

Personal development plan in childcare



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Over the four years I have been working at various different settings as a student volunteer which include the following Private Day Cares, Primary Schools and Nursery Schools. Studying Early Childhood has given me, amongst other things, a broad knowledge of child development. It has given me an opportunity to reflect upon my own learning styles and professionalism and explore legislation, theories and research materials.

I have devised a Skills Audit (See Appendix One) where I have chosen categories (taken and adapted from the UCLAN Employability Framework) to assess and grade myself against which I will be evaluating my strengths and weaknesses against the competencies.

- Leadership Ability

“ Shows ability to innovate and shows initiative however lacks confidence to motivate other and shows some evidence of leadership.” (See Appendix 1)

Leadership is about vision and influence therefore Rodd (1998) says that “ Leaders are able to balance the concern for work, task, quality and productivity with concern for people, relationships, satisfaction and morale”.

(Isle-Buck. E: 2003). Although I am not a leader but a student volunteer I believe that this is my weakness as I haven't been able to establish leading other colleagues and promoting their development and taking their views into account. However I could say that I am a leader for children as I provide for them, allow them to take part in decisions and take into account their views and needs for them to develop their knowledge and understanding further in a fun experience.

- Organisation Planning and Prioritising Abilities

“ Capable of managing time effectively; demonstrates self motivation/self management, showing some level of increased confidence in planning and carrying out arrange of tasks.” (See Appendix 1) Time Management could be described as “ Getting the most benefit from time, using it wisely and efficiently” (Day, 1999). This could include avoiding wasting time on tasks that are unnecessary. However managing my time successfully ensures that I leave myself time to alter or make improvements on assignments as necessary without causing me too much concern or missing a deadline. Being able to organise myself and my priorities it enables me to approach each day in a positive manner and at ease. On the other hand I could say that a weakness of mine is planning at the moment as I have been working in a Year 1 class with the National Curriculum (NC) and have now moved down to a Reception class where the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is used. The EYFS is used differently to the NC when planning so it will take me some time to get used to this procedure taking into account this could be a goal for me to achieve.

- Communication and Interpersonal Skills

“ Always clear and accurate, high standard of presentational skills. Is able to communicate with people ant all levels and shows confidence in how they communicate to meet others views.” (See Appendix 1) Communication skills are important and the way you communicate with others too. Parents and other colleagues find it easy to approach me as I have developed a good understanding with them. As mentioned in Sadek, E, (2009: 72), “ If the people whom you are communicating usually experience their transactions with you as positive, affirming to their self-esteem and productive for them

personally, they will usually come back for some more”. Being bilingual helps the setting that I am volunteering in at the moment. This is entirely due to the fact as children from Asian backgrounds that attend the school out of which some children and parents have English as an Additional Language. For example if children are struggling to understand what the teacher is saying to them in English, the teacher asks me to translate to the child in their home language (Urdu/Punjabi). This then enables the child have a clear understanding of what the teacher is expecting or wants them to do. Therefore over the years my self esteem/ motivation and confidence have built up and I enjoy what I do during my days at the school enabling me to provide stimulating activities for them to enjoy and learn. Miller. L, (2005: 28), states that “ Communication within early years settings is fundamental and as Rodd (1998) suggests: Working in an early years setting, whether it is large or small, involves many interactions between adults and other adults and between adults and children”.

- Team Working Abilities

“ Reasonable evidence of working as part of a team and shows evidence of interacting and begins to contribute ideas or concerns with other team members.” (See Appendix 1) “ Whalley, M (1994: 171) Reminds us that ‘ working as a team is a process not a technique’, while Rodd (1998: 116) states that teamwork ‘ relies on open communication, democratic organization and effective problem-solving skills’.” (Dryden. L: 2005). I have worked within teams and sometimes find it at ease to interact and sometimes I lack confidence in contributing when in large groups as I feel I might be saying a comment or contributing unnecessary ideas. However this

is something that I could develop upon. I occasionally share concerns with the staff if they are necessary regarding parents or children.

- Reflection

“ Shows significant ability to evaluate and identify key learning of self and others. Shows clear understanding and knowledge of how to use and aid reflection within learning.” (See Appendix 1) The work of David Kolb studies the way in which people learn and looks in particular at experiential learning.

