

Overcoming communication challenges to engage children

Case study – Kevin

Kevin is eight-years-old and has an intellectual disability which impacts his ability to verbally communicate with others. Kevin communicates through a Pictorial Exchange Communication System (PECS) and can get frustrated easily at home and in school if others don't understand what he's communicating.

Kevin's mother, Jessica, has grown increasingly worried about Kevin's behaviour as he has increased in his aggression and reactivity, particularly when returning home from his special needs unit at school each day. Six months ago she and her husband separated after a long period of tension in the house. Since that time Kevin hasn't seen much of his father at all and Jessica worries about the impact this is having on him.

Kevin's father was very hard on him and would grow frustrated and angry with his behaviour. Kevin and Jessica have come to see you to discuss Jessica's concerns, and to help Kevin discuss the effects of the separation on him. Right away you notice that Kevin looks at the floor and seems quite agitated.