

3.2 Levels of Need and Service Delivery Good Practice Examples-

Introduction

Alyssa is a 7 year old girl. She has younger twin brothers aged 2 ½ years. They live in the area where both parents grew up and are surrounded by family and friends. Her dad works and Alyssa's mother has started to work part-time. They only just manage on their income, money for clothes and shoes for Alyssa is especially hard and they struggle to buy books or toys. However, they consider themselves lucky as many of their neighbours, relatives and friends are unemployed. Alyssa's parents recognise they give Alyssa much less attention now than they used to, firstly as a result of the arrival of the twins and now because of their job changes.

Current service delivery within universal provision and presenting issues

Alyssa attends Greenhill Primary School. She is becoming more and more disobedient in class, not willing to join in the activities or stay quiet when the teacher is telling a story. She is often aggressive to other children and despite the teacher's experience and efforts, she has not been able to make any lasting impact on Alyssa's behaviour.

Initial targeted response

The teacher approaches the SENCo in the school for advice. Having observed Alyssa in class and in the playground, she feels that there are a range of additional strategies which could be implemented to support Alyssa. The class teacher talks with Alyssa to talk with her about her behaviour, how she feels about what is happening in school and how she thinks things could be better. Alyssa finds it difficult to talk about her behaviour and is unable to offer any explanation or suggestions for change at this point.

ContactPoint is checked to see if any other Children's Services are, or have been, involved. There are records only for universal services such as the school and GP. It is agreed to invite Alyssa's parents to the school for a meeting. The teacher and pastoral head meet with them and explain their concerns for Alyssa.

Alyssa's mother explains that her behaviour is difficult to manage at home. She enjoys coming to school but doesn't seem to be making friends with any of her class. At home she is often playing with younger children but usually it is not long before one of them is crying. An assessment of Alyssa's needs and strengths is suggested, using the common assessment framework (CAF) to identify how best to help. The teacher carefully explains the process that will be followed and what will happen to the information gathered. She explains ContactPoint and what information will be included there as a result of the CAF.

Outcomes of initial targeted response

Both parents think about the suggestions, and see whether or not having discussed it at school and at home, Alyssa's behaviour changes. They are aware of ContactPoint through fair processing notices and other communications from the school and local authority. Alyssa's father is unsure about undertaking a common assessment as he feels that this is prying into their business and they should be able to look after Alyssa without any help from others. He blames Alyssa's mother for not being strict enough with her. Her mother wants help with Alyssa. After some weeks

the situation at school and at home is not improving despite the extra targeted response. Gentle encouragement from school persuades both parents that more help is needed and they agree to the common assessment.

Further actions leading to coordinated targeted response

The assessment confirms a number of strengths including good literacy and numeracy. However Alyssa regularly disobeys her mother and fights to get her own way, with tears and tantrums. Alyssa's mother finds it hard to cope with this on top of all her other worries and often will let Alyssa have what she wants for the sake of peace and quiet. Alyssa often displays anger towards other children and on one occasion had bitten another child. She sometimes still wets the bed. It is suggested that a more detailed assessment of behaviour and learning is required and some support for Alyssa's mother. The teacher suggests a multi agency meeting is held and explains who may be invited and what they may be able to offer.

The teacher records the common assessment information in the CAF system and this automatically updates ContactPoint to show that a common assessment has been undertaken for Alyssa and with contact details for her teacher.

The outcome of the meeting is an Educational Psychologist is to conduct a more detailed assessment, the School Nurse and local Children's Centre provide some support to Alyssa's mother and the school nurse provides advice on bed wetting. Alyssa's aggressive playground outbursts are discussed with the playground assistants who agrees to try and involve Alyssa in some of the more structured play sessions. The behaviour support team discuss with the teacher some strategies that might help her to manage Alyssa's behaviour in the classroom. The local Children's Centre also offer to help Alyssa's Mother with finding childcare for her younger children as well as identifying opportunities for training and employment in response to her expressing a wish for a better job.

Alyssa's mother is keen that the actions take place and that the teacher remains the Lead Professional. The teacher is recorded on ContactPoint as lead professional.

The school nurse later visits Alyssa's mother and recommends a visit to the GP and to take a urine sample for testing just in case of infection or other medical problems. She provides practical advice regarding intake of fluids, use of nightlights in the hall leading to the bathroom and how to handle occurrences of bed wetting calmly. She provides written information and the address of the internet site for ERIC, the parent support group, which they can access free of charge in the local library.

Alyssa is invited to join the Bubble club after school which provides a nurturing relaxed environment where children can participate in creative activities with general themes around making friends, taking turns and thinking about feelings.

The educational psychologist assessment takes place two weeks later at school and involves Alyssa being observed in the classroom and playground and detailed discussions with Alyssa's parents and her teacher.

ContactPoint is automatically updated with the EP involvement and contact details.

