

Mellow Futures: A perinatal programme for parents with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LD)

Introduction

It is estimated that approximately 50% of parents with learning disabilities have their children removed (Tarleton et al., 2006). Many healthcare professionals do not have sufficient LD training to feel either qualified or referring people on for further support whom they suspect to have delay in learning or to care for their needs properly (Phillips et al., 2004). People with LD have the potential to parent very successfully with appropriate additional support in place.

Case Study

Lisa has had two previous children removed into kinship care. When she became pregnant again she was told this child would be immediately placed in the care of their local authority and recommended for adoption.

Lisa joined the Mellow Futures programme and was encouraged to use the skills she developed in the group to engage positively with social services and all legal representation but also to have the confidence to speak up appropriately if there was something she didn't understand or didn't feel was right.

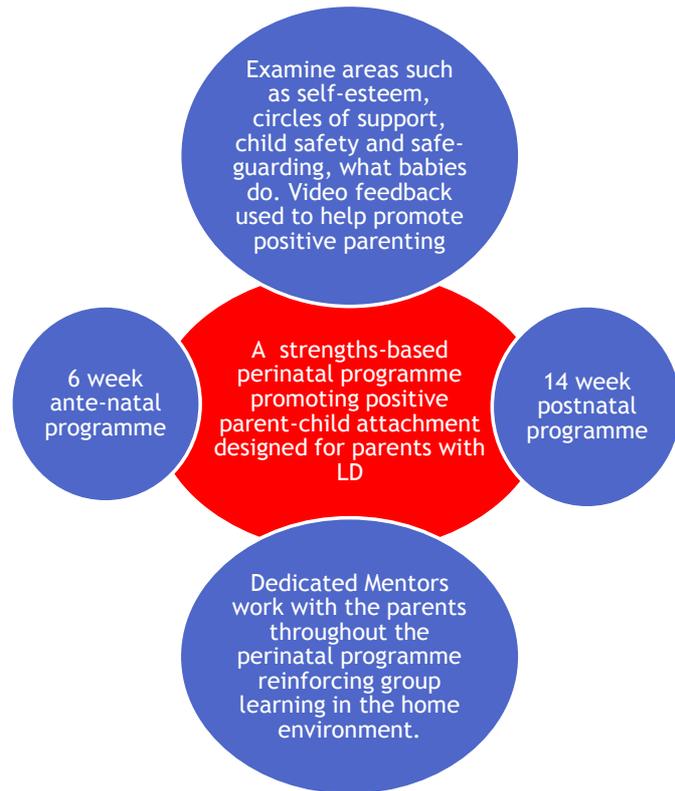
Through better engagement and implementing the skills in parenting she learned through the group sessions and mentor support, Lisa and her partner were assessed regularly and on each occasion their situation became more positive until at six months old, baby was removed from the child protection register and full-time care and responsibility was returned to the parents on the provision of continuing engagement with appropriate support.

References:

Phillips A, Morrison J and Davis RW (2004). General practitioners' educational needs intellectual disability health. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 48, 142-9.
 Tarleton B, Ward L, Howarth J. (2006) Finding the right support? A review of issues and positive practice in supporting parents with learning difficulties and their children, Baring Foundation/NFRC

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Mellow Futures is a perinatal parenting programme which provides additional support from before birth until the baby is up to approximately six months old. The programme provides a safe environment to learn about the self, parenting, relationships and good attachment, and offering mentoring support and reinforcement in the house.



Feedback from the Mums

"I've found my voice, for me and for her (daughter), I didn't even look people in the face before Futures" (Mum, Alloa)

"I've done four parenting programmes before with my other kids and never finished them, but Mellow Futures was different and it really helped and didn't judge me" (Mum, Girvan)

"My life has turned around and best of all we've got our baby home with us – I know I can do this now!" (Mum, Glasgow)

"Mellow is fantastic, the facilitators are just ordinary people and don't judge and everything is just so relaxed!" (Mum, Stirling)

