

Professional development and employability skills in childcare sector



Professional development is the process of increasing one's skills through training opportunities and reflection. Employers consider continued professional development to be an integral part of working within the childcare sector.

This summary will discuss the importance of transferable and employability skills such as communication, team work, project management, leadership and multicultural awareness, which will be of benefit to both the employer and employee. It will explore how continued professional development increases the knowledge, understanding and skills of an individual, as well as the importance of taking responsibility for one's own learning and development. A supporting portfolio provides evidence of the practitioner's skills and professional development in the child care sector and reference will be made to these examples.

Practitioners in the childcare sector should be able to utilize a number of skills to ensure all the needs of children are met. Morton wrote about the findings of a report compiled by ofsted which identified that,

..... a recurring strength in the settings was the practitioners' high level of experience, qualifications and ability to identify and meet children's varied needs Morton (2010)

They must create a warm, nurturing environment for the children and provide comfort in times of upset and distress. Have an awareness of child protection issues and be aware of the setting policy and point of contact should any concerns be raised, the need for confidentiality at all times should be upheld. The ability to set boundaries for the children and manage

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behaviour appropriately, ensuring the safety of the other children will maintain the smooth running of the setting and maintain relationships. Being able to recognise and respond to a child's individual interests and support these with a stimulating and challenging environment ensures that the practitioner is addressing all the needs of the child in a holistic manner.

Daily contact with parents and other professionals requires good communication skills both verbal and non verbal. Empathy and patience are essential for forming and maintaining positive relationships with the family and wider community. When children observe secure positive relationships it encourages them to respect and cooperate with others. This in turn will aid the development of the child. Brookson (2006) pg241 writes about effective communication being essential for the well being of the child and that positive relationships are the 'building blocks' of productive relations which will benefit the child.

All parents and children should be greeted by staff and shown respect regardless of their differing backgrounds. Every child within the setting is unique with a differing cultural heritage, by introducing multi-cultural awareness through activities and displays practitioners can help staff, children and their families understand the values and beliefs of each individual. The Early Years Foundation Stage DCSF (2008) Principles into practice 1. 2 agrees that all children should be treated equally regardless of their background and practitioners should make sure their own knowledge of diversity is current as well as reflect on their personal attitudes.

Team work is an integral part of any profession and plays a major role in the child care sector, a successful team is one that works together to collaborate ideas and accomplish collective goals that ensure all children succeed in a happy enriched environment. In agreement Tansey states that;

A stable team is important in creating positive outcomes for children's development and the provision of quality care as team stability is essential to the development of strong relationships between children carers and staff. Tansey(2006) pg3

The key to efficient team work is efficient leadership

Leadership is critical to teamwork. The team leader is the person responsible for ensuring that members work effectively together to achieve their goal or objective and must facilitate the co-operation necessary for the team to perform well.

Eclipse Research Consultants (2004)

A competent leader must facilitate harmonious relationships between staff and show confidentiality, understanding and empathy when dealing with problems. Being sensitive to others feelings and valuing their input and interests is vital but, possessing the aptitude to make the final decision and delegate appropriate tasks to the team will ensure the setting staff works to the best of their ability and each person's strengths are recognised and utilised. A proficient leader will control regular meetings with staff and cascade relevant information as well as discuss ideas and problem. This coincides with Garner (1991) who identifies in his theory of multiple

intelligences that a person with interpersonal intelligence has the ability to communicate effectively with others and work within a group. They are perceptive to other people's moods, feelings and what motivates them. In agreement with this Sciarra & Dorsey (2002) pg 26 who write that

Two way communication in a meeting permits an interchange of ideas and feelings and provides a forum for thoughtful discussion and clarification of problems and issues.

A strong leader must also be an entrepreneur and project manager who has a sound knowledge of education and be responsible for the development of their setting in order to move it forward, having vision and drive to plan and implement their ideas to develop both the setting and its practise to achieve best results for the children their families and the staff.

They must possess self motivation, creative thinking and persistence.

Comprehensive audits,

research and analysis of the data will ensure that solutions to problems are identified before they arise and regular reflection of incidents throughout a project enables any obstacles to be dealt with efficiently and the final goal to be reached with minimal problems. (DCSF 2008) pg8-9 discusses the importance of continually developing and improving the provision offered and that practitioners must ensure it is of a high standard.

Observation underpins good practice and is a vital tool in assessment and planning as well a means to analyse and develop the learning environment.

This is a skill which can be enhanced through regular practice and training.

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The ability to record and write informative non judgemental interpretations of events, plan activities and develop practice within a team around the analysed findings supports the developmental journey of the child.

Nutbrown and Carter (2010) pg 113 agree that;

Other reasons for observing and assessing young children centre around the adult's role as a provider of care and education.... The extent to which educators can create a high quality learning environment of care and education is a measure of the extent to which they succeed in developing positive learning interactions between themselves and the children.....

Practitioners need to be responsible and take charge of their own learning they must recognise their strengths/ weaknesses and set achievable goals which can be altered as each goal is reached. Finances, time, family commitments and motivation can impede the learning process at any time and it is important that practitioners address these barriers when compiling a development plan.

Pedler, Burgoyne & Boydell (2007) pg 5 define self development as;

.... a person taking primary responsibility for their own learning and for choosing the means to achieve this. Ultimately it is about increasing your capacity and willingness to take control over and be responsive to events.

Cable & Devereux (2005) pg19 recognise that professional development needs supplementary training along with qualifications and opportunities to accept change.

The writer has taken both essential and transferable skills to a higher level through experience, personal development and training. By developing a sound knowledge of current frameworks and legislation and how to implement them, as well as extending transferable skills such as motivation, organisation, planning, timekeeping, problem solving, information technology and self reflection has enabled a greater success in employability.

Conclusion

Through careful observation and close monitoring of the setting it was noted by myself that there were no clearly defined areas and each area was not accessed and utilised by the children as it should be. Due to managerial barriers regarding the development of the setting I made the decision to undertake the task of re-organising and enhancing areas of provision. On reflection it was realised that I held very little knowledge of auditing and re-developing practice, according to Bruce T (2006) pg 5 informed reflection will pinpoint areas of learning that will improve your practice. Research was carried out as how to compile and implement audits and other staff and children were asked to input their ideas. These ideas were valued and incorporated into the planning. These audits and ideas were then analysed to ascertain the best way to approach the project. (appendix1) Current frameworks were consulted to gain advice on best practice and how to organise the areas to ensure they would meet the requirements of all the children. A small budget was obtained and resources were sourced, a record of the expenditure was kept and logged into the accounts. The areas were re-designed taking into account the diverse population within the setting. A <https://assignbuster.com/professional-development-and-employability-skills-in-childcare-sector/>

multi lingual display was added which welcomed all individuals into the setting and the role play area was transformed into a Chinese restaurant. Various interactive displays were added to illustrate the differing cultures around the world. The majority of staff were involved and I delegated tasks to them and gave advice throughout the project. The process was successful and the setting is now running more efficiently, although it needs regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure it continues to meet the needs of all the children.