Outcomes of coordinated targeted response

The coordinated targeted support clearly identified that Alyssa has less confidence and a shorter attention span than would normally be expected for her stage of development. She becomes frustrated easily and vents this frustration through anger and aggression. There are ongoing concerns about her play and interaction with other children. She spends some time on her own in the playground and sometimes seems unsure how to approach others to join in their play. It becomes evident how important it is that Alyssa has clearly defined boundaries, and a consistent response when she over steps these boundaries. She does respond very well to rewards.

Further actions leading to specialist response

The educational psychologist suggests that, although she could work independently with Alyssa, this type of work is best carried out in the partnership with other practitioners including teachers, learning mentors, therapists, paediatricians, and parents. She explains the wider family support provided by a specialist team called Bears and recommends that they should be involved in helping Alyssa. She explains that Bears is a multi agency team, part of the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), whose work is designed around early intervention for behavioural problems and that they have worked with the school for many years with excellent results. She explains that, as Alyssa's problems have been identified at an early stage, she expects that the team will be able to address these quickly and very effectively. Alyssa's parents are worried about the stigma that might be attached to involving a CAMHS team. They are reassured by the teacher explaining the benefits of dealing with Alyssa's problems early and properly. She also explains that the service is completely confidential and how even the team name gives no clue to the services being provided. They meet with a Bears team member and talk to a parent of a child currently involved in the programme. After some deliberation they agree a request for support to be made to Bears and for Alyssa's information to be shared with them.

Specialist response

All the previous assessment information is used for the pre-evaluation and to devise an individual programme to help Alyssa at home and at school. A multi agency team is established with the teacher, a behaviour worker, Bears team member and Alyssa's parents. All have clear roles and responsibility.

Alyssa is referred to the school paediatrician, who works with the Bears team part-time to see if there is an underlying cause for her behaviour.

Outcomes wanted from the programme, both from parents and professionals point of view and a timetable for review meetings are agreed

Alyssa is helped to develop her skills through individual and group exercises

Alyssa's parents attend a series of parents groups offering a range of strategies for coping with children's behaviour problems and encouraging learning and play

As a follow-up to the parent groups, the behaviour support worker works with Alyssa's parents at home to help put ideas into practice

Alyssa's parents are consulted about consent for contact details to be recorded on ContactPoint. ContactPoint will only indicate that there is a sensitive service involved. Alyssa's parents prefer for the involvement not to be included on ContactPoint and their preference is respected.

Outcomes of specialist response

The school paediatrician makes a full assessment of Alyssa's health needs, including checking her vision and hearing but does not identify any health concerns.

Behaviour workers from school and Bears provide support to Alyssa, working with her individually in school and at home respectively. Alyssa also attends small group sessions run by Bears at the Children's Centre where they use video, games and role play to help improve the children's social skills and problem solving abilities.

As lead professional, the teacher arranges and chairs the first monthly meeting of the team, including Alyssa's parents as agreed. All of the team report back on their actions from the last month, their view of progress towards the pre-defined outcomes, what has worked well and what not so well. They review the action plan and adjust as necessary. All the members of the team leave the meeting with a clear view of their next steps and those of the other members of the team.

After 3 months, Alyssa is showing good progress and is much less disruptive in class. Her behaviour at home has also improved and Alyssa's mother seems more relaxed and happy. There is a noticeable improvement in their relationship.

To support Alyssa's development and improving behaviour the team recommend that she should regularly take part in exercise and other activities outside of school. There is a range of suitable sports and arts activities provided by the local leisure centre and by the school as part of their extended services. As Alyssa likes music and dance, her mother decides to enrol her in a ballet class provided by the leisure centre and an after school music club provided by the Extended School.

Alyssa is no longer disruptive in class and her behaviour at home is as expected for a child of her age. She is enjoying her after school activities, especially the ballet, and is responding well in class. Her relationship with her parents is stronger and happier. The team believe the intervention has achieved the desired outcomes.

Appropriate maintenance within universal provision

The support from Bears now enters the maintenance period where David and Sonya and Amy are no longer actively involved with Alyssa or her parents however are available to provide support if required. Sally continues to monitor Alyssa's behaviour at school and maintains contact with Alyssa's parents. The team meet for reviews after 3 months and at the end of the maintenance period where Sally and Alyssa's parents report back to the team on what they have observed.

Alyssa's mother has completed her NVQ course and has got a new job working part time in the canteen at a local factory. She only earns a little more than she did before as a cleaner, but is happier with her work now and feels that the prospects for herself and the family are much better. Also, she can meet Alyssa from school and spend more time helping her with school work. They both enjoy cooking together.

Alyssa's behaviour remains good and she continues to thrive at school. As with any child, she occasionally misbehaves but her teachers and her parents easily handle this. She now has a firm circle of friends from within her class. The Bears follow up evaluation confirms there is no longer a need for support from the team.