



Introduction

Welcome to the last issue in our 'keyworker series', where each half term we have focused on one of the eight domains of quality of life (QoL) and how you can support your key child through your weekly keyworker sessions.

This issue focuses on **rights!**

Rights relate to being treated fairly, with dignity and respect and having equal opportunities to participate in life. For autistic people, rights are not just about having access to opportunities; they are about having the support, understanding and adjustments needed to meaningfully engage with them.

Research Summary - Lebenhagen (2024)

Lebenhagen (2024) explored autistic pupils' views on meaningful inclusion. While there are policies that promote autistic pupils' rights to things like education and inclusion, the study highlights a gap between having a right and being able to experience that right in practice.

Pupils reported the most positive school experiences when they felt welcomed, respected and supported by staff. They also emphasised the importance of communication methods that worked for them. The findings suggest that in order to experience the benefits of their rights, autistic pupils need the right conditions to access and engage with them fully.



**Chandra
Lebenhagen**

The Reality

1. Present or Participating?

Are they genuinely able to participate and contribute in ways that are meaningful to them?



2. Identify Barriers

Explore what may be preventing meaningful participation (communication, sensory, emotional, environmental factors).



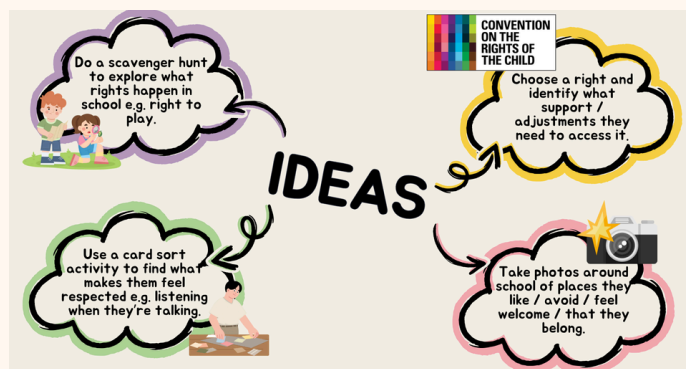
3. Welcome, Respected, Valued

What makes them feel these things in school? Ensure these factors are consistently considered.



4. Reflect Regularly

Ask yourself: My key child has rights, but do they have what they need to access the opportunities that come with those rights?



Further Reading & Links

[Lebenhagen, Chandra. \(2022\). Autistic Students' Views on Meaningful Inclusion: A Canadian Perspective. Journal of Education.](#)

[LAT Liberty Quality of Life Home](#)

INTRODUCTION: Inspired by the latest Research to Reality newsletter on material wellbeing, Pupil H's keyworker sessions have focused on developing her money management skills and identifying environments in which she thrives.

Plan: Pupil H will design her ideal classroom environment.

Pupil H trialled a range of calming strategies and rated whether she found them calming or not. She also identified that she finds her cat calming.



1. EXPLORE ENVIRONMENT THEY THRIVE IN

In preparation for the transition to a new school site next academic year, the aim is to support Pupil H to identify what she needs (in terms of strategies and environment) to feel calm, safe, and confident.

Pupil H played a budgeting board game which involved managing income and spending, making choices about costs, and tracking a balance. She engaged well, made effective spending decisions, and successfully stayed in credit, showing developing understanding of how everyday costs impact disposable income.

Pupil H completed a higher or lower money quiz about how much things cost.

YEARLY TV LICENCE DOES A TV LICENCE COST MORE OR LESS THAN £200 PER YEAR?

MORE LESS

2. MONEY MANAGEMENT

Pupil H's mum requested that we explore money management in keyworker sessions. Therefore, the aim has been to develop her understanding of how much things cost.

PUPIL OUTCOMES	NEXT STEPS
1. Pupil H is able to identify strategies that help her feel calm in different environments.	1. To identify what environmental features support her to feel calm, safe, and confident.
2. Pupil H is beginning to develop an understanding of the cost of items.	2. To develop her budgeting skills through estimating the cost of everyday items, understanding the consequences of overspending, and making informed spending decisions.

DESCRIPTION

A keyworker focused a session on future aspirations, goal-setting, and understanding the steps required to achieve long-term ambitions for employment. The pupil talked about their dream of becoming a professional footballer for Barcelona and explored some pathways towards this goal. They talked about training, commitment to their current club, and finding opportunities to be scouted. The discussion also covered future employment opportunities, the value of earning money through part-time or summer work, and the importance of education in supporting career aspirations.

