

training talk



SOUNABOUT
How the charity's music course is helping children with special needs' development. By Gabriella Jozwiak

Sometimes small things make a big difference. In the case of ten nursery and Reception class children with special needs at Booker Park School in Buckinghamshire, a ten-week music project helped them make small physical reactions that represented developmental leaps.

Charity Soundabout began the project in summer 2018 by providing a half-day of training to all staff, followed by more intensive training for teacher Clare Perry (pictured) and a colleague. This prepared them for ten weeks of hour-long, weekly music sessions with children and parents.

The approach measures children's musical development by how they engage with sound reactively (listening and responding to music), proactively (making music alone) and interactively (engaging in music-making with others). 'We did a baseline of the children's ability at the beginning,' says Ms Perry. 'Many at 20 months were operating at a level of zero to 11 months.'

During the training, and subsequent music sessions led by a Soundabout representative, Ms Perry learned how to observe children very closely and detect if their small responses and movements, even just an eye or finger movement, were intentional and in response to songs or sounds they could hear.

'We were using music already, but this enhanced what we were doing,' says Ms Perry. She adds that the method helped develop the setting's approach of 'intensive interaction'. 'The children are at such an early developmental level that they haven't learnt there is power in communication,' she says. 'Intensive interaction allows an adult to respond or join in with the movements of a child. Gradually the child realises that's what the adult is doing and you start a two-way conversation.'

During the sessions, some children began to mimic rhythms. Others were able to vocalise, such as filling in a missing word in a song.

→ www.soundabout.org.uk

training

The new Level 3 apprenticeship

After five years of delays, the new Level 3 early years apprenticeship standard is finally here. So what's new? **Hannah Crown** looks at the end-point assessment

While the content of the new Level 3 apprenticeship is not new, with requirements taken directly from the Early Years Educator (EYE) qualifications, the system of 'end-point assessment' heralds big changes to the way apprentices are assessed.

Under the old system, apprentices had skills and knowledge continually evaluated by their training provider, who assessed their progress and signed off when an apprenticeship was 'achieved'. This system, where an apprentice signed up to a framework, led to criticism that training providers were 'marking their own homework', as the people doing the training were in effect responsible for ensuring that the training was completed properly.

With apprenticeship standards, apprentices will undergo a face-to-face assessment with an independent assessor at the end of their apprenticeship, and sit a knowledge test.

Janet King, senior subject specialist at CACHE, says end point assessment 'offers employers greater opportunities for engagement



in relation to "employment readiness".

Stella Ziolkowski, director of quality and training at the NDNA, says, 'The end-point assessment is about all the elements of the apprenticeship. It is all about employability: can the apprentices impart and apply what they have learned? It is not supposed to be a tool to weed out poor-quality training providers, but it will as it is more rigorous than what went before.'

FAQs

When will the standard be ready for delivery?

Awarding bodies will have to develop plans and materials relating to the content of the qualification (such as module specifications). Then end-point assessment organisations will develop a strategy to do with the end-point assessment. From these the training providers create apprenticeship programmes – which may reflect the training priorities of the employers they work with.

The original apprenticeship framework won't be 'switched off' until August 2020, meaning apprentices can still be signed up to it until then.

Can the end-point assessment be retaken?

Apprentices who fail one or both of the assessments will be offered the

opportunity to resit (try again) or retake (try again having done additional study), with agreement from the employer. Any apprentices doing so will be awarded a pass as their maximum grade for the entire assessment. Any resits/retakes must be complete within three months of starting the EPA, or the entire EPA must be taken again.

Who pays for a retake?

Resits of the end-point assessment (or mandatory qualifications) where no additional learning is required cannot be funded by the levy, or government-employer co-investment.

How do I find an EPOA?

There is a list at: <https://bit.ly/2s78ji5>

How do I find a training provider?

Go to: <https://bit.ly/2ms2S97>

qualifications needed

Before the EPA is undertaken, Level 3 Early Years Educator apprentices must complete:

- an Early Years Educator qualification – see the DfE's approved list
- Level 2 English and maths
- and a Level 3 award in paediatric first-aid.

