

Robert Robertson: early years' practitioner

My name's Robert Robertson and I'm an early year's practitioner at Springvale early years centre in Saltcoats.

When I was at Springvale I then decided to go and do my BA. I've been asked to talk about my leadership capabilities and my experience of collaborative working so that's basically what this is about.

I am enthusiastic and I want the best for the children that are in my care, but sometimes it's beneficial to challenge yourself now and again and when this happens with my colleagues I offer support to them and I trust that they will try their best when you're giving them that support.

Obviously I work in a predominantly female environment and I've been told that I am a positive male role model, eh, not only to the children but to the staff and the parents that are using the establishment.

When I'm in the nursery setting I look at things differently, I kinda use three and four year olds eyes when I'm looking to set up an area. I'll think of a child coming in what would they like to see, what would they like to do? So when my area's set up that's how I set it up em and any changes that I envisage I share with the staff and I encourage them to take on board anything maybe that I've implemented there.

Y'know try it out, if it doesn't work, it doesn't work, try something else. Em and one such thing that I like doing, I like the aspect of risky play. Our early years intervention social worker, she recognised my passion for outdoors and the outdoor environment, so, she offered me the opportunity to collaborate with a team from the local allotments. This allowed me to build another leadership capability, in leading the initiative I had to organise the transport, secure parental support, risk assess and think about the staffing who were going to be involved and that and here's what happened.

There was lots of talking, there was lots of listening, there was lots of relationship building between the adults and the children but above all there was lots of fun.

My vision was to transfer the skills and my knowledge gained in the allotments to the centre using the nursery garden and to empower the children as little leaders of learning. They're sharing their knowledge through discussion and hands on experiences. As a result, staff are more motivated to offer more opportunities to do different things outdoors.