

Young People Engagement Toolkit

#firstfiveyearscount



National Day Nurseries Association

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years education and why
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1. Introduction to your Young People Engagement Toolkit

Within the early years sector, we recognise the impact we have on the first five years of a child's life. But with recruitment becoming tougher, NDNA have a focus on addressing the recruitment and retention crisis. NDNA are equipping you with information and resources to help support you in attracting young people to start their career in the early years sector and maximise recruitment opportunities.

Direct contact with young people in schools, colleges, sixth forms and universities is one of the best methods to encourage young people to consider a career within early years. By creating partnerships, attending events and engaging directly with young people and the parents/carers, staff and advisors who support and guide them, you can build a firm base on which to build their career.

Your toolkit covers:

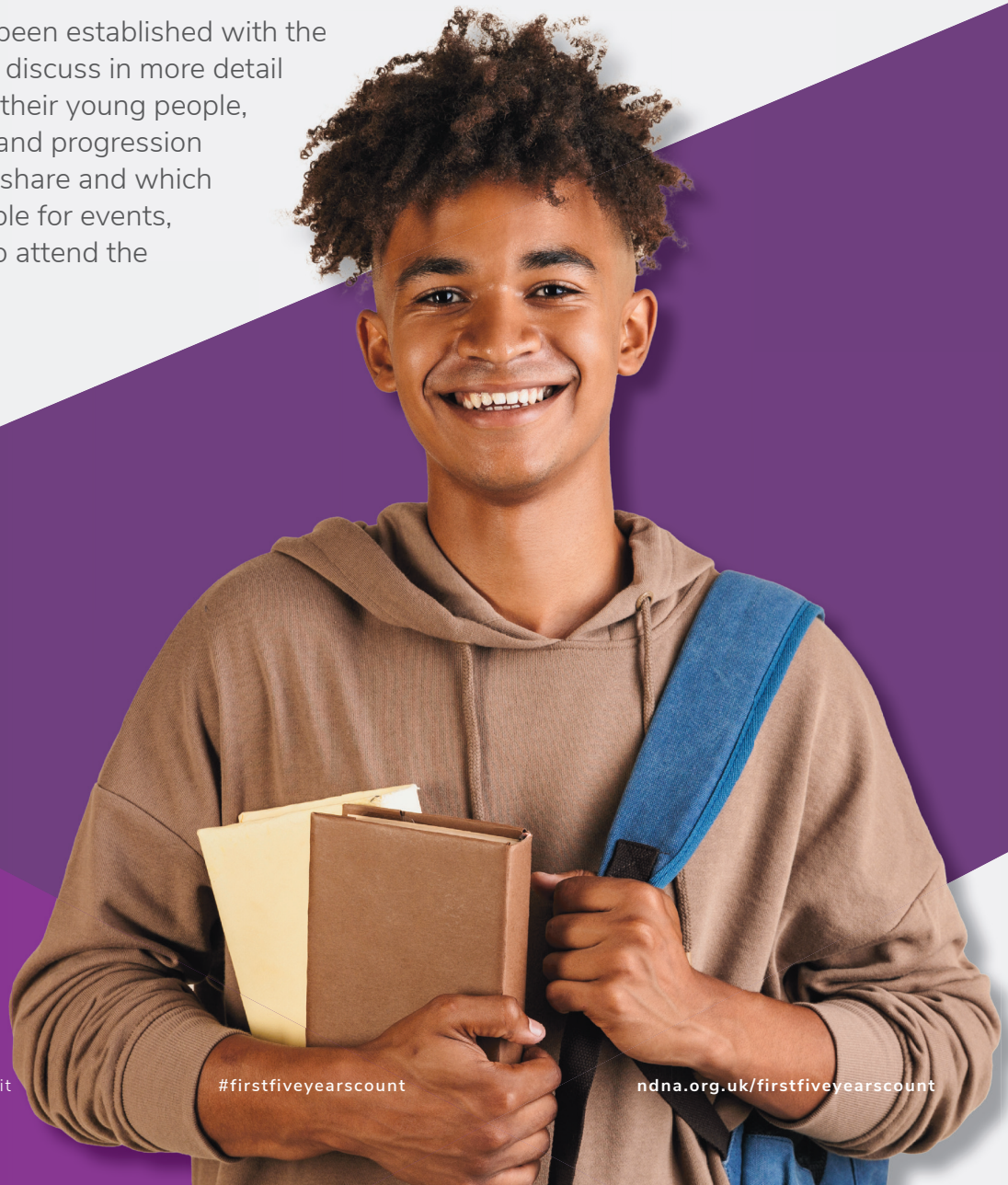
- Partnering with education settings
- Going to events and helpful resources
- Engaging with young people
- Engaging with parents/carers
- Support with young people engagement.