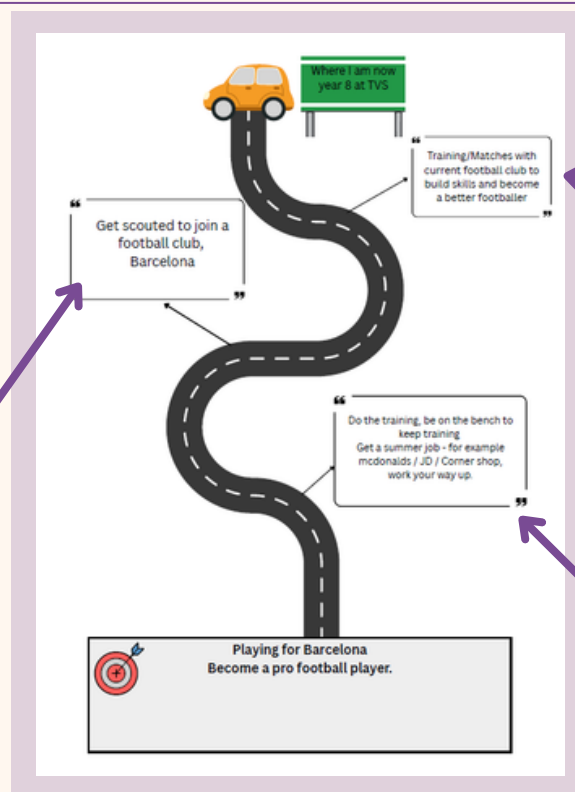


GOALS

- Develop realistic pathways towards future aspirations by helping the pupil identify and work towards the steps required for their long-term goals.
- Strengthening the pupil's understanding of how subjects such as Maths and English support future career opportunities and life goals.
- Promote future planning and employability skills by exploring potential employment opportunities.



PROGRESS / EVIDENCE



A road map was used to outline the key steps to achieving aspirations and show how multiple steps are taken to achieve a goal.

A key stage in this session was identifying the importance of highlighting the short term goals first.

A key discussion point was the importance of financial stability whilst working towards longer term employment goals.

PUPIL OUTCOMES

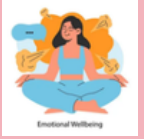
Since the beginning of the key worker sessions the pupil has shown an increase in engagement with learning opportunities to prepare for life after school. The most notable improvements were reported in Maths and English.

NEXT STEPS

Support the pupil to understand the environments and expectations of employment. This will also involve practicing advocating for reasonable adjustments and the benefits of this.

INTRODUCTION

This case study focuses on a secondary pupil at Church Lawton School. This student experiences high levels of anxiety, low self esteem, and occasional self-injurious behaviours such as scratching her skin when distressed. She meets with her keyworker weekly, with additional ad hoc 1-1 check-ins during periods of heightened emotional need.



INTENDED OUTCOMES

- Pupil will be able to recognise early signs of anxiety and emotional distress
- Pupil will begin to independently use agreed coping strategies to manage these feelings
- Reduction in self-injurious behaviours over time
- Pupil will feel more confident in seeking support when needed
- Improved self-esteem and ability to recognise personal strengths

GOALS

The support programme focuses on developing emotional regulation, introducing safe alternatives to self-injurious behaviours, and providing regular opportunities to practise coping strategies.



nshn Distractions that can help...

PHYSICAL	CREATIVE
1. Exercise - Sit-ups etc.	1. Writing poetry, journals, letters, stories etc.
2. Going to the gym	2. Doodling or scribbling on paper
3. Punching a punch bag	3. Playing a musical instrument
4. Having a pillow fight with the wall	4. Singing
5. Stretching and aerobics	5. Knitting
6. Ripping up paper into small pieces	6. Sewing
7. Popping bubble wrap	7. Crocheting
8. Popping balloons	8. Drawing or painting
9. Playing with a stress ball	9. Origami
10. Picking your eyebrows	10. Memorising poetry or song lyrics
11. Taking your anger out on a soft toy	11. Making a mix tape, compilation of your favourite music
12. Throwing socks against the wall	
13. Dancing	
14. Stomping your feet (with boots on)	
15. Playing catch with a ball	
16. Swimming	
17. Going for a drive (take city/ town roads/roads out)	

Weekly keyworker sessions are used to rehearse these strategies in a calm, low-pressure environment, supporting the pupil to become more familiar and confident in using them. This approach is informed by Bennett (2022), who highlights the importance of repeated practice to help pupils access coping strategies more independently during moments of distress.



nshn Distractions that can help...

COMFORTING	CONSTRUCTIVE
1. Cuddling a soft toy/blanket	1. Doing school work, homework, paperwork
2. Allowing yourself to cry	2. Writing a to-do list
3. Sleeping	3. Unrugging mattresses, string, wool
4. Taking a shower or bath	4. Organising your room, clothes, photographs
5. Playing with a pet	5. Cleaning
6. Drinking hot chocolate	6. Organising CD's, DVD's and books in genre, alphabetical and/or chronological order
7. Watching your progress and watching daytime TV	7. Reading a book
8. Having a massage or massaging your own hands and feet	8. Cooking, bake a cake or make cookies, treat
	9. Calling a helpline, Samaritans, child line etc.
	10. Polishing furniture, jewellery
	11. Posting on web forums/reply to posts
	12. Writing a list of positive things in your life
	13. Shredding
	14. Dying hair
	15. Painting your nails
	16. Putting on false nails
	17. Putting on false hair
	18. Stomping on cars for recycling (with sturdy shoes on)
	19. Gardening

PROGRESS / EVIDENCE

- The pupil is starting to recognise when she feels overwhelmed and can talk about this in sessions
- Engages well in practising coping strategies and will sometimes use them in school with support
- Fewer incidents of self-injurious behaviour observed in school
- More receptive to support when distressed and able to use agreed alternatives at times
- Showing small improvements in confidence and willingness to discuss feelings
- Progress is ongoing and continued regular support is needed

IMPACT

The student appears more settled during keyworker sessions and is starting to develop a sense of safety in talking about her emotions.

OUTCOMES

These sessions have led to the development of more effective coping behaviours, with reduced reliance on self-injurious responses and the need for adult support.

NEXT STEPS

Continue to build on emotional regulation strategies, with a focus on supporting the student to apply these more independently across the school day.