**Guidance on**

**Preparing for Placement**

**Module 1**

**Hello and welcome back!**

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**Hello!**

Welcome to the programme **Preparing for Placement**. At this strange time, it may be difficult for you to access your placement and we hope that this programme will help you to prepare for the time when you are able to move into your setting and begin working with the children.

We know you must be feeling nervous about the whole thing, and the idea of placement might be a bit daunting at the moment – but don’t worry; you will soon settle in and enjoy your experience, being able to make links between what you are learning about in the classroom, in the context of a real work environment.

We aim to give you some useful hints and tips throughout the programme to support you. There will be paper based exercises as well as more interactive sessions, with short quizzes to help you prepare for when you will be able to access a placement

The programme is broken down into several modules and during the programme we will work through different topics such as:

* what you can expect from the employer and what the employer expects of you
* types of settings
* the qualities of a practitioner
* your responsibilities whilst on placement
* a guide to getting ready for placement
* legislation, policy and procedure
* Preparing for Placement with regard to Covid-19.

Before we begin, I would like to introduce you to Hanna and Jackson. Hanna and Jackson have both been in your position, getting ready to go to placement, they know the challenges you will face and how nervous you must be feeling, they were too, and that was before Covid-19! They will pop up throughout the programme to help guide you and share their experiences of placement.





Attending a placement is a great opportunity, you will get to spend time in a real work environment and to put into practice the things you have learnt during this programme.

There is quite a lot you can do for yourself before you start, a little preparation helps to make you feel more confident and get the most out of your experience.



## **Topic 1: How do I feel about starting placement?**

“So there I was, I was both excited that I had landed that all-important work placement, but at the same time I was apprehensive because I didn’t know what to expect? Yes; I had learnt a lot during my course, but work placement at an early years setting was going to be a whole new ball game.”



“Hi my name is Drina, I am a manager at an early years nursery. The most important thing for us, is that people who come in for work experience know something about our organisation and what we are passionate about. It’s a good idea to have a good look through our website, read through our prospectus and some of our published policies. It will make you feel much better if you can get a feeling for what we do and the children we work with.”

What steps might you take to find out about the organisation you will be spending your placement with?

* Visit their website
* Get a copy of their prospectus
* Ask a lot of questions about the organisation on your first day
* Arrange a pre-visit to meet some of the staff as soon as you are able to attend

The prospectus of a setting will provide information about the mission and aims of the organisation. Describe opening times, sessions, routines and policies.

The document will state the position in regards to parent involvement, learning and development, communication, physical development and much more.

Find a prospectus for a local setting and read about the features and functions, write a short piece about what you have found out about the setting.

So now you have carried out some research, let’s take a look at what those first few days maybe like when you do start your placement.



Drina says: “You probably won’t know anyone and you won’t have people coming up to you asking you your life story. But it doesn’t mean you’re not wanted. A lot of the time people are busy, so don’t mistake this for rudeness and don’t get upset if they forget your name.”



“It really helps if you learn the names of the people you work with. Address people by their name as much as possible when you first meet them. You will be surprised at how quickly you will be able to instantly recall the names of your new work colleagues. By remembering the names of your colleagues you will begin to create good working relationships.”



“The first few days in any setting can be challenging. I remember that I felt awkward and a bit like a spare part. Everything was new, I didn’t know where anything was kept, I was wasn’t sure what I should be doing from one minute to the next. I was the only male in the team, which felt a bit strange at first but everyone was very approachable, especially my placement mentor, who gave me some great advice. Remember you are new, so it’s important to take some time to settle in and get to know the team, their roles and how you fit in. Take time to assess the culture and personalities within the team. That’s not to say you can’t be yourself, but just get an idea of how things work first.”



“Please don’t think that you should know everything straight away, it is OK to ask questions, you will soon get to know everyone, their different roles and responsibilities they hold.”

What should you do if any of your new work colleagues don’t speak to you?

