# Newsletter KUEarly Years Autumn 2023



Welcome! Welcome to the first Kingston University Early Years newsletter of the 2023/24 academic year. We hope you are all enjoying the start of the academic year and settling into your course.

Kingston University

This newsletter aims to showcase all the exciting developments happening in the Early Years department and partnership teams at Kingston University. If you have anything you would like to contribute to future issues, please email c.guard@kingston.ac.uk before February 9th 2024.

### **Kingston is GOLD!**



Teaching Excellence Framework

Kingston University has been awarded a GOLD rating in the National Teaching Excellence Framework. This reflects the university's high quality teaching, and commitment to providing an outstanding student experience and supporting its students to achieve successful degree outcomes. Kingston joins an elite line up of 26 universities and colleges across the United Kingdom who have been awarded triple TEF Gold, alongside Oxford, Cambridge, Exeter and Warwick.

# Don't forget!

Please check your Kingston email inbox every week. Important information is shared about your teaching, learning and assessments. Please do not forget to check before you attend lectures!

AND

RICKS

Please only email your tutors using your Kingston email address. This is to protect the internal systems from unnecessary threats and viruses.

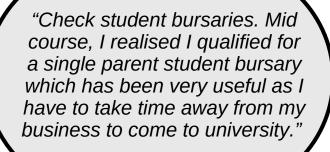
### **Student to Student Top Tips!**



We asked students for some top tips to aid studying and surviving University life.

"I found a dedicated study area at home useful, so it's always set up. That way there are no excuses not to study!!!"

"Find a great critical friend. This can push grades up if you find a really good one."



"Don't miss any lectures. I've found I can pick up golden nuggets of information that help you raise your grades."

"Read essays out loud to yourself. It's a really good way of proof-reading your work."





### An update from:

Hazel Marian, Early Years Curriculum Development and Partnerships Lead

This academic year brings lots of wonderful news for us at Kingston University which showcases the important work the university does in meeting the needs of their students and the wider sector. We are proud to announce that Kingston University secured a Gold rating in this year's Teaching and **Excellence Framework. This** award formally recognises the support provided by Kingston University to students to ensure that they achieve successful degree outcomes. The Gold rating confirms the high quality of teaching and outstanding student experience that the University is committed to. The Teaching **Excellence Awards scheme is** run by the Office for Students and Higher Education providers are assessed based on student satisfaction, continuation rates, employment rates and academic support by a panel of experts.

To add to the wonderful developments at Kingston University is the Navigate framework which is part of Kingston University's Future Skills, Town House Strategy. The Navigate workshops were embedded into our Level 4 work based learning Induction sessions at Kingston University.

The Navigate workshops are part of the New Town House Strategy that is meant to transform Kingston University's education by incorporating future skills that are sought by employers and professional sectors.

The feedback from the Navigate workshops were positive with students citing a greater awareness of their own personal and professional development and how they can learn and grow within a Community of Practice.

To extend the work of developing self and professional advocacy in the field of Early Years, Dr **Caroline Guard**, Senior Lecturer in Early Years is leading an Early Years **Community of Practice** (COP) at Kingston University. I strongly urge you to join this COP to advocate for the children, parents and professionals in the Early Years sector through the various activities that Dr Caroline Guard will be facilitating.

To build on the Future Skills Townhouse Strategy, Kingston University under the leadership of Senior Lecturer Andrea Mills is offering the Graduate Practitioner Pathway for Early Years students studying on our Level 6 programmes. This is an optional pathway to help practitioners extend and build their professional practice to work confidently with children aged 0-8 years. Kingston University is a member of the Early Childhood Studies Degree Network (ECSDN) which enables us to embed the Graduate Practitioner competencies on our Early Years Top Up programmes.

To enable the Townhouse Strategy to be fully reflected within the work based learning programmes, Senior Lecturer Kyle Moore, leads the Mentoring/Critical **Professional Advocate (CPA)** CPD training and activities to ensure that we are continually partnering with employers and that they are at the heart of the developments within our programmes. This includes ongoing meetings with mentors and employers that support our student groups.

As part of our efforts to ensure out students' career enhancement and employability skills as part of the Future Skills framework, I am engaging with a series of meetings and discussions with local authority Early Years and Inclusion Advisors, Autism Specialists, NHS support workers and other governmental organisations to gather feedback on the needs of the sector to ensure that our courses embed these skills and produce confident, creative and innovative graduates.

Do join us in advocating for the Early Years programmes at Kingston University because we are committed to 'Unlocking Potential and Nurturing Bright Futures'.





