

Getting ready to take the next step

An example of an EP working with a child, her family and school

The situation

Sarah's Statement of Special Educational Needs had just been finalised. In light of her previous experiences of school refusal/anxiety behaviours, Sarah's mother requested Educational Psychology Service (EPS) involvement in supporting her transfer from primary to secondary school. This piece of work was agreed by the EPS panel and was allocated to a Trainee Educational Psychologist (TEP) supervised by an experienced EP.

What happened?

A telephone consultation between the mother and the TEP took place, during which they explored the role the EPS could play in supporting Sarah. The TEP visited Sarah's current school to gain their perspective on Sarah's areas of strengths and needs.

Sarah and the TEP then worked together to produce a 'Transition Passport'. The purpose of the passport was to support Sarah in her new school. It would explain her needs and also provide easily accessible information for staff. All of the tips relating to support were linked back to recommendations within Sarah's Statement of Special Educational Needs. These were prioritised by Sarah, translated into child-friendly language, and written from Sarah's point of view e.g. "I find that I sometimes learn best when someone repeats instructions for me, telling me them one at a time".

The TEP and Sarah also spent some time talking positively about the move. The TEP encouraged Sarah to think about her talents and the successes she had achieved during other periods of change in her life.

What happened next...

The Transition Passport was shared with key staff members at Sarah's new school. A clear explanation of why it had been developed was shared and the possible ways in which they could use it were explored. Sarah and her parents were also provided with copies that they could copy and use.

The result

This piece of work resulted in TEP input at several different levels, with Sarah, her family, current school and future school. It fostered a shared understanding of Sarah's transfer needs and promoted the use of clear communication. It is hoped that this preventative work will contribute towards a successful transition for Sarah and she will feel happy and confident to attend secondary school on a regular basis.

Psychology used: Social Psychology, Cognitive Behavioural Psychology and Positive Psychology

