

## Person Centred Approaches – Just get started! - July 2016

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To support schools, parent carers and professionals in the development of person centred approaches the Local Authority arranged for a 2 day training session in Person Centred Planning to learn about creative Person Centred Planning tools such as a PATH.

The SENCo from The Glebe Primary School in Southwick attended this course and since then, has been using a PATH for all annual and six monthly reviews for Education Health and Care Plans. This report shares the SENCO and parent carer view of adopting this new approach and highlighting the schools 'journey to date' and 'next steps'.

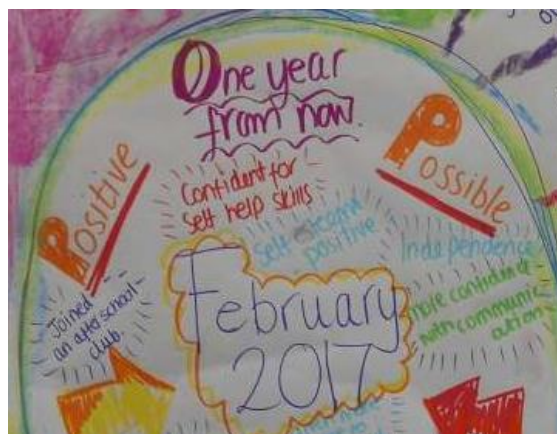
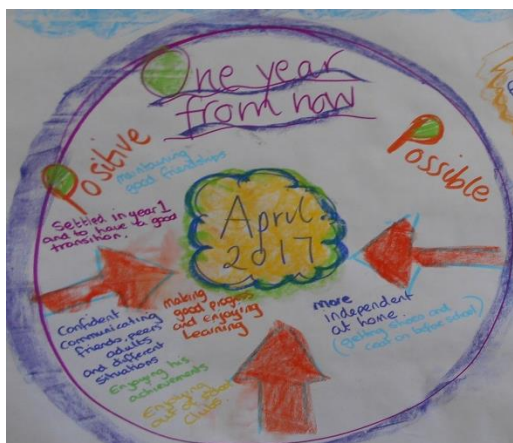
### The View of the School's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)

"We first heard about Person Centred Planning at a West Sussex County Council conference and had to consider carefully where this approach would benefit our practice in our own school. We could see it being an interactive, pro-active and positive process which could identify what we all needed to work on. The tool helps us to have a meaningful conversation rather than just call a meeting because it's part of a statutory cycle.

The first part of the PATH is a visioning exercise in which we create 'The Dream' This helps sets the tone for the meeting and creates an overview of what we want to want to achieve for the child. It helps you understand the priorities of the child and their family.



The 'One Year On' is useful in generating shared targets to go onto the Annual Review sheet and for the child's Personal Progress Plan. You can lift the wording straight off the PATH from the 'positive and possible section' so parents and staff have a shared understanding of what we are aiming to achieve together.



We are getting better and better at using the PATH – our confidence is growing. By taking one step at a time we have introduced a new way of working. The quality of our Personal Progress Plans has improved along with our home school partnership. The PATH we create together becomes our driver for the year.

We have also used a PATH as a Personal Development Tool for a member of staff who found the whole process “enlightening”. All our Teaching Assistants now want one too! Using the tool in this way provides a great opportunity to practice your skills and for staff to learn about the process so we all know what we are doing when using it with our families.

Parents have enjoyed this new approach and found it “helpful and refreshing”. Here are just a few examples of their feedback.

“Both myself and my husband found this task so helpful and refreshing. For us, having a child with a disability can on occasions be tough. Doctor’s appointments and school meetings can sometimes feel like you’re discussing negative issues - their struggles compared to peers, difficulties, problems, extra support required etc. Completing this task however, helped us to realise that while the one year goals are important, it’s the dream of their long-term happiness and contentment which are of real significance and value.”

Parent of child

“Together we completed XXXX’s Dream. Together we went through and discussed where we see XXXX in a year’s time. I really liked how we all gave a different point of where we see XXXX, all of which is totally possible. Nothing was put on there that I thought would be a problem or a struggle.

The PATH also gives XXXX and I things that are achievable for him and he loves seeing them up. He often talks about when he is in Year 1, when he is a man, so it gives him comfort and support in a way to know that others are with him all the way to help him achieve his dreams.” Parent of child

“It was a really positive and creative experience which we liked. We responded well to this new approach. We weren’t bogged down with what XXXX can’t do, we realised what he could do. We have put his poster on the wall.” Parent of child

### **Our Top Tips for using a PATH**

- Just get started – try out the part of the PATH that captures ‘The Dream’ and ‘One Year On’ first. Once you are confident you can add in other sections.
- Letting parent carers and other staff know about the new approach and what is going to happen is key. We talk to the parent before the meeting and then send a letter explaining what we are trying to do. A quick phone call to parents the day before the PATH is a good idea too to remind them to attend.
- Two people are needed to co-ordinate the meeting– one acts as a facilitator to work through the process, one as a graphic recorder to capture the conversation on paper. Our Learning Mentor normally graphics the meetings and I (SENCo) facilitate the discussion.

- Pre-drawing the PATH outline before the meeting starts is really important. Prompt cards are essential too especially while you confidence grows. Our prompt cards are full of key questions to act as reminders.
- Music is used to start the meeting and is also played in between the stages of the PATH, it really helps to 'set the scene' and focus for each section.
- We make sure we have copies of the 'child view' and 'parent carer view' Annual Review sheets in the meeting to make sure all points captured in them have been included in the discussion.
- We always take lots of photographs of the PATH after the meeting for our records. Parents just wanted to take the whole thing home with them once the meeting is finished and pop it up on their wall.

### **Next Steps for Person Centred Planning in our school**

- Introducing person-centred planning props to support the meetings 'ground rules'. We will be using a squeaky ball for 'no jargon', large plastic glasses for 'not judging / leaving the pass behind' and a wand to hold when speaking so everyone gets the chance to have their say.
- Extending the PATH graphic to include an Action's section. At the moment I do this after the meeting when I'm back in my office with the 'One Year On' graphic in front of me. It would be great to develop this section as part of the PATH as we can also agree review points and who is working on each target when we are all together.
- For the child's Class teacher to have a copy of the PATH during Parent meetings so they can check on progress during our Parent Consultation evenings which take place in between our more formal 6 and 12 month EHCP reviews.
- Although some of the older children have joined us already for the PATH meetings, we want to include our younger students too. We are also going to ask families to bring in some photos of what their child likes doing at home to make that home school partnership even stronger."