* Wait until they are less busy then find a reason to speak with them
* Use the person’s name when you address them, to break down barriers and establish a more personal relationship
* If they are busy and you are not, offer to help
* Ignore them they are just rude

When someone does not speak, it does not mean that they are rude, they may be busy, shy or unsure how to approach you. When you are new, it sometimes falls upon you to make the first move and speak to the other person.

Try to adopt a friendly, proactive, can-do attitude. Make sure you give every task equal enthusiasm; you’ll soon impress everyone!

Excited



“Your placement is going to be a fantastic time, you will have the opportunity to immerse yourself in the daily routine of an early years workplace, gain experience and put into practice the skills and knowledge gathered during your course. However, not every day will be great, you will have to adapt to your new environment, meet new people and learn new skills. So it’s inevitable that there will be moments when you may need to demonstrate some personal resilience; don’t let the moment get you down.”

Hey! Feeling isolated, doubting your own abilities? Don’t let things bug you… try this ‘Worry Buster’ technique. Think about:

* why the task, person or request is worrying or annoying you?
* your reaction, focus on the possible positive outcomes
* what you have to lose or gain and learn from the experience?
* the importance of trusting your own intuition and judgement.

## Topic 2: Qualities of an Early Years Practitioner.

Take a look at this short video, see what Dan and Ann say about working in Early Years: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bfxp6n9kPg&list=UU6okC54Np5JZH23I-1ALjlQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bfxp6n9kPg&list=UU6okC54Np5JZH23I-1ALjlQ)

Having watched the video what do you think the qualities of an Early Year’s Practitioner are? Read the following section and use the text boxes to answer the questions set for you.

It may sound simple, but really above all else you need to like children! And enjoy being with them.

Throughout your course you will learn about the different knowledge and skills required to become a “quality” practitioner. Let’s consider some of the important qualities which you may already have and spend some time improving these areas, this will help you to develop them to a higher level.

* Are you a good listener? Attentive listening is a vital part of caring for anyone. Sometimes a child's needs are communicated more by what is left unsaid than what is actually said. You should be aware of the different forms of non-verbal communication when you are interacting and listening to children, look out for clues of how a child may be feeling this could be communicated for example in the way they stand or sit and their facial expression.
* Can you comfort a child? Physical comfort could be hugging a child who appears distressed. Holding their hand, listening and talking can all provide emotional comfort as well. There are often policies in place at early years settings around how you must interact with the babies and children, so always ask about this and be mindful to always follow policy.
* Describe verbal and non-verbal communication.
* You need to be able to be aware of and to respond to the feelings and needs of others; this is sensitivity. Being sensitive to children’s needs means you can try to predict and understand their feelings, for example, when a child's grandmother is in hospital or there has been a significant event or transition in their lives, you may need to be ready to show that you understand how they might be feeling and that you really care.
* You will need to be patient and tolerant. Letting a child develop independence by dressing himself, even when you need to hurry – is an example of being patient.
* You need to be aware of and respect children’s personal rights, dignity and privacy. Each child is unique and so your approach will need to take account of each child's individual needs. **Give any examples when you have shown respect for another person.**

Examples:

* Interpersonal skills: these include the ability to show warmth and friendliness to help create a positive atmosphere and to break down barriers. These are also the behaviours and tactics a person uses to interact with others effectively. Interpersonal skills include the ability to communicate effectively and listening skills. **Give examples of interpersonal skills.**

Examples:

* Can you judge what effect your behaviour may have on other people? This is self-awareness. Are you willing to adapt? When you are working as part of a team, you need to be aware of how others see you and to be prepared to change your behaviour to help the team function well and become a quality practitioner.
* Can you cope with stress? Are you resilient? You need a great deal of energy when you are working in an early years setting.

