

Case study: A Parent's Story:

Positive Support for a Child with Additional Learning Needs Starting Nursery

My son is 3 years of age and his quite severe additional learning needs.

A little about my son, Tomos - he is totally non-verbal, no understanding of any words or instructions, has no name recall, extremely limited non-verbal communication skills, he does not wave/ clap/ point, he can only hand lead to what he needs/wants.

My son gets extremely overwhelmed with both environmental changes, noise etc which result in various stims that he has, he will run away/ jump up and down.

He will get extremely frustrated with lack of communication. He cannot sleep and is up multiple times a night, having a massive impact on him the next day. He will put absolutely everything in his mouth and eat this, from mud/ chippings/ animal food/ grass/ leaves etc. If Tomos is not enclosed, he will run away and keep running. Keeping Tomos safe is extremely challenging.

Going back to the start

To ensure I give you a full picture of how the nursery has helped me over Tomos' time there. I had originally put off finding a nursery for my son as it was starting to become clear by around the age of 15 months that he had some signs of emerging development delay, naturally, as his mum, I became increasingly protective and really was very defensive about him starting any type of nursery.

As I said, I was very reluctant to visit any nursery due to my worries of my little boy settling anywhere and anyone being able to look after him due to his emerging additional learning needs. We discovered Cwtsh Y Clos Nursery, when he was of 18 months of age after being highly recommended.

Myself and my mother visited the setting, as soon as we took one foot in the door, I felt at ease, I felt as though everything had fallen into place, the staff, the setting, the atmosphere, it all felt right. I quickly made sure I reserved a space the sooner the better, I was so excited for him to start!

Tomos' nursery journey

He started a few weeks later, obviously still had natural mum nerves but he settled in pretty much instantly. My son had been in the creche only a few weeks when I was already enquiring about an additional day for him to attend nursery as was loving it that much! (talk about a U Turn in events!)

By the time Tomos had been in Cwtsh Y Clos a few months, I visited the nursery for a little chat about Tomos' development as his additional leaning needs were at this point becoming more and more apparent. It was absolutely huge as a parent, coming to the realisation that your child had delays and things were looking quite different, it was a very emotional time for me and to come to terms with this. Cwtsh Y Clos, were absolutely indispensable the entire time, couldn't do enough for me and my family and I would've been totally lost without them and definitely not where I am today, that is for sure.

Support

The support they gave to us as a family was second to none and it meant the absolute world, I no longer felt alone and it really felt like a proper community, the support they gave to us all, I will be forever grateful, as Cwtsh Y Clos have become part of the family.

The following day, Gwenllian (owner of Cwtsh Y Clos) had put all of the necessary referrals in and everything was in place, I couldn't believe how fast she had acted for Tomos, it was quite amazing. She acted with the upmost professionalism as well as providing the most the incredible support throughout. Within a fortnight, we had Tim Camau Bach in touch with us at home to provide us with the necessary support Tomos needed and the early years intervention team were all on board and visiting Cwtsh Y Clos to assess Tomos to put in the necessary support in place for him within the nursery.

Speech and Language support were involved with nursery and providing the staff with relevant training courses such as 'Cruise to Communication', his key worker at the time, Megan Davies was working tirelessly with Tomos within her 1-1 sessions, focusing on different tasks as set out by the early intervention team, Megan instantly connected with Tomos, despite being unable to communicate, she has such skill to be able to create bond they clearly have is absolutely amazing to see.

The nursery worked tirelessly to ensure Tomos was supported, through ensuring he had access to different items/ areas that helped regulate him, to working out what worked for Tomos at nursery.

Eventually, Tomos moved from the toddler room to the preschool room within Cwtsh Y Clos when he was nearly 3 years of age.

His key workers Megan & Rebeca, were absolutely amazing in ensuring a smooth transition, went above and beyond to assure this, his new key workers, Gracie & Jordan took over the role with ease and made the whole transition extremely smooth for Tomos, it was something as his mum, that was really dreading as Tomos didn't cope well with change but the nursery, as always, managed to listen to Tomos' needs even though he can't communicate them. It means a great deal to me that they are able to do this

Fast forward to today

Tomos is 4 next month, his challenges in the last year have gone up quite significantly, Tomos has had lots of challenging scenarios to work through in the last year. His current key workers, Gracie and Jordan, work so well with him, we couldn't ask for more, Tomos has had an awful lot of meetings and admin associated with his journey in the last year, all of the staff have gone above and beyond whilst ensuring the highest standard of care.

At the start of this case study, I explained how challenging it is to keep Tomos safe, I can't emphasise this enough, it really takes a lot to keep him safe, let alone happy and regulated when he has no verbal skills and no name recall, Cwtsh Y Clos manage this daily whilst maintaining the highest level of support for Tomos and me as his mum, they have helped and supported me through an exceptionally tough time and I know for a fact that I could not have done it without them.

Gwenllian is now working so hard to ensure the next step, Tomos transitioning to a specialist provision is smooth and at ease for all concerned, she really is, along with all the amazing staff, working very hard indeed to make sure it is as easy as possible for us all.

To find a nursery or even a person to look after your child when they have additional learning needs such as Tomos is huge. The fact that each day I can drop Tomos off with Cwtsh Y Clos, knowing that he will be safe, well looked after, kept regulated, calm, ensured his best interests are put first and that he's happy there. I can't tell you how much this means as his mum and they have really been a true lifeline for me and an extended family.

I really feel quite strongly that this nursery deserves the highest recognition as a nursery supporting children with Additional Learning Needs

I really don't think words will ever be able to express how truly grateful I am to Cwtsh Y Clos which has then led me to yourselves as I truly believe they deserve the highest level of recognition.

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