



family care associates

Educational Outcomes (2008-2009)

Family Care Associates Limited and Families@FamilyCare

Introduction

Family Care Associates Ltd., Dalepeak Ltd. and 'Families@FamilyCare Ltd.' continues to promote the thriving educational achievements of the young people who are educated by ourselves or the education that we promote for young people within our residential and family placement settings. It is important that we have a current and comprehensive analysis about how well our young people are being educated. Whilst the “outcomes” established and measured by DCSF do not always allow us to adequately mark and reflect the superb achievements of children coming into our services¹ we owe it to them to celebrate their achievements.

The Government guidelines “The Every Child Matters” (ECM) Green Paper, subsequently enshrined in the Children Act 2004 identified the five outcomes that are most important to children and young people.

- Be Happy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well being

These five outcomes are universal ambitions for every child and young person, whatever their backgrounds or circumstances. Improving outcomes also improves narrowing the gap between disadvantaged children and their peers. The Government is currently focusing again on improving outcomes for Looked After Children. Within the Family Care Associates Ltd. group of services we have and have consistently demonstrated that the difficulties experienced by looked after children is not necessarily the consequence of poor or inadequate legislation but as a result of 'Every Child not necessarily Matter enough' to each and every professional involved in their 'care, health and education plans'.

Children in the care of the Local Authorities are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Sadly, evidence compiled over the course of the last twenty years shows that little relative improvement has occurred in respect of many aspects of the life of young adults who were formally in care. Self-evidently many of those children who enter and remain in remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. Whilst Access School in particular and our education service in general cannot specifically address such issues we can seek to ensure that whilst colleagues focus on the social and therapeutic needs of children we can ensure that we design an education programme that will build self-esteem, encourage

¹ Many of the children attending Access School and, self-evidently all of the children cared for by Family Care Associates Ltd., 'Families@FamilyCare Ltd.' and Dalepeak are looked after. As such whilst they represent a cross section of abilities, inevitably they will have experienced disrupted education and in some cases will have been chronic non-attenders and or under achievers in their schools

engagement and ultimately achievement. One aim of Family Care Associates is to provide an education for those Looked After Children, after all don't they all deserve the same educational opportunities as every child.

Information has been gathered to demonstrate the academic achievements of young people who attend Access School, within 'Families@FamilyCare Ltd.' and those placed residentially within Family Care Associates or other mainstream provisions.
(Family Care Associates DCSF registered school)

Research has found that “Looked After Children” tend to fail quite significantly in relation to those children who attend a mainstream education. Children who are looked after are more than likely to have a statement of educational needs which again usually shows that these young people are not learning at their chronological age.

The following outcomes demonstrate the achievements of young people placed with Family Care Associates and Access for the past academic school year.

'Families@FamilyCare Ltd.'

At the start of the academic year 2008/2009 seven young people were placed with foster carers and attending education whether it be mainstream, independent or special provision. Whilst during the course of the year these figures increased significantly the figures below relate only to children who spent the full academic year placed with 'Families@FamilyCare Ltd.'

Key Stage	Gender	Attendance
5	Female	98%
4	Female	98%
	Female	97%
	Male	86%
3	Male	100%
	Female	96%
2	Female	98%

While there are no national figures for the attendance of “looked after” young people at school, these children and young people should be given every opportunity to achieve their full potential promoting opportunities for learning within and outside of school.

Looked After Children should be attending suitable education on a full time basis from the term following their 5th birthday until the last Friday in June in the school year in which they are 16. The place where children receive their education will be based on their age, aptitude and ability and any special needs that they may have. For many of the children in our care that means mainstream education or Access School.

“Being in school full time gives the children the best possible chances to succeed. As well as learning subjects in class, they develop routines and understand about time keeping. Missing school makes it harder for them to catch up on what they miss” ('Who Does What' DfES 2004)

Access School

Name	Possible Attendances	Actual Attendances	Lateness	Overall %
J E	370	338	2	91
R E	370	362	0	98
D S	370	357	23	96
D S	370	344	1	93
L H	370	348	0	95
V E	370	175	3	47
M N	161	113	0	70
L C	310	185	0	60
A D	53	45	1	85
P S*	29	8	0	28

* PS was referred near the end of the year and had no history of school attendance. Happily by Christmas 2009 he was attending at a rate of virtually 100%

Access School attendance figures have never been better. With most absences being accounted for, due to medical appointments and exclusions.

The lowest termly absence figure being a young female whose family contact led to her being absent from school. This would have been a major concern if it was a school issue but this was not the case and the Care plan was such that it was considered imperative for her to spend a great deal of time at home to test the viability of an eventual full-time return.

