GIRFEC story of impact for project or programme

Getting it right for Breastfeeding Support

Introduction

Chester's story reflects the everyday struggles of extremely vulnerable parents to make the best choices for their newborn baby in the face of extreme adversity. This demonstrates how the correct support and information can empower families to make positive health choices.

The Context

Chester was born to Mum and Dad against the backdrop of significant Adverse Childhood Experiences for both parents. Through pre- birth Child Protection Procedures, a parenting assessment and intensive support was provided as part of the care plan. Ante natal support was provided from Health Visiting as part of Universal Pathway and a good relationship was established between HV and family. Mum decided to breastfeed after feeding choices were discussed and she was very relaxed about it. She was supported tirelessly by her partner (baby's dad). Regular feedback, support from SW Assistant and HV prepared parents for the birth of Chester. Following birth, an additional visiting plan was established and extra support from CIFN helped mum to continue breastfeeding.

Chester's name was removed from the South Ayrshire CP Register following regular review of progress using Signs of Safety framework much to the delight of the family, who saw this as a huge milestone in their own journey.

The family agreed to share their positive breastfeeding journey under their mantra of 'everyone should just give it a go!'

The Solution/ Approach

- Essential **relationship** building with Health Visitor and early partnership approach with Social Work.
- Effective **identification** of vulnerability through local processes to enable early support.
- Good breastfeeding network of **support** and expertise with Community Infant Feeding Nurse.
- Good **communication** between family and partnership agencies.
- Health Visiting care plan as part of Additional Health Plan Indicator.
- **Identification** of needs and risks using National Risk Framework Tools.
- Regular **review** of care plan with family.
- Joint visits between social work, HV and CIFN

Result/ Outcome

Chester has had all the health benefits of early breastfeeding from his mum together with a very supportive father who had advocated for breastfeeding from the start of their parenting journey together. This has resulted in excellent bonding and attachment between baby and both parents and a commitment to breastfeed any subsequent children.

Chester has met all of his milestones developmentally and is a happy, healthy wee boy.

Testimonials/Quotes

Dad had literacy challenges but found the layout of the 'red book' easy to follow his baby's progress and milestones. He could see the growth easily on the centile charts and the picture of developmental firsts.

Lessons Learnt

The quality of relationship and trust can impact the health outcomes for very vulnerable families.

Ensuring that health information is presented to families in a format that they will understand where there are literacy challenges and makes them feel empowered in decision making.

Using a non-judgmental and consistent visiting approach in Health Visiting is essential to improving the health and wellbeing outcomes for children and families.