

# Hayley's story

Hayley is three years old; she enjoys the outdoors, playing in the garden and riding on her tricycle.

Hayley doesn't know how to play with other children; she is wary of them and likely to hit out if they want to play with her or touch her toys. Hayley has speech and language delay due to an undetected hearing impairment and there is evidence of emotional neglect. Hayley is to be removed from her birth mum and would be placed in the care of Jean.

Jean has been a foster carer for the past 10 years and lives alone. Most of the children in her care have been teenagers and this will be Jean's first experience of caring for a young child. Jean feels reasonably confident and is looking forward to welcoming Hayley, but has little knowledge of what is available locally for young children. Jean and her supervising social worker consider Hayley's need to play with other children, where she can begin to learn how to make friends, an immediate priority.



What are the important issues for Hayley?

- How might Hayley's hearing impairment, speech and language delay and early emotional abuse affect her ability to learn how to play with other children?
- How could Jean manage these challenges? What resources will she need?
- Can you think of any other challenges Jean might expect to face?
- What role could the supervising social worker play in helping Jean?



## Facilitator's notes/points to cover

Hayley's impairments, early emotional abuse and lack of play experience is likely to be a significant challenge for her. She may have learning difficulties as a result of undiagnosed hearing loss. Hayley might express frustration when not understood, be possessive about and unwilling to share her toys, not be able to hear and follow rules of a game and unable to make other children understand her.

(The facilitator might want to re-visit the impact of emotional abuse on young children).

To best support Hayley's friendships, Jean will want to get expert advice from the relevant therapy professionals, for example a speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, specialist pre-school teachers and play workers.

Jean's supervising social worker can help advise about local support, for example mother and toddler groups, local nurseries (specialist and mainstream), and meeting foster carers supporting younger age children.