

Case Study: Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Accredited Training

- The SEND course was accredited and free.
- It provided useful tools to create an inclusive nursery.
- The learning could be cascaded to all nursery staff.
- The knowledge and tools enabled improved communication with parents.

Introduction

The Wandle Early Years Hub (WEYH) focussed on improving support for children with SEND. The hub commissioned London Borough of Merton Early Years (a hub partner) to write an accredited SEND course for practitioners.

Practitioners keen to improve their ability to lead practice for children with SEND were additionally motivated by the level 3 qualification.

The content was built on SEND challenges that practitioners had identified, leading to a particular focus on language and communication issues. The course was modular, with four modules delivered over four days. Each module had two assignments, one an essay and one practical.

The participant

Mary is a day nursery manager of a large nursery in one of the 10% most deprived areas in the country. It has a Good Ofsted rating and offers all year round full daycare provision for children aged eight weeks to five years.

Mary did all four modules and the eight assignments required by the course. She appreciated the range of topics covered and the fact that there were many practical tasks involved. She would not have been able to have done this type of training had it not been free.

Mary's motivating factors in undertaking the SEND accredited course

"I wanted to become the day nursery SENCO so that I had some key strategies and skills to work with children and places and put early intervention in place for children. As a day nursery we are not required by Ofsted to have a named SENCO. It was about getting parents on board that there was something else we needed to do to help them with their learning and get them school ready."

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Mary wanted to:

- acquire the confidence to tackle conversations with parents about their child's extra help requirements and to have a joint approach to supporting the child
- cascade learning, not just to professionals working with children with additional support needs, but across the whole staff team
- use her new knowledge and skills to be able to put in place further CPD that would benefit her staff.

The key learning Mary took away from the course

"I introduced an ABCC chart – antecedent behaviour, communication and consequence – into the nursery practice. This makes you take a step back and look at the triggers for behaviour and what it is telling us. It was used with one of the children I was working with. It's also a good tool for working with parents. You are able to look at what was the trigger and then look at what can be put in place. You are looking for patterns instead of just seeing the behaviour."

"It has been very important that I know what to say to parents, how to say it and have parents involved from the start. Generally, we have really good communication with parents, but the parents have said it has been very useful to know what we are working towards."

Mary also learned about:

- undertaking an inclusion audit e.g. assessing activities, set up of rooms, equipment and materials for any impact on sensory processing
- strategies for running an effective language group for children who are not communicating at the expected level. This is an activity Mary continues to run in the nursery
- putting in place SEND support plans for children, using a process of "assess, plan, do and review". This was also found to be beneficial for working with parents.
- tools for good communication with parents that encourage a joint strategy for tackling their child's particular issues. This has been beneficial when an EHCP application becomes necessary because the evidence has already been collected.
- the knowledge and tools required to confidently apply for SENIS (a local Inclusion Fund).

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