

Case Study – Early Years Professional



I've worked in early years settings, in private sector nurseries, for a number of years. The **Childcare Act 2006** has had a huge impact on the sector and on my own job role. I've always enjoyed working with children, but the new ways of working have had such a positive effect that I enjoy my job even more now.

We use the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** guidance to structure the way we work with the children in our care. We develop early learning goals that are specific to the developmental stage of each child and support them in learning through play. Children are encouraged to explore and be creative in a safe environment, with caring adults around them.

We work with very young babies through to children up to 5 years old. Some parents/carers choose to send their child to alternative settings once they reach 3 years old, but some stay with us through to school age. When a child is about to go on to school, we prepare a profile, outlining their individual level of development. This enables the school receiving them to better plan for their continued achievement.

In order to achieve best practice in implementing the EYFS, our employer supported all staff members in gaining the **Certificate in Early Years Foundation Practice**. I went on to work for my **Early Years Professional Status** and I now manage two settings. I regularly supervise staff discussions of any issues or concerns they have about individual children, other staff or the setting. We also run an annual appraisal process, where we review progress over the year and look at our future development. Staff members are encouraged to take part in continuous professional development and work towards further qualifications. We feel valued by our employer and it shows in the quality of our work. The business has a good reputation as a result and is flourishing, with many children on our waiting list.

My job means that I am responsible for developing policies and procedures around a wide range of issues, including staff/child ratios, child protection and disciplinary. We have an Early Years Link Officer, who works for the local authority, who assists with this. He ensures that we are up to date with new requirements, lets us know about training or other activities we could access and shares good practice already used in other settings.

In line with the **Health and Safety at Work Act**, I am also responsible for ensuring the safety of children, staff and visitors to our sites. I organise regular checks of our safety equipment, such as the fire extinguishers and emergency lighting. I oversee fire safety and evaluation drills, and organise first aid and fire safety training for staff members. I ensure that, where possible, hazards are anticipated and all accidents are recorded. We have lots of young and boisterous children around, so we need to ensure that our activities, in and out of

the building, are risk assessed and that our building and equipment is safe, in a good state of repair and properly used.

We run such a good setting that staff tend to be highly motivated and stay with us. Recently we have expanded and so we are employing some new staff. I have been asked to lead on the recruitment process, so I've had to get up to speed with new legislation, guidance and good practice. We have always ensured that a current **Criminal Records Bureau** check is done for new staff, but we now want to improve our approach to safeguarding the children in our care and comply with the new requirements under the **Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons Act**. We will all have to register with the **Independent Safeguarding Authority** eventually, as the scheme rolls out. Then, as we employ new people, we'll check the status of all our potential new recruits too.