**CASE STUDIES**

### Case Study: Transition from Primary to Secondary

*Below is an anonymised example of how the East Midlands Adoption Support Service (EMASS) has helped families. Provided by Rebecca Gray, Senior Adoption Support Worker, EMASS.*

A young person was referred to EMASS prior to his transition from the primary to secondary departments within a large school. The young person had attachment difficulties and low self-esteem, but was extremely intelligent and had aspirations to become a surgeon.

The school reported that there were minimal concerns with the young person’s conduct within class and during school time; however, parents reported that the young person regularly came home distressed and had ‘melt downs’ daily.

Parents reported that the distress at home was caused by a number of factors at school, the main factors being his relationship with his class teacher and difficulties with peer relationships. The school reported that a regular issue they had experienced was the young person refusing to complete work in certain lessons or at certain times of the day.

The EMASS worker attended school and observed the young person, where she noted a level of hypervigilance within the classroom. This presented as overreliance on recognition from the class teacher and difficulty in sitting near peers. As a result of this observation, the EMASS worker arranged to meet with the class teacher and the SENCO in order to discuss possible strategies to support the young person.

The strategies suggested were: a designated safe person and safe place, time out of class through the use of completing jobs or tasks around the school, regular check-ins throughout the day for emotional unloading. The school staff agreed to put these strategies in place; however, they highlighted concerns about the young person’s imminent transition to the secondary department.

The school requested support from the EMASS worker regarding this and, as a result, the EMASS worker created an adapted Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) to reflect the attachment needs of the young person and the strategies that should be used in order to support this. This PSP was distributed to every member of staff involved in the care of the young person and a review date between the school and parents was arranged in order to keep track of the plan’s progress.

The EMASS worker also took the young person round the secondary department, allowing him to take photos of all areas of the school, which he felt he would need to know about. This was then created into a personalised transitions book, which he was able to utilise over the summer holidays to familiarise himself with where he needed to go and where he could go for support and advice within the department. In addition to this, the school agreed to provide the young person with extra transition sessions to the department and to continue the check-in times throughout the day for the first few weeks of term in order to ensure he was settling in well.

Upon starting the September term the young person transitioned with very few concerns being raised. He took his transitions book with him to school in order to support him in finding places of support, and the check-in times were utilised to allow for emotional unloading. These check-ins are currently ongoing and are now supporting his peer relationships in addition to supporting his emotional health.

The young person is making steady academic progress and is no longer refusing to complete tasks within lesson time.

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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: 264713 Registered company limited by guarantee in England and Wales no: 01068186  Read our disclaimer: [www.family-action.org.uk/disclaimer](http://www.family-action.org.uk/disclaimer)  Copyright © Family Action 2018This 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: 18.3.18* |