So now you have looked at the qualities of a practitioner, the following short video will highlight the difference high quality settings and practitioners can make to children. Take a look: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmaApIJzyOY&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmaApIJzyOY&feature=youtu.be)

### **Resource**

Spin the wheel

This resource will help you to think about and discuss different scenarios that could occur during your placement, not necessarily to you, but to someone you may work with. Think about what you would do should any of the examples happen to you, or if someone you may be working with came into the setting with one of the challenges in the wheel. This activity will help to prepare you if you were to come across any of the examples.

Use the template after the example below to create your qualities of a practitioner wheel. You can then use this either on your own or in groups; spin the wheel then discuss or write a short piece about how you might tackle each of the issues raised.

The ‘Qualities of a Practitioner’ wheel.

1. To produce the wheel, an inner and outer circle template is required.
2. The outer circle is divided into 6 equal segments, each being representative of an issue or problem that may be faced.
3. The inner circle has a segment cut out which is the same size as the individual segments in the outer circle.
4. Secure the inner circle to the outer circle. Movement must be enabled.

Example of finished wheel:

Template pieces ready for cutting:

Now you have completed the wheel task, think about some other scenarios which may occur and create your own headings for the wheel. Carry out the same exercise again with your own examples.

 “You are off to a great start. You have completed 2 topics so far in this programme and now know some of the other topic areas which will be covered in this programme. You have also been given some practical tips on how you can prepare for your placement, help you get settled in quickly and also provide you with some techniques to help you develop your own personal resilience.

Now is the time to begin building a plan for yourself, perhaps a small table of hints and tips to help you when you do get into your placement. You could include contact details for your setting, bus routes and times, and appropriate dress code for the setting once your placement has been confirmed. Perhaps even links to useful statutory information and guidance, whatever you include make sure it’s relevant and useful to you.”

A useful resource may be the placement attendance record on the next page, keep this handy for when you are able to access your placement.

**Placement Attendance Record**

Use the form below to record details of your placement. If your placement changes remember to complete a new form so that you have the details that you need.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Learner name:** |  |
| **Placement details and contact number:**  |  |
| **Name of supervisor/ mentor:** |  |
| **Age range of children:** |  |
| **Placement date:** | **Hours:** |
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\*Always use in conjunction with the relevant qualification specification.

### **Activity – Research CACHE Alumni**

CACHE Alumni is a free to join membership group for all practitioners whether you are just starting out as a learner or are a fully qualified practitioner. You will find so much information on CACHE Alumni; lots of interesting articles and it’s a really useful tool too. There is a CV builder, a job finder and so much more - and of course; it’s free!

If you would like to join CACHE Alumni and therefore be able to complete some online learning later in this programme, you can of course join by clicking this link [www.cachealumni.org.uk](https://www.cachealumni.org.uk/Public/Join-Us/Public/Join/Membership_Join_Us.aspx?hkey=86c6893b-bca4-4871-a937-4664b8a02263)

Have a look at this short video which will give you some insight about the importance of a membership organisation:[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pz6q8kJnIrQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pz6q8kJnIrQ)

What did you find out? Use the space below to explain why joining a membership organisation could be beneficial for you.

Now; let’s consider your placement in a bit more detail, and how you can get as much as possible out of your time in placement when it happens.

In order to help you to have a good experience, it is important that you are clear about the aims of your placement. It is equally important to establish a common understanding with the organisation you are joining about what you will do and what support you may require.

## **\\citygate.local\data\ClusterGroups\Marketing Team\2019-20\3.0 Marketing Operations\3B - CACHE\Content\Placement docs\1768 - illustrations-01.pngTopic 3: How to get the most from your placement.**

* Your placement will provide the opportunity to experience work-based learning and develop practical skills.
* The experience gained will develop your underpinning knowledge and understanding of the care and education of young children in early years settings.
* The placement will give you the opportunity to work collaboratively with parents, colleagues and other professionals.



* Your time on placement will give you confidence to be able to take on new responsibilities.
* You will have the opportunity to apply the knowledge you have acquired during your course to solve problems in a variety of contexts.
* Working with your mentor you will be able to reflect on what you have learnt and review its impact on you work practices.