2. Partner with education settings

By partnering with education settings such as schools, colleges, sixth forms and universities, not only are you supporting your internal recruitment requirements, you are also supporting the education settings to find suitable progression pathways for their young people. Section 6.1 details how you can work within your local NDNA Network to collectively partner with local education settings.

An initial phone call with education settings to find the best contact is helpful, who may be their own careers advisor, Head of Year or Head of Departments. Be prepared to leave your contact details and brief summary of your partnership ideas and await a return call. It may be possible to obtain relevant names and contact details and follow up with an email or letter. Our very simple letter template can be adapted to your nursery, the education setting you are approaching, and the opportunities you are offering.

Once communication has been established with the education setting, you can discuss in more detail the message you have for their young people, the careers, qualifications and progression opportunities you hope to share and which resources you have available for events, plus which staff are able to attend the different types of events.



“Dear <Education Setting>

Here at <Nursery>, we have a wealth of knowledge and experience regarding careers in Early Years. We are very keen to share our insight with your students.

Within early years, there are many opportunities for a rewarding career, starting with a role within a local nursery, college courses, apprenticeships or T Levels. These all lead to progression in further and higher education, leadership and management, specialist roles (e.g., Special Educational Needs Coordinators) or opportunities for roles in finance, marketing, administration or catering.

We would very much like to participate in:

- Careers events and fairs
- Spotlight sessions, talks and lectures
- Workshops and Q&As
- Hosting a nursery open evening for young people.

It would be great to discuss the type of events or workshops you are running or hope to run in the future and our involvement with these. I can be contacted on <Phone> and <Email>.

Best wishes,

<Nursery Contact>”

3. Going to your event

Different events have different requirements, so ensure in advance that you have the resources and staff support needed. Appoint ambassadors from your own setting or as part of your local NDNA Network to attend different events. Manage the comfort levels of ambassadors to ensure each person is confident with the level of interaction, communication or speaking at different types of event.

3.1 Careers fairs

Create an interactive, engaging and attention grabbing stand which encourages young people and potentially their parents/carers to come and speak with you. Don't worry about giveaways, your primary goal is to provide a positive, memorable message about a career in early years.

Insight

Decorate your stand with children's artwork and create an interactive play space for young people to explore. You may want to host a small, fun competition, e.g. the best playdoh model.

Resources which may help:

- Tablecloths and boxes/crates to add height – remove chairs and don't be tempted to sit behind the table
- Children's artworks to decorate the stand (hang with string and pegs)
- Laptop/tablet with a slideshow of pictures to play the First Five Years Count video
- Nursery activities - tuff tray, playdough, treasure baskets
- NDNA's Careers Roadmap and banners from nursery/training providers
- Handouts for the young people and their parents/carers - don't forget to add your own contact details/website links
- Data collection form (These must be stored and processed in line with GDPR).



Marketing your event

For careers fairs which are open to the public, don't forget to use your own marketing channels to promote the event.

This could include:

- Updates on your social media
- Promotions on your website
- Having leaflets/posters in the nursery drop off and pick up areas
- Emails and updates via parent apps
- Word of mouth.

3.2 Spotlight sessions, talks and lectures

Spotlight sessions, talks and lectures allow you to present or talk directly to an audience of young people. This is an opportunity to share your insight into early years, what inspired you to join the sector, and what they might expect from a career in the sector, such as how they may feel about a role in early years to career progression opportunities. Know in advance how many young people are expected to attend so you can be prepared for the audience size.

Resources which may help:

- PowerPoint presentation
- A stand or display with resources to demonstrate
- NDNA's Careers Roadmap and banners from nursery/training provider
- Handouts for the young people - don't forget to add your own contact details/website links.

Insight

Fill your PowerPoint with images and cues for you to talk about your journey in to early years and your experiences. Show what a normal day at nursery looks like. Don't forget to tell your audience what they would love about the role, about the daily fun and happiness, how they might progress, and how rewarding they will find this career.

Aim to keep these fairly short and discuss a whole range of entry routes into early years and lots of varied progression opportunities. Don't expect much audience participation in larger groups but leave opportunities for questions and leave details of how to contact you directly if they prefer.

3.3 Workshops and Q&As

Workshops are often used for smaller groups and allow you to present or talk directly to the audience but also engage in activities too. You could plan topic specific workshops which looks at:

- Activities with children in nursery
- Engaging and communicating with babies
- Theories of early years education
- Planning a specific topic for nursery.

Insight

Q&As should be incorporated into workshops, spotlight sessions, talks and lectures to help with understanding and individual queries.

