

I completed my placement in a setting of a private nursery based in Newport. This placement took children from the age of 6 weeks to 12 years old with baby, toddler, pre-school and after school club rooms.

Day 1- 16th December 2019.

I began creating Christmas cards and pictures for the children to design and take home for friends and family. I used different materials to do this, such as glitter, stickers and foil. I wanted to use sensory play as well as other forms of learning, such as reading, to explore learning differences. To experiment with the environment around me, I did this in groups when making the cards and worked with children individually to see behaviour differences. I noticed some differences, mostly how children changed their work if others were around them. Whilst working in groups, many of the children used similar designs as their peers and didn't experiment as much as when they were working alone. I spent around two hours working on this activity with them and when the cards were dry and ready to be taken home, I asked what they liked about certain designs. There were certain patterns in what children favoured, such as brighter and more colourful cards more than plainer ones. To me this showed the different levels of creativity some children had, and I noted it to explore certain children further. I noted:



"Children who appeared shy within my placement setting often followed similar designs as their peers whereas more confident children explored designs further without my assistance".

Day 2- 17th December 2019.

Today we took the children outside to explore the differences in nature over the different seasons. We brought pictures of spring, summer and autumn scenes to compare, such as showing the flowers and leaves on trees in the summer and what they looked like in autumn and what they appeared to be now it is winter. We asked open questions to observe if they could identify the differences and noted any alarming difficulties with this, such as problems with speech. From doing this I saw improvement in positive mental attitude and how it helped aesthetic awareness. I also learnt how much asking questions can encourage children to become more involved. Children asked more questions and became more interested in the activity. This showed me how children's behaviour is freer to experiment with new activities they may not have attempted indoors, such as playing with new toys (balls, ropes and sand) because they aren't in a usual routine of playing indoors with the same toys. Playing outdoors showed me key differences in children with additional learning needs also, such as a young boy undergoing therapy for ADHD being able to express himself without children around him being unsure of playing with him which often occurred indoors as there was such a wider space for him to explore.

Day 3- 18th December 2019

Sensory play was the focus of day 3 in my placement. With Christmas being present I decided to use salt dough and create tree decorations. With flour, salt and water being needed and the final 'product' only being used for decoration and not consumption, the children were able to use their hands to mix

and mould the decorations. They were given freedom to use whatever cake cutters available, often tree, Santa and penguin cutters. When they were cooked and ready for decoration, we used finger painting and sticking to encourage creativity and motor skills. I noted in my diary:

"I observed more enjoyment through sensory play with these materials compared to using card and paper as it also included the theme of messy play".

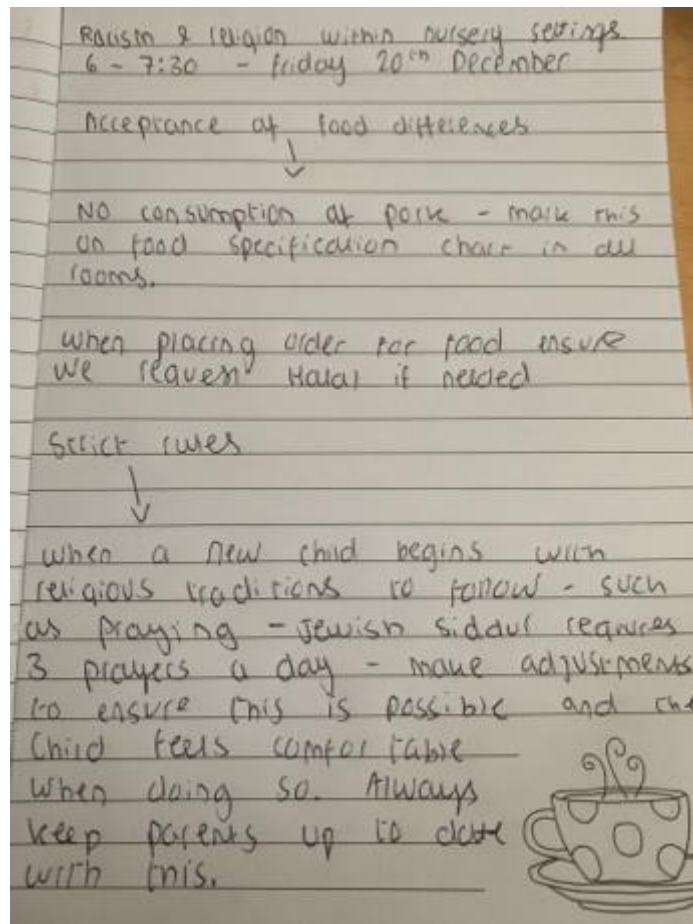
I learnt so much through sensory play as it advances my understanding of why children enjoy it and the possible reasons why some children don't. It was observed that younger children enjoyed it more compared to older, as a key word that was often used was 'dirty'. Older children are more aware of personal hygiene and seemed concerned about this when playing with dough. Older children also wanted to keep their clothes clean.

Day 4- 19th December 2019.

Today was the day we began to practice our five to ten-minute Christmas concert. This was the first concert most children had performed in an education setting and with the youngest children being 3 years old, it was hard to keep concentration levels up and help them gain confidence. We had included songs such as Jingle Bells, Little Snowflake and We Wish You a Merry Christmas. To encourage taking part and good performance with their parents being present for the concert, we allowed children to bring a comforter in and asked Christmas jumpers to be worn to set the theme. Religious beliefs were taken into consideration when choosing songs, so we chose to avoid songs such as Away in a Manger. When I started my placement, I was made aware of all religious beliefs within the nursery which helped me assist in choosing the songs to include. Me and the room leader also highlighted any problems with the performance after every practice such as moving children around seating places if they were distracted by their peers. I understood from this experience it can be of great difficulty planning an activity with the focus of memory, concentration and confidence within a time span as short as five minutes.

