

**“I don't know where we would
be without you”**

Lily's mum



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Registered Charity Number: 210920

A close-up photograph of a young girl with brown hair and large, expressive brown eyes, looking directly at the camera. She is wearing a red top. The background is dark and out of focus.

Catholic
Children's
Society

**Help us give disadvantaged
children like Lily a better future**

With your help we can transform the lives of vulnerable children and families

St Francis Family Centre (St Francis), a project of the Catholic Children's Society, is based in Tower Hamlets. This area has the highest rate of child poverty in the country.

Here we help give disadvantaged children like Lily the best possible start in life.

Lily's Story

Lily's mum Claire had Lily at the age of 17. On discovering Claire was pregnant, her boyfriend left and her family threw her out.

Claire moved to a bedsit on the ninth floor of a tower block in Tower Hamlets. It was cramped, dark and full of mould. She didn't know anybody in the area, felt isolated and anxious about going outside and became increasingly reclusive.

It was in this environment that Lily spent the first years of her life. She had never had any friends or toys to play with and rarely went outside. By the age of two Lily could not speak a word. Concerned about Lily's development, a Health Visitor referred the family to St Francis.

By the age of two Lily could not speak a word. She had never had any friends

At first Lily clung to the nursery door, too scared to go in. But with the gentle support of our staff she began to settle. After just a few months Lily started to speak. Claire cried when she heard her first words. She had been so scared she had failed her daughter, and was overjoyed to see Lily making such good progress.

When Claire first arrived at St Francis she said that she felt lost and did not know how to be a mother. We helped Claire develop her parenting skills; we also lent her educational books and toys from our toy library so she could read and play with Lily at home. This has greatly improved their relationship.

When Claire arrived she said she felt lost and did not know how to be a mother

Last summer our supporters even sent Lily and Claire on their first ever holiday. They spent a week at the seaside, playing on the beach and splashing around in the sea. When they came back Claire said she had never been so happy.

It has now been a year since Lily and Claire joined us. Claire has grown in confidence and is currently applying to college. She plans to become a nurse, something she never thought would be possible.

Lily is a different little girl. She is now a chatty, happy four year old and will thrive when she starts school. In the mornings she runs into nursery excited to play with her friends with a huge smile on her face.

"We felt so alone when we came here. You have helped us so much. I now feel like we have a future."

Lily's mum, Claire

Many more children like Lily are living in poverty and facing uncertain futures. You can help transform their lives:

£15 can buy educational books and toys

£25 can feed a child for two weeks

£50 can buy emergency clothing for a family

£75 can help provide budgeting workshops for deprived families

£100 can buy a single bed and mattress

£1000 can pay for 100 children to have a trip to the seaside



Your prayers for our work are greatly appreciated.

If you are able to make a donation, please go to:

<https://www.cathchild.org.uk/donate/>