### An update from:

#### Kyle Moore, Liaison Officer for Early Years Foundation Degree

### **Reflecting on the FdA Induction Day**

Our annual FdA induction day (Saturday 23rd September 2023) was a resounding success, setting the tone for an inspiring academic journey for our level 4 and level 5 students this year. The event consisted of a range of voices and presentations from our university services, FdA programme course leader and teaching teams and Academic support team. The discussions were met with warmth, intrigue, and positivity, fostering a sense optimism for the year ahead. Interactive teaching sessions around core module teaching allowed us to forge connections and new ideas with fellow students, setting the stage for collaboration and growth. Thank you for all the FdA tutor attendees on the day, your thoughtful contributions ensured that all students were clear of our module teaching and expectations. Overall, the induction day was a testament to the FdA student's commitment to their studies. It left us, as an academic team; excited, empowered, and eager to support you the FdA students with their educational adventure.

Thank you to all CPA's who were able to attend our remote Critical Professional Associate (CPA) training event (Saturday 7th October 2023). We appreciate the effort and collaborative approach demonstrated by all throughout the event as we explored the important role that the CPA plays in the success of our FdA students.

### Achieving for Children Annual Conference

Achieving for Children (AFC) hosted their annual conference at Kingston Hill campus in September. Keynote speakers were Early Years consultant Kate Moxley and Musharaf Asgahar from Channel 4's Educating Yorkshire. Delegates were offered a range of seminars across the day considering topics including dyslexia, phonic, and the voices of young children. Through engaging discussions and workshops, attendees forged meaningful connections, gaining fresh insights into best practices and innovative approaches. The collaborative atmosphere was truly inspiring, reminding us of the immense impact we can make when we work together to nurture the youngest minds.



#### An update from:

Andrea Mills, Course Leader for the Foundation Degree in Early Years

I am delighted to be working on the FdA and BA Top Up courses, in my new role that started in August. It has been a very busy few months preparing for the start of your new courses, as part of the EY team. My favourite part of the role is getting to know you (the student groups) and working directly with you in the teaching sessions.

#### **Communities of Practice**

This year, more than ever, we are keen to support you to participate in Communities of Practice (CoP)\* with your immediate and wider peer group. You will notice the launch of our **Graduate Community of Practice** which aims to create a sector wide presence and collaborate across local communities. As our current students, we will provide opportunities for you to collaborate with one another as part of your own CoP's, to broaden your EY experience beyond your settings and colleges. Please do engage in CoP opportunities, as these will undoubtedly assist with the development of your outwardfacing ethos, and professional identity, within a supportive peer group.

\*A Community of Practice is a group of people who come together to fulfil both individual and group goals. They often focus on sharing best practices and creating new knowledge to improve professional undertice

#### **FdA Induction Day**

As FdA Course Leader, I would like to personally thank you to those of you who were able to attend the FdA Induction Day on 23rd September, at Kingston Hill. I hope that you found the day useful and that you made the most of the opportunity to visit the campus, meet your peers, staff, and engage in teaching sessions. The EY Team have looked at your evaluations, and we aim to use your feedback to inform future training opportunities.





### An update from:



#### Caroline Guard, Course Leader for the BA Top Up Early Years pathways

I have been so inspired by the level of discussion, enthusiasm and professionalism shown by our new BA Top Up students.

Induction Day was a great success, with attendance high and some excellent quality reflections emerging from the first afternoon teaching session.

We were all inspired hearing from our alumni students and how their careers have already transformed following on from their learning across the degree programme at Kingston. Thanks to those who contributed.

This academic year sees some exciting developments in the Top Up programme, including the launch of our GPC module and our Graduate Community of Practice. In addition, to the sector wide CPD opportunities advertised in the newsletter, we are hosting a Research Day for all students on Saturday 2nd March. All Top Up students will be sharing their training programme as part of the QY6050 leadership module in January and ELP students will be presenting their posters in March as part of QY6020... We also hope to launch our student led conference evening on Tuesday 11th June - check your emails for more information!

#### BA Top Up Early Years: Your Student Representatives



For those of your studying on the Education, Leadership and Practice pathway, Made Suseni is your student rep. Made is keen to hear from you and looks forward to representing you at the SVC meeting in November. Contact Made: K1929812@kingston.ac.uk



For those of your studying on the Teaching and Learning pathway, Joanne Ransley is your student rep. Joanne is an early years advocate and can't wait to work with you all to feedback in the SVC collaborative space. Contact Joanne: K2125334@kingston.ac.uk



# Partnership update

### APPG in Early Years and Childcare: Inclusivity in Early Years

On the 13th June, students from Reach Academy were invited to present findings from their recent internal research project at the All Party Parliamentary Group for Early Years and Childcare at Westminster. Keeley Weeks (L4), Emma-Jane Hassan (L4), Jane Gould (L5), Dawn Kiefer (L6) and Elleanor Brennan (L6) did so well highlighting Reach's campaign of a basic expectation of the Living Wage for all early years educators.

