

training talk



FOR WHY
Nasen's Early Years SEND Resources helped Jen Malins to address the 'why' and not just the 'what' in

observations. By **Gabriella Jozwiak**

The team of four practitioners at Milly's Nursery School in Basingstoke, Hampshire take a united approach to supporting children with special educational needs or disability (SEND). This strategy grew from in-house training delivered by manager and director Jen Malins, using face-to-face continual professional development materials by the National Association for Special Educational Needs (Nasen).

Available to download from its website, the Nasen pack includes presentations, handouts, and links to webcasts and online resources. It covers five topics including the role of the SENCO, inclusive practice and whole-setting approaches to SEND.

Ms Malins began using the resources in September 2017. At the time they cared for a four-year-old boy with delayed development. After working through the resources on the role of the SENCO, Malins and her team decided to ensure each staff member knew exactly what the setting's SENCO had recommended so they could deliver a consistent approach. 'We all sat together and discussed a care plan,' says Ms Malins. They applied for an education, health and care plan, and the boy moved on to school.

Ms Malins uses the Nasen 'personal SEND and inclusion audit' form with every new team member. It asks staff to detail their experience and rate their own confidence and knowledge. 'We all discovered we didn't know as much as we thought,' says Ms Malins. They used the training on characteristics of inclusive learning to change the way they wrote child observations.

Upon completion of a Nasen session, users can download a certificate. Nasen recommends users deliver the face-to-face materials over five one-hour sessions. However, Ms Malins picked and chose what she used. Nasen also offers webcasts, miniguides and an introductory guide for early years practitioners.

→ www.nasen.org.uk/early-years-send-resources

training

New apprentice

The early years trailblazer group is now in its third incarnation, and busy devising apprenticeship standards at Levels 5 and 6. By **Hannah Crown**

Early years apprenticeships may not sound like a gripping subject for a TV drama, but the last five years have had just about as much intrigue and plot twists as US serial *House of Cards*, with threats, sackings, dramatic resignations, and even allegations of bullying. But despite the first group of employers having met in 2014 to devise and define the first apprenticeship 'standards', the sector still has none to its name.

Two apprenticeship groups have come and gone, one having been sacked. The second group resigned, citing concerns about the process not being employer-led. Former chair Fay Gibbin is still working on trying to get the Level 3 standard ready for use. At the time of writing, this standard, supposedly the first to emerge, is still 'subject to further discussions,' according to an Institute for Apprenticeships spokesman.



However, there is progress in the form of a third trailblazer group, working on standards at Levels 5 and 6. The group, which is chaired by Laura



Upton (pictured below left), workforce improvement advisor at Leicestershire County Council, will hold a workshop in mid-January to write two new standards.

'The IfA have agreed the group can continue to develop the standards for Levels 5 and 6,' says Ms Upton. These are a Level 5 Early Years Senior Practitioner and a Level 6 Early Years Lead Practitioner. While there are existing Level 5 and 6 qualifications, degree-level apprenticeships are new.

CAREER PROGRESSION

An early years careers map showing how different qualifications interrelate has been

funding

The lack of up-to-date apprenticeships in the early years sector is a problem for quality. It means that apprentices are in effect missing out on thousands of pounds in funding.

This is because apprentices are still judged against a poorly funded framework, rather than the better-funded apprenticeship standard. Current frameworks provide about £2,500 per apprentice. According to the IfA, the new Level 3 standard has been given an indicative funding band of £6,000-£8,000. A source told *Nursery World* it was believed that the likely level will be towards £6,000.

It's not known what funding is likely to be available for the early years standards at Levels 5 and 6, but the new trailblazer group can provide quotes to the IfA 'route panel' indicating how much they think the standard should be funded for.

Ms Upton said, 'We are focusing on developing high-quality standards and end-point assessment plans for the two occupations. We have the opportunity to submit provider and endpoint assessment organisation quotes when we submit our end-point assessment plan and we will definitely take up that opportunity. It is then up to the IfA and ultimately the Secretary of State for Education to decide which funding bands the standards are allocated to.'

The Level 5 standard for a Children, Young People and Families Manager (aimed at a manager of a Children's Centre or other community organisation, or in children's residential care) has been allocated £6,000. A teaching apprenticeship, at Level 6, has been awarded £7,000, while a teaching assistant apprenticeship at Level 3 has been awarded £5,000.

ship standards

End-point assessment

A big change under the new standard will be the end-point assessment: a final assessment of an apprentice's knowledge and practical capabilities.

