ Develops new patterns of speaking based on what they hear from friends, social influencers and TV programming



## TIPS FOR INTERACTING

- ☆ Ask specific questions.
- ☆ Offer appreciation and compliments for cooperation during the wish visit.
- ☆ Give your full, undivided attention to your wish kid.
- ☆ Show your wish kid respect by asking about their needs and desires.
- ☆ Ask the wish kid about school, favorite games, favorite shows, etc., to build rapport.
- ☆ Speak to the wish kid in a mature fashion, acknowledging their “bigness” and ensuring you are not talking to them like babies.

## ICEBREAKER AND WISH ENHANCEMENTS IDEAS

- ☆ Challenging board or card games
- ☆ Jenga or dominos with questions from the wish paperwork on each piece, encouraging the child to answer a question while playing the game
- ☆ Jeopardy style poster board with sticky notes that display a wish question when selected
- ☆ Items that allow the wish kid to build or create something such as Legos, model kits, science kits or coding and computer games
- ☆ Items to encourage creativity such as paint, sketch pads, markers, craft kits, sewing, jewelry making, woodworking or pottery
- ☆ Items related to their favorite sport, game or activities such as baseballs, dance costumes, soccer balls or sheet music for an instrument



# Intro to Adolescents (12 to 18 years old)



*I wish to be a  
cardiothoracic  
surgeon*

**Micaela, 16**  
cancer

## WISH DISCOVERY STRATEGIES

- ☆ Ask the caregivers about how to best interact with the wish kid prior to meeting. Check with chapter staff to determine if a Communication Profile was completed for a wish kid who is non-verbal.
- ☆ It may take some time for a teenager to open up to volunteers. If the wish kid is hesitant to talk, ask if there is another way they prefer to express themselves (e.g., writing or drawing).
- ☆ Teenagers often feel the most pressure to determine the “best” wish. Take the time to really talk through their wish ideas and record what they envision.
- ☆ Try commercial conversations. Watch a favorite show together and talk during the commercials. These short bursts of communication, conducted without having to sit face-to-face, may help a reluctant teenager share insights, interests and wish ideas.
- ☆ Be prepared, as it may take a few visits or conversations to help the wish kid narrow down the wish choice.



*I wish to go on  
an LA food tour*

**Joshua, 12**  
leukemia

## Working with Young Teens (12 TO 14 YEARS OLD)



### KEYWORD: IDENTITY

This is a time of many physical, mental, emotional and social changes. At this age, young teens make more of their own choices about friends, sports, studying and school and become more independent, with their own personality and interests.

### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

- ☆ Demonstrates concrete, black-and-white thinking (i.e., things are either right or wrong, great or terrible)
- ☆ Begins to formulate independent opinions and thoughts, which can lead to rebellious behavior
- ☆ Can be self-centered (i.e., egocentric)
- ☆ Desire for an increased sense of privacy
- ☆ Shows more concern about body image, looks and clothes
- ☆ Peer pressure can begin to impact their decisions and views
- ☆ Peers act as emotional confidantes

### LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

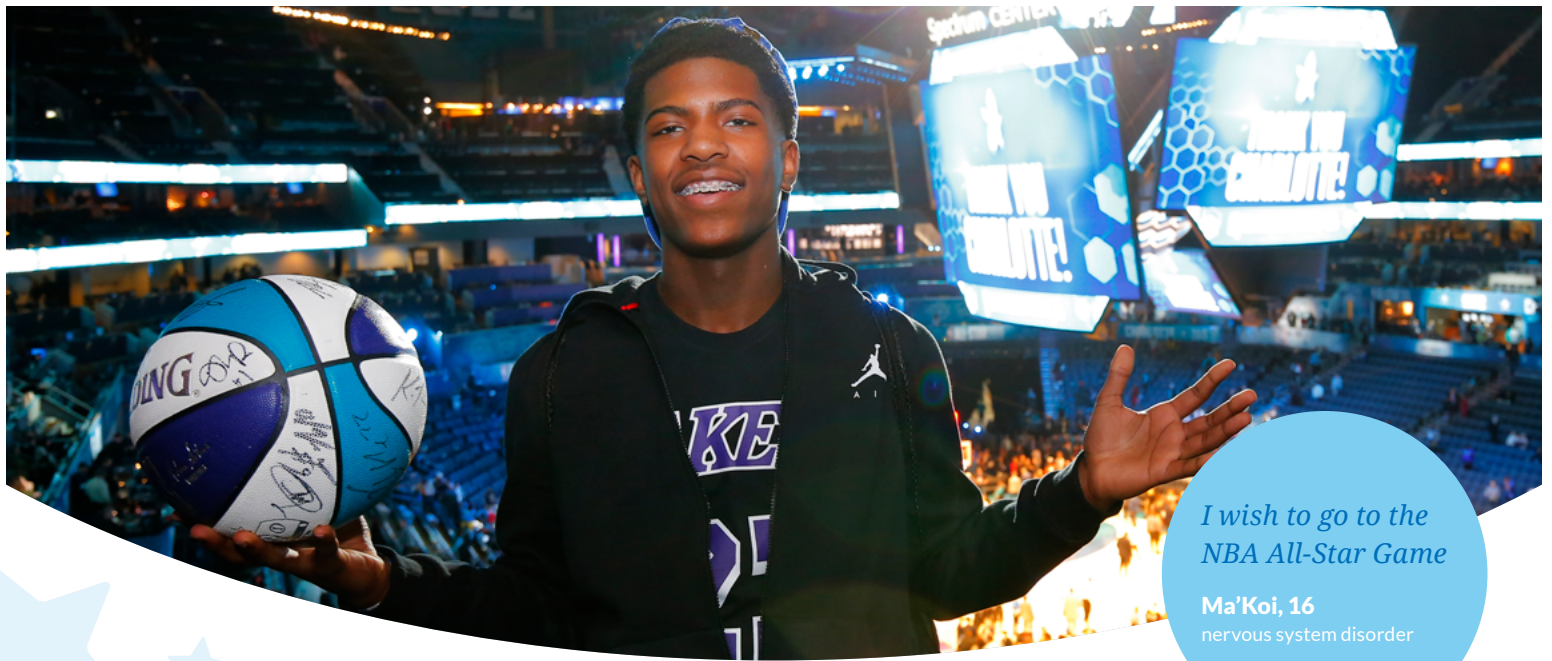
- ☆ Able to verbalize thoughts and views on a wide variety of topics
- ☆ Has the tendency to interrupt adults more often
- ☆ Oral and written language evolves, along with the ability to hypothesize
- ☆ Wants to be treated more like an adult and have a greater say in decisions
- ☆ Desires specifics, especially when it comes to rules and expectations

## TIPS FOR INTERACTING

- ☆ Respect your wish kid's opinions and consider their thoughts and feelings.
- ☆ Be open and nonjudgmental of the wish kid's ideas.
- ☆ Use humor to invite conversation and to lighten things up.
- ☆ Actively show your wish kid that you are listening by maintaining eye contact, showing engaged non-verbal cues and listening more than talking.
- ☆ Ask questions that elicit a conversation, using the wish kid's interests as a guide.
- ☆ Consider asking about friends to get the wish kid to open up.
- ☆ Encourage the wish kid to finish their thoughts.
- ☆ Restate things that the wish kid has said to ensure you've got it right.

