

# in training

Despite six years as a nursery manager, **Lisa Thomas** was surprised by just how much she had to learn from the Institute of Leadership and Management...

## You've recently taken a course with the NDNA's Institute of Leadership and Management. Why did you decide to do this?

**LT:** I had the option to do the course as part of my EYPS studies. I debated whether or not to do it for quite a while. After all, I had been managing a setting for six years already. What was it going to teach me? As it turned out, the course was exceptional – one of the best I've ever been on.

## Who was the course delivered by?

**LT:** A man named Glyn Diggins, who was very inspiring. He originally worked in sales before he went into management training. In early years settings people often get promoted through the ranks, so you can end up working for someone who is an exceptional nursery nurse but has no experience of being a manager. Learning from someone like Glyn opens your eyes to how management skills from other sectors can be applied to running a nursery.

## What did you learn?

**LT:** We looked at the advantages of *leading* teams rather than *managing* teams. The difference being that by leading you're trying to get everyone to work towards your vision, whereas managing is just deploying resources and getting the job done.

In the past I've been guilty of being a manager rather than a leader. Now I am making an effort to give staff more autonomy.



## How have the staff responded to your new management style?

**LT:** The staff have really appreciated the opportunity to take on more responsibility. In our 3–5-year-olds room we'd had different zones of learning for quite some time. One of the room leaders really wanted to develop the room and move the furniture around. In the past I might not have been very enthusiastic about this! But on this occasion I was prepared to take a step back and now the room is probably better than it has ever been.

## What was one of the most interesting ideas you took from the course?

**LT:** We looked at reward systems for nursery staff. For example, if a member of staff were to come up with a way of generating funds for the nursery, we might give them a percentage of this income. It's not something I had thought of before – again, you don't always think about things in this way when working in an early years setting. We were given the example of a nursery that's having difficulty getting new children to join. In this situation it was suggested that staff might be given a financial reward for every child that they recruit – say 10% of that child's fees for the first six months.

## Room for improvement

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### Centre of learning

The LEYF's Centre for Research, Learning and Development offers high-quality, bespoke training for early years practitioners, as well as cost-effective, competent staff through its access to employment, youth mentoring and apprenticeship programmes. So, if you're after CPD or an extra pair of hands, call 020 7821 1258 or email [learn@leyf.org.uk](mailto:learn@leyf.org.uk)

### Practice makes perfect

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