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## Family childcare stories

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### George

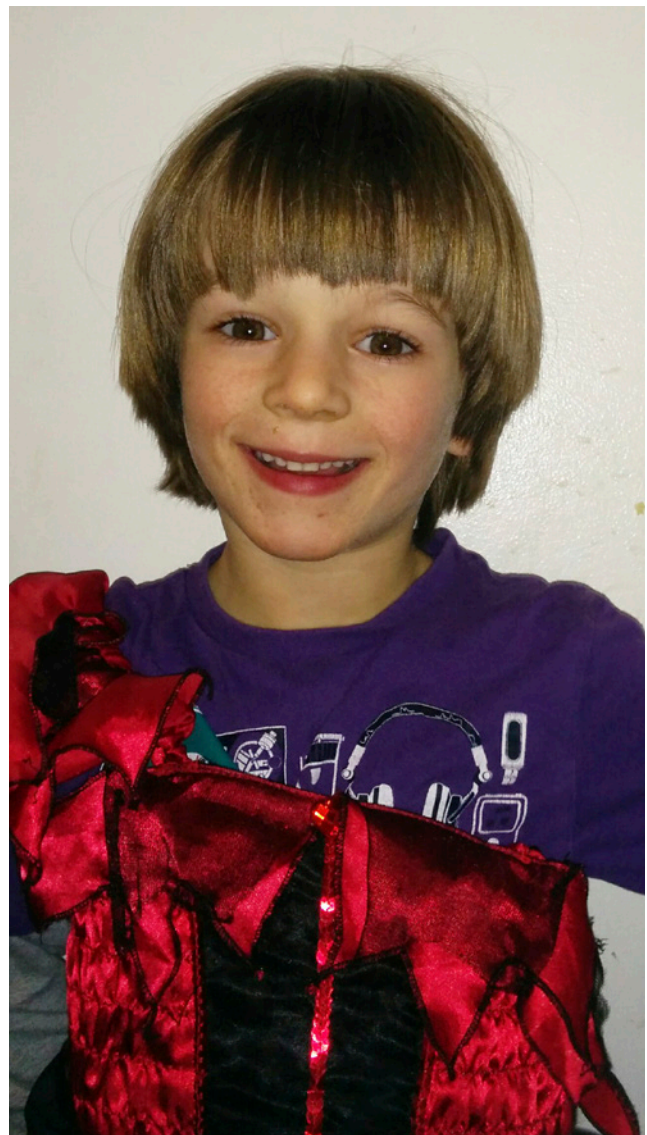
George is six and has tuberous-sclerosis. This is a genetic condition which can be slow to emerge and often goes undiagnosed for several years. Tuberous-sclerosis can have a wide range of features, including seizures, developmental delay, behavioural problems, skin abnormalities and kidney disease. George has a range of symptoms with medium severity but like many children with tuberous-sclerosis, his family didn't know the extent of his needs until he was about five.

#### Finding a childminder with a "can do" attitude

When George was a few months old his family found a childminder who, after only a few weeks, said she couldn't offer him the care that he needs, so they set about finding another. They eventually found a childminder who was very experienced but had no direct experience of caring for a child with complex health needs. Their childminder managed to access funding from the local authority to enable her to take fewer children and cover her subsequent loss of earnings.

*"I hope our story can prevent anyone else from having to go through what we've been through"*

George's mum, Kate





### Support from Portage

The family were also receiving support at home through Portage. This made a huge difference to George, and the Portage worker offered to support the George at the childminders as well as at home. As Portage is "at home" early years support, this would have been lost if George had gone to nursery.

George spent two very happy years with the childminder, learning, growing, playing and developing.

### Moving to nursery

A couple of years later, when George became a big brother and his childminder couldn't care for both the children, his parents enrolled them onto the workplace nursery attached to his mum's employer. This was far from a positive move. They had no experience of working with children with disabilities and didn't know where to go for additional funding. Their lack of awareness led to

their expectations on him being unreasonable. At three his development was very delayed; he couldn't feed himself and he couldn't play with the toys that the other three year olds were playing with. He became isolated, miserable and started developing behavioural problems (which hadn't ever been present before). Despite numerous meetings at the nursery with his parents saying the same things repeatedly, they decided to move both children.

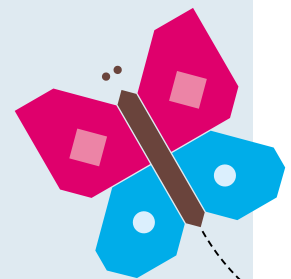
### Flourishing and ready for school

The move to a children's centre nursery was very positive which the family felt was brilliant. The staff were very experienced and immediately started the process of getting him a statement of SEN. This led to him having one to one support and he flourished, ready to go to primary school.

George is now happily at school with one to one support but the issue of after school care is looming as George's mum hopes to return to work very soon.

### Advice from George's mum

- Childminders are great at being able to offer very young children with special educational needs the care and love that they need.
- Find a childminder or nursery setting who clicks with your child on an emotional level – even if they don't have lots of experience within special educational needs you can work together to get your child the support they need.
- Find out about Portage in your area but remember this will stop when you start using nursery – but they can visit your childminder too.
- Be prepared for many childcare settings stating that they do have experience or space for children with special educational needs – sadly, they'll frequently say that they can't take your child.
- Ask the staff at nursery or your childminders about the Education, Health and Care assessment process (previously statement of SEN) and any additional funding that might be available from the council.
- Apply for Disability Living Allowance, and if you have an Education, Health and Care Plan apply for direct payments/personal budget to cover some childcare costs.



**For further information about childcare and family services visit:**  
[www.familyandchildcaretrust.org](http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org)