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WHAT MADE YOU APPLY FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP ROLE?

I chose to complete an apprenticeship rather than attending university as I am a very practical person and prefer to work and get 'real-life experience' rather than being sat in a room listening to a lecturer. My concentration does not last very long in environments like this too, and I find I focus far better being more 'hands-on' in a job. Another positive is that whilst completing an apprenticeship, you are essentially being paid to learn a new skill which is a huge bonus!

HOW HAVE YOU FOUND THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING AN APPRENTICE?

The apprentice is fully supported throughout their apprenticeship by both their colleagues and mentor, which arguably enables it to feel less daunting than beginning a completely new job with no familiarity to it.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE BENEFITS OF AN APPRENTICESHIP ROUTE?

The most salient benefit of becoming an apprentice is that you are able to learn completely novel skills (or build on existing skills) that perhaps were not an option earlier on in life. This can then open up opportunities to you that would not have been available otherwise. Moreover, another benefit of completing an apprenticeship is that you are being paid whilst learning skills that you hold an interest in. Whilst completing an apprenticeship you are able to learn life skills in the workplace that can then be taken to future careers such as independence, teamwork, resilience, respect, and good work ethic.

An apprenticeship also allows individuals to seem more employable to employers as they recognise you are working a full-time job as well as completing coursework, which portrays dedication and a good work ethic.

WHAT'S BEEN THE MOST REWARDING PART OF YOUR APPRENTICESHIP SO FAR?

My confidence has grown massively since I began my apprenticeship, and my communication with others has improved too, predominantly amongst my colleagues. I have learnt so much about the career path that I would love to follow whilst working with the children in the nursery and have grown to love working with them more and more every day. I know now that I will continue working with children within the 'early years' sector for a very long time, and look forward to progressing to further career routes, such as by completing my forest schools qualification or training further to work with children who have special needs (SEN training). My independence has also grown and

I feel confident when I am at work (whilst feeling able to ask for help when necessary). Last year was difficult for everyone due to the Coronavirus, albeit it definitely taught me to adapt to change quickly and to be more flexible within the workplace.

I have learnt so much whilst working with the children such as their general behaviours, the importance of routines within the nursery, children's development (according to the EYFS), how to support children through transitions and in general, how to support children with self-care and hygiene, forest schools... the list is endless!

WHAT MAKES APPRENTICESHIPS A GOOD DEVELOPMENT ROUTE FOR YOUR CAREER?

Some opportunities from choosing an apprenticeship in a nursery are that I may be able to continue working at the setting after my apprenticeship, in a familiar environment doing a job I absolutely love. The Level 3 Early Years Educator apprenticeship provides me with the opportunity to work in many jobs within the industry such as a: nursery practitioner, Forest schools teacher (with forest schools training), nursery manager, children's support worker, childcare assessor and trainer, early help family support worker, SEN worker (with additional training), childcare skills coach and a youth enrichment worker.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE TO OFFER ANYONE CONSIDERING AN APPRENTICESHIP ROLE?

My advice would be to go for it! It's a great way to learn on the job whilst earning a salary at the same time, and there is so much life experience that can be gained from an apprenticeship. You learn within a workplace as a team as well as how to solve problems independently, building resilience, determination, dedication, and empathy.

The apprenticeship can also enable you to assess what sort of career path you would like to follow, for example, it can help you decide that you really enjoy that form of job or that you would like to try something different.

Throughout the apprenticeship, you are constantly supported both by your mentor and your colleagues in the workplace as they want you to achieve. The apprenticeship may also earn you a permanent position at that workplace by the end of it!