



An Inclusion Hub's Journey

Developing Inclusive Practice and Supporting the Early Years

Being an Inclusion Hub and going through the upskilling process was like giving us all a box of magic tricks to use in our settings, but also to train us to be confident enough and in a position to support other settings. The information and confidence practitioners at the setting have gained has empowered and enabled them to grow professionally.

The course content was created to arm us with the most important basics of what we all need to support children with special needs, but much of it was relevant for all children. This has meant that as a setting we are more knowledgeable, informed and confident in all areas of SEND. We have had more members of staff trained as SENCOs, which means we now have a SENCO in every area of the nursery. We started to have fortnightly catch up meetings with all the SENCOs, where we discuss concerns about children and ICAT plans and we share strategies for individual children. The Area SENCO then has a meeting with the staff where that child is and supports them with being on hand. This heightened knowledge and confidence means we, as a setting, are well placed to support other Early Years settings.

Can you give an example of something you have implemented in your setting?

One of the most valuable things we have done as a setting is to create a resource library that all staff have access to, to help them to better support children. For example, if they need symbols for a visual timetable, or strategies on how to manage transitions for children with ASD, these are available in the resource library. When any member of staff attended a training session, they were given the time and asked to add the information they had gathered to the resource library, make up any specific resources and cascade their training to others, and be on hand to support other practitioners with implementing the resource.

We invite any Early Years setting in Kingston or Richmond to visit us and find out more about the resource library and how it has improved our inclusive practice.

How has your practice changed?

We certainly have more frequent professional discussions on a daily basis about SEND and of course our knowledge has grown, but mainly it is about our journey around increasing our confidence. We are now far more confident, right from the initial contact with parents when they say, "Can you take my child?". We have always said yes but we all feel so much more confident that we can now make a difference for that child. All staff feel more confident knowing that they are supported by a designated Area SENCO and that all children are regularly discussed with the team of SENCOs to ensure nothing is missed and support can be implemented quickly.



Inclusion Hub

We also now have the confidence and feel equipped to offer peer-to-peer support to other Early Years settings. We can share strategies and examples from our own inclusive practice that we have been constantly working on and developing over the last year.

How can other Early Years settings benefit?

Being an Inclusion Hub has proved to be so invaluable as an opportunity to network, discuss, debate and share experiences with like-minded people who all want to do the best for all children, but particularly for children with SEND. We all share a common goal! This is something that we, as an Inclusion Hub, can offer to other Early Years settings in Kingston and Richmond. We can be your support network and discuss your concerns and any issues.

Conclusion

None of us particularly like change, but I can honestly say that being a part of the Inclusion Hub has changed our practice so much for the better, for all our children, but particularly for those with SEND. I would like to think that like the rainbow, it has no end, we will have further opportunities to extend our knowledge even further and share this with other settings too.

Hazel Moody

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