

Three-year study proves EYPS boosts quality ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

The Early Years Professional programme has created a new generation of practitioners with the confidence to lead practice and increase quality across the sector as a whole. This is the finding of the final report of the Longitudinal Study of Early Professional Status, a three-year study commissioned by the Children's Workforce Development Council in 2009.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The national survey, which included more than 30 case studies, highlights the positive impact of EYPS in supporting workforce development. Over three quarters of those surveyed said that gaining the status had increased their personal professional development. Those with less than three years experience were most positive about this, while those who were owner/managers were somewhat less so.

Overall, just under 50 per cent of EYPs were found to routinely lead CPD activities in their settings, with one fifth of mainly more experienced EYPs routinely leading activities outside.

Those at the earlier stages of their careers rated the impact of gaining EYPS on their career prospects most highly. This was particularly in relation to gaining employment and improving their careers in their existing settings.

More than 77 per cent believed that the status had improved their career prospects, while 47 per cent saw themselves continuing in their current role.

The main barriers to progress were identified as low pay, a limited number of roles available and the lack of an obvious career path.

While 85 per cent stated that gaining EYPS had improved their sense of professional status, two thirds felt that other professionals had little understanding of it, with 91 per cent believing that people outside of the sector did not understand it at all.

LEADERSHIP

EYPs now represent a group of more than 10,000 professionals who are confident about taking on a leadership role within their settings. Fifty-eight per cent felt that it had increased the likelihood of this and 80 per cent felt it had improved their ability to carry out improvements.

EYPs defined their approach to practice leadership primarily in terms of improving the quality of pedagogical processes in their settings, focusing on:

- Strategically assessing the current quality of the current provision and relating this to an overall vision of quality
- Establishing a common understanding of improvements that were required and developing norms around quality
- Developing, leading and evaluating professional development activities that focused on improving process quality
- Enhancing practice leadership capacity in the setting.

In smaller settings EYPs significantly improved the overall quality of interactions by a combination of modelling, mentoring and formal professional development. In larger more complex settings where EYPs did not interact directly with children for substantial parts of their working week, other staff were needed to develop practice leadership skills collectively.

In most effective settings, practice leadership had become formalised and embedded in the settings' culture and leadership structures.

-reprinted from Nursery World

Region: Europe ^[2]

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