The assessment will be graded (in most cases) and the assessment organisation and assessor must be independent of the training provided by the provider and employer. Crucially, the employer will have to choose the end-point assessment organisation, which should be on this list (<https://bit.ly/2s78ji5>), and negotiate fees with them, though in practice many training providers are doing this. Only those on

the RoAAO list are eligible to be funded.

According to the Education And Skills Funding Agency, the cost of end-point assessment should not usually exceed 20 per cent of the funding band maximum. 'This does not mean that end-point assessment must cost 20 per cent; the cost that employers will pay for assessment varies between standards and we expect employers to negotiate with organisations to secure value for money. The assessment costs include any costs related to external quality assurance of the end-point assessment,' the guidance reads.

devised to promote progression in the sector, and the routes are intended to align with this. Ms Upton said she was 'keen to ensure any proposed developments are right for the sector and in line with the [early years] careers map; the group are working closely with the DfE to ensure congruence and clear career pathways'.

Members of the group 'wish to develop routes that are evidence-informed and place child development at the heart of the proposals', she added.

While what will go into the new standards remains to be written, the careers map has a breakdown of key responsibilities for these roles. According to the map, an Early Years Senior Practitioner (Level 5) will:

- have specific responsibilities for room leadership and/or safeguarding and SEND
- have responsibilities over curriculum planning
- work alongside others to provide high-quality learning environments.

An Early Years Lead Practitioner (Level 6, degree level) will:

- be a room leader
- lead curriculum planning
- supervise others and manage staff
- be responsible for recordkeeping and lead safeguarding.

The degree-level apprenticeship will allow the student to gain a full degree while working and studying. There will be an attempt to align the qualification with new graduate competencies, which have been devised by the Early Childhood Studies Degrees Network, which sits on the panel, as an optional bolt-on to a degree to indicate

that a level of rigour has been met. They will be awarded by universities to students who have had 80 days of assessed placement experience and have demonstrated the skill in applying the holistic knowledge and understanding that underpins early childhood in practice at Level 6, with children aged birth to eight. They also indicate that students will count in ratios.

The new group has 25 members and was initially set up with 'interested parties' from the Midlands, including the universities of Northampton and Derby, Birmingham Metropolitan, West Nottinghamshire and Loughborough Colleges and Derby City Council. Also involved are group Kids Planet and Showcase Training. New members can apply by email (see Further information).

When asked how members of the group came to be chosen, Ms Upton said, 'Consideration was given to a wide range of providers and employers on a national scale. It was important to consider large day nurseries and smaller settings. We want to make sure the standards appeal to as wide a range of providers as possible and have ensured the trailblazer group is thoroughly representative of the early years sector.'

A spokesman for Leicestershire Council said, 'Laura has lots of contact with all parts of the early years sector from small pack-away pre-schools to the large chains and has excellent links with Leicestershire's thriving early years postgraduate network.' ■

Further information

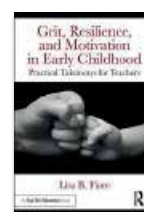
- To apply to the trailblazer group, email laura.upton@leics.gov.uk
- Funding, <https://bit.ly/2BVpAPO>



Men in Early Years Settings: Building a mixed gender workforce

By David Wright and Simon Brownhill
(Jessica Kingsley, £18.99)

The number of men in early years has hovered around the 2 per cent mark for decades. 'It really matters that nurturing, fun, wild, calm, eccentric, cerebral, artistic, or empathetic men are not involved in children's early years care and education,' argue the authors. The reasons are explored in detail in this definitive guide to addressing the idea of a mixed-gender culture. It features original research with male early years practitioners and the wider sector to provoke thinking on the issue.

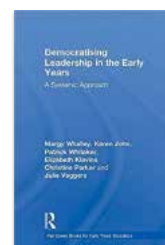


Grit, Resilience and Motivation in Early Childhood

By Lisa B Fiore
(Routledge, £21.59)

Written for a US audience, this text nonetheless provides

a useful guide to practical applications for educators to understand research which strengthens young children. For example, in the chapter on 'grit' is an activity about how to turn 'whoops' moments into 'wow' moments. Concepts such as motivation and resilience are explored in detail, as are risk factors such as poverty and a child's environment.



Democratising Leadership in the Early Years: A Systemic Approach

Contributions from Margy Whalley, Karen John and Patrick Whitaker
(Pen Green Books for

Early Years Educators)

How can early years settings develop leadership in collaboration with other services? Drawing on the authors' experience, which ranges from the director of Pen Green Centre to a developmental psychologist, this book provides advice on how to overcome barriers and create accessible and inclusive services.