**CASE STUDIES**

### Case Study : Primary School emotional regulation

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

We received a referral from a Post Adoption Support Social Worker within the local authority, who was concerned that the child required more support in school due to the impact that attachment issues were having on her academic progress. The child was in Key Stage 2 and it was considered to be timely to ensure that appropriate support from school was secured in preparation for the forthcoming transition to secondary school.

EMASS made a home visit and met with Mum. A senior worker and Mum completed the Family Star assessment together to identify areas of need. An action plan was agreed with Mum with a focus on: direct work with the child on anger management issues; building relationships between home and school and increasing the school’s awareness of attachment issues.

A senior worker completed a classroom observation of the child and from these findings the school received support from EMASS in terms of advice and guidance regarding attachment awareness. Practical strategies were suggested, including the use of:

* brain breaks to aid concentration and engagement on a task
* concrete language to avoid confusion over directions
* a nurture group to aid social interaction development
* a meeter and greeter to set the tone of the day
* visual timetables to sequence events in terms of ‘now and next’.

Direct work was completed in the family home by the senior worker to support the child’s emotional regulation, as the child would regularly arrive home from school overwhelmed by feelings which would present as an anger temper.

Ten sessions were completed based largely on the cognitive behavioural therapy workbook on Anger Management – ‘Starving the Anger Gremlin’. The sessions focused on physical signs of anger within the body, awareness of angry behaviours and calming techniques. The work was completed using social stories and story books exploring anger, craft activities making posters and collages, role play and board games. Through increased self-awareness the child was able to increase their self control.

EMASS arranged two further school meetings, where support via a Pastoral Support Plan was discussed, particularly in terms of proactive support in preparation for the secondary transition. Mum confirmed that she felt more empowered and acknowledged that her relationship with school had improved.

The school staff were much more responsive to the child’s needs due to their increased insight into the emotional disruption caused by attachment issues. The school initiated a Team Around the Child to co-ordinate support for the family. Consideration of an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) was raised with school by EMASS on parental wishes. The school expressed some reluctance on initiating the EHCP process, so Mum was signposted to contact the local independent parent partnership service for support with a parental request for an EHCP.

EMASS finished their involvement with a range of approaches embedded at home and school. These consistent strategies were known by the child and those supporting her which allowed for increased effectiveness. Mum was considering the possibility of a parentally requested EHCP assessment with support from the local agency.

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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: 23.3.18* |