

5) Case Study: Empowering

This illustrates how so much of someone's goals and aspirations can all hang on one key skill; communication. By looking at things in a person centred way, means that communication outcomes will now be applied across the whole school/life curriculum in a more practical and meaningful way.

Maria is 16 and attends an SEN school in a neighbouring borough.

Maria's Story

Maria was due to go through the transfer process from a Statement to an EHCP. Mum was a little worried and did not know what to expect. I met mum ahead of the transfer review and went through the 'Planning Ahead' (Parental and young Person input for Section A of the plan) form with her. I also told her what to expect from the meeting and the process that would follow.

Mum spoke with Maria about what she would like to do in the future but she still needs to make a lot of her decisions for her, due to poor communication skills. Mum would like her to continue in education and get increased input from therapies such as Speech & Language and Occupational Health. Mum was concerned about the lack of communication between school and home and felt they needed to share more strategies. She would like Maria to attend college once school ends at year 15.

Maria is due to transfer in September to the upper school but the school were not aware that she would not be able to manage the stairs. She can get up them slowly but is not able to come down them unassisted. The school can now look at this sooner rather than later so that she will get to her classes on time and safely.

We attended the review and mum felt free to voice all of her concerns and the school assured her of the adjustments they would make.

The school are now communicating better and they use the "home/school" diary to let mum know about Maria's day, meaning mum can have a conversation with her about it after school. Mum is now in touch with Mencap and they are looking at a Travel Training programme for Maria. The school are using more communication aids for Maria and will consider implementing the autistic aids (Maria is not diagnosed with autism but these methods work well for her) around the entire school i.e. PECS Symbols all over and greater use of Makaton.

Mum realises that Maria is growing up and needs a little more independence and she is slowly giving her more responsibility and freedom/options so that she can be more independent in the future. Mum feels that coming to this understanding has relieved some of the pressure and is enabling her to remove some of the cotton wool she keeps Maria wrapped in.

The school considered a "Palm Top" communication aid for Maria but she really tries to speak so the Speech & Language team do not feel this is the best way to move forward at this time.

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The school have also referred Maria to CAMHS so that mum can get some coping strategies for the behaviour and sleeping issues at home, and to help ensure that Maria will be able to settle into her new environment in upper school.

Mum has had the final EHC plan through and is happy with it, she is also aware that it will now be reviewed every year just as the statement was. Mum is pleased with the progress and is looking forward to Maria gaining a little more independence.