

**EECERA**

**Budapest 2018**

# **Parents' Involvement in their Child's Learning and Development whilst Supporting their Transition from a Maintained Nursery School to a SEND Special School**

# Pen Green Centre for Children and Families

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- Early years education 0-5yrs
- Extended hours, extended year provision to support families
- Inclusive, flexible, education with care for children with additional needs and children with special rights (SEND)
- Kingswood Children's Centre and Early Years provision
- Adult Community Education
- Family Support Services and Integrated Health Services
- Focus for voluntary work and community regeneration
- Training and support for early years practitioners
- Research and Development
- Leadership Professional Development
- Early Years Teaching Centre/Teaching School



# My Role

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I am the SEND Support worker within Pen Green. I support all of the children who have SEND and their families that attend either of the 5 provisions in Pen Green, as well as any who may attend the children centre.

My role allows me to

- initially support families to access the centre
- lead on multi-agency working for children
- co-ordinate the additional work that takes place to support and enable children to attend our provision
- support children to make progress that is unique and individual to them whilst attending
- plan for and facilitate transitions for children both within the provision and externally

# Research Aims

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This research aims to promote the voice of a parent whose child with SEND is transitioning from a maintained nursery school to a school.



# Relationship to previous work

This paper builds on

- the START project (2016)
- Working with children aged 0-3 and their families (Whalley et al, 1997)
- Supporting children's transitions within a nursery school (Medhurst, 2014)



# Introducing Ryan & Helen

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Ryan is 4 years old and has Dravet's Syndrome. This is a rare and complex form of epilepsy and is a life-limiting condition. Due to this condition, all areas of Ryan's development have been affected. Ryan loves the company of adults, he likes to be able to lead his own learning and spends a lot of time outside. Ryan's play is repetitive and he particularly enjoys sensory play where he receives feedback through his whole body. After a seizure Ryan loses some of his cognitive ability and has to re-learn and practice skills he had previously mastered.



**RYAN**

### The things people love about me

There are lots of things people like about me;

I am very friendly, I love people to know how much I like them.

I am so driven by my need to seek sensory input from my surroundings.

My love for music and singing and anything loud is amazing to see.

I am fantastic at real work especially at the tool bench.

### What makes me happy

I love music all things loud!  
I like to visit the shared spaces - soft room, beach, water room. I really enjoy story books with props, especially the 'shark in the park' this is one of my favorite stories. Most of all I love sensory exploration where I can seek big heavy sensory feedback.

### How I like to be supported

I need adults to use direct language alongside a visual cue. In busy or new environments I can become frustrated or over excited, I need adults to be close to me and support me through the experience giving me social cues if I need them. If I lash out and hurt the people around me I need adults to give me a clear consistent response. I get tired very quickly, sometimes I can be distracted by the things I enjoy, but when I am really tired I will let you know by going to the sofa.

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**RYAN**

### The things people love about me

There are lots of things people like about me;

My self confidence, I will confidently go off and explore new environments.

I am very friendly.

I am so driven by my need to seek sensory input from my surroundings.

I have the best singing voice ever! My version of 5 little monkeys will be the best you've ever heard.

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### What makes me happy

I love music and singing this is definitely my favorite thing to do.

I like blocks and building.

Exploring the home corner makes me happy. I like opening and closing all of the cupboards, twisting the knobs and taking the lids on and off the pots and pans.

Most of all I love sensory explorations.