Okay – so you understand why you are going on placement, but what will be expected of you?



“As an employer, I expect you to contribute to the smooth running of the setting from day one. As your placement progresses, I expect that I will be able to trust you to take on more responsibility, use your own initiative and act in accordance with our policies and procedures.”

I will expect you to:

* treat the needs and welfare of the children as your first priority
* be able to communicate with the children appropriately
* be polite, courteous, willing and co-operative at all times
* be honest, trustworthy and maintain confidentiality
* follow our dress code requirements
* attend on the days and times agreed
* be punctual and ‘on time’ at all times
* should absence be unavoidable you will let me know before the start of the working day
* that you will be organised and know what you have to achieve during your placement
* be respectful of your colleagues, children and parents/carers and their extended family.”

Excited



“Although you will be on placement, you are still ‘on course’, therefore your training provider will also have requirements and expectations of you. This includes:

* good attendance
* that you carry out the duties assigned to you to the best or your ability
* evidence of meeting the assessment criteria
* that you learn reflective qualities
* that they can see growth in your confidence
* that you can demonstrate your ability to apply what you have learnt in practical situations
* that you meet regularly with our onsite mentor to review progress and plan your development.

Which 3 of the following do you think are expectations your employer will have of you whilst you are on placement?”

* That you are able to work and interact with the children, ensuring their wellbeing
* You turn up on time for all shifts allocated to you
* You take responsibility for achieving your aims whilst on placement
* That you will require ‘hand holding’ and one to one support

It is important that you assume responsibility for yourself when in a workplace environment. You should know where you have to be and when you are have to be there and wear appropriate clothes. You should also contribute to the running of the early years setting, but be sure to complete the tasks you need to complete for your qualification.

Which of the following do you think are expectations your training provider will have of you whilst you are on placement?

* That you respect the opportunity the employer has given you and turn up for sessions as scheduled
* That you learn from the experience, keep a record of your activities and reflect on what you learn
* That you take the opportunity to gain practical experience and put theory into practice
* That you only do the tasks that further the aims of your placement and meet criteria in your study programme

You will soon become familiar with the daily routine, and before long, you will be contributing to this with confidence.



“So now you know what is expected of you… but what can you expect of the employer and training provider whilst you are on placement? You should use this guide as a basis for discussion with your manager and mentor. Let’s find out more.”



“When we take you on placement we understand that we will provide opportunities for practical experience and give you access to a mentor to guide and support you. We will give you a warm welcome and help you to quickly settle in as part of the team. You will be given an induction; this will introduce you to our policies, procedures and provide general guidelines about the setting.

* We will allocate one of our experienced members of staff to be your mentor
* We will monitor progress, help you formulate your plans and give feedback
* When and if appropriate we will conduct observations and assessments
* We have a duty of care to you to provide a safe and secure environment to work in
* In addition to the help you receive from your mentor you can expect help, advice and support from your manager and work colleagues
* We will offer you appropriate opportunities/experiences to enhance your training
* As part of our duty of care, we will communicate any cause for concern to the college”

You are still a student of the training provider, even though you are on placement. You can expect regular contact from your training provider during your placement. However, you can also contact your training provider if you have any personal concerns or are worried about how your placement is going, so solutions can be looked at as quickly as possible.

You can expect your training provider to:

* be available to provide guidance, advice and support for your training to be completed whilst you are on placement to both you and your mentor
* when necessary, send an Assessor/Tutor to complete observations in order to achieve assessment criteria
* visit the location to discuss progress and check the suitability of environment for placement
* respond to any concerns raised by the staff in the setting and provide you with feedback if appropriate
* manage all necessary paperwork
* maintain a safeguarding role in respect to your safety and wellbeing.

Although the employer has a shared responsibility for your support and wellbeing, whilst on placement, you remain a student and have access to the full support of your training provider.

Consider the list of responsibilities and match each responsibility to the correct person, employer or student, then check your answers on the next page.