“ Experiential learning describes the cyclical pattern of learning from experience through reflection and conceptualising to action, and back to experiencing once again” (Wallace, 2001). Relating this to my own learning, I experience on a day-to-day basis the challenges and joy of working with children. I then reflect on the things I have learnt and how they correspond with my studies and the theories. By reflecting on my learning styles and the way in which I approach my work, I have been able to improve my techniques to ensure I am making the most of my time and energy. However reflecting on my learning with other team members has been beneficial too as it has supported me to change or develop my learning further. As stated in MacLeod – Brundell. I, et al, (2008), “ Pollard and Tann (in Fisher, 2001: 199) suggest that reflective practice, professional learning and personal fulfilment are enhanced through collaboration and dialogue with colleagues”.

- Problem Solving

“ Occasional critical thinking and decision-making skills with some interpretation of major factors and understanding choices. Some evidence of testing different options and implementing the chosen solution.” (See Appendix 1) Being able to think critically takes time and practice to master.

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Brookfield has described critical thinking “ As a useful and positive activity. The word ‘ critical’ often suggests finding fault”. However, “ critical thinking can examine an idea or concept by looking at the positive as well as negative aspects” (Day, 1999). For example, during my working day I am able to reflect upon and evaluate current activities that I have done. Likewise in my studies, I am able to look at pieces of researches or articles that have been produced by different authors and occasionally be able to analyse and reflect upon them but I feel that I am lacking some confidence in critical thinking as sometimes I describe rather than analysing the texts. However I am able to reflect on them by giving my views and opinions as well as making links to other articles and/or theorists.

- Continuous Professional Development

I recently started working part time in the summer holidays at a Children’s Play Scheme Centre as a Mobile Team Worker. My role was to go to various settings and provide fun activities for children aged 5 – 12 to enjoy in their holidays. Before attending work I was offered to go on training courses alongside other new colleagues which included First Aid Training and Safeguarding Children. Whilst on the Safeguarding Training the information that was being told was already fresh in my mind as I had completed a module on Safeguarding Children. Within the module we discussed relevant and up to date legislations as well as how to proceed and take action on how to deal with children and families where abuse is identified. However this training course was not beneficial for me I think as I knew the relevant information already bearing in mind that it was a beginner’s course to Safeguarding.

First aid training was a period over two days where I and other colleagues joined in discussions and practical activities. I enjoyed this training session and found it a valuable asset to learn. It showed me how to proceed when in difficult situations such as a baby not breathing, cuts and scabs, bleeding and vomiting etc. I learnt what procedures to follow to get a result and if the situation was not able to be dealt with how to deal with the situation then too. We worked as a team to assess different situations and cases, I thought this was good as each team member would get to talk to each other and communicate effectively and help each other if one wasn't sure how to proceed. Overall the First Aid training session for me was a worthwhile session that I had been too.

- Critical Analysis of Professional Development

What is professional identity? It can be described as the relationships between social structures and individual agency between notions of a socially constructed and therefore contingent and ever-remade 'self', with dispositions attitudes and behavioural responses, which are durable and relatively stable between cognitive and emotional identities (Day et al, 2006: 601)

Since the launch of the Every Child Matters (ECM) document in 2003 regarding the Victoria Climbié Enquiry and the succeeding of Children's Act 2004, it could be argued that childcare services have had a rapid change for everyone involved within this field for example teachers, practitioners, doctors, social workers, health visitors and the police etc. In August 2006 the local government published its response to the national consultation on the future of the children's workforce. Within this context the government's

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response was to outline how people working within the early years workforce will provide a major contribution to improving children's achievements as well as supporting parents and families in giving their children as many possible life chances they can achieve. Every Child Matters: Change for Children has the outcomes that we desire for all the children to achieve their full potential in. This change has gone some way to creating the role of the Early Years Professionals (EYPs). An EYP will have the qualifications and experience needed to take on a leadership role in a childcare setting, and provide quality care and education for children. (Nursery World: 2009). CDWC (2006a: 2) state that EYPs are seen as "agents of change dedicated to improving practice in the early years sector". (Nurse: 2007).

