



## Emma Kelly

Early Years Phase Leader & EY Covid Recovery  
Mentor for DfE

Emma has a wealth of early years experience through her years within the industry. She was searching for a free-to-access, high-quality CPD opportunity for her practitioners and was impressed when she saw what the Early Years Professional Development Programme had to offer. With several children joining the setting with delayed speech due to the Covid-19 pandemic she believes the EYPDP has made a significant impact on how her staff work with these children and the significant improvements they have made to communication and language within the setting. Here, Emma provides some feedback on her experience of the programme to date.

"This is the first fully funded Early Years CPD opportunity that I have come across in recent years. The design of the programme looked really interesting and the range of topics covered really sold it to me. I have been looking for a high-quality training programme that my staff can access alongside our weekly phase meetings. The mixture of self-study and webinars suited the needs of my staff.

The online learning platform has been really easy to navigate. As Head of Early Years, it allows me to see how my three practitioners are getting on, and the percentage of the course they have completed. My practitioners have found the materials extremely useful, and we often sit down together as a team to go through the questions from the independent study section. The group webinars have also been very beneficial. My staff have enjoyed sharing examples of our best practice and gaining an insight into how other settings run too.

After the pandemic, we noticed that our children were joining us with some communication and language difficulties. As a leader, I had to ensure that my staff were continually using high quality interactions and questioning to aid our children's communication and language development.

This can be difficult to implement independently, but the EYPDP have ensured my staff are all on the same page and have provided valuable learning opportunities. The EYPDP programme has really enhanced my staff's knowledge and understanding of high-quality interactions.

I have noticed a significant improvement of their open-ended questioning skills, as well as the language they are using with the children. **Consequently, our children's speaking, listening and communication skills have really developed and they are making excellent progress, despite their low starting points.**

One of the main benefits of the training so far has been the knowledge that my staff have gained. I have three practitioners enrolled on the course; each have been in the early years sector for various amounts of time with different levels of experience. Some have been in the industry for over 15 years, whilst some are just beginning their career. **I can whole heartedly say that the EYPDP has enabled all three of my staff to develop their knowledge, understanding and pedagogy. They now reflect on their practice, and are always looking for ways to improve and develop the learning experiences for our children.** My team have also commented how knowledgeable and helpful the mentors/practitioners have been during the webinars.

**I would 100% recommend the EYPDP as it's the only training course of its type and has been expertly developed. The focus on subject areas such as Communication and Language, Early Mathematics, Personal Social Emotional Development are unique in their kind.** Most Early Years CPD programmes are not subject specific, so my staff have really benefited from developing their knowledge in these key areas. I am grateful that we have had the opportunity to engage in this course during its first year. I would recommend to all Early Years leaders to sign up their staff; it will benefit everyone including practitioners, children and parents."