

Collaborative approach to support for transition of a child with social, communication needs from home to a setting

Background

The early years setting has had involvement from the Educational Psychology and Early Years Service over a number of years based around individual children with SEND who have attended the setting at different times and so they know how to access support as required as well as having excellent relationships with the team. They have a very inclusive ethos within the setting and are prepared to 'bend over backwards' to get it right for children and families.

Aspect of SEND Inclusive practice being developed

- Effective transition to the early years setting following a period of weekly Portage within the home.

Action/activity to change /influence practice

- The use of the Portage transition process, sensitively adapted to address the individual circumstances of the child and family including a very detailed phased plan, gradually increasing the child's time and experiences within the setting.
- A series of visits including:
 - A visit from a key practitioner in the setting to the family home to observe a Portage session.
 - A consultation visit to share advice and practical ideas (combined with written information (transition report) compiled jointly by the Early Years Advisory Teacher (EYAT) and Portage home visitor (PHV).
 - An initial visit from the PHV into the setting to observe the child and liaise with the setting SENCO and key practitioners
 - A visit to model the Portage approach within the setting
- Once Portage has ended within the home, the EYAT then provides ongoing advice to the setting around meeting the child's needs.
- The EYAT completed the child's CAN Do Assessment and applied for Element 2 Inclusion Funding prior to the nursery transition to allow the setting time to arrange and fund appropriate adult support.

Impact

- The child has now settled well into the setting and is almost at the stage of accessing his full 15 hour provision.

Challenges

- Challenges during transition were mainly around this child's separation issues and his dependence upon his mother to interpret the world around him.
- The current challenge is that the Education, Health and Care Plan Request that was submitted for this child in preparation for him starting school (and a possible move out of the area due to the parents' work commitments) has been turned down which may affect his subsequent transition to school.

How challenges were over come and lessons learned

- The success of the transition depended very heavily upon an excellent knowledge of this child's and the whole family's needs. The PHV worked very closely with him and the family to explore his developmental profile, learning style and communication/interaction skills.
- The service has recently developed its own small-steps developmental checklist and profile to record progress against the child's baseline so that progress, including rate of progress, can be recorded. This is closely linked with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Development Matters so it can easily be shared and used by the receiving early years setting.
- The EYAT and PHV worked closely with parents and the setting SENCO and key practitioners to ensure that detailed planning and contingency plans were in place to deal with any eventuality, thus reducing anxiety and ensuring success.
- The current challenge as detailed above has been addressed by signposting parents to the SEND Information and Support Service so that they have the option of requesting mediation regarding the 'no to assess' decision by the SEN panel. The EYAT has also discussed the implications of the decision for the child and family with the local Assessment and Reviewing Officer

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