**CASE STUDIES**

### Case Study 1: Early Years/Reception

*Below is an anonymised example of how the East Midlands Adoption Support Service (EMASS) has helped families. Provided by Sarah Lepley, Service Manager, EMASS.*

‘We received a referral from a parent who was worried her child wasn’t getting the support they needed since starting school. Mum was worried as the child was now unhappy about going to school. The child had started in a nursery class in September and was struggling to sit still and concentrate in class, and wasn’t making friendships with the other children. He was observed at school being controlling in play and sought out adult attention in the class, at playtime and during activities. At home he had been content previously, but was now lashing out at parents and a sibling.

Mum wanted advice to manage the situation before it escalated at home and felt that school staff also needed advice on meeting the additional needs of adopted children.

EMASS made contact with mum and arranged a visit. A senior worker completed a Family Star assessment with mum, looking at a wide range of factors affecting family life. Parents were told about the Adoption Support Fund and were signposted to a therapeutic parenting course. A plan of work at home was agreed, where a sessional worker was going to do some direct work with the child to help him recognise and manage his emotions. He enjoyed the sessions and mum sat in on some to see how to use the techniques after EMASS had ended their work.

Observations of the child at school were completed and the class teacher was asked what they were seeing and how they were using the Pupil Premium Plus. EMASS offered advice to school staff on meeting the needs of children who presented as anxious and hypervigilant (particularly sensitive to noises and changes around them, as they feel these are threatening). These included:

* using a ‘fiddle toy’ to suppress the sensory anxiety in the class
* positive re-enforcement of independent activities
* social stories and an emotions box made with the child at home.

The emotions box was then shared with school to start the process of getting the child to regulate their overwhelming emotions, which were preventing him from learning.

After a few weeks, progress at school was reviewed and some ‘tweaks’ were suggested by EMASS. Mum reported the calming techniques were working at home and the child had gone and got the emotions box himself when he was getting cross. School had seen some positive improvements and booked to have whole-school training on Attachment Awareness, delivered by EMASS.’

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| Further information Family Action has been awarded a grant by the DfE to deliver a pilot adoption support service across Lincolnshire and the East Midlands. Working in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council and the East Midlands Regional Adoption Agency, the East Midlands Adoption Support Service (EMASS) aims to improve outcomes for adopted children and their families. The service will focus on providing attachment training and support for schools, as well as individual support for adoptive families. Find out more about the project from: [www.learning-exchange.org.uk](http://www.learning-exchange.org.uk) Produced by Family Action: Unit 24 Angel Gate, City Road, Islington, London EC1V 2PT [www.family-action.org.uk](http://www.family-action.org.uk) Registered charity in England and Wales no: 264713Registered company limited by guarantee in England and Wales no: 01068186Read our disclaimer: [www.family-action.org.uk/disclaimer](http://www.family-action.org.uk/disclaimer) Copyright © Family Action 2017This handout has been produced as part of the EMASS project. Permission is granted to reproduce for personal and educational use only. Selling without prior written consent is prohibited (eg as part of a commercial training programme).*Last updated: 5.5.17* |