



Kaitlen and Emma's Story

Kaitlen and I were matched by the Ypeople intandem mentoring programme this year. Having been through my training with the intandem team, I had been really excited to finally make my mentoring match, I just hadn't anticipated it would happen during lockdown. The whole situation had thrown everyone's plans for the year off track, but the intandem team where positive and confident that we could continue. They reassured me that it was not only possible to continue but perhaps more even more necessary to make my match. I could be there for my mentee through a tough and confusing time. We could be there for each other.



Although Kaitlen and I were only able to meet virtually we quickly developed a great relationship and made the most of our weekly video chats together. We quickly found a shared love of arts and craft and this was where our relationship really blossomed.

My priority as a mentor was to be there for Kaitlen in a way that she was excited about and to help her with things she wanted to do. To begin Kaitlen decorated a bucket list jar and we filled it with a new activity, one for each week so we had lots of fun things to look forward to.



Getting creative was fun for both of us, and we would set each other making tasks and check back in the next week to see each others progress. We made our own sock puppets, sewed stuffed animals, made cards to send to our mums since we couldn't visit them during lockdown, and designed a personalised face mask that Kaitlen uses when going to the shops. To help Kaitlen feel confident about keeping up with her school work we engaged with learning outcomes through alphabet-based games, guessing games and paired reading. In the spirit of keeping it fun and learning together we made our own bookmarks to use when we were reading.

When it came time to think about going back to school we planned a bedtime routine together. It helped Kaitlen focus on getting back into her old routine and to give her day more structure. Now things have relaxed more, and Kaitlen is back in school we can finally meet up in person. To plan for this we are starting a new bucket list jar to filled with fun projects we can do in the community. We are going to document all these new adventures with Kaitlen's digital camera and we will be adding them to our mentoring scrapbook.

Emma: 'Though we couldn't meet up it was nice to have virtual contact as it allowed us both to do fun activities we wouldn't ordinarily have done and think outside the box to keep ourselves entertained'

Kaitlin: 'I really enjoyed the mentoring so far. I liked having someone else to speak to during lockdown and was less bored. We did so many different activities but painting the bucket list jar was my favourite.'