Alongside ECM, the Government launched a ten year strategy to improve services for children. The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) was set up in 2005 so that they would support the performance of ECM. The CWDC's role is to join together the way different agencies work together to bring consistency to the way children and young people are listened to and looked after. They state that "we are the voice of employers and we make sure their concerns, experiences and views directly influence workforce reform". The CWDC supports people who work with children, young children and their families in the sectors including the early years, social work, social care, the welfare sector and young people. The ECM website quotes: "The ten year strategy aims to provide a sustainable framework for high quality integrated early years and childcare services for all children and families" (Every Child Matters: 2009). The word 'sustainable' is a vital point here. In order to continue providing good quality service, there needs to be a

continuous program of training in order to provide settings with professionals for future generations. 'Sustainability' could be described as meeting overheads and provide a quality, accessible and affordable service that is relevant and needed in the community. Although sustainability is important 'sufficiency' also plays a vital role too which can be described as having the means to provide childcare that meets the requirements of the community, showing awareness of the needs of parents who work or are in training.

The Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) was first introduced in 2006 a graduate professional. EYPs are highly trained graduate leaders, with up-to-date knowledge and understanding of early years sectors regarding child care and development, as well as having qualifications that are recognised. This enables the EYP to share their high levels of practice and knowledge with other members within the team. This essential role within the early years plays a vital role in supporting children's well being and development for them to succeed which has become evident within recent years. This has been emphasised a great deal in the Children's Plan (2007) within the early years sector. Anning and Edwards (2006: 51) describe professional identity in the EYP role as "a way of being, seeing and responding', responsively and flexibly maximising the learning potential of every aspect of Early Years practice, particularly in building on the children's own ideas, preferences and interests" (Carr: 2001).

The EYPS is the on the same professional level as with teachers who have a Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). CWDC (2006) states that it is important to consider that the two qualifications are "both professional statuses but are based on different set of skills and knowledge". On the other hand newly

qualified teachers (NQTs) are provided with support, personal mentoring, effective career development etc, as well as the opportunity to follow up by Continuous Professional Development (CPD) structure within the school year. They also have the opportunity to work effectively and focus on the highest levels of learning and pedagogy. In contrast EYPs have none of this support available to them at the current time. The pay for the EYPs is minimum as well as no structures or guidelines around conditions of service, support requirements, or ongoing CPD to maintain and build skill-levels. (Aspect: 2008).

There are a number of questions which immediately rise from this, as Nurse, (2007) mentions that there is serious debate about the link between the EYPS and QTS, not only because it “ cuts across many current employees allegiances to particular professions but also it affects the lives of children and families as well as those who will work in the field in the future”. Since the launch of the EYPS in 2006, the Government has provided around £250m in funding through the ‘ Transformation Fund’. This enabled students to apply for money to fund a degree in Early Childhood Studies. A further £305m was made available through the Graduate Leader Fund to help transform the early years workforce and deliver the ‘ Ten Year Strategy for Childcare’ (Every Child Matters: 2008)

To gain the EYPS each candidate should be able to demonstrate and achieve 39 standards which will enable them to meet the requirements for EYPS. These standards fall under the following six categories: Knowledge and Understanding, Effective Practice, Relationships with Children, Communication and Working with Partnership with Families and Carers, <https://assignbuster.com/personal-development-plan-in-childcare/>

Team Work and Collaboration and Professional Development. These six categories when working with children from birth to five which the 39 standards fall under are to be achieved by each candidate that chooses to do the EYPS. Most of the standards that are created are an effective way of meeting the requirements to enhance professional development as well as meeting the needs of children and their families. For example in the category ‘ Knowledge and Understanding’, Standard 1, “ The principles and content of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how to put them into practice” revolves around the practitioners. This standard enables the practitioner to enhance their knowledge of the EYFS and how it is to be used to provide effective provision for the children within their setting. Without the knowledge and understanding of the curriculum practitioners will be unable to provide the up most best for children in their care. Another example can be from the category, ‘ Professional Development’, S38 “ Reflect on and evaluate the impact of practice, modifying approaches where necessary and take responsibility for identifying and meeting their professional needs”. This enables the practitioner to develop on their weaknesses which will allow them to provide opportunities in development where necessary to enhance their professional development. Taking into account practitioners should note that EYPS is not a qualification but it is a new status which recognises a student’s knowledge and skills as a practitioner and a professional leader (Moyle: 2007).

