



M's story

M is a young boy who lives in Solihull. He was almost 2 years-old when his Mum and health visitor referred M to Early Years Team around the Child (EY TAC) for additional support. M loves climbing and likes to play on his own.

M lives with his Mum S and siblings, who have been supported by services in Solihull to help with their barriers to learning. S was keen to get support as they continue their early education journey. She is knowledgeable about support that is available across the local authority because of her experiences.

Early Years Team Around the Child panel meets each fortnight to consider the support needs of young children (pre-Reception) and get some additional support without making multiple individual referrals. There is more information [here](#) and the panel involves the Early Years Team and Solihull Inclusion Support Services, health visitors and health representatives from the therapy services.

M was considered at EY TAC and speech and language therapy and early years practitioner support identified as a need. M was on the waiting list for a month or so until an Early Years Practitioner (EYP) was able to talk to S and arrange to visit and support.

K was able to support M in his home for a couple of months during the summer. During this time, K supported M and S to communicate through introducing Makaton signs to aid communication.

The impact

In Mum's words S says.....

Speech and language therapy are still involved and have added another layer of picture of reference and Picture Exchange Communication System to encourage and enhance his speech. Since intervention started, he has gone from 5 words to around 15/20. M is able to understand more of what people are saying and able to use one-word responses/Makaton to signal what he would like. This has made such a difference as although he still has communication delays and frustrations, generally he is a little calmer and will try again if you don't get it right the first time. The first time he signed I love you I cried as it was such an amazing feeling. I was a little apprehensive at first to do Makaton, as I wondered if it may delay his speech, but actually it just reinforces, supports his speech and helps him understand what we mean. Also, with the support of K with the play therapy work, we got to actually play with M for the first time and his older sibling got to play with him through mirror play. This was lovely and was so lovely to see him playing with his siblings.

Not all families will be able to access the home support through Early Years TAC. The guidance available through <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people> and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/send> are also helpful for families. Speech and Language Therapy support and guidance will be useful but many of the ideas from [Tiny Happy People](#) and [Solihull Children's Community Therapies](#) will continue to be helpful to all. Makaton helps understanding by giving an extra visual cue to communication. There are simple Makaton signs available online such as [Sign of the Week](#) and [videos from the Singing Hands where you can learn classic nursery rhymes and signed songs](#)

Also look at [Through the Eyes of a Child Films](#). S and M played together to introduce signs and shared attention and play ideas, so S got the idea of communication and shared play.