

Case Study

Cameron Douglas Atkins *HNC Childhood Practice*



After leaving school in 2014, I was unsure of what career path I would like to take. I completed a college course but realised that it wasn't the career path for me. I worked but I wasn't sure what I wanted to do with my future. Then in 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic hit and it affected my life, like many others, severely. It made me reconsider what I wanted to do in life. On a whim, I decided that I would like to go into teaching. My girlfriend suggested early education and if I am being honest I was hesitant but it felt like the world was ending so what did I have to lose? Turns out it was one of the best choices I have ever made.

My first year, NC Early Education and Childcare, was an odd year full of adjustments; classes were done via Teams, there was no placement and everything was hypothetical. This was challenging but we were all in it together and all the classes had something interesting to them. It made me realise that working with children was a lot more complicated than I'd previously assumed. The lecturers were extremely supportive of the class, and it is most likely because of them that most folk stayed for the following year.

The second year was when I attended my HNC Childhood Practice course, classes were still predominantly on Teams but, as COVID cases were on the decline and restrictions were starting to lift, we could attend placement. Placement was the aspect of this course that solidified the idea of working with children. Everything we learned in NC started to make sense because I could see it being used in front of me.

During this time, I found my passion for outdoor learning. It started when I took part in a three-day Forest Kindergarten course run by one of the lecturers and just grew at my placement with *the Jeely Piece Club*, which has an outdoor nursery for 3 to 5 year olds and is an extremely welcoming place to be. I saw the progress the children were making while outdoors in all aspects of development.

When coming to the end of my time there, I realised that I was not ready to leave. Luckily, there was a Sessional Worker vacancy and following a successful interview, I was offered the position.

I started this journey in early education on a whim and it has paid off. The course can be challenging and stressful at times but what isn't? Working with children can be hard work, stressful, exhausting and overwhelming. However, it is never boring. Working with children you help them develop and grow into the people they will become. They have helped me too, I find myself in a happier place getting to make others happy while we play and learn new things together.

It may not have been in a school as I originally thought, but the reward I have felt working with children is unmatched. I have now moved on to working at Mearns After School Care Service Ltd (MACS) and it has only strengthened my love for working in childcare.

"There's no point being grown-up if you can't be childish sometimes."