

From severely absent to vocal and making positive choices

Background

This case study was completed in August 2023 by a member of Redcar & Cleveland Council's Early Help Intervention Team. Names have been changed.

This is about 'B', a boy who was aged 8 when he and his family started receiving support from the Early Intervention Team. At that time, B had become **severely absent**, meaning he was missing over 50% of his education. With 18 months of support and encouragement, B's case was closed meaning, he had a transition plan in place that was proving successful.

B has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)¹ and when the Early Help Team started working with him and his family, B had been diagnosed as having a learning difficulty. He also had poor eyesight but refused to wear his glasses. B was assessed for Autism/ADHD however was unsuccessful in gaining a diagnosis. His mam was challenging this. The family were originally from Guisborough but were now living in Skelton.

Team around the child and family

A range of people were supportive of B including the Early Help Team, his school including the SENDCo, a Speech and Language Therapist and a continence nurse. B still wears pull ups at night time.

What were the main reasons for B not attending school?

B's mam chose not to send B to school as she did not feel that B's needs were being met by school. Mam suspected B had a problem with learning and that he was unable to learn at the same speed as his peers in the classroom.

Mam said:

"It was a nightmare. I didn't feel like they were listening to me, so I pulled him out. I know others didn't agree but they didn't see what I saw at home. The kicking, the crying, the shouting and throwing things at me. B telling me he hated school and he seemed to be left to do the work, he wasn't moving forward because he didn't understand it. He got that bad, he would have a bad stomach, headaches and everything. This wasn't a new thing; it had been going on since Year 1, but he had a good 1:1 worker then that he liked."

B would often tell her he didn't want to go, he didn't like the teachers and told me he sits at the back of the class and cannot see what is on the board.

B also struggled with speech and language and he refers to himself in third person, such as *"me do..."* At the point of referral B's speech was very difficult to understand and I could not hold a clear conversation with him.

B also told me of a time a teacher had slammed a door when he was about to walk through it. This scared and upset B. B also still wore pull ups during the day and would not use the toilet at all and refused to eat in front of other people.

Mam said she would scale things at a '1' out of 10 in the beginning because she had no trust from a parent or student point of view. Now, she would rate things as a '6', as:

"....although there are some niggles, it's a fair jump from where we were. I don't have any qualms about ringing school now and I know they'll deal with things."

¹ [What is an Education, Health and Care Plan \(EHCP\) \(educationadvocacy.co.uk\)](https://www.educationadvocacy.co.uk)

What has made the difference to the young person attending?

Mam explained:

"Listening to me and the EHCP. Noticing that his difficulties weren't just because he wasn't attending. When it was stepped back and broken down, it was about them – school - listening rather than him not being there. We lost all that time in Year 2 and Year 3. I had to shout from the rooftops, but we got there"

There were other things too. Professionals working together to listen to B and mam about what their worries are and work together to resolve this. Mam said:

"The staff came to the house one morning and saw what I was dealing with. B shouting, crying, throwing things and refusing to move. Then they understood, it wasn't just me being unreasonable. The schools SENDCo was more proactive in helping him. I get on now with her."

Having a plan in place has helped find a way forward to support B in school and B has had assessments that have allowed professionals to better understand B's levels of learning which has allowed them to put a tailored plan in place and a 1:1 support worker following B getting an Education, Health and Care Plan. B has been supported with transport to and from school when the family moved out of the area, and this has helped B also develop

some level of independence. B has improved with eating in school as he refused previously and has been encouraged to use the toilet in school and at home. Both are much better.

B told me:

"School? It was a 1 (out of 10) before, now it's a 5 (out of 10). My 1:1 worker was good, she helped me. I put my hand up in class now."

How are they now?

- ✓ B's attendance has improved. He has increased his time in school to nearly full time, and some days this is full time and is led by B.
- ✓ B's toileting is better, and he has gone from requiring a pull up all day, every day to now just needing them during the night.
- ✓ B is accessing small group learning which is targeted at his level.
- ✓ B's speech has improved and is clearer in his speech and is easily understandable.
- ✓ B's personality is really shining through, and he seems much happier.

Mam said:

"Now he's mouthy more, more vocal"

Mam says he gets in the taxi on his own and he isn't as grumpy on a morning like before.