

Dr Dianne Borien

Southend City Council's Interim Head of Early Years, Dr Dianne Borien shares her thoughts on the EYPDP.

What have the practitioners in your area gained from the EYPDP?

Practitioners have said how they've found it really useful to refresh their knowledge. Some of them were familiar with the programme content but they enjoyed having a more structured webinar or lesson where they were able to refresh their knowledge and bring the learning back into their practice.

Many practitioners in the area found the Early Mathematics module very useful. I think for some people, it was an area that perhaps they weren't quite so strong on, so they found it useful and were able to develop children's mathematical skills through games and play for example.

The programme is providing practitioners with first-hand practical experience which we're always championing.

How are you supporting practitioners in your area to complete the EYPDP?

We always celebrate whatever they do, for example, when we have our network evenings, we always talk about the programme. Any practitioners that have taken part are encouraged to stand up and talk about the learning and how it's enhanced their provision and their professional development. **Recently, when one of our candidates finished Cohort 1 of the EYPDP, we celebrated by giving her certificate and lanyard in front of everybody and we really celebrated that and took photographs.**

We also do a lot of communications for the sector, so every week we'll send out communications around the programme.

We also have a very strong development team who visit settings on a regular basis and talk to the practitioners and childminders about how other people have learnt from the programme, and how it could enhance their own learning.

We've suggested doing a WhatsApp group in Southend to enhance the networking in our area, I know that some practitioners who have finished the programme have their own WhatsApp groups that they still use with practitioners from all over the country which they find helpful, **so the learning doesn't stop when the programme stops.**

Other than skills and knowledge, have the practitioners in your area gained anything else from this programme?

Practitioners have talked a lot about how the EYPDP has improved their confidence. I read all the visit notes that the development officers do when they visit a setting and they're about how practitioners are talking with excitement about what they've been doing and really want to show the development officers the work that they've done.

What do you think the lasting legacy of the EYPDP will be in your area?

I think people will continue to talk about it. They will say "Do you remember when we did that programme and what we learnt from that?"

For me, I'm hoping that what they've learnt is really going to impact on the children's learning and their outcomes. So, we really see that readiness for their next stage of learning and when we talk to our reception colleagues, they will be talking about how the children have come into school with some of these skills that they learnt in their early years setting.

I definitely think the legacy will be that **it's a good programme, people have enjoyed it and it's not just about enjoyment, it's what they've learnt from it and the impact of what they've done will be on their practice and on the learning outcomes for children in Southend.**

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