

Case Study

I first met Ben, his mum and two sisters in September at their home. This visit was to introduce myself and spend time getting to know the family and how I could support the family.

Mum had initially spoken to the Centre Manger regarding how she was feeling and to ask for some support in helping Ben to settle at nursery.

Ben was new to the nursery so it was understandable that he got very upset and didn't want his mummy to go. Everything was new and scary to him and he needed time to build up relationships with staff and feel safe and secure, he also needed reassurance that his mummy would come back. Mum spoke about feeling anxious about leaving Ben at nursery as he would get so upset and on occasions make himself sick. Mum was also anxious about rushing back to her two other children who were being looked after by relatives while mum took Ben to nursery. Mum had also commented to me that Ben had been taken out of two other nurseries because she felt that they were not treating Ben properly. We talked about Ben picking up on mum's feelings and how much Ben loves his mummy because he doesn't want to leave her. Mum and Ben also need time to get to know the staff that will be looking after Ben in order to develop a positive attachment.

I have supported mum and Ben in different ways. Where possible I have met mum and Ben when they arrive at nursery to help reassure mum and Ben and so I can work with nursery staff to help Ben settle. It also allows me to model to mum ways to talk and things to say to Ben to help reassure him.

I have popped into the nursery during the day to see how Ben is and when Ben has asked 'where's my mummy' I've shown Ben the big clock and showed Ben when the little hand gets to three mummy will come and pick Ben up, we have also looked at picture clues to help. (We have lunch, and then play, and then mummy comes). Ben's key worker also keeps me informed to how he is doing so I can feedback to mum to reassure her. We have also taken pictures of Ben painting to show mum and these are up on Ben's kitchen wall.

I have also been visiting the family once a week in their home, and have brought toys with me so the whole family can play and interact together. I also bring a toy that Ben enjoys playing with at nursery and can borrow till he next comes in to nursery this was to help create a link between nursery and home as well as me being a link between nursery and home. Through my visits I have also put mum into contact with Home Start.

Four weeks on Ben is a happy little boy in nursery and joins in and socialises with staff and other children. He still gets a little upset initially saying goodbye to mum and it is important that Ben gets to wave goodbye from the garden. When mum brings him in the morning he is keen to show her some of the toys he enjoys playing with. Mum is a lot happier and has spoken to me about how helpful we have all been in helping Ben and is now considering letting her two year old daughter spend some time in nursery.

Through working together as a team we have helped mum and Ben have an easier separation. We have also turned mum's negative feelings towards nurseries in the past into a positive experience. The nursery are currently revising their settling in policy and setting up a home visit prior to starting nursery. This family has highlighted how important it is to give both the child and parent time to settle and get to know staff in order to feel safe and secure whilst developing positive attachments to other adults.

(Mums words)

The first day Ben went to nursery he didn't have a good day he cried loads didn't he that day. I can't remember if he was sick or not, I think he was because they phoned me and they asked me if I could come and pick him up.

I spoke to the centre manager and we decided to cut Ben's hours down which would enable Ben to settle in easier and as he started to settle increase the hours slowly.

At this point I was getting very upset and felt like the worst and cruellest mother ever. I was at breaking point, he would cry so much he would be sick, so I asked for help and support to help Ben with his separation anxiety.

I've had a family support worker come to my house once a week for several weeks now and she has helped me so much with Ben's behaviour and he now goes to nursery 3 days a week 4 to 5 hours a day. He cries for a while and waves bye and he knows on the clock that mummy comes back at 3.00.

With out the help and support of the centre Ben would be staying at home with me and I would have had a big problem on my hands when it came to him starting school!! I would recommend the centre to any parent who is considering sending their child or children to the nursery. I've had bad experiences in nurseries in the past but I'm happy with the centre and the progress my son has made and I'm more than happy to send my other 2 girls there when they are old enough.