Other reasons for low absence on occasion is the fact that some pupils are introduced into school on a part time timetable. Again this could lead to concerns if we had not put plans into place to integrate into school on a full time basis.

Although no pupil has gained a 100% attendance figure, it has been noted that the reasons for this when looking through the evidence is that the pupils who would have had 100% attendance have been involved in medical appointments. One pupil had permission to be absent from school due to an annual family holiday.

Overall, in terms of absence it has shown that Access school cohort exceeded nationally expected figures, especially as most of our young people were previously described as being 'school phobic' and most of them have had a very disrupted traumatic educational experience.

Academic Achievement

Schools are key in helping to raise standards and improving life chances of Looked After Children and in tackling the causes of social exclusions through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. Schools can also provide a source of continuity and “normality”, for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and or disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and be themselves.

Unfortunately, the education of Looked After Children has been characterised by fragmentation and failure for too long. Leaving Care Studies has revealed that 75% of care leavers leave formal education with no qualifications and only between 12% and 19% go onto further education, compared with 65% of the general population. Raising levels in Family Care Associates has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving life chances of Looked After Children and our school experience play a pivotal role in this.

Access School

We can now play a vital role in ensuring our children achieve and fulfil in school. All pupils have the opportunity to have testing as in line with mainstream schools.

Our children are eligible for testing at GCSE, Key Stage 3 SATS and Key Sage 2 SATS. This has been successful for our small cohort of pupils.

WJEC Entry Level	Subject	
Pupil X	English	Entry 3
	Science (single award)	Entry 1

Key Stage 2 Tests 2009	Subject	Result
Pupil X	English	Level 3
	Science	Level 3

As of September 2009 all pupils within the school will have access to the following seven WJEC exams:

- English
- Maths
- French
- Science
- Art
- History
- Geography

Other Indicators

Young people within the Looked After System are statistically more likely to be excluded than any other young person in the education system. Many schools nowadays are advised that they should be especially sensitive to these children as they are especially at risk of low attainment in school and exclusion schools should try every practicable means to keep a Looked After Child in school, seeking local authority or other professional advice as appropriate.

Exclusions	2007/2008	2008/2009
Number of sessions	34	2

We, as a school for emotional and behavioural difficulties do not view exclusions as the answer to negative behaviours but in some circumstances find it necessary: -

If a serious offence (such as violence, aggression or a criminal offence in school) occurs, a young person can be externally excluded as a last resort for a fixed period of time.

The option of exclusion should only be taken in exceptional circumstances, such as:

- violence/intimidation (bullying)
- serious vandalism
- sexual/racial harassment
- drugs/alcohol/solvent abuse
- stealing
- carrying offensive weapons
- damage to property (serious)
- behaviour – putting themselves/others at risk

When a pupil has had an exclusion, a back to school meeting should be put into place to ensure that the incident should not be repeated. However, as stated before this is a last resort option.

Extra Curricular

Within Family Care Associates, we also believe that children should be able to achieve outside the curriculum. Not all our pupils are going to be higher achievers; therefore we give them the opportunity to gain other experiences outside the academic curriculum. These could also be seen as indicators that our children are achieving.

Within Family Care Associates we have the opportunity to gain vocational studies with our close links with Connexions:

Year 2008/2009 pupil X – Shrewsbury College to start a catering course.

Year 2008/2009 pupil Y – Walford College to have experience of Land Use Studies.

These are all experiences that will help our pupils and ensure that they are placed in a position to move forward positively with their lives.

Many of the children referred to Access School have experienced considerable difficulty in engaging in education. We appreciate that attempting to do so in a 'traditional' school environment will have already been attempted previously and as such have found that by having very small class groups and a flexible approach to time-tabling - crucially with the option of Horticultural studies and Outdoor Education studies - we are able to successfully introduce or re-introduce pupils to learning and ultimately educational success.

Opportunities to assist in school drama productions where the outcome is a performance to people outside the company.

Opportunities for pupils to partake in school clubs such as:

- Drama
- Football
- Tennis
- Chess
- Netball
- Swimming

All the above are activities that the young people in Family Care Associates have had access to over the past academic year. Our young people are achieving outcomes that are both nationally recognised and assist in their overall growth towards independence. The stability of placement is paramount to this continued progress, both academically and socially, so that the young people maximise their potential. What we at Family Care Associates must remember is what we do, we do exceptionally well for the young people that we care for and that we must strive for their continued success.