

Working in the early years

a work experience case study



Rosie Thurbon aged 19

Work experience at Uplands Preschool in Lowestoft

How did your work experience opportunity in early years come about?

My Mum's best friend works here and she suggested it as I've always loved being with young children. I was very anxious at school and had no confidence. Coming here was a big thing and I wasn't sure I could do it but I talked to Sam the manager and work experience here was the best week of my life!

Was there anything you were worried about before starting?

How to speak to children if they are doing something wrong, how to understand how a child feels and how to approach this. Also when you can ask to use the loo as you are watching the children! I did lots of shadowing of staff so everything was fine, hard work and challenging but so rewarding.

What surprised you about working in early years and childcare?

I didn't realise how much hard work it would be and how much goes on in families' lives that you support and help with. There are different parenting styles and I had just assumed everyone was parented like me. There is lots to know around safeguarding and I didn't realise how intense that could be. I had a meeting with Sam before I started she explained everything like confidentiality, what the day looks like and key things to know.

What has been the benefits to you of volunteering in a childcare setting and what did you enjoy?

It massively clarified 100% that working in early years was what I wanted to do and I decided to pursue this after finishing school. I learnt so much. I did an early years apprenticeship and now work at Uplands as a staff member! I love being with the children and staff and have made lifelong friends

What's next for you in your early years career?

I love my job and the children and staff here and I want to challenge myself further, perhaps by developing my interest in working with children with special educational needs and disabilities.

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Sam Howlett – manager at Uplands Preschool

What have been benefits of having work experience students or volunteers in your setting?

At Uplands we have offered both volunteer and work experience opportunities. We find it is advisable for people to do work experience or volunteering before undertaking a qualification. Several of our work experience students went on to do an apprenticeship with us after leaving school and then remain with us becoming permanent staff which helps with our continuity of staff.

What does a potential volunteer or work experience student need to know and do to be successful in an early years setting?

Be punctual. Use your initiative and be willing. You need to show your passion for the role. You need to be a good team member and to follow the policies and procedures of the setting. We need people dedicated to working with children who have a passion to work together as a team.

What did you do to prepare your students and volunteers?

We provided a good induction and sought references. We also agreed a trial period.