

Case study: Childcare Works Project - Trainee Nursery Assistant Experience

Lauren Walters participated in NDNA Cymru's 16-week Childcare Works programme that was delivered in RCT from October to February 2024.

The programme was funded by The Moondance Foundation and supported 5 Trainee Nursery Assistants.

The trainees completed 4 weeks of training, followed by 12 weeks on placement in a childcare setting.

Lauren completed her placement at Stepping Stones Nursery in Rhondda Cynon Taf and this case study shares her journey and experience of participating in the programme.



I was so excited to learn, I've always enjoyed working with children when volunteering with a musical theatre group, but the timing was never good to go back to college with having children of my own, so getting the qualifications I needed to work in childcare wasn't going to happen.

The interview with Claudia, however nerve-wracking, was very exciting and not being asked the usual interview questions had me at ease as I tend to crumble during interviews. Throughout the first four weeks of training, getting into a routine, was the hardest part of it all but having a complete timetable to know what we were learning and when helped massively. I loved the Paediatric first aid course, I really felt like I learned a lot from that, learning about children's schemas and most importantly the importance of the first five years in a child's development.

Being involved in this project gave me the chance to meet new people which I loved, I'm a sociable person and sometimes I find that being a mother can be quite isolating, so being able to get out was great and this project gave me a sense of purpose. As my placement in Stepping Stones began I worked in the Shooting Stars room, where I was able to plan my own activities, including 1 to 1's which allowed me to really bond with the children, I also took the lead in the dance and movement activities every shift.

I really felt that I was finding my place but unfortunately my personal life took a turn, just before Christmas my mum passed away after a four-year battle with cancer, a week after my mum's funeral my grandfather had a massive heart attack which resulted in brain death. His funeral was on the last day of my placement however, I didn't want to miss my final day in the nursery. Two weeks after my grandfather had passed my 2-year-old was hospitalised after breathing difficulties and low oxygen levels due to an infection. It's safe to say my mental health took a tumble but having my dream job kept me going, being able to work helped me massively.

During all the hardships, the support I received from Claudia, Sarah Coates and Stepping Stones was fundamental to me not giving up my place on the project and I'm so grateful because on my final day of placement I was offered a job there.

I will forever be grateful to Claudia, NDNA and the Moondance Foundation for giving me a chance to not only better myself career-wise but also helping me become a better mum, I have so much more patience and understanding of my own children now, playdough and kinetic sand is now our favourite activity because after all a game of peek-a-boo can really change the world.

I really believe that this project was the beginning of the rest of my life.

Thank You.

Lauren Walters



Comment from Stepping Stones Nursery, Rhondda Cynon Taf

“Lauren has been fabulous and like a breath of fresh air.”

For further information contact

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