

Fred's Story

An example of how the Early Years Team help children and families.

Fred was born in 2020 just before lockdown. He was usually a quiet and happy baby and Mom enjoyed becoming a parent, although it was stressful because of the COVID restrictions, and she missed meeting other new families and being able to see the Health Visitor.

When Fred was 2 years old, the Health Visiting team came to complete the *2-year check*. This showed that Fred's development was delayed in speech and language and social skills. She suggested some things for Mom to try. Mom followed the advice she was given. Fred was still quiet and happy, but Mom was worried that he wasn't making progress and was not trying to communicate with her or anyone else. Mom noticed delays in other areas too. The health visiting team suggested a referral to the EY TAC team for additional support.

The family was accepted onto the waiting list for both the Early Years Team and Speech and Language Therapy. She received a letter to tell her this which signposted her to advice while she waited.

Mom was then contacted by Kate, an Inclusion Support Practitioner (ISP) from the Early Years Team who explained her role. The first appointment was a telephone call in which Kate collected all the information she needed to start working with Fred. She was very supportive and listened to Mom's concerns. They talked about what had been tried and why it might not have been successful so far. She arranged to visit the family regularly to support Fred with his communication and language need and his social skills.

During the first visit, Fred hid behind Mom and was not happy about Kate being there. He wasn't interested in the toys she had brought, but when she blew some bubbles, he did come out to pop them. Over the following visits Kate was able to gradually get to know Fred and model strategies the family could use to support his communication and social skills. She completed a SEND support plan which said what they were working on, and the strategies the family could use at home.

After 8 weeks Kate reviewed the plan and discussed the progress that had been made. She and Mom agreed new some new targets, and Kate continued to visit but a little less often. During this time Kate also encouraged Mom to apply for Disability Living Allowance for Fred. She also suggested that Mom and Fred try out the SEND Stay and Play at the local Family Hub. Kate met Mom and Fred there and he had a great time. After this Mom felt more confident to look for a Nursery for Fred.

Mom visited her local Nursery, and staff there knew the Early Years Team well, and understood that the team would support Fred's transition to Nursery. They arranged a settling in session. Kate also contacted the nursery and shared her assessments and the Support Plan. This helped the Nursery to understand how best to support Fred. The settling in session went well and he started to attend regularly.

Fred settled in well at his new Nursery and Kate was available to support the setting for the first half term. During this time Mom got to know Fred's keyworker who she could speak to every day, and the SENCo who is responsible for Fred's SEND needs in the Nursery. Once

Kate's support ended, the SENCo was supported by the Area SENCo who is also part of the Early Years Team. The Nursery wrote the next SEND support plan, following the advice of the Area SENCo.

Fred began going to Nursery every day and made progress with his communication. He now uses a few words, including bubbles which he still likes to pop. Mom has just had an appointment for Speech and Language Therapy. Fred started in Reception in September and the Early Years Team will stay in contact with him until October Half Term to support his transition into school.