

Disability Access Fund (DAF) Case Study 7

A Setting in the North West of England.

What were the challenges that the disabled child faced within the setting?

The child was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy at a young age, she has been at nursery with us since she was 18 months old and attended for 3 full days per week. Throughout her time in the setting she has continued to gain more strength and mobility, there have been minor difficulties throughout her time with us around speech and language and her mobility. However, she is an extremely determined little girl who will try her very best to find her own way to master any task, therefore a lot of the support we put in place was allowing her to be as independent as possible and be able to push herself especially with physical challenges.

How has DAF funding enabled staff to address or alleviate these challenges for the child? Including what DAF has been spent on and why?

The child's mum had been taking her to regular hydrotherapy sessions but her work sessions were changing and therefore wouldn't be able to take her anymore, we felt that this would be detrimental to the child's physical development as it had been making a real impact on her core strength along with her regular physio sessions. The DAF money was spent on covering 2 staff every other week to take the little girl to Hydrotherapy, one staff member accompanied the child in the pool with the hydrotherapy teacher. The money also allowed for her key person to support her with a private physio session every other week with her physiotherapist within nursery setting. With any money we had left we gave all staff time out of the classroom to read a SEND document recommended by the local authority's Early Years team. We felt that this would benefit the whole team and their understanding of supporting children with additional needs, from doing this we were able to look at our paperwork that we used to support children with additional needs and make some positive changes to them with the feedback from the staff team. We also used some of the money for a one off skype session with an Occupational Therapist who was also a handwriting specialist so when the run up to school time came, we had as much information as possible to ensure we could support and encourage the child as much as possible within this area, on the skype session the OT talked through activities we could do daily to strengthen her fine motor skills and ensure she was using both hands (due to her condition she didn't use her left hand as much as she should)

The impact on the child?

With the continued experiences of physio within nursery and attending hydrotherapy sessions it enabled the child to build on her core strength and general mobility, each session was different and therefore staff who attended the sessions got to see many different exercises that they could do with her within nursery to help her further. It was also a very positive experience for working together with other agencies to support the child best. So, with her key people, the physio and hydro therapist having regular contact they could pass on directly to each other about things she had been doing well or things she had been struggling with so that they could work on exactly what was needed at that time. The child continued to develop her physical skills and as her starting school became closer, we then began to look more closely at ensuring all sessions looked at her fine motor movements to help her with writing skills at school.

Why is this an example of good practice?

We feel that the money was used as effectively as possible and we really tailored the money to meet the needs of the child. We met with the child's parents to discuss how we would best use the money therefore we involved the family in the decision-making process. As the child didn't need any specific support within the setting or any equipment or resources, we feel that we really did think outside the box as to how we could use the DAF money to not only support the child and family but also encourage her development even further. The experience also really enhanced the staff team's knowledge of her condition and enabled them to put more exercises and activities in place to support her on a daily basis. When the child went to school, she was meeting all of her age appropriate milestones (other than physical which will always be slightly delayed), this shows to us that all the support and experiences we had put in place through using the DAF money had had a positive effect on her overall development.

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