

National Certificates and
National Progression Awards

PLAYWORK & CHILDCARE



National Progression Award
SCQF Level 5

In Playwork and Childcare
delivered at South Lanarkshire College



Rationale

The project was designed to meet the challenges faced by people from the most deprived areas in South Lanarkshire, offering them life-changing opportunities leading to possible employment.

The group came from a variety of backgrounds, all of whom wished to work with children. The course has helped build self-esteem and develop the skills necessary to work in a variety of childcare settings.

Individually the students have gained confidence through practical learning and written research work, while their families are benefiting from their growing sense of self-worth. Students are now enthusiastic about their future employment prospects.

They have become positive role models for the children in their care and an inspiration to others thinking of undertaking this course.

Partnership Arrangements

The College works closely with South Lanarkshire Council to identify employment routes for the participants while a dedicated employability team provides support for students.

Routes To Work South help with recruitment, assessment, monitoring of attendance and delivery of employability skills, and provide some funding towards childcare and transport costs.

The project works with Local Community Centres, using the community café, crèche and gym facilities, accentuating healthy living and social skills as part of the course.

The European Social Fund and the Fairer Scotland Initiative fund a package of support for students ranging from financial assistance to training in local community centres and additional learning and pastoral support.

Delivery Approaches

All courses start with an induction programme, which includes team-building exercises. Students then study in class 2 days per week and in placement for 1 day in a variety of local child and young people settings.

They are interviewed initially by college staff when the outline and expectations of the course and their commitment is discussed, as well as childcare arrangements and funding. All students complete Enhanced Disclosure Scotland vetting.

Staff are sympathetic to the difficulties faced by these students,



including lack of confidence, family commitments and caring for elderly relatives. Each class has a designated guidance tutor and guidance slots are built into the programme. Confidence in many cases was raised due to being in a supported peer group.

Students are provided with some resources, stationary, a textbook, dictionary and a college sport shirt to wear in placement.

The course is delivered across 3 venues – Larkhall near Hamilton, Whitlawburn in Cambuslang, and Hillhouse in Hamilton. These are situated in the heart of their communities, making it easier for students to pursue lifelong learning. All centres are equipped with meeting rooms, computer rooms, kitchens and toilets and some have libraries. Entrance ways are ramped and toilets designed for disabled users.

Transferable Skills

During placements, students are given opportunities to observe good practice and are allocated a mentor to work alongside with in order to encourage reflective learning.

Students also see the importance of team-work, punctuality, timekeeping and taking instruction as they work alongside practitioners. They can relate what they have learned in theory to a practical situation, thus making connections between academic work and planning activities that encourage children to develop and learn.

On completion, students can continue their education by applying for the NC Early Education and

Childcare. Others may apply for session work with the local authority during the Easter and Summer play schemes.

In some case students enjoy their childcare placements so much, they continue on a voluntary basis. This can lead to employment.

Centre Evaluation

South Lanarkshire College impacts directly on local people's lives, helping them into employment, making them better parents and more active citizens in their communities.

The success of this project can be measured by the students who gain the full NPA award, enter employment or progress into further study. Of the 43 enrolled for the course, 35 are on target to gain the full award.

The majority of students had extremely negative experiences of education, but relish the praise they have received due to the high standard of work they are producing. Most are using the NPA as a stepping stone to lifelong learning, with several expressing interest in applying for NC EECC, which will involve the big step of coming to college.

External Verification of the course highlighted the enthusiasm of the lecturing staff and their ability to engage adult returners. The team were able to meet the individual needs of the student sensitively. Our cognate and course review meetings encourage professional dialogue reflecting on best practice in learning and teaching.



Future Delivery Plans

We are now offering the NPA Award in February 09 in Fairhill Lifestyle Centre in response to employers' demand and the registration requirements with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

Advice

This NPA Award has proven its value in engaging people in areas of deprivation in South Lanarkshire, in order to develop new skills and foster the confidence required to go on and pursue further education or to find employment and make a lasting contribution.

Lasting and effective partnerships are crucial to this outcome, as is a body of staff who can understand the need for more than knowledge-based learning.

Testimonials

Candidates

"Course in a community setting is ideal, local, very friendly, internet access excellent. I have developed my oral, written and communication skills."

Margaret Callaghan

"Lecturers are friendly, helpful and motivational."

Margaret Fellows

"I feel I have achieved a lot. The course boosted my confidence and increased my employability skills."

Elayne McKeegan

"The programme has been set out and explained very well."

Heather Lamont

"I feel we are doing well and able to work as part of a team."

Margaret McCardle

Deliverers

"The NPA Playwork and Childcare course equipped the students with practical skills and knowledge that allowed them to gain employment in a playwork/childcare setting."

Anne Marie Wynn – Course Leader

"Opportunities given to students who have additional support needs."

Caroline Gillespie – Support Learning Tutor

"South Lanarkshire Council employed many as sessional workers."

Chiara Verrechia – Care Lecturer

"Very positive feedback from students."

Rhona Keys – Care Lecturer, Larkhall

"Enthusiastic students who can work as a team and individually."

Jennifer Hughes – Care Lecturer, Hillhouse

"Two students offered employment while doing their placement."

Anne Marie Wynn – Care Lecturer, Whitlawburn



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