

Jigsaw Families – the family learning programme

A success story from Wheatfield Primary School



Hi, my name is Emily, a teacher at Wheatfield Primary. I want to share with you some of the reasons why I am so passionate about the Jigsaw Families programme, helping you recognise how your school may benefit from considering delivering the programme too.

My colleagues and I have experienced so many positives from using Jigsaw Families. These include:

- We have developed a better home school relationship with parents
- Less 1-1 parent enquiries as we have been able to deal with some of these during Jigsaw sessions
- High impact for low prep time
- Great for some of the children who do work better in smaller groups
- Parents have a greater understanding of Jigsaw and are now using strategies at home that we use in school
- Children and parents really feel valued and listened to
- Great fun

To give you a real-life demonstration of how powerful 6 sessions of Jigsaw Families can be we were delighted that one family gave their permission for us to share their story as a case study.

Jigsaw Families – Case Study

Background

The child (I) has a diagnosis of ADHD and started at our school 18 months ago. She has older siblings and a younger sister who is in the year below. She does not access the classroom and finds it hard to focus on more formal learning. She has 1-1 support for some of the time funded by the school. There are only a few adults that she will interact with and struggles if others are given attention. She can be disruptive at home which leads to her younger sibling not getting as much attention as she needs. Mum is very quiet and does not engage much with school or the other parents.

Mum was encouraged to come to Jigsaw Families as a way of helping to support her child.

Session 1 – She came with her 1-1 and just observed. She was unsure about her mum being there to begin with as that was something unusual. Mum was very quiet and mainly listened to what others were saying. During the art activity I came over and asked her 1-1 to make her a Jigsaw Puppet. She was very excited about getting a Jigsaw Jonty cuddly to keep and began to smile a little towards the end.

Session 2 – Mum reported that I had kept her Jigsaw Jonty in a special place at home and really looked after it – as would sometimes destroy toys. Mum started to chat a little to the other parents during coffee time. I listened to the whole story and sat with the other children but didn't speak. During the art activity I worked with her 1-1 to complete the activity.

Session 3 – Continued like the previous session. I spoke during the children’s activity and said that she wanted to get better at riding her bike. She also took a biscuit for the first time during snack time. Mum was also beginning to open up in the small group environment.

Mum stated that:

“I realise that other parents feel the same way as me and don’t always know what to do”

Session 4 – I loved this session and especially enjoyed chopping the fruit and veg to make a healthy food platter. She spoke much more as she was occupied with chopping and really let her guard down.

“I like Jigsaw Families because its quieter and we do fun stuff”

Session 5 – This was a very powerful session, and we discussed small changes that we could make to strengthen our relationships. Mum stated

“I am going to make sure that I give I time to answer and make the right choice before I get cross”

I stated “I am going to try and listen so I can make good choices”

Session 6 – I and her mum really engaged in this session and worked together to work out what they would like to do together and when they could do it when Jigsaw Families ended.

I said “I like spending time with my mum without anyone else it makes me feel happy and I want to do it more”

Mum admitted that the reason why she didn’t engage with other parents was because she was worried that they would think she was a bad parent due to her child having challenging behaviour. She has now realised that this is not the case.

Since Jigsaw Families

Mum and Dad have both continued to try and spend time with each child on a 1-1 basis. Mum’s confidence has grown hugely and she no longer worries that people are judging her – this has meant that she offered to help on her younger child’s school trip which they both thoroughly enjoyed. The whole family have agreed to an EHAP to help support them. I is now in class for over 50% of each day and it is continually rising. I will talk to more adults in school and is generally a more smiley child. She has had the confidence to begin to make some friends due to working with a small number of her peers in Jigsaw Families. She will often ask when we can do Jigsaw Families again.

My colleagues and I hope you’ve found it useful to hear our story. If this has made you want to consider Jigsaw Families for your school, contact:

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