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Case study: Childcare Works Project - Trainee Nursery Assistant Experience

Chelsey participated in NDNA Cymru's 16-week Childcare Works programme that was delivered in Pembrokeshire from July to October 2025.

The programme was funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and supported 12 participants from Pembrokeshire.

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

Chelsey completed her placement at Stepping Stones Nursery in Haverfordwest and this case study shares her journey and experience of participating in the programme.



I participated in the Childcare Works Project through NDNA as a Trainee Nursery Assistant. The programme was delivered in Pembrokeshire, West Wales from June 2025- end of October 2025. This programme was funded by the government to get individuals back into work in Childcare settings.

I was very lucky to have had an opportunity to be a part of this awesome programme. It involved 4weeks of training and 12 weeks of placement. I attended Stepping Stones Nursery in Haverfordwest.

When I was volunteering for a charity in Pembrokeshire at the time, I heard that there was a project starting working with children. I was really excited when I heard this news and wanted to go for it. I was interviewed by the Project Coordinator, she made me feel at ease and less anxious.

Working with children is a dream of mine and has been since secondary school. I have had some experience supporting children in the past, through work experience, volunteering and also had a paid job working in a holiday club/afterschool club alongside doing an Early Years degree at UWTSD Carmarthen, but was only able to finish and pass two years of the three-year course due to my mental health.

I have been living in supported housing just over three years due to my ADHD and my anxiety disorder. My disabilities have made it difficult for me in previous employment as I had the added pressure to excel and to



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show employers that I was worthy of the employment, even though I have these difficulties in life. Due to my disabilities, I have found it hard to keep a job, which makes me feel quite embarrassed, so when this opportunity arose, I was extremely happy to be accepted and wanted to challenge myself.

Before starting the 4 weeks of training, I was quite anxious about whether I would be able to keep my focus when training and understanding certain aspects of the training due to my ADHD. The training was very informative and interactive which helped me to learn and have a better understanding of the different childcare related topics.

Our tutors were extremely supportive throughout my journey of the project and gave me the guidance I needed. They also supported me through my anxieties with placement and any problems I had with training too.

I then attended Stepping Stones Nursery for the 12 weeks of placement which was a great experience, but also a roller-coaster too. I was quite anxious to start placement but when I got to know the children and the routine of the nursery it got easier, which made me enjoy my time more at the nursery. I had a lot of experience working in the 2+ room, but was also able to explore and have experience with working with the other age groups.

I also had experience working with the older children and some experience with children under the age of 2, and I loved this age group I found it so rewarding. I never thought I would have enjoyed working with the older children but I did. I found I connected with one of older children due to their difficulties which reminded me of my younger self and having an understanding on how to support that child correctly.

I found that when any child was struggling or just having a bad day, I would think on my feet more on how to support that child due to their needs and their interests. I would really like to work with ALN children in the future, I would find that so interesting.

For example, the child I said I felt quite connected to was outside in the nursery garden with other children and I got him engaged by showing my interest in the activity book they brought from home. I sat with the child, listened and interacted with them when they explained the book to me. I think they enjoyed the interaction with me as I was giving them my full attention.

Throughout the 12 weeks I felt that I was more anxious some days/weeks and I felt I wouldn't be able to finish my 12 weeks of placement, but tried to conquer my worries of not doing well and I wanted to show myself, with having my difficulties, I can do this and I can succeed.

I am very pleased to have been offered employment at Stepping Stones Nursery to continue my childcare journey. I definitely would recommend this project to anyone who has a dream or would love to work with children in the future.

"IF I CAN DO IT, YOU CAN!!"



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Feedback from placement nursery:

"Chelsey is like a breath of fresh air! She has a really good work ethic too. She is doing very well indeed and the staff value her already and say she is gaining more confidence each week.

She engages with the children really well- the, children have taken to her very quickly- and this is all down to Chelsey's lovely warm personality.

We are keen to keep her on once the project has ended as she has shown herself as a hard worker and empathetic. She has fitted in perfectly at Stepping Stones and we want her to stay."

For further information contact

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