

## Professional Development at Little Angels!

At Little Angels we strive to support our staff team, whatever role they are in, to develop, grow professionally and support their passions!

Emma, Deputy Manager and baby practitioner at our CVPS nursery, has recently been given the opportunity to train to become an Early Years Thrive Licensed Practitioner. Take a read below to find out more about how Emma has developed her practice and disseminated her knowledge to her fellow practitioners, and what she plans to do next! There is also some information below on the Thrive training that Emma received.

### What has Emma done after her training?

"I have implemented some of the VRFs practice in the nursery, demonstrating this for practitioners to observe and helping them to understand the benefits of this as well as carrying out some short training sessions at staff meetings. After observing me, or after a staff meeting session that I have led, I have asked practitioners to reflect on this and how they are going to use this knowledge and what they would like to do next to learn more. The impact for the children is the most important thing and that they benefit from this training.

A fun example of teaching children about sensations is puppet fun! I use puppets to explore the children's imagination and highlight the sensations they might feel. We also get our puppet to look at feelings cards with us and talk about how we feel. One of the children now tells me "Emma, I feel like a rainbow today because I'm happy and bright". This is **so rewarding knowing that she is validating her sensations and attuning them to a feeling**.

For smaller children it's all about making them feel safe, secure and meeting their needs and helping them to understand that their sensations are quite normal and to attune to being able to self soothe gradually. In simple terms, getting down to the children's level and cuddling them using a quiet, calm voice, letting them know you are there and they are ok and they are safe, can be magical for smaller children and you will find they will generally calm down very fast. Just being their security blanket.



Next I would love to train for family Thrive. This will allow me to teach parents more about Thrive and how to support children's development on a different level. Thrive is something I'm very passionate about and I also cannot wait to support staff meetings and training and develop all of the staff's knowledge about Thrive too. I am so excited that I get to share this with the staff and parents.

Doing this training has been such a magical experience for me and I'm so grateful for being able to be supported by Little Angels and Northumberland to do this course."

Emma is an amazing example of just one of our fantastic practitioners, how passionate they are and how hard they work to try to support every child they work with at Little Angels. Watch this space for further examples of amazing achievements within our staff team at Little Angels as we have some brilliant training opportunities coming up!

## What is Thrive?

A dynamic, developmental approach to working with children and young people that supports their emotional and social wellbeing as the foundation to improved learning. The aim is to enhance connection and the intelligence, creativity and engagement of all.

The principle aim of Thrive is to create a workforce of adults who understand how to contribute to a child's secure emotional base. Such a base provides the necessary foundation for healthy development and access to learning so that each child is able to maximise their potential.

It is based on:

Established research in neuroscience

Attachment research

Child development theory

Research into the role of play, creativity and the arts

There are four guiding principles deeply embedded in all aspects of the Thrive Approach®: every child is a unique person, constantly developing and learning in different ways and at different rates, each with their own abilities, talents and potential to be fulfilled children's healthy development, emotional wellbeing and learning rely upon, and are promoted through, positive relationships. Children flourish when they are confident, self-assured, capable and resilient. Children thrive in enabling environments where children's individual development, learning experiences and needs are understood, responded to and supported through strong partnerships with parents/carers.

Thrive used two models to understand human development:

Model 1 - the development strands which support the understanding and skills we need to have as practitioners for the aims of Thrive. These are Being - Thinking - Doing. Have a look at the [attachment](#) about how parents can support this.

Model 2 - Interrupted development, which helps us to help children who may need support at times that are more challenging.

Emma said 'this has really helped me to understand that as a practitioner we must be the second person and lend children our thinking brains, as they haven't developed these skills yet, and help the children attune to their feelings and to really understand their behaviours. I have learned a lot around different theories but have really taken to the VRFS theory.'

The Vital Relational Functions (VRFs):

This is about how to support children to understand their sensations and let them know that it's actually ok to feel all these different sensations.

It includes the following steps:

Attunement - being alert to how the child feels



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Containment - showing them you can understand and bear the child's behaviour

Validating - this is the very beginning of them being able to talk about feelings

Soothe - we have to experience being calmed before we can do it ourselves

There are a lot more interesting theories that Emma has learned more about, for example PACE (Playfulness - Accepting - Curious - Empathetic) and also the cortex brain development.