Day 5- 20th December 2019.

I had my first meeting on Friday 20th December, and we were spoken to by a member of Newport City Council from the Education Department who spoke to over 42 schools before travelling to private nurseries. Every member of staff was required to attend a meeting on racism and religion within the education setting. We were shown an article that reported over 40,000 cases of racism were reported in schools across the UK in 2018/19. We as staff had to discuss any racist terms or actions that children had used. Overall, it was only minor claims which were all within the pre-school section. Such as some children preventing black children from playing with white dolls. The lady conducting our meeting highlighted that most of the time, children do not fully understand the terms they are using and don't recognise they are being racist. The council worker had given us some examples of how staff could prevent racism and support



religious requirements in our work setting such as food needs and the different routines some religions follow, such as Jewish children praying three times a day. Staff contributed certain ideas of how we could support all religions by making different wall displays we were instructed to design some ideas and me and my room leader began to create one in our playroom the following week.

Day 6- 23rd December 2019

Christmas dinner was given to the children in all rooms with the consideration dietary requirements at 12pm and to encourage children to be grateful and aware of what they have, we went around the tables and asked them to say one thing they are grateful and happy to have. Most children mentioned toys, but 'mummy' was also a common word that came to mind for them. Me and the other staff present also said what we are grateful for, me saying my friends and the room and leader and other member of staff saying family and food. One child said:

"I am happy that I have a dinosaur bedroom at home with my mummy and daddy".

We also made a 'goody bag' for the children to take home, filled with pens, stickers and other materials. For the first time in placement and my employment I was taught a new way of referring to Santa and the aspects of receiving presents. I was told that due to some children getting more presents than others because of family finance for example, children often asked what they had done to be 'bad' when they hadn't. We told children that Santa gives some presents and does visit, but most presents are from parents. This helped children become aware of the concept of Christmas and family.

Day 7- 24th December 2019

Christmas Eve was an exciting day for all the children and staff, we also closed the nursery four hours early. Our manager thanked parents on the social media forum used and uploaded all creations made by the children. After a busy few days we decided to play some Christmas films such as The Polar Express and The Grinch. We also allowed the children to bring in one toy and put all the children together in one room (excluding babies). This was good for socialising skills and showed us how children interacted with those younger than them. I saw a



nurturing environment made by the children. For those who found it harder to concentrate and sit for longer periods of time, we placed colouring sheets to complete and opened the sandpit to ensure all learning needs were being catered for. We did a buffet styled lunch due to closing early and allowed the children to pick their own food- with guidance if there were certain dietary requirements. I saw the children being more open to eating when they could choose themselves which showed me how freedom of choice helps a child develop and helped 'fussy eaters'. This buffet styled lunch added an idea to me that could be used in future work environments so was of great benefit to me.

Day 8- 27th December 2019

Sadwrn Siarad



Mynediad (Entry)

Group 1.

The main aim of this one-day course is to offer the opportunity for Mynediad 1 (entry) level learners to get together and practise speaking and developing your conversational skills in Welsh.

Under the guidance of a tutor, a variety of workshop exercises are used during the day that will help you to converse and respond in different situations and help to develop your confidence to 'give it a go' by starting to use your Welsh beyond the classroom.

Please note: the course will be dependent upon viable numbers prior to booking deadline. Please also see the Learn Welsh Swansea Bay Region section on this website to see details of discounts that you may be eligible to apply for.

Remaining Spaces: 24

£10.00

[Register](#)

To book this course with your provider, click "Register"

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Our first day back since Christmas Day and Boxing Day was fast paced and we welcomed some very excited children back to nursery. We had circle time in the morning and discussed Christmas Day, presents, food and what the children did over the holiday. When the children told their peers and us what things they did and what presents they received, we wrote down the Welsh word and practiced it. For example, a doll being 'Doliau' and car being 'Ceir'. Learning Welsh helps their cognitive skills develop and will provide skills for when they learn other languages in Comprehensive School. From learning Welsh on their first day back, I observed some children struggling more than others. Often, those struggling were being tested for Dyslexia in their school nursery. From this

observation I learnt the importance of noting difficulties and focussing on helping these children in their area of struggle. We spoke Welsh every day, such as singing 'Bore Da' in the mornings and the children asking to use the toilet in Welsh through "ga i fynd i ty bach os gwelwch yn dda?". We were required by the Welsh Assembly Government to use Welsh and staff were also going to attend the Sadwrn Siarad one day course in March to learn basic Welsh.

Day 9- 28th December 2019

Me and the room leader took the experience from our Racism and Religion meeting on the 20th of December to create a wall display today including different symbols, quotes, pictures and designs made by the children. The children coloured and painted our printed symbols such as The Star of David, The Aum, The Star and Crescent as well as the Christian Cross. We added their birthdays to a part of the board that included Chinese New Year and they drew the animal of their year, such as tiger or pig. We printed pictures of children wearing a Hijab, Kippah or a Cross necklace and used arrows to point to the terms they were referred to and what religions wore these. We didn't separate the pictures or use sections to encourage the idea that all religions and beliefs weren't separated from each other. From this activity I also took notes on the knowledge I had learnt and learning techniques from this that I could use for other displays.

Day 10- 29th December 2019

On my last day I covered in the baby room. I have months of employment experience in the baby room, so I was comfortable to do observations with other members of staff. I had the observation book of a male baby aged ten months. After only a few weeks of starting to walk, I wrote about his gross motor skills and compared to previous information written to see how well he was developing. I noted how much he was using his arms for support and his reactions to falls and trips. I also observed him eating and drinking to see how well his fine motor skills such as grasping and holding had developed. This gave me more experience on learning about babies and how I can apply my knowledge to helping them.