

## Case study: Developmental pathways for children 0-3 years

Sunray Daycare Nursery is a two-story barn conversion situated in a rural setting on the outskirts of Mold, Flintshire. Lynne Northcroft is owner and director of Sunray, who alongside her family opened Sunray in June 2010 with the birth of their first little boy, Edward.

Sunray Daycare Nursery provides full daycare for children, from 3 months, up until a child attends school full time. Sunray receives nursery education funding. Sunray also operates wraparound and holiday club care, with the holiday club offering care for children up to the age of 12 during school holidays.

Due to the location of the building, the children have extensive access to the outdoors and the opportunity to experience nature in all seasons. The nursery is spacious but prides themselves on maintaining a homely, loving and happy environment filled with fun, challenging and thought-provoking learning opportunities for every child's development.

The name Sunray originated from the Northcroft's family farm in Zimbabwe. The name Sunray depicts a new beginning and a new life.

### Reflecting on existing practice and considering how to incorporate the Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care (ECPLC) guidance documents into practice:

Through inspections by CIW and Estyn, Sunray has been recognised as effective in evaluating and making improvements that benefit the children and the care they receive. Staff work together well and feel supported in this cycle of self-improvement. Once the ECPLC documents (ECPLC: Developmental Pathways 0 to 3, ECPLC: Reflective Practice Toolkit, A Quality Framework for ECPLC in Wales) were shared with the setting, managers shared them with staff and encouraged them to spend time reading and digesting the information. The documents were added to the agenda of a staff meeting for all staff to bring their thoughts, questions and any concerns to the group and the management team.

The team discussed what they currently do across the setting, how this flows throughout the different rooms and considered how they could support incorporation of the guidance to enhance their practice across the setting.

The response from staff to the documents was positive and they felt they supported the setting's existing ethos of child led learning. Staff felt the documents were informative and useful to guide them in improving their practice.

### **Engaging with professional learning opportunities to support knowledge and understanding:**

As well as asynchronous reading of the documents and professional discussions supported within team and staff meetings, Sunray also accessed a range of training opportunities that were made available to them.

Two members of staff attended local authority training with Kym Scott (Early childhood consultant) which focused on all aspects of development for children 0-4 years. The training was hosted by the Flintshire early education team and was aimed at supporting practitioners to understand the principles and pedagogy of the [curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings](#) alongside the [Developmental Pathways for 0-3](#). Following the training, the two staff members disseminated and shared information from the training with colleagues.

Staff members attended NDNA Cymru's 'Introduction to Early Childhood, Play Learning and Care (ECPLC) in Wales' webinar. The webinar offered practitioners an introduction to the documents, how they can use them to support their practice and gave an opportunity to ask questions.

Following the information webinars, staff from Sunray reached out to NDNA Cymru and in particular, Hayley Grayson, NDNA Cymru's Early Years Education Officer, for further support in implementing the ECPLC: Developmental Pathways 0 to 3.

Hayley supported staff members to engage with the Welsh Government online [Hwb playlist](#) modules. A suite of modules and supporting information in the form of infographics and training videos designed to assist practitioners to reflect on practice and provision in understanding the five developmental pathways, pedagogy and schematic development. Staff felt these learning opportunities supported their underpinning knowledge and understanding of the pathways and pedagogy, which developed their confidence in considering how to support children's holistic development through the pathways.

### **Supporting practitioners with implementation:**

Following professional learning, whole staff team discussions and support from NDNA Cymru, staff felt more confident in approaching the roll out of the developmental pathways across the setting, with all staff being engaged within the process.

Leaders within rooms worked together to develop information folders for each room within the nursery, which included information from the ECPLC Developmental Pathways 0 to 3, the Quality Framework and curriculum documents relevant to the developmental needs of the children within the room with ideas and suggestions on how aspects could be incorporated into practice. These folders were established to support staff with beginning the process of incorporating and including elements from the guidance documents within their practice. The folders are easily accessible and provide consistency across the setting.

