

OUTCOMES SPOTLIGHT

How Valuing SEND is supporting practitioners to make use of parent and carer expertise to improve support for children and young people with SEND

OVERVIEW

Jess, the SENDco at Orchard Garden Day Nursery and the team have been using Valuing SEND to work with parents and carers to better understand their children's needs, and plan more impactful support. Here we hear from Jess, and a brilliant family of a little boy in her care, about the impact of this work on both school and home.

Xander has complex SEMH needs and when he arrived at the nursery, he regularly displayed problematic behaviours such as biting. Both Xander's parents have additional needs too. By working closely with Xander's family and using the Valuing SEND tool to plan support, Orchard Garden nursery have provided really meaningful support. Xander now rarely bites and is making rapid progress, particularly in his communication and language skills. He and his parents are looking forward to his transition to mainstream primary school in September.

"Honestly, it's been so successful. The staff have become more like friends. We don't feel judged, they have really broken down barriers. My partner has previously struggled to take part in these kind of conversations, but this is a good little tool, it's helped him realise he's actually doing really well as a dad and he can help to plan Xander's support. He actually did almost all the scoring in the end, he finally feels involved."

Amanda, Xander's mum (or super-mum as we call her)



WHAT IS VALUING SEND?

Valuing SEND is a tool that maps the unique needs of a child or young person with SEND alongside the support a setting is planning to provide for them, making it clear where needs can be met, and where further training or support might be required.

As well as this, the tool maps the confidence of the parents and carers through a structured conversation. No judgement is made by the practitioner about the parent or carers' ability to meet need, it's more about an open-minded conversation to see what can be learned from the family's experiences to help plan better support for the child or young person at school or nursery.

In Xander's case, the nursery staff and his parents came together to discuss the challenges they were all experiencing in meeting his SEMH needs. Through a conversation with the Valuing SEND prompts, Mum and Dad were able to provide the nursery staff with some really great strategies they were using at home; one example was an enclosed quiet space he had access to when he needed to regulate his emotions. While nursery don't have much space to spare, they made a semi-private small space for Xander. They have also with help from Mum and Dad, better understood his triggers and are helping him to manage the way he reacts to them before his behaviour escalates.

"Valuing SEND massively helped structure the conversation and brought us together around the table." Jess – SENDCo



OUTCOMES



Partnership working

For mum, using Valuing SEND has meant better interaction with school. “I feel like we’re getting daily feedback... if he has a bad day but they know how to calm him down, they know what he needs before Xander knows himself. It just feels different. It’s been quite nice to be asked questions about home. I might seem like I’ve got it all together, but I’ve got a full-time job and I’m a full-time mum and I rarely get time to just reflect.” For Jess, it’s all about planning support that really works, “Xander’s parents are great at meeting his needs. They are a really good team, it’s given us insight into their family life, it’s been useful to tap into Mum’s instinct and Dad’s strategies.



Better support

Jess and her team now have creative solutions to supporting Xander; as well as the semi-private space they are using a visual timetable and providing continuity for Xander in how they manage transitions so he has a similar experience at home. “We are having less biting incidents, and the staff can intervene to prevent situations escalating because they know about his triggers. We can’t believe how much he’s come on from when he first started. He has so much more language.” Both Mum and Jess are quick to praise Gemma, Xander’s key worker who has really worked hard to understand his needs, and those of the family.



Next steps

There are plans to use Valuing SEND to plan Xander’s transition to mainstream primary school, with the new reception teacher, mum and dad and the nursery staff getting around the table to help make Xander’s transition as successful as possible. Jess says “With the right support that little boy will thrive. And we’ll really miss him”.

To find out more about Valuing SEND and how it might help practitioners and families work in partnership in your local area visit our website enquiries@impower.co.uk

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