

Anxious and afraid.

Five-year-old Maddie has lived through moments that we can only imagine. Her parents showed her very little love and affection and there were no games or learning experiences in her home. Most days, Maddie was left to her own devices, charged with feeding, entertaining and caring for herself.

Due to the abusive nature of her home, Maddie was removed from her parents and now lives with her grandmother.

“From birth, Maddie was physically, emotionally and verbally abused by her parents, witnessing severe domestic violence and substance abuse, including Ice.”

Sadly, children who are abused and neglected can find it difficult to interact positively with other people or express themselves in words. They struggle to understand their feelings and frequently feel overwhelmed.

As a result of the ongoing trauma, her speech and language was severely delayed and later she suffered separation anxiety from her grandmother, and was unable to safely leave her side. Maddie only communicated her grandmother using gestures such as pointing, and very basic words.

She doesn’t always understand her feelings, they’re big, loud and overwhelming.

“Although she looks like any other girl, the trauma she suffered has left scars that will last a lifetime without ongoing therapy.”

Every Monday, Maddie has been receiving speech therapy and psychological support from Act for Kids to build on her relationship with her grandmother to encourage safe separation and develop speech and language skills.

“After two months of intensive integrated therapy, Maddie had a breakthrough.”

One Monday morning, the normally reserved and very anxious little girl greeted her therapist with a wide grin, declaring that she loves Mondays because she can spend time with her therapists and grandmother doing fun activities and afterward everyone is really happy.

Maddie can now communicate using phrases and short sentences with a range of vocabulary and expression, resulting in improved outcomes at home and at school. However, due to Maddie’s complex learning needs, her therapy has become more intensive from one session to the next.

The COVID-19 pandemic meant that Maddie needed to transition from face-to-face sessions to online telehealth. Her therapists were concerned that the sudden change might disrupt her learning and stunt her progress. However, telehealth has provided Maddie with new opportunities and the potential to increase skill development within her own home. Through telehealth, our speech pathologist and psychologist can now have more frequent sessions with Maddie to support her development and continue the progress she has achieved within the last few months.

Mondays have become a day of learning, fun, and happiness, where Maddie and her grandmother engage in an online session together. Her grandmother reports they are really enjoying all the additional activities and resources as it keeps Maddie busy, interested, and entertained, while also promoting her language and overall learning. In a recent therapy session, Maddie said that every day should be like a Monday – full of smiles and laughter.

It takes a lot of hard play to heal little hearts. Although Maddie continues to improve, she still struggles with anxiety and will need long-term support to help her overcome the years of severe abuse and neglect. She's experienced a lot of trauma in her short life, but with continued support and positive reinforcement, Maddie will go on to express herself with confidence, engage in conversations, and no longer be filled with fear.

Thank you for helping us give kids like Maddie a safe and happy childhood, free from abuse and neglect.

CONDENSED CASE STUDY

Five year old Maddie came to Act for Kids feeling unloved.

She was had been removed from her abusive parents and was living with her grandmother. Maddie could barely speak suffering speech and language delays as a result of the trauma she'd suffered.

After receiving therapy Maddie started saying short sentences which helped her at home and at school. Monday has become the little girls favourite day when she gets to see her therapist.

Thank you for helping kids like Maddie reach their potential and grow up in a safe environment free from abuse and neglect.

IMAGES FOR USE WITH CASE STUDY

