Persuasive Social Story

MYA Choices Knowsley is a project focused around providing consistent weekday evenings, weekends and holiday provision in three different locations, for children with Special Educational Needs. This project provides multiple families and carers with the opportunity to access respite, knowing that their young person is being well-looked after by specifically trained staff, who are able to engage their young person in well-planned activities ranging from sensory play to cooking and swimming.

Many families who have a child with a disability find it difficult to locate a place in which their young person can socialise and fit in outside of their school environment. While participating in the MYA Choices Knowsley project, young people gain the opportunity to socialise with other young people which is an essential part of their development. Without this project many young people would lose the chance to gain social skills and ultimately hinder themselves in future situations. Many of our young people would become isolated in their homes finding it especially difficult during the school holidays, weekends and weekday evenings to make progress in their learning and development. MYA Choices Knowsley provides many benefits, not only to parents and carers, but to the young people who attend.

The sessions delivered are custom-made to suit the needs of individual young people aiding to motivate and inspire their imagination and interaction. When attending sessions, the young people have the chance to participate and engage in well-planned child-led activities dedicated to their interests and hobbies. Without MYA Choices Knowsley many families and carers would find it tough to do everyday tasks such as cooking and cleaning, as they would have to give their sole attention to their young person in order to keep them safe and occupied.

Many of the young people that attend MYA Choices Knowsley have siblings both older and younger who don’t have disabilities and will require a different type of attention. Having MYA Choices Knowsley in a family’s life allows parents to spend quality time with siblings, knowing their child is safe and secure in a familiar environment. Siblings in a home that has a child with a disability see things many of their friends don’t; this can be things such as aggressive meltdowns or seizures and fits. Giving children the opportunity to spend quality time with their parents brings a sense of normality to their childhood allowing them to take part in activities they may find difficult in their day-to-day life. Many parents have also expressed how bringing their child to Choices improves their relationship with their siblings. This can be through the use of improved communication and socialising skills, but also through showing their siblings what they have made and engaged in within the sessions.

When working on an MYA Choices Knowsley holiday session, a new child aged five was introduced into the group This was his first time attending the session and he was very wary and didn’t want to be left without his mum. The child began to have an explosive meltdown at the front of the room, disrupting many of the children from the activities they were doing. His mum stated that this was a frequent occurrence and she found it difficult to take him places such as supermarkets and restaurants. Our team leader ensured the child’s mum it was okay to leave and that she would call if there were any problems. Once mum had left, the child became intrigued by his surroundings and began to explore what was on offer within the session This gave him the opportunity to find the car mat and toy cars which he loved playing with at home. The child began to socialise with other children within the club through his love of cars, helping him to become more comfortable in the session. When it was home time, mum was surprised her child had managed to stay the entire session but was grateful as she was able to complete many tasks at ease, such as going shopping. The next time the child came to the session he said goodbye to his mum at the door and went straight to the car area

There were no meltdowns and the process became easier with each visit. The parent expressed how the sessions have allowed her child to socialise and make friends with other children but also how it has made a difference at home, making it easier to take trips to the supermarket/restaurants without the worry of meltdowns.

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