

Early Years

Professional Development Programme

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Zoe Jones: LA Lead

About Zoe

Zoe Jones works for Newcastle City Council in the school effectiveness team as an Early Years Adviser. Her main areas of interest and responsibility are around early language development and early reading. In this case study, Zoe gives us her thoughts and feedback on the second phase of the Early Years Professional Development Programme called 'Building on Success' for early years practitioners in her area, which ran from January – July 2022.

What was it that interested you about the Building on Success programme when you first heard about it?

I thought it sounded interesting and relevant, because of its focus on supporting practitioners and children to recover post-covid. I thought anything that could support the sector would be beneficial. I was also attracted to the fact that it was online as there is often a problem in the sector with staff release and this sounded like high quality CPD which practitioners could potentially make work.

How was the experience of being involved with the Building on Success programme for you?

At first it was quite challenging to encourage the practitioners to sign up to the programme as I think there was a bit of reluctance to sign up to things, partly due to staff feeling exhausted coming out of Covid. Despite everybody in the sector recognising the need for additional support, it did take a bit of time to build enthusiasm with EYPs to sign up. However, I called on the support of colleagues to talk to the settings about what the programme involved and that really helped.



We also made it very clear that there was funding available for back-fill and we explained to settings how we would manage that payment to support them.

How have the settings you put forward for the training found it?

From the feedback I've had, practitioners have felt that it's been a really useful course for helping them to refresh their knowledge, which even for the most experienced practitioners has also been useful. New things have obviously been learnt as well but getting back to the core of what they do, I think they've found useful.

I think during Covid, everyone in the sector was working so hard to keep everyone safe and to continue the childcare provision where they could, but I think sometimes some of those things at the core of good quality provision got forgotten a bit, and that's not a criticism of practitioners, but to be reminded of those core principals, I can see they've found that useful and they've enjoyed the learning.

We've had lots of positive feedback about the programme from EYPs who have told us how the quality of the training has been really good and how beneficial they've found it. One thing that has been said is how useful the maths module in particular was at helping the practitioners to understand the importance of maths learning and that it's not just about counting. I think it's great that the early years sector has been given the same opportunity to understand maths in the whole development of the child. I think a lot of practitioners also enjoyed the PSED module which included a unit on staff wellbeing as I think this is an area which is often overlooked.

Did you find anything challenging about the programme?

One of the issues at the beginning was that I felt a bit in the dark as a local authority and we didn't quite know exactly what the programme involved which made selling it at the beginning quite problematic. Our Local Authority Support Manager Catherine has been very good at giving regular updates about what the CPD entails and things that we can build upon in visits which has been really helpful, but maybe a bit of additional information or training would have helped us even more.

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