Rachel Allan – ELC case study

Rachel Allan, 20, is a nursery practitioner at Heriothill Nursery, Edinburgh.

Rachel has always enjoyed spending time with kids. Growing up in a big family, she spent a lot of time with her younger cousins and family friends. From a young age, she loved helping to look after them and this is where her interest in working in childcare first began.

Prior to leaving school, Rachel did some work with the JET programme, which helps young school leavers gain work experience. After finding out about a local training provider online, Rachel applied and went along to an interview. Rachel was placed in a nursery and with guidance, she worked through her SVQ Level 3 qualification. On working in Early Learning and Childcare, Rachel said: “I’ve found doing my qualifications whilst working in the nursery a lot easier than studying at a college. I could earn money while studying and I knew I would have a job at the end - that helped me a lot.

“My favourite part of the job is getting to know all of the children and their different personalities – I love it! You might think it’s just playing with children all day and before going through training you don’t realise how much there is to it and how the role can really make a difference to children’s lives. We do lots of creative, and sometimes messy, play. It’s really varied.

“Being creative is a big part of the job. You can make up new and interesting activities for the children, from fun art projects such as junk modelling, to outdoor games.

“Early Learning and Childcare makes a big difference to the lives of little ones. All the different aspects of play and learning helps them from a young age with their physical and mental development. It also really helps to prepare them for school. Getting to see the children develop and grow, and helping them understand different things, is really rewarding.

“There is no average day in the nursery, every day is different. There are times when the kids are quiet and calm and at times it can be the complete opposite. It’s really how the children are feeling that day and you can’t predict what the day will be like. Which is part of the fun!

“I’m keen to continue to progress in my job. Next, I’d like to go on and do my level 4 qualification.

“To someone considering a job in Early Learning and Childcare, I’d say if they love spending time with children, they should go for it, whether it’s through college, an apprenticeship, or learning on the job as I have done. It has its ups and downs just like any job, but ultimately, you’re there for the children, interacting with them, seeing them develop and grow - that’s the best part.”