

Amanda Donkin, Nursery Owner

# Working towards her Fou



**Setting up your own nursery and doing a degree are both full time commitments. Amanda Donkin, owner of Daisy Chain Nursery in Blaby decided to do both at the same time - showing that if you have enough ambition and passion; anything is possible.**

#### **How did you get into childcare?**

"I've worked in childcare in some form since I left school. I started as most people did then by doing my NNEB. After this I had a variety of jobs in childcare including a Nursery Assessor and delivering NVQ's. I continued training throughout and eventually ended up as manager of a nursery.

My dream has always been to run my own nursery and this came true in 2009 when I bought Daisy Chain Nursery in Blaby."

#### **Why did you choose to start the Foundation Degree so close to opening your own nursery?**

"Throughout my career I have always worked on my own personal development and the Foundation Degree is the next step in my journey. I decided to start the course alongside buying the nursery to allow me to be reflective on my setting right from the offset - being in charge makes it easier to implement new things I learn!

I'm also increasing my knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), making the most of the framework is imperative since it came into force in September 2008.

One drawback is that I have to take an afternoon off once a week to attend university. I was able to work around this by accessing the Graduate Leader Fund which covered the cost of my course fees and funded me for my day off. This would have been complicated but I received excellent support from the Early Learning and Childcare Service who helped me through my application."

#### **Is it easy to juggle your work life, home life and studies?**

"Juggle is the right word! I've just started to get to grips with the course but I'm still not sure how I'll manage to do all three at once. Both the college and tutor have been really supportive so far and have done everything they can to make things run smoothly for me.

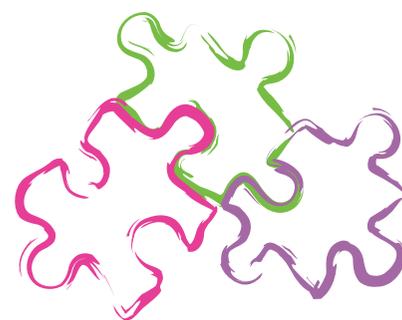
I think a lot of the people who are on the course have similar circumstances so the tutors are really understanding and do what they can to make things easier."

#### **How has the course impacted on your practice?**

"I try to bring what I am learning on my course into the nursery, this may sound like an obvious thing to do but it helps to both cement the knowledge in my mind and bring new ideas and experiences to the children. We have just been looking at outdoor play and how children can



# Foundation Degree



learn from their environment - so I have been planning with my staff how we can use our outdoor space more effectively for the children.

Having the opportunity to talk to other providers about how they have implemented the same learning in their settings has been really helpful. Other people often look at the same thing differently and it's interesting hearing what they have done in their settings.

I have definitely become more reflective about my own practice since I started the course and try to make time to look at how we do things at the nursery, and what we can do to improve."

### What would you say to other practitioners who are thinking about starting the degree?

"Definitely go for it! Any course which can help you improve your knowledge and skills of providing early education for children is too good to miss. With all the funding and support available to help you access the course there has never been a better time to take the plunge."

**If you would like more information about doing a Foundation Degree or any other training queries contact our Training team on 0116 305 6555.**

## Professional development road shows

During the Autumn term the Early Learning and Childcare Service will be out and about in Leicestershire to talk about career pathways, including qualifications, training opportunities and grants which are available for the county's childcare providers.

We offer a free personalised service to find the best route for you or members of your staff to further their professional development.

You can either book on to a session by phoning 0116 305 6555, or simply turn up on the day.

Location	Date	Time
Oadby Library, 10 The Parade, Oadby, Leicester, LE2 5FB	Tuesday 22nd Sept 2009	11:30am - 4pm
Coalville Library, High Street, Coalville, Leicestershire, LE67 3EA	Thursday 24th Sept 2009	10am - 4pm
Melton Library, Wilton Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE13 0UJ	Tuesday 29th Sept 2009	10am - 4pm
Hinckley Library, Lancaster Road, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 0AT	Wed 30th Sept 2009	10am - 4pm
Market Harborough Library Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7LT	Tuesday 6th Oct 2009	10am - 4pm
Loughborough Library, Granby Street, Loughborough, Leics, LE11 3DZ	Thursday 8th Oct 2009	12:30pm - 4pm