

6) Case Study: Empowering

This case study illustrates how by providing information, advice and guidance, parents can be empowered to take a lead role for themselves in the EHCP process. The IS offered encouragement, reassurance and information which guided the parent to put their views across in an informed and confident way through a collaborative process.

Belle's Story

Belle's mum came to one of our information workshops about transfers from Statements to EHCPs. She had received a letter from her school inviting her to an EHCP transfer meeting, to be held in two weeks time at her daughter's mainstream school. She was worried because she didn't know what the meeting would be about and had not received any reports or an agenda for the meeting. She wanted to bring a physiotherapist to the meeting but the school had said this was not allowed.

The workshop covered the EHCP transfer process, and the principles of involving the family fully in decision-making, and after chatting with IS after the workshop, Belle's mum contacted the school and asked for copies of all of the reports from the professionals working with her daughter. She asked to have a meeting with the school SENCo, to discuss what would be covered in the meeting. She contacted IS after this because the school told her none of the reports would be ready for her to see before the meeting. We discussed this with her and she decided that she would ask for a postponement of the meeting, so that all of the current assessments from therapists could be completed and their reports available. We discussed the importance of Part A and Belle's mum felt confident to have a go at drafting it herself.

Belle's mum met with her IS again once she had received the reports. She brought with her a draft of Part A, as well as a report from school describing Belle's strengths and needs. Together we went through the school document and one of the therapist's reports. We noticed that some of Belle's needs had been highlighted by the Speech & Language Therapist but weren't yet in the report. Belle's mum made a note of these needs so that she could bring them up at the meeting. She said she now felt confident enough to go over the other therapists' reports and check that everything was included. We also discussed Part A, and she said she had spent about 5 hours writing it. It was a really clear and detailed description of her hopes for her young daughter's future, and of her daughter's interests and personality.

Belle's mum was worried about the process of writing outcomes for her daughter in the meeting. We discussed what a SMART outcome looked like, and the link between aspirations, Belle's needs and provision and outcomes. After the meeting she wrote:

Thank you very much for helping me to go through this important transaction. I really appreciate your highly valuable advice. Without your help, the experience would be much tougher and stressful for us. Thank you so much.

Belle's mum arranged to meet with her IS again, as she had developed some ideas about outcomes for the short and medium term for Belle and she wanted to discuss these prior to the transfer meeting. We went through Belle's mum's ideas for outcomes

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and worked on how they could be made SMART. We discussed the way that the outcomes are drafted in the meeting by the Team around the Child in a collaborative process and that these may be refined in the meeting.

Belle's mum felt that she was well prepared enough to manage the transfer meeting on her own. Belle's mum wrote:

Thank you very much for your help.

Without your guidance, I would be completely lost. For the preparation of the meeting, I would like to account major credit to you.

Please accept my deep appreciation for your advice, encouragement and earnest support.