* Be punctual, know where to go, how to get there and where to be throughout the day.
* Be professional, non-judgemental and maintain confidentiality.
* Have excellent personal hygiene and dress appropriately.
* Maintain a learning journal. Reflect on learning achieved and your personal experiences.
* Attending sessions with the mentor.
* Be familiar with and understand the employer’s policies and procedures.
* Set targets, challenges and delegate responsibilities.
* Take interest in workload, progress and give feedback.
* Allow involvement in daily routines.
* Co-operate with visiting Assessor or Tutor.

**(S) Student**

**(E) Employer**

* (S) Be punctual, know where to go, how to get there and where to be throughout the day.
* (S) Be professional, non-judgemental and maintain confidentiality Have excellent personal hygiene and be dressed in appropriate attire.
* (S) Reflect on learning achieved and your personal experiences.
* (S) Attending sessions with the mentor.
* (S) Co-operate with visiting Assessor or Tutor.
* (S) Be familiar with and understand the employer’s policies and procedures.
* (E) Set targets, challenges and delegate responsibilities.
* (E) Take interest in workload, progress and give feedback.
* (E) Allow involvement in daily routine.
* (E) Co-operate with visiting Assessor or Tutor.

Apprehensive



“Hi! So now you know what is expected of you. So how do you measure up? How confident are you feeling?

Don’t worry, when you do start placement, you won’t be dropped in at the deep end! You will spend the first week getting to know the children and work shadowing staff. You will then gradually assume more responsibility for care and learning routines, perhaps taking responsibility for one area of the setting or classroom.”

Excited

 “I remember that when I first started in my placement I had observations to carry out and activities to plan and evaluate for my qualification. I still had plenty of time to carry out duties required by staff. One more thing, make sure you take advantage of any opportunities to prepare resources, put up displays, record children’s achievements, outdoor supervision etc and any other practical tasks that come. This is your time to practice these essential skills.”

### Activity

Take a look at this video which gives you a short day in the life of a learner on a placement, when you have watched the video please note down the main points you have taken from the clip, these should include:

* how will you know what activities to set up for the day?
* how long does it take to set up the activities?
* in this setting how do they plan activities for the follow day?

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=HS9Ec4\_PcU0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HS9Ec4_PcU0)

## **Topic 4 – Exploring different types of early years settings**

Now you have an understanding of what will be expected of you, your training provider and the employer in your placement, these expectations do not change whatever type of provision you are in.

So let’s explore the different types of settings available to parents/carers and their children:

* childminders and childminder agencies
* nanny or home child carers
* day nurseries
* private nursery schools
* (local authority) maintained nursery schools
* pre-schools and playgroups
* independent schools
* out of school clubs.

### **Activity**

Pick 3 of the provisions from the list above and research these, write a short piece about each of the 3 and include some explanation of why each is different from the other. If you are working in a group then divide the list between you, carry out your research and then bring your findings back to the group for discussion.

### Resource

Below is the template for the spin the wheel exercise. Use the spin the wheel either in groups or on your own to help ensure you have a clear understanding of what will be required of you, the employer and your training provider during placement.

## **Topic 5: Professional Practice**



Punctual attendance is a matter of personal discipline and planning. It demonstrates qualities such as trust and reliability, important requirements in adults wishing to be responsible for other people’s children.

Make sure you have a record of the setting telephone number. If illness or emergency prevents you from attending your placement telephone and explain, before the working day begins. You should also let your Tutor know too.

Must be on time



“One thing I soon found out was that being in the right place at the right time was very important. Sounds simple I know, but I had to get used to having different start times perhaps each day, and make sure that I knew the bus timetable so I was there in plenty of time.”

### **Activity**

Planning is an essential part of ensuring you are on time and keep on time throughout your day, try finding out the following information.

Choose a setting in your local area, somewhere you may be put for your placement and then fill in the blanks. It helped me when I was preparing for my placement. Be sure to include any walking time and also a little bit of contingency for early running buses. Make sure you have a record of the setting telephone number. If illness or emergency prevents you from attending your placement telephone and explain, before the working day begins.

