

In Training

Further your career, improve your practice



“Providing apprentices and qualified practitioners alike with opportunities to lead small-scale projects will give them a sense of ownership.”

of managers in early years settings are primarily office-based due to their administrative duties, it can be difficult for them to have an accurate grasp of what their team's skill sets – their strengths and weaknesses – are. A staff coordinator with a high level of autonomy can ensure that apprentices have access to instant advice should they need it. This will ensure that decisions can be made with reassurance – vital, especially if the team is still being established.

As the team develops and an apprentice's skill set grows, the staff coordinator can start to coach him or her along with qualified practitioners. This will help the apprentice begin to problem solve on their own, as well as to take on additional responsibilities as their confidence grows. Using scaffolding to reassure and support is an effective way to ensure that an apprentice develops well at their own rate.

Sandhya Godhania is staff coordinator at Training Depot Day Nursery in Luton.



New recruits

Well-trained apprentices can significantly strengthen

your team, says Sandhya Godhania...

At a time when there are a number of uncertainties surrounding the early years sector, employing an apprentice is a great way to add strength to your setting. An apprentice is a blank canvas – the majority will only have a basic knowledge of what skills are needed to become a high-quality practitioner, but this means that they will not have picked up bad habits you may

not want in your setting too.

To help apprentices achieve their full potential, you cannot be totally dependent on the training agencies employed to provide the necessary support and guidance. A robust induction must be carried out to ensure that any apprentice is aware of your setting's policies and the needs of the families you look after. Providing the apprentice with a mentor will make their settling in period smoother and help them to find their niche within your team.

It is vital that the mentor is an experienced practitioner with a sound understanding of how to support and guide inexperienced team members. You may want to consider developing a specialist 'staff coordinator' position within your team rather than the manager taking responsibility – as a number

Further opportunities...

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National Education Trust

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