

## **Smart Start Project Case Study**

### **Case Study Title**

Are You Sitting Comfortably- providing specialist equipment.

### **Background**

What is the background to the case study?

As part of the 'Are You Sitting Comfortably' project, specialist equipment is being purchased to support the inclusive provision of 2HELP nursery places for children with physical disability.

Children in receipt of disability living allowance, or children who meet the criteria for portage home teaching in Warwickshire can receive 15 hours free nursery education to improve long term outcomes. For children who require specialist equipment, for example specialist seating, there was no provision of this equipment outside of the home, making nursery placements challenging or impossible.

We will soon have a store of specialist equipment for 2 years olds across the county. The first equipment was ordered in the last week of October. Within 24 hours of equipment arriving, the first floor sitters were delivered to two nurseries.

### **Activity**

What was involved? Who? Where?

Several children are already in receipt of equipment. Further equipment was purchased in January 17.

Sammy\* has cerebral palsy and is at nursery. He has a floor sitter and a seat for the table. Sammy requires specialist seating for safety as his swallow is compromised. With the chair provided he is able to sit with his peers at the snack table. With the floor sitter he is able to sit with peers for singing and story.

Cost of floor sitter: £250

Cost of specialist chair: £3400

Lisa\* has cerebral palsy and a severe visual impairment. She has a floor sitter and is able to use this to support not only sitting for playing but also for her physiotherapy sessions where it supports her in a 4 point kneel.

Cost of floor sitter: £250

Henry\* at Nursery has complex learning and physical needs. He has a severely compromised swallow. He is a child who is Looked After. His nursery place not only

allows him to spend time with peers but also provides respite for his foster carer as his sleep is poor. His floor sitter has allowed him to working on bringing both his hands together, for activities such as clapping or holding a ball. It is also supporting him in achieving 'tummy' time', an activity which will not only develop his core muscles for sitting, but is a necessary developmental stage prior to crawling.  
Floor Sitter: £250

Twins boys have cerebral palsy following extreme premature birth. They are not able to sit independently. Their floor sitters allow them to play inside and out and sit with their peers. Their chairs allow them to sit at the table for lunch.

## Outcomes

What were the outcomes or learning points?

- Children are able to attend nursery safely
- Children are able to be with their peers
- Children can sit independently, increasing their self esteem
- Peers see children with physical disability as part of their community from the earliest stages
- Peers see children with disability as developmentally similar as they sit independently, rather on adults' knees.
- Parents have access to their 2HELP entitlement
- Parents have opportunities to meet with families in and engage in their local community.
- Parents have time for respite, training or work while their child is safe in nursery.
- Nurseries have access to specialist equipment which they cannot afford to purchase. For example a Stage 1 JMC Triton specialist chair is £2400.
- Staff receive training to meet the needs of children with complex physical disability. These skills impact on their understanding and support of children at Universal and Targeted level.

### Learning Points:

- Provision of equipment is complex and the preparation time has been significant.
- Using knowledge of the cohort has allowed us to plan the purchase of high levels of equipment but the cohort of children requiring equipment is increasing all the time.
- Service Level Agreements are in place with nurseries for cleaning and servicing of equipment but managing the costs to make it accessible is challenging.

## Quote/Testimonial

Feedback given from the individual

"It's lovely to see her sitting on the floor. I read a story last week and one of the other children joined us. It was the first time she really took notice of the other children because she was sitting independently and they sat close together. I can see her reactions because I can face her. Before she was always on my knee and I was constantly teaching her from the back if she were sitting upright."

Nursery Staff

"Now he is supported to sit on the floor there has been an improvement in posture. He was sacral sitting and dependent on using one hand for support. Now he is confident to sit we can work on bilateral control"

Occupational Therapist