

## Cardiff case study

Paul and his partner Melissa received ELP items of a table and chairs as well as a high chair for their then new-born baby. They live with their two daughters, five-year-old Amy and two-year-old Annie.

In June 2013 Melissa and her two-year-old daughter were caught in a horrific hit-and-run incident, which led to the death of another mother. Melissa was hit and dragged under a van, and then man then ran over her a second time, breaking her legs. These were later pinned together. She also suffered spinal injuries and a hip injury. She still gets flashbacks and says her daughter, who has now calmed down a lot, used to have nightmares about it.

She spent eight-weeks in hospital and on crutches following the incident. Although the van didn't hit her daughter – she did suffer minor injuries as Melissa let go of the pram, resulting in it hurtled down the street.

“I was hit from behind, he then went over me again. I remember looking at my foot and it looked like it was hanging off. But my recovery was all about my daughter and getting off those crutches. I wanted to be there for her.”

Melissa was hospitalised for eight weeks, during which time Paul had look after Amy, full time. He was sacked from his job in a small local shop, for not being able to attend.

Melissa was struggling with life and her leg was still incredibly painful, as new pains through sciatica, developed too. She didn't realise that her spine injury was the cause of additional pain and this made it impossible to manage alone as Amy grew.

“Paul had to help with the school runs as I couldn't manage and needed to be around as I'd often so many problems.”

Later in 2013 Melissa fell pregnant and her youngest daughter was born with epilepsy so severe that when she has fits she is hospitalised. On top of all of this, Adam is about to undergo surgery on his knee, which has left the couple unable to find work. It left the couple with little money to be able to afford anything, and the newest child, now two, didn't have anywhere to sit once she started to eat solids. The couple sat with plates on the knees on the sofa, while the eldest child sat on her own small table while they ate.

She says the addition of a table and chairs and high chair that year transformed every Christmas and mealtime, onwards. The baby (at the time five months) was able to sit at their level and join in with their meals. Amy was moved from her small toy table to join them at the new table for family meals and for the first time they were able to have a meal at home, sitting around the same table, as a family. The

table also doubles up as a play area for Amy who uses it to do colouring, reading and drawing and play with their toys together as a family.

“It’s so nice to be able to all sit together and all be at the same level, and even the baby was able to join us.”

### **Swansea case study**

Mum was finding it hard to leave the house with three children. This was due to the baby only being seven weeks old and Sarah\* being two, which meant she got tired when outside walking and would have tantrums, this also meant David\* the four-year old was stuck in. This meant she stayed in a lot. Having the items from ESPL play grant has helped the mum go out more and as a result the children are happier and she finds shopping and everyday tasks outside less stressful.

Having the pushchair means “I can go food shopping”. “Some people take shopping for granted when you can’t go it’s a nightmare”. “things are so much better for me since we had the buggy and the voucher.”

(The pushchair) It’s changed the whole environment I am less stressed now. If I had not received the item I would have stayed in as it was too stressful for me to go out so it was easier to stay at home, which my children found hard especially my oldest as he likes to be doing things.

### **Newport**

Laura moved from Scotland to South Wales when she was 15 years old and attended the Local Youth Service. Laura fell pregnant with Peter when she was 16 years old. At the time, she was a carer for her Grandmother and had been awarded a scholarship to a prestigious ballet school.

Laura had to give up her scholarship and decided to move to Scotland to live with her family; Mum, Dad and two Sisters, as she was pregnant. She had Peter when she was 17 and moved back to Wales with Peter when he was 3 months old.

Laura found it difficult to get essential things for Peter as he was growing up and her local Youth Service directed her to the ESPL! Grant. She was awarded a cot bed, an Argos voucher and a toy package for Peter. The grant has helped her rebuild her life in Wales and she is so grateful for the help she received.

Laura is now attending college 4 days a week and is hoping to attend University next year on a Primary School Teaching Course.

## **Newport**

Kate (aged 18) is mum to a 2 year old boy and a 2 month old boy. It's been a difficult journey for Kate. She then found out she was pregnant with her new baby boy (now 2 months old). She wasn't prepared for the pregnancy and didn't have any items for baby. She is very young and moved into a tenancy that she was managing, so she felt a lot of pressure. She was in a lot of debt, and so she didn't have the means to buy any of the items she needed for the new baby's arrival. Working with her, I can see the massive difference the items from Save the Children have made on her emotional wellbeing and her confidence in parenting. Her confidence was very low after 1<sup>st</sup> baby, and to be able to provide somewhere for him to sleep with the Eat, Sleep, Learn, Play! cot, being able to take him out in the pram, and having toys to stimulate him has given her the confidence that she is a good mum and that she can provide a stable environment for baby.

Without the grant from Eat, Sleep, Learn, Play! Kate would be in more debt, and she didn't want to get into debt again. Or she would have had to ask family and friends to help, but they really didn't have the means to help. The grant from Save the Children helped her to be independent and that's a really big thing for her.

From first-hand experience as a professional, I know the Eat, Sleep, Learn, play grants! Have made a massive difference to the families I work with. Even if it's just confidence that they can provide for their children. Especially for the young parents I work with that have come from foster care. If the young people have the first baby when they are in foster care, they are able to provide for their baby with the items the foster parent has. But when they leave to their own house, they have absolutely nothing, and no family support to help them know what to do. Then if they have a second child, they are then not entitled to a sure start grant (because it's their second baby), even though they have nothing at all.