

Ruby's Story

Additional

Presenting Concerns:

Ruby is 3 years old. She is brought to her local Health Centre by her mum who is concerned about Ruby's speech. Ruby did not have a 27 month developmental assessment because her mum didn't feel she had any concerns at the time and would have found it difficult to manage along to the appointments. The health visitor (Named Person) notices that, although her speech was clear there was not much vocabulary and her language was immature. Ruby's eye contact is also noted to be poor. The Named Person asked Ruby's mum if she has any concerns about other aspects of Ruby's development. She told the Named Person that Ruby finds it difficult to play and share with other children her age and that she often isolates herself when she has been at family gatherings.

Family background:

Ruby is an only child and lives at home with her mum and dad. Her family moved into the area shortly after she was born. Her dad is an agricultural worker and the family live in a cottage on the farm, about 2 miles outside of town. The family have made good friends through the farm but none of the other families have children Ruby's age. Ruby's mum spends all her time at home with Ruby and although she loves being a mum she worries whether she's doing things right.

Response:

The Named Person discusses some options with Ruby's mum. They decide to refer Ruby to the Speech and Language Therapy service for assessment. The named person also asks whether it would be possible for Ruby to attend the local toddler group to support her to develop her social skills. Ruby's mum is also signposted to some local activity groups to help her socialise in a range of peer environments. The Named Person also suggest making a referral to a community paediatrician to look at Ruby's overall development.

As Ruby is due to start nursery in a couple of months the Named Person agrees to contact the nursery head teacher to make them aware of the situation, so they can plan for Ruby starting. The nursery staff suggest that the family come for another visit to help Ruby familiarise herself with the nursery and to help make sure any necessary support is in place for her starting.

Outcome:

Ruby's mum reported feeling much better after speaking with the Named Person and said;

"...it's a real relief to know there is support out there and that there is someone to talk too if there's a problem".

Ruby and her mum started attending the local toddler group. Ruby continued to struggle with sharing and would occasionally 'grab' toys off of the other children but Ruby's mum was able to support this behavior. Ruby's mum is reassured she now had a network of support around her through her Named Person, the nursery and the referrals to support services. Ruby's mum also reported she had made friends with some of the mums and they would often visit each other for coffee with the children. This gave her a further support and allowed her to share her feelings and concerns with a peer group.

The speech therapist worked with Ruby to assess her speech and language skills and the effect of these on her day to day family life. The therapist reassured Ruby's parents that she was developing appropriately and gave them some learned strategies to implement during everyday situations, to help improve the clarity of Ruby's speech. They started to model words correctly when Ruby made errors and gave her encouragement and praise when she tried to use the sounds in her words.

When Ruby started nursery she required some support with play and peer relationships but staff reported minimal concerns. The nursery did allocate Ruby a key worker to support her with her communication and social skills and the worker liaised regular with the family and Ruby's speech and language therapist. This support continued throughout Ruby first year at nursery but was gradually withdrawn as her language and social skills improved.