CWDC (2010) stipulates that the role of the EYPS enables practitioners who are working with children aged birth to five to demonstrate the excellence of their practice and their ability to lead practice. The government proposed

that the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS) should be delivered by a skilled early years and childcare workforce, professionally led and with a strengthened qualification and career structure. On the other hand the EYFS also enables to improve on their practice and support their professional development by the recommendations which are stipulated in section 1 of the EYFS Practice Guidance. (DfES, 2007b: 5) This links into the EYP Standard S33, as Nurse (2007: 144) states that this standard “ stresses the important link between reflection and professional development, the more skilled you become in evaluating the effectiveness of your own practice, the more you will be able to identify opportunities to enhance and develop your own expertise and knowledge”.

The EYFS is the curriculum for 0-5 year olds that was introduced in 2008 which took place of the ‘ Birth to 3 Matters (2002)’ and the ‘ Foundation Stage (2000)’ Curriculums. It is a single quality framework to support children’s learning and development. For practitioners and EYPs, the EYFS has presented many challenges, its main effect is to recognise each child for its individuality as well as recognising the child’s strength to improve and plan their future continued learning. Therefore the governments aim was to have a graduate EYP in all children centres by 2010 and in every day care setting led by an EYP graduate by 2015 with two graduate EYPs per setting in the disadvantaged areas. The childcare sector has, until recent years, been overshadowed somewhat by formal education. The Government has now recognised the importance of delivering a quality service for children aged Birth to 5 years, delivered by professionals trained and experienced in the field of early years (Whalley: 2008). This recognition could partly be due

to the increasing number of children attending a full-time setting and the emphasis on helping a child reach their full potential early in life. Once the EYP has qualified they can choose to either work in the children's centre which provides early education which is integrated with health and family support services. By 2010, the government proposed that they will have at least 3, 500 centres across the country which will be available and accessible to everyone (Every Child Matters: 2009). However other career paths are available for EYPs to follow than work in Children Centres for example Private Day Cares, Early Years Advisors etc.

In conclusion there are no arguments that the EYPS cannot work or indeed it isn't a good idea apart from the lack of low pay and conditions Pugh et al (2010: 206) stipulates that the “ new initiatives that the government have outlined promise a better future for the early years workforce and consequently a better future for children as well”.

Personal Development Plan

- Target: In order to apply for PGCE I need to achieve Science GCSE Grade C or above

Short Term Goal: Arrange to attend classes in the following year 2011.

Long Term Goal: Achieve Science GCSE by 2012.

- Target: Complete BA (HONS) Early Childhood Studies

Short Term Goal: Complete formative assignments and receive feedback to develop upon.

Long Term Goal: Complete and pass all summative assignments by summer 2011.

- Target: Study and research a wider selection of articles and texts to support my degree work

Short Term Goal: Study and make notes of course books and recommended reading for each module. Download relevant articles and information from the Internet related to my assignments.

Long Term Goal: By 2011 I will be able to judge my success by my improved knowledge and ability to read critically.

- Target: Build on my self esteem and confidence.

Short Term Goal: Take sessions on how to build confidence and self esteem by taking counselling.

Long Term Goal: Be able to share and contribute ideas with confidence.

- Target: To experience working with children between the ages 0-5 years.

Short Term Goal: Attend nursery sessions to see how staff teaches. I will also be attending training sessions for the Early Years Foundation Stage to increase my knowledge and understanding.

Long Term Goal: By September I will work in a nursery class and work alongside children from 0-5 years and the Early Years Foundation Stage.

- Target: To develop an understanding of the concept of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Short Term Goal: I will attend training sessions for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the summer.

Long Term Goal: By September I will have an understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and will be working alongside it.

- Target: To work alongside the Early Years Foundation Stage and develop how to use it for an observation.

Short Term Goal: I will attend training sessions for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the summer to understand the concept of this curriculum.

Long Term Goal: In September I will be able to use the outcomes of the Early Years Foundation Stage to observe and assess set children and this will be able to help me build up their personal profiles.

