



Helen Hardy

Helen is an Early Years Practitioner from Cumbria and completed Cohort 2 of the EYPDP in the spring of 2024. After falling behind with the start of the course, Helen is thankful for the support she received to catch up and has no regrets in choosing to undertake the programme. In fact, she credits the EYPDP for helping her to get her new job as she says she now has so much more confidence in what she knows and she was able to articulate that at her interview.

How has the EYPDP supported you in your role?

If it wasn't for this course I probably wouldn't have got the job I've just landed as a Teaching Assistant with a school. It's given me a newfound motivation!

I've had really bad self-esteem for a while and completing the course gave me lots of small reminders that were really helpful. I never thought I'd have the confidence to be able to sit in front a panel of people and answer the questions, but I did and I got the job.

I feel this programme nudges you back into place and gives you lots of reminders, for example from the Communication and Language module I was reminded to comment more rather than question. At first, you find it really difficult, but then with practice you allow the child to lead the conversation which is really important.

(The EYPDP) has been a constant reminder of what you should be doing and has helped me to iron out bad habits.

What caused you to fall behind with the programme and how did you catch-up?

I fell behind because of my brain fog and fatigue, which was caused by chronic health issues. Due to this I also struggled to keep on top of e-mails, which lead me to miss some of the important EYPDP reminders.

It didn't help that I was a technophobe either, just the thought of a webinar was nerve racking and filled me with dread...until I met all the lovely tutors and practitioners.

I think I must have missed the first 5 webinars, and it wasn't until I got onto them and spoke with the tutors that I realised the value of this programme and saw how good it actually is. It got me to enjoy childcare again.

How did you manage to catch up with your learning?

Everybody (including the support staff and the tutors) have been really understanding and they've put themselves in my shoes and helped me which has put me back on track and helped me get through all the catch up webinars.

How have you applied what you've learnt on the EYPDP?

I've used what I've learnt across the board. So when you're in the sandpit for example, rather than just saying 'what are you doing?' you're using mathematical language like 'that one's full to the brim' or 'I think this one holds as much as that one.'

Since doing the course, you try to think about every last word that comes out of your mouth so that it has some sort of value, and it's not just empty words.

What would you to say to others who have a place on the EYPDP but have fallen behind?

Initially I thought why have I been put on this course because I'm qualified and you think what else could I possibly learn? But I now take back all of my words!

I found it far more interesting than I first thought it would be and although it can be uncomfortable doing the webinars, it puts you outside of your comfort zone and I feel like by doing that it helps you to achieve more in not only your career, but every part of your life.