Leaders collated questions and concerns from staff members and reached out to Hayley for further support. Hayley visited the setting and discussed the questions and concerns with staff. Following the visit, leaders used the feedback and advice to create a new planning document and planning board for use across the setting. Staff feel this has been a great success.

Planning boards have been placed in each room within the setting for staff to input their ideas for planning based upon their interactions and observations of children's interests, needs and ongoing development. These boards are then used to inform and enhance planning documents to support children's learning and development.

Sunray host monthly meetings between staff and the management team to discuss ongoing implementation, review progress and to discuss next steps. Staff feel this is a valuable part of the process, where they feel supported, with additional help offered where necessary and progress is celebrated. Sunray also have a curriculum focused email address where staff send; photos of thoughts and ideas to be collated, questions and concerns to be addressed and requests for further support.

### **How changes have impacted children within the setting:**

Staff at Sunray state that adopting the developmental pathways throughout the setting has had a positive impact on the children. They feel the planning process they have developed, collaboratively, has built upon and improved their existing child led approach. Staff feel the child-led ethos has become more embedded into their practice throughout the setting in a developmentally appropriate way. Staff feel confident in understanding children's development needs and using their knowledge of the children to plan and provide appropriate resources to support children to develop a range of skills. Staff are communicating using the same language which has helped to develop smoother transitions into, through and out of the setting. Implementation of the developmental pathways has supported staff to effectively support each child individually.

Staff have also used the developmental pathways to reflect on their effective environments, engaging experiences and themselves as enabling adults. Staff use the "I need to..." statements to

ensure their provision supports development in a holistic and authentic way in the environments and experiences they offer. They use the “my...is supported by adults who...” to guide themselves as enabling adults in supporting development and making the most of the teachable moments that occur during play. They have used their observations of children in play to notice how they interact with the environment and other children and have responded to these with adaptations and changes to the indoor and outdoor areas. All this work has resulted in happy children who have a sense of belonging, they enjoy their play and learning, as they are able to follow their interests. Staff feel that children interact well with each other and the environment, showing respect to both.

Practitioners at Sunray felt that the developmental pathways encouraged them to offer extensive opportunities for children to develop their independence and children are encouraged to do things for themselves. Subsequent observations have highlighted children showing more independent skills naturally and without the requirement of a prompt. They freely access resources and choose what and where they want to play.

### Next steps

Sunray has already begun the next step in their journey of implementation by sharing initial ideas around how to improve their observation process. Due to the setting being extremely large with high numbers of children registered, managers and leaders want to ensure that observations are manageable for staff. Sunray wish to streamline their process and make it more purposeful and impactful on their provision and practice. Sunray has included the observation process as a topic for ongoing curriculum meetings and staff are encouraged to share their own thoughts and ideas. Sunray will again use guidance provided from the Welsh Government and encourage professional discussion and engagement with professional learning from the local authority and umbrella organisation. Through the local authority, Sunray also attend meetings where they discuss their journey and give and receive support and feedback from other settings. They would like to develop further setting to setting collaboration in the future and regularly seek opportunities to do so.

### Further support

- Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care: **Developmental Pathways 0 to 3** - <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/early-childhood-play-learning-and-care-in-wales>
- **Curriculum** for funded non-maintained nursery settings - <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/curriculum-for-funded-non-maintained-nursery-settings/>
- **Assessment** arrangements for funded non-maintained nursery settings – <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/curriculum-and-assessment-arrangements-for->

[funded-non-maintained-nursery-settings/assessment-arrangements-for-funded-non-maintained-nursery-settings/](#)

- A curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings: **modules and supporting information**, Hwb - <https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/resource/d34b921e-3b07-4524-87b5-e461540c5ff7/overview>
- Professional learning: foundation learning support for practitioners in schools and settings – **modules** - <https://hwb.gov.wales/repository/resource/b8781f79-5eb7-4548-a20e-a17b0da88df2/overview>