Resources which may help:

- PowerPoint presentation covering your workshop topic
- Toys/resources/materials that young people could use to create their own nursery activity, e.g. how would you use a sensory tuff tray for a two year old?
- Young people handouts - don't forget to add your own contact details/website links.

3.4 Hosting nursery open events

Speak with the education setting about hosting an open day/evening in your setting which they can advertise to their young people to visit with their parents/carers. Arrange these at times that might be most convenient, e.g. after school hours, half-terms and holidays.

Whilst young people are visiting the setting, encourage staff to chat with them about their role, talk about the activities they do with children and the early years education they support. Allow young people to explore the setting and imagine themselves working within the environment.

Resources which may help:

- Nursery set up ready for a typical day
- Application forms if you are hoping to recruit
- Leaflets for training providers/apprenticeships schemes
- Handouts for the young people and parents/carers - don't forget to add your contact details/website links.

Insight

Follow up after any events with the young people who have left contact details. You could always host a 1:1 nursery tour for a more personalised approach.



4. Engaging with young people

Young people have many options available to them and making the right choice can be difficult. It is important to help them see how their strengths and skills could translate to their potential career in early years. Focus on who they are and how their qualities would serve them well within early years. Sharing your own experiences may help them to visualise themselves following a similar career journey. Your appointed ambassadors can tell young people what inspired them to work with children and the educational route they took to get there.

Insight

Offering a well-structured pathway from education to employment appeals to young people considering many options on leaving school, college, sixth form or university.

Whether you are delivering a presentation, at a careers fair or delivering a workshop, talk about the positives of your career and what inspired you to join early years and what motivated you to stay. Rather than focusing on which qualifications they require, talk about development opportunities whilst they work, the importance of the profession and bust existing myths.

Communication hints and tips for young people:

- Be prepared to share your own experiences which they can relate to
- Where possible, ask about them and their aspirations
- Actively listen and mirror their language
- Be engaged, caring, non-judgemental and empathetic
- Be aware of your body language
- Ask open-ended questions.





5. Engaging with parents/carers

Parents/carers are a huge source of inspiration, motivation, guidance and support for young people. Be prepared to communicate with parents at careers fairs and open events to share why you are encouraging their young people to start their career in the early years sector. Parents/carers might have more questions than their young people, and it is important to ensure their questions are answered. If you are unable to answer them there and then, consider arranging a private catch up to talk more in depth about career pathways in early years.

Parents might ask about:

- **Qualifications** - Talk about the schemes and training which are available to their young people and how nurseries support them through this
- **Career progression** - NDNA's Career Roadmap is a helpful tool to show how their young person might progress
- **Salary expectations** - Help young people to make informed decisions by discussing a range of salaries from new starter to management roles
- **Working hours and responsibilities** - This may change based on nursery settings, type of contact and level of practitioner. It is important to give a good idea of how this might change over time.

Insight

Breaking the stigma

There are often common misconceptions and stigmas which surround working in the early years sector. In response to their questions, you can share your insight into early years, how you were inspired to join the sector, and what motivates you each day in your role.

6. Support with your young people engagement

6.1 Create a team action plan

We recognise how busy nurseries are and to carry out all of this on your own is a huge challenge. To successfully engage with young people consistently, NDNA recommend putting this toolkit to action as part of a team which crosses multiple nurseries. Our local NDNA Networks are an ideal place to start.

6.2 Steps to achieve young people engagement as a team

1. Establish your team. At your next local NDNA Network event, ask for enthusiastic involvement
2. Create a list of the schools/colleges/sixth forms/universities in your local area
3. As a team, note down who will be approaching which education setting to prevent duplication
4. Discuss your availability and comfort levels for a wide scale of events
5. As opportunities come in from education settings, refer to your team action plan to decide who will attend. Note nurseries which are actively recruiting and share this information at events
6. Provide support and encouragement to your early years colleagues ahead of events. Don't forget to check in to see how successful it was
7. Feedback to your network about the event, include any changes that would be beneficial for the next event and pass on contact details where relevant.

6.3 Other sources of support

Training providers often have relationships with education settings, so get in touch and see if they would like to be involved in your team action plan or attend the events with you. Even if they are unable to attend, they may be able to provide resources for your event.

7. Measure success

No event is complete without assessing its success. Within your young people engagement team, track how many young people you have spoken to, how many requested additional information or how many came to your open evenings. By tracking this information, your team can see which events are most successful. Don't forget to share these figures with NDNA at www.ndna.org.uk/YPengagementtoolkit

By feeding back to NDNA about your successes, we are able to support you with more resources which are relevant to your future young people engagement.