## ICEBREAKER AND WISH ENHANCEMENTS IDEAS

- ☆ Challenging board, trivia or card games
- ☆ Jenga or dominos with questions from the wish paperwork on each piece, encouraging the child to answer a question while playing the game
- ☆ Jeopardy style poster board with sticky notes that display a wish question when selected
- ☆ Poster board with numbered envelopes leading up to the wish visit or the wish; each envelope has a question (for an icebreaker) or a fact (for a wish enhancement)
- ☆ Age-appropriate movie or video game, with parental approval
- ☆ Items to encourage creativity such as journals, gel pens, scrapbooks and scrapbooking materials, coloring books, craft kits (e.g., lip balm making kit, jewelry kit, candle kit)
- ☆ Items that allow the wish kid to build or create something such as Legos, model kits, science kits, coding and computer games
- ☆ Headphones, wireless speakers, mobile phone case, pop socket, phone chargers
- ☆ Book series
- ☆ Items related to fashion including makeup, nail polish or hair accessories
- ☆ Items related to their favorite sport, game or activities, such as baseballs, dance costumes, soccer balls, sheet music for an instrument, mini cornhole set or a reusable water bottle
- ☆ Gift cards to their favorite store, restaurant or arcade



*I wish to go to the  
NBA All-Star Game*

**Ma'Koi, 16**  
nervous system disorder

## Working with Teenagers (15 TO 18 YEARS OLD)

### **KEYWORD: INDEPENDENCE**

Each teenager begins to develop and formulate a unique personality, as well as views and opinions. This is a time for more independence and responsibility.

#### **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS**

- ☆ Begins to think in a more complex, systematic way
- ☆ Strong sense of their own individuality and can identify their own values
- ☆ Focused on the future and bases decisions on their hopes, ideals and goals
- ☆ Desires more independence and an increased sense of privacy
- ☆ Able to think abstractly and consider “the big picture,” but may lack the ability to apply it in the moment
- ☆ Strong emotions drive their decisions when impulses come into play
- ☆ Peer pressure peaks at this age
- ☆ Shows increased concern about body image, looks and clothes
- ☆ Has a deeper capacity for caring, sharing and developing more intimate relationships
- ☆ May begin spending less time with family and more time with friends

#### **LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

- ☆ Wants to be treated more like an adult and have a greater say in decisions
- ☆ Desires specifics, especially when it comes to rules and expectations
- ☆ Wants to have control over their choices
- ☆ Provides explanations and reasons for their own choices
- ☆ May push boundaries and react strongly if limits are reinforced
- ☆ Oral and written language evolves along with the ability to hypothesize

## TIPS FOR INTERACTING

- ☆ Encourage the wish kid to think independently and develop their own ideas about a wish experience.
- ☆ Reframe your questions so that the response requires more than a yes or no answer.
- ☆ Listen more than you talk, asking occasional questions to help guide the conversation and show interest. Be careful not to take over the conversation by asking too many questions.
- ☆ Speak to the teenager directly, even if parents intervene, always bringing the conversation back to the wish kid, encouraging them to finish a thought.
- ☆ Use humor to invite cooperation and to lighten things up.
- ☆ Restate things that the wish kid has said to ensure you've got it right.
- ☆ Compliment and praise the wish kid for well-thought-out responses.
- ☆ Take the time to talk to the teen about their interests in a sincere, genuine manner.

## ICEBREAKER AND WISH ENHANCEMENTS IDEAS

- ☆ Jenga or dominos with questions from the wish paperwork on each piece, encouraging the child to answer a question while playing the game
- ☆ Jeopardy style poster board with sticky notes that display a wish question when selected
- ☆ Poster board with numbered envelopes leading up to the wish visit or the wish; each envelope has a question (for an icebreaker) or a fact (for a wish enhancement)
- ☆ Age-appropriate movie or video game, with parental approval
- ☆ Headphones, wireless speakers, mobile phone case, pop socket, phone chargers
- ☆ Items to encourage creativity such as journals, gel pens, scrapbooks and scrapbooking materials, craft kits (e.g., lip balm making kit, jewelry kit, candle kit), pocket puzzles
- ☆ Items that allow the wish kid to build or create something such as Legos, model kits, science kits, coding and computer games
- ☆ Book series
- ☆ Items related to fashion including makeup, nail polish, hair accessories or toiletry bag
- ☆ Items related to their favorite sport, game or activities, such as baseballs, dance costumes, soccer balls, sheet music for an instrument, mini cornhole set, a reusable water bottle or trendy backpack
- ☆ Gift cards to their favorite store, restaurant or arcade