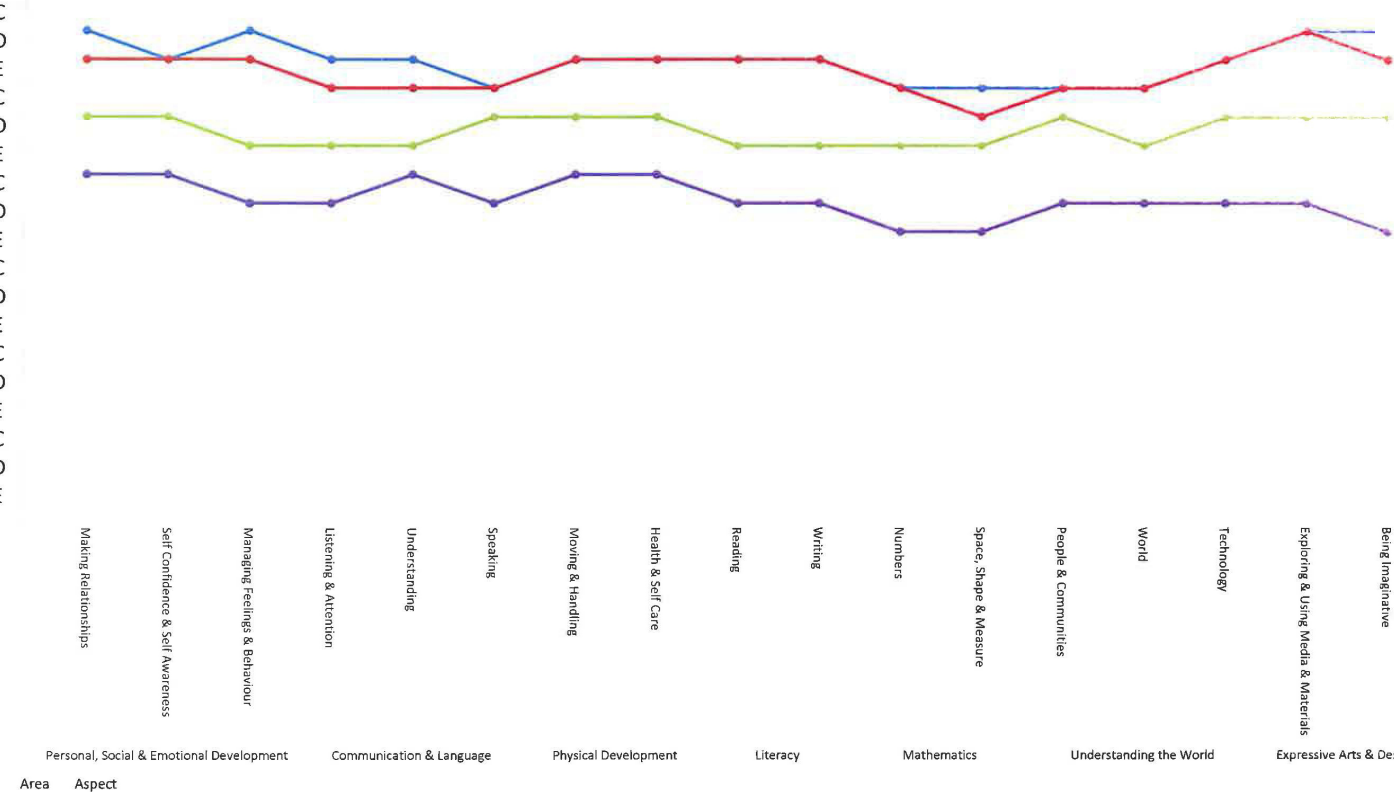
### How I like to be supported

I need adults to use direct language alongside a visual cue. In busy or new experiences I can become frustrated or over excited, I need adults to be close to me and support me through the experience giving me social cues if I need them. If I lash out and hurt the people around me I need adults to give me a clear consistent response. I then need adults to move me on and support me to explore something more appropriate.

# Ryan

Early Learning Goals

40-60 mths C  
D  
E  
30-50 mths C  
D  
E  
22-36 mths C  
D  
E  
16-26 mths C  
D  
E  
8-20 mths C  
D  
E  
0-11 mths C  
D  
E



- 2014/15 – Summer
- 2014/15 – Winter/Spring
- 2013/14 – Summer
- 2013/14 – Winter/Spring

# Methodology

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This paper is interpretive research, employing a qualitative methodological approach that has involved

