

The benefits of being an Apprentice



How Joel discovered his true ambitions with the help of an Apprenticeship

“I would never have said that childcare would be my dream job or profession, but two years on and nearing the end of my training, I’ve discovered that I’m really enjoying what I’m doing.” Joel Culpepper, Child Care Assistant.

Joel Culpepper, 22, is in his final year of a Child Care NVQ Level 2 training at Zoom Nurseries at Hither Green, South East London, but this certainly isn’t his first job involved in helping young people...he’s being doing it since he was 16 years old!

“I started off as a mentor at a community project, working with young people, through creative development,” he says.

A positive role model

Joel’s opinion is that there are not enough positive role models for young people, and those with the right attitude and outlook on life should make as many positive contributions to society as they can.

“I want to make a difference, and luckily my passion is my music which is a great way to make links with others.”

Joel started his childcare training two years ago after a friend, also male, was working at Zoom Nurseries and recommended that he apply.

Rewarding work

“At the time I was on a programme called Youth Development for Schools where I was going into schools across South East London and working with young people who had some behavioural difficulties,” he explains. “I’d been doing it for two years and was training on the job. It was rewarding but also very draining and whilst I love the success when things worked out well, you can only do that sort of job for a while before burnout.”

On his friend’s advice, Joel went for an interview at Zoom Nurseries and then went on a week’s training, after which they offered him a job.

Supportive training provider

His training provider is Smart Training, who he says are really supportive. “They offer training once a month on Saturdays and regular assessments in the workplace.”

“My aim is to harness all this experience and knowledge and use it to develop my own career and make a difference to the lives of others”

Positive role models

One of the reasons Joel enjoys his job so much is that he can see he’s making a difference.

“There is a lack of positive male influence in so much of our children’s society, and I think that anything we can do to get the balance right should be encouraged, for the benefit of society as a whole. Young children respond in different ways to male and female influences, and they should be given the opportunity to do so more often in a safe and secure environment, such as a nursery.”

He adds that Zoom Nurseries is a great environment for his style of childcare: “It’s relaxed but the quality of care is very high,” he explains.

A record career

Joel is young, loves music and enjoys life. After two years completing a Performing Arts qualification at college, he spent a year commuting to New York to try and get a record deal – something he would love to pursue in the future. But for now, he’s committed to his job and keen to complete his training.

“The way my career has panned out to date has been great,” he says. “I’m gaining experience of working with young people of all ages, from teenagers right down to the work with early years that I’m now doing. My aim is to harness all this experience and knowledge and use it to develop my own career and make a difference to the lives of others.”

Communication through music

Joel sees his future working with young people through his music. “It doesn’t matter who you are, music is a great communicator,” he says. “Putting music together with my Apprenticeship, and all the other work experience I have gained and will gain in the future, I have no doubt that doors will open for me in my career.”

Joel’s supervisor says:

Michelle Bennett, Joel’s supervisor at Zoom Nursery, says: “Joel is hard-working and great with the children. His positive attitude shines through in his work here and we really enjoy having him at the nursery.”



If you would like further information about Apprenticeships in South London call the Apprenticeship Hotline on 0800 169 4824 or visit www.apprenticeships.org.uk

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