- Target: To work alongside the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and have some training done.

Short Term Goal: By summer 2011 I will have attended some training sessions and have developed skills for the Early Years Foundation Stage so that I can use this curriculum as I am working with under 5's.

Long Term Goal: In September 2012 I will be working with children under 5's using the Early Years Foundation Stage and will be able to adapt to the changes

- Target: To work alongside other professionals within the setting.

Short Term Goal: By Easter I will have acknowledged which professionals are working within the setting and understood their role

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Long Term Goal: By September 2011 when I work in another class where there are special needs children or other children with specific needs I will be working alongside with them with the child.

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Appendices

Appendix

One

Leadership Ability

Organisation Planning and Prioritising Abilities

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Example

A leader who provides for self and others working alongside them. Communication and decision making skills to involve and take views from colleagues.

Time management (punctuality, meeting deadlines), self management and self motivation, interpersonal skills like confidence, awareness of life-long learning and planning for future development.

Oral, Written, Visual,

PowerPoint and other forms of delivery; communicating academically and professionally choosing forms of delivery, structure and language appropriate to audience; leading discussions and responding to feedback.

1.

Poor communication. Inability to consider others views before making decisions and unable to play a positive lead role.

Little or no use of evidence of using time effectively, attempting to improve self motivation and self-management or to develop confidence in planning and carrying out a range of tasks.

Inadequate no real consideration of audience and has tendency to be inaccurate. Shows little or no evidence of communicating effectively with others and has difficulty conveying information in any form.

2.

Good communication skills but lacks initiative in playing a lead role as well as the planning and organisation.

Occasional evidence of using time effectively; basic self motivation evident with limited development of confidence in planning and carrying out a range of tasks.

Starting to show and use good communication skills however lacks confidence in communicating with others and has difficulty presenting to people at all levels.

3.

Shows ability to innovate and shows initiative however lacks confidence to motivate other and shows some evidence of leadership.

Good attempt at using time effectively, some evidence of self-motivation/self management with some improvement in confidence in planning and carrying out a range of tasks.

Reasonable presentation and generally accurate in content rarely has difficulty in making a point starting to show confidence in what they are doing and the way they are communicating with others.

4.

Beginning to show confidence in motivating others and providing support for the staff. Shows clear evidence of leadership ability.

Capable of managing time effectively; demonstrates self motivation/self management, showing some level of increased confidence in planning and carrying out arrange of tasks.

Always clear and accurate, shows high standard of presentational skills. Is able to communicate with people ant all levels and shows confidence in how they communicate to meet others views.

5.

A strong leader who shows self motivation and motivates others too considering their views and needs. Is confident in making the right decisions.

Manages time highly effectively; demonstrates consistent self motivation and self-management and an increased confidence in planning and carrying out a range of tasks.

Shows a strong ability to give a complete and concise account of a situation, either orally or written. Is able to communicate effectively with parents and others in a wise manner and confident. Skills Audit

- Team-working
- Abilities
- Reflection
- Problem Solving

Example

- Understanding and developing a role in the team and showing its effectiveness by working with, listening and encouraging the

development of others which may also include leadership skills, group ideas and resources.

- Understanding own learning (learning styles, awareness of how one develops and appropriate use of C. I analysis and journals) Recognition that people learn differently and see things from diverse perspectives.
- Decision-making skills, critical thinking sustained and applied analytical skills, negotiation skills, managing change and risk, testing different strategies and choosing most appropriate solution.

1.

- Inability to interact within a team and shows little or no evidence of participating within a team by sharing ideas and concerns.
- Has no evidence of evaluating/identifying of key learning experience of others and self. Lacks the understanding and knowledge of reflection
- Shows no evidence of critical thinking and decision-making skills with little or no evidence of appreciation of major factors and no evidence of how to handle choices solution implemented without considering alternative options.

2.

- Shows some evidence of interaction and motivation within a team. Occasionally listening and working with others but lacks confidence in sharing ideas and concerns.
- Adequate evidence of evaluating/identifying of key learning of self and others. Tends to use reflection as a tool simply with little understanding and knowledge.
- Acceptable critical thinking and