What time do I need to…………

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Get up |
|  | Leave home |
|  | Get my bus/transport to my setting |
| 08:30 | Start my shift |
| 08:45 | The start and end times, location (room/outdoor) of sessions you are participating/supervising. |
|  | Break time |
|  | Meet with my mentor |
|  | Lunchtime |
|  | Team meeting |
| 17.30 | End of shift |
|  | Bus home |
|  | Local events that might impact travel the following day eg road works, public events etc. |
| 20:00 | Preparation for the next day. |



“I found out that it is the little things that catch you out. It seems silly now but I went without a drink the first day as I was too shy to ask about making a cup of tea… which cup could I use? Could I use the milk? I know it was daft really, but I didn’t like to ask. Oh… and by the way make sure you find out about the arrangements for meal breaks, where you will eat, how long you have, if you are to bring food, is there a shop nearby.”

##### **What to wear or what not to wear**

 

We all like to dress up and wear our favourite clothes and jewellery, but in an early years setting, this is just not appropriate. You will need to find out if the setting requires you to wear a uniform? If not, what is the required dress code?

If there is no uniform, you will need to be smart but do not wear your favourite clothes, as you are likely to be mixing paints and other potentially ‘messy’ routine tasks. Your clothes and footwear should be clean and sensible.

Many settings will have polo shirts or sweatshirts that you are expected to wear. This is a good idea as parents/carers, children and staff will be able to recognise you as a student and not a stranger.





Fun days

 “From time to time, your setting might have theme days, they are great fun; I love them! But it is another bit of planning, right place at the right time and in the right clothes!”



 “If there is no uniform. Your clothes should be clean and sensible. Wear sensible shoes at all times, no heels or sandals and definitely no sling backs or open toed shoes, as these could be dangerous in the setting. Do not use excessive make up or a strong scent, as this may cause a reaction to a child when working in close proximity.

It is not good practice to work with babies and children with long fingernails. This is for hygiene reasons as well as for safety. Some early years settings will have procedures in place around nails, but as a general rule, long nails and working with children do not mix well! You will be undertaking routine procedures that involve cleaning duties and preparation of resources.

If you have long hair, tie this back, this not only looks smart but will also contribute to hygiene practice. Do not wear jewellery as it can become entangled, broken or lost or even cause a child to be scratched.”



“It’s the same for boys too, wear sensible shoes at all times, no flip-flops as these are dangerous in the setting. Some settings may not approve of jeans, it is always best to check out the dress code policy.

Some settings may disapprove of tattoos and/or piercings and will ask you to cover or remove these.

If you asked to wear a visitor or name badge or a lanyard make sure you do; this is an important security procedure as well as identifying you to others.

Do not use excessive or a strong aftershave, as this may cause a reaction to a child when working in close proximity.”

Think about the following reasons why punctuality and attendance are important:

* punctual attendance demonstrates qualities such as trust and reliability
* punctual attendance ensures that the children in your care are adequately supervised in accordance with the shift rota
* punctual attendance is an act of respect to those your colleagues, parents and children
* to ensure your Tutor gets a good report about you

Arriving early and being prepared reduces your personal levels of stress and will allow you to tackle tasks in a positive frame of mind.

Consider the following when dressing for work:

* wear sensible shoes
* do not use excessive make up or a strong scent or aftershave
* do not wear jewellery that dangles (earrings, necklaces etc)
* only wear jeans if the setting dress code allows them
* if necessary cover tattoos and/or piercings or remove them
* wear a visitor or name badge/lanyard if one has been issued
* do not wear items of clothing that are brightly coloured

Don’t forget the setting may require you to wear a uniform, company polo shirt or sweatshirt and name badge or lanyard. If there is no uniform you will need to be smart but be aware that some tasks are potentially ‘messy’.



 “I hope you have enjoyed this the first module in our preparing for placement programme. Come back soon for module 2!”