

## Early Years Professional Status case study – full-time pathway



**Anna Corbett**

Anna Corbett undertook the full-time Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) pathway in September 2007 and has never looked back. Since becoming accredited, Anna has built a real career as an EYP, and has even achieved an award in the process.

With an interest in working with children generated by child development modules she undertook as part of her degree, Anna applied for the EYPS programme because she “always considered working with children to be a rewarding career where no two days are the same.”

### **The role of the Early Years Professional (EYP)**

After attending an Advice and Information day to find out more about being an EYP, something that Anna says “was useful, and clarified my decision to enrol on the full-time pathway,” it was time to start the programme. With learning involving a range of distance learning and tutorial and curriculum days, Anna quickly developed her knowledge of early years and her role as an EYP.

She believes the role of the EYP is to act as a “change agent, improving the quality in early years settings.” Although she says that some of her counter-parts on the programme found it difficult to envisage what would be expected of them as an EYP during the early stages, she reports that she was lucky enough to receive a placement within a nursery where the manager had already been through the programme. She says that this was a big help in understanding what the future held.

The NDNA/Open University full-time pathway includes the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Award in Leadership and Management and Anna says that this was particularly useful as “it gave me some theoretical background into management and the skills gained from this have been useful. I have taken a lot of the knowledge gained from this into my employment, for example I have recently implemented a programme of Continuous Professional Development within my setting.”

Anna firmly believes her role is to “be instrumental in improving the quality of provision in all areas...we are awaiting our Ofsted inspection and I am hopeful my input into the setting will reflect our outcome.”

### **Becoming an EYP in practice**

Anna reports that both of her placements were highly positive experiences. She says that her first placement was useful in exploring good practice, and by the second placement her confidence had grown considerably and she felt able to implement changes.

Exploring the 39 Standards is a key part of the EYPS programme, and Anna shares that both managers on each placements “were very supportive and offered me ‘time out’ to gather evidence, including suggesting ways for me to collect evidence based on their own experiences.”

### **The assessment process**

All those on the EYP programme are assigned mentors. However, Anna says that with the amount of other support and information available, the contact with her

mentor was minimal at her own choice. She says that the briefing days covering what would happen at the Gateway Review and Setting Visit were particularly useful, as was her Mentor support. She says these processes “gave breakdowns of what would happen on each day which made them much less daunting as I felt I knew what to expect.”

### **Her career future**

Following her achievement of EYPS, Anna was offered a job in the setting where she had undertaken her second placement as a deputy manager then acting manager. She recently had a boost to her career when she was appointed as a Senior Early Years Practitioner in a newly opened children’s centre. Anna is enjoying her career as an EYP and has won a prestigious ‘Childcare Champion’ award from Rotherham City Council in February 2009 in recognition of her dedication to the sector.

Although Anna recognises that there are still some barriers to both home grown and graduate EYPs in terms of salaries and access to funding, she believes that there is still work to be done to ensure that the benefits of being an EYP are recognised. She feels in particular the Status has been instrumental in her recent achievements.

Anna credits much of her success down to the achievement of EYPS and says “I believe EYPS is the reason for my success in the early years sector...without EYPS and the knowledge and experience I gained from it I would not have achieved the success I have in such a short time after graduating.” Although she is happy with her Status and does not plan on working towards further qualifications at the moment, Anna is already working on her own CPD plan to progress her skills and knowledge further for the benefit of children she cares for.

In conclusion Anna adds “My OU tutors offered support to me when needed, I found email to be helpful when contacting my tutors as they replied promptly to address my concerns. Likewise with NDNA, they were very supportive and answered any questions or concerns I had and I can certainly recommend them as a training provider for EYPS”.