Assessments must be carried out by a Government-approved end-point assessment organisation (EPAO). These will be awarding bodies, training providers, higher education providers, or professional bodies. Neither the Early Years Alliance nor NDNA are EPAOs at present.

ASSESSMENT UNDER THE NEW LEVEL 3 EYE STANDARD

According to the standard's assessment plan, which is available on the Institute for Apprenticeships' website, the assessment is formed of two parts:

1. Knowledge test

This is a 60-minute, 35-question multiple choice test which will be awarded with a distinction, pass or fail. The candidate must answer 23 questions correctly to pass.

The test will be to assess the apprentice's knowledge on theories of psychological practices and safeguarding.

Key knowledge will include child development from birth to five; attachment; underpinning theory; promoting diversity; transitions; EYFS; speech, language, communication, literacy and maths; and safeguarding, health and well-being.

2. Professional discussion

This one-to-one discussion will test not just knowledge but skills (planning and leading activities, for example) and behaviours (such as compassion and teamwork). Lyndsey Herdman, head of early years at Busy Bees, says, 'As the early years sector requires a practical workforce that gathers knowledge of children through observations, being allowed to present an observation of their skills or written statement allows the learners to provide an accurate account of their ability.'

It will last 90 minutes and be with an independent assessor from the EPAO, with access to the apprentice's portfolio.

who is involved?

Apprentice – will undertake the training and assessment.

Employer – will support the apprentice, select the training provider and the EPAO.

Training provider – they provide the apprentice training and work with the employer to ensure the knowledge, skills and behaviour requirements are met

End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) – will design and develop the content of the end-point assessment

Independent assessor – is sent by the EPAO to conduct the end-point assessment. They should hold or be working towards an independent assessor qualification.

The portfolio must contain ten to 12 pieces of evidence including two videos of observations of practice which are together a maximum of 20 minutes long. It will contain records such as observation, assessment and planning documents, meeting records, employer reviews and CPD certificates. The portfolio must contain evidence of the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprentice to be assessed, and relate to real work the apprentice has undertaken.

The option to be awarded a distinction is new. Sandy Silvester, director of operations at Busy Bees, says the criteria 'also supports all areas of the sector, encouraging learners to achieve the best and for employers to identify the best. [It] reflects the outstanding criteria that Ofsted would expect to see.'

What else is different?

Like the framework, the new standard criteria are taken from the standalone Early Years Educator qualification criteria. Unlike the framework, ICT is not included as a core qualification.

The standard is also funded better – it has been placed in a band of £5,000-£6,000 (while funding for the old framework was cut to around £2,500 before top-ups.) Small employers will pay 5 per cent towards this under a system of co-investment, and larger employers will pay the apprenticeship levy. ■



Learning Threads for the EYFS by Eleanor Hoskins (Sage, £22.99)

Built around five chapters containing practical ideas for activities through which all areas of the EYFS can be delivered. The first is beaches and blue seas, with various activities, such as creating an underwater world, or using postcards for painting, and how they relate to development guidance for the prime and specific areas for different ages. Filled with opportunities for child-initiated learning, and relates to planning for continuous provision.



50 Fantastic Ideas for Children with EAL by Natasha Wood (Featherstone, £9.89)

Written by a school early years co-ordinator with SENCO and Forest School experience, activities include simple speak and repeat games, role play, visual ideas to support learning new words and phrases and activities which reflect home environments. For example, continent boxes filled with objects such as books, flags, music, ornaments and photos from countries of that region which can be discussed, while language can incorporate greetings from that country.



What's My Child Thinking? by Tanith Carey and Angharad Rudkin (DK, £16.99)

This is a useful guide to 100 troublesome everyday situations involving children, which translates their first expressions of their earliest thoughts and feelings, what you might feel and how best to deal with the situation. The book is aimed at parents of children aged two to seven.