Journal 4 –

One of my most challenging moments happened when I first started substitute teaching. I was teaching middle school PE. The class had around 40 students enrolled in it. The teacher’s directions were to split the class into four teams and have two teams in each gym playing wiffle ball. Before dividing the class up, I went over the directions and added a few rules of my one, including instructing the catchers NOT to stand directly behind the batter because they were not wearing protective gear and the batters were NOT to throw the bat when they hit the ball. I had the students split into the different gyms and positioned myself in the doorway that connected the two gyms. I bet you can guess what happened next. Yup, the batter threw the bat which hit the catcher who was standing directly behind the batter. The catcher lost three permanent teeth and had to be rushed to the hospital. We had two of the teeth initially and I found the third tooth at lunch time. It was an awful position to be in, as substitutes are not given any real training on how to handle emergencies. As a parent, I went into “mom” mode and dealt with the situation as best I could. Needless to say, that was the last time I subbed in a middle school gym class!

One of my most rewarding moments came earlier this year. I had been asked to take a long-term substitute job in an ASD classroom. I got to spend four months with some of the neatest students and staff that I’ve had the pleasure of working with. One of my students, Isiah, is non-verbal and has had some PEC’s training in the past, but the teacher was not utilizing his PECs book to help Isiah communicate appropriately. Isiah was allowed to grab food and eat while running wildly around the room. He would also climb on chairs and get into the cupboards that the snacks were stored in. One of my personal goals for him was to get him to sit down, ask for food and eat it appropriately. Over the next three months we saw a great improvement in Isiah’s eating habits. One day in May, I watched as Isiah climbed a chair to get into the snacks. He opened the cupboard door, stopped and thought. He then climbed down from the chair, went to the table and got the PECs card for what he wanted and brought it to me!! He now sits and asks for food using his PECs cards and knows that he’s to eat sitting down. He can be a stinker, so with a glint in his eye, he sometimes takes the food and runs to get a reaction. I was so proud of him!!!