

Case Studies: Parents' Pathways to Employment in the Early Years Sector

- Parents' motivation to work in the early years sector is often through seeing their own child's development.
- Combining theory and practical activity helps embed learning.
- Parents need high levels of commitment, and effective planning and time management skills.

The following mini case studies are about the journey of some parents from the three hubs.

Parent A

A has a background in education in her home country and became interested in pursuing a career in early years after receiving specialised support to help her child's speech and language development.

A attended volunteer training and an 'Introduction to Childcare' information session delivered by Wandsworth Lifelong Learning (a partner in the Wandle Early Years Hub). After an induction and some training, she did a volunteering placement for two hours per day, four days a week at her local children's centre. She received outstanding feedback from her distance learning tutor and is on track to successfully complete her course and obtain her level 3 qualification. At the time of her interview, she had amassed significant experience, acquired highly employable skills and had applied for a job in a nursery and been shortlisted for interview.

Parent B

M is married, has two primary school children and works part-time as a security guard. She completed a level 3 apprenticeship at a BEYA nursery in April 2019. In September 2019 she was offered a one-year term-time-only contract in the nursery's baby unit. M had to juggle an apprenticeship (working full-time and studying) alongside her family commitments and holding down a part-time job. She found this challenging but rewarding. She learned a lot about early education and has valued the opportunity to learn both on and off the job.

“The course was definitely worth doing – it really helps you to learn – studying and practice – doing both at the same time means that what you learn in the book you can put into practice.”

She puts her success down to:

- good planning
- being organised
- being prepared to sacrifice your own time and
- reminding yourself of why you are doing what you are doing.

“You have to believe in your success because that's very important – you need to believe you will succeed that you can really do it. If I hadn't believed I could do it I wouldn't have done it. You need to think everything through. Organise yourself. Think how it will change your life and what sacrifices you'll have to make. If you want something in life you need to work at it. Nothing comes ready on a tray – you get pleasure when you achieve. You have to expect hard work. Once you put hard work into it, it pays off. “

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Parent C

In 2018 N had a four-year-old daughter in reception year.

N had previously worked as an administrator in the textile and fashion industry for over seven years. N decided to leave her job so she could better support her daughter's transition from nursery to school. Initially N thought that she would be an unemployed parent but began to explore other options. Recognising how much she enjoyed watching and helping her daughter to learn and develop, N realised that she would love to work with children. However she had no idea where to start or how to go about making this career change.

About this time, she received an email from BEYA inviting her to an open day for people who wanted to work in early education. N began a level 2 Skills for Teaching and Learning (STL) course in September 2018.

As part of the course N undertook a volunteering placement - a full day with a Year 1 pupils and half a day with Year 2 pupils as part of a Forest School.

N now works as a lunchtime playleader and provides cover for teaching assistants and learning support assistants as required.

N is enthusiastic and excited about her new career.

"I would tell them to search for the schools / courses relevant to their aim. If they feel highly passionate about teaching, I would recommend them to go for teaching training in a university. I would certainly say that working with children, observing their developments and supporting them have been the most amazing experience so far in my life. It is far more rewarding than any job in my opinion. And I can say this, having had 28 years of professional business experience in office environments, before my current role.