- Home visits
- Settling in period
- Daily conversations
- Feedback from colleagues
- Dialogue within specialist children centre groups
- Multi agency working
- Research/Feedback from the International project START
- Voice recorded interview with parent
- Voice recorded interview with Ryan's new school Teacher
- Observations of Ryan in nursery
- Observations of Ryan in his new school environment

# The Main Findings

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- Helen's expert knowledge of Ryan's specific needs and condition were crucial
- Helen's advocacy for Ryan was paramount when ensuring a positive, successful transition
- Helen required the support of trusted professionals to ensure she had the confidence to share her knowledge with his future school



# Main Findings from Home Visits

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## Home Visits

We believe that parents know their children best. Knowing children well involves getting to know them in their home environment.



Home visits can play a really important part in forging relationships; getting to know the family and gaining an insight into the home learning environment.

Parents may feel more relaxed in their own home to engage in a dialogue about their child.



# Main findings from Settling in period

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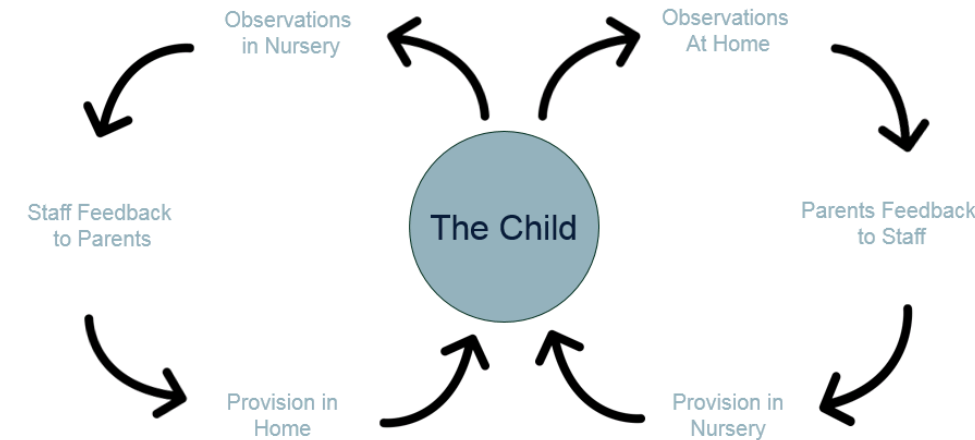
- Getting to know the child and their parents/carers
- Learning about each child's individual rhythm and routine
- Answering any questions or queries
- Introducing key staff
- Sharing information – introduce our conceptual frameworks

# Main Findings in Engaging Parents/Carers in the process

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- Parental engagement is key and does make a difference to children's overall outcomes
- Parents know their children best and always want more for their children than they had themselves. We as Early Years professionals can learn a lot from parents, we have to be willing to listen.
- Parents need to know their voice is important, they are heard and are supported to have their voice heard by others
- Reciprocal, open and honest dialogue is critical and isn't always easy.

## The Pen Green Loop



# Why transitions matter

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- Children need time to make relationships
- Getting used to new or different surroundings
- Children need time to understand new and different routines
- Parents need to adjust to the same things
- Teachers and practitioners need to:
  - Get to know children as individuals
  - Understand the child's home context
  - Know how children like to learn
  - Take time to hear the voice of the parent
  - Engage parents in their children's learning

# Implications for own practice

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Continue to consistently ensure we

- Support parents to make school applications
- Work collaboratively with the admissions team
- Facilitate annual transition market place
- Visit local feeder schools, including specialist schools
- Facilitate multi –disciplinary transition meetings
- Share all appropriate documentation with future school
- Class teachers visiting nursery
- Make relationships with class teachers
- Joint home-visits
- Joint projects
- Access to continuous professional development
- Offer inclusive practice for **all** children



# Summary of findings

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- Parents and children both have rights
- Investing time into building trusting relationships is crucial
- Being a parent is a complex and difficult role
- The belief that parents are deeply committed to their children
- That early years educators need to recognise parents' roles as their child's first and most consistent educators
- Working jointly with educators from children's forwarding schools promotes successful transitions