

Building and Sustaining equal and active relationships with parents living through complexity

Bella's transition

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Family Worker

Pen Green Centre for Children and Families

Bella in context

The family live in a privately rented house.

Mum asked Hugh and Bella to leave the family home when she was 18 months old.

In the family home with Bella and Hugh's new partner and their baby.

Bella's mum lives away with Bella's two older siblings.

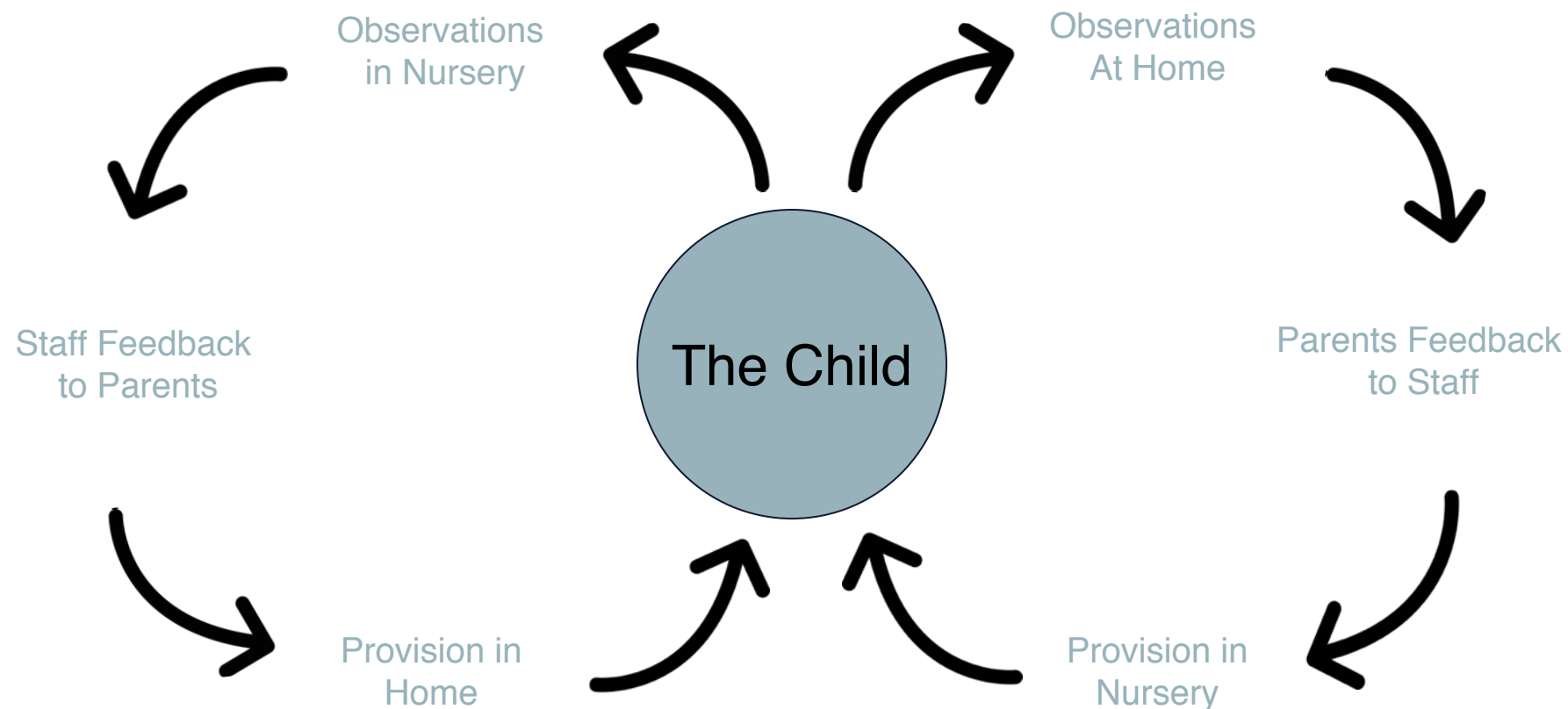
Bella's contact with her mum is sporadic due to mum being inconsistent.

Hugh's new partner has had 14 children; 13 have been removed from her care.

Hugh tries to hold down a job as a labourer.

Hugh has some support from his parents.

The Pen Green Loop



Bella and Hugh

- Hugh spoke about wanting things to be different for Bella, when reflecting on his own childhood and his experience of school
- Family worker shared information with Hugh through the on-line journal to allow Hugh to get engaged in Bella's learning
- Hugh shared with his Family Worker that he was unable to read or write
- Family worker immediately changed the way she engaged with Hugh
- Sharing images, videos and observation with Hugh when he dropped off or picked up Bella
- The Family Worker would add comments from Hugh to Bella's on-line learning journal
- Regular home-visits

Bella you have recently been interested in mark making and writing using various materials. After speaking to your daddy I have made you up your very own little bag with lots of paper and pencils and pens and chalk for you to transition to home and nursery to use with daddy and show him your amazing writing.

Bella you love to draw and write and paint. In the garden today you approached the paints at the perspex glass. "Daddy" you said as you dipped your brush into the water and then attempted to draw. "Are you drawing Daddy"? I asked you. You nodded and when you noticed the wet mark and no colour you looked at me puzzled. I showed you how to apply paint to your brush using the palette paints. You copied what I had showed you and smiled when you made a coloured mark on the screen. You then handed me the brush and said "Daddy". I proceeded to draw a face with eyes, nose and mouth. "Mine" you said as you gestured for me to give you the brush back. You then tried very hard to copy my picture.

Dads reply - it's nice to see her drawing and doing stuff like that I don't think to give her pens and paint at home, I thought she would probably just paint my walls but I will now.

Supporting Bella's transition

- Bella was part of the Erasmus project
- Supporting and building up Bella's emotional resilience
- No school application completed
- Conversation with class teacher
- Visits to school
- Supported place over the summer holiday
- Additional home-visits to help prepare Dad and Bella for leaving nursery
- Supporting Hugh to make the transition to school

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What worked well

- The Family worker was an advocate for Bella and Hugh at Child Protection meetings, school transition meetings.
- Regular home-visits were important for both Bella and Hugh
- The Family worker had to be mindful about all of the pressures that Hugh was facing and hold on to he wanted the best for Bella and that he would engage in his own time and in his own way.
- Persistence pays off – never assume that parents aren't interested in getting the best for their children – lots of stuff can get in the way.
- Through working together Bella's well-being and involvement in nursery increased. She was much more receptive to learning and made some strong friendships with peers.
- Hugh has a better understanding of how the effects of their complex life can have an immediate and longer term impact on Bella's life chances.
- Hugh is now more able to advocate for Bella.