For those of you who wish to hear our students' contribution, you can access the recording of the meeting here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCIGBSGA9\_A (Reach's contribution is at 25:53).



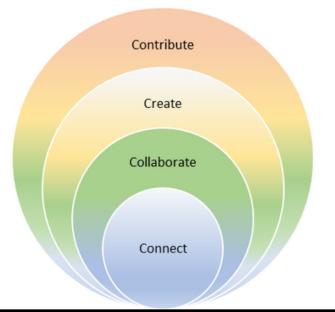




# Community of Practice

2023 has seen the launch of our new Kingston Early Years Graduate Community of Practice. This new initiative aims to work with our alumni to develop a sector wide presence and share practice and research to enhance professional practice and dialogue.

The Community of Practice has been established to retain links with Early Years Graduate alumni students and develop opportunities for knowledge exchange and research across the university and early years sector. The community of practice seeks to collaborate with graduate students, their settings, and communities to create ongoing professional development opportunities and bridge the gap between practice and academia.



Framed by four principles, the community of practice seeks to act as a platform to **connect** with likeminded colleagues, to share practice, discuss current sector wide issues and form partnerships across professional and academic communities. Members will **collaborate** on sector wide issues and engage in regular professional dialogue, reflection, and projects. The community of practice will **create** opportunities for practice-based dialogue and research and **contribute** to a greater understanding of the societal, cultural, and political landscape of early education.

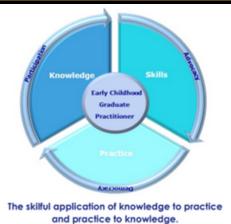
#### Our founding Alumni members are:

Elizabeth Lord, Childminder, Dawn Kiefer, Educator, Nadine Roye, Educator, Giorgia Floridi, Manager, Laura Bruce, Educator, Karen Darnborough, Educator, Maysa Ahmed, Educator, Gemma Hoosain, Early Years Educator, Afra Hussain, Educator, Candice Butler, EY Advisor, Alexandra Blackwell, Teacher

### If you are a recent Graduate from our Top Up programme and would like to get involved, please contact Caroline Guard.



## **Graduate Practitioner Competencies**



We are so lucky at Kingston to be now offering the Graduate Practitioner Competency Pathway as part of the Top Up programme. We are now one of 70 Universities nationally offering this exciting opportunity to our student body to upskill and further professionalise their degree status.

The GPC pathway provides opportunities for BA Top Up students to celebrate their developing professional knowledge and practice, throughout the year. They complete an additional module (non-credit bearing), in which they reflect, link practice to theory, and explore effective provision for the birth to eight age range.

Students complete a range of tasks as part of everyday practice, aligned to the Early Childhood Studies Graduate Practitioner Competencies (ECSDN, 2020), which are endorsed by the Department for Education. They collate evidence from these tasks and other examples of their good practice, in a Portfolio of Professional Practice (PPP), which is forms the formative and summative assessment for the module.

We are pleased to announce that six BA Top Up students are embarking on a GPC journey this year.

We hope that you will all join us in wishing them every success on the pathway!'

For more information about the GPC programme, please refer to the ECDSN website - <u>https://www.ecsdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/ECSDN-Booket-Rev-July-2020.pdf</u>





## **Student Voice Committee**

At Kingston University your voice is important to us and we take your comments seriously. We're constantly working to enhance your student experience.

Student Voice Committee Meetings

Thursday 23rd November and Tuesday 12th March

4-5pm Microsoft Teams The Student Voice Committee aims to bring together Course representatives and academics to reflect on course feedback. Each cohort of students nominate a Student Course Representative to attend SVC meetings on the behalf of the group. Course reps are fellow students who actively represent the views and experiences of students on their course. They gather feedback on issues that affect you and your course mates, and then bring these to the attention of academic staff.

They are a vital link to ensure your voices are heard. If you have any feedback relating to your course, they should be your first point of contact. You can speak to your course reps at any point throughout the academic year.

Additionally, course reps will signpost students to available services and promote events/opportunities that are coming up. Reps may also be asked to collaborate with staff on course/University decisions and enhancements.

#### FdA Programmes Your Student Representatives

#### **Brooklands College**

Emma Hayward (L4) K2333654@kingston.ac.uk Kayleigh McCance (L5) K2265712@kingston.ac.uk

LETTA

Kulsuma Begum (L4) K2362796@kingston.ac.uk Rabia Chowdhury (L4) K2373628@kingston.ac.uk

**Reach Academy** 

Sinead Carroll (L<sup>4</sup>) <u>K2365036@kingston.ac.uk</u> Emma Hassan (L5) <u>k2267092@kingston.ac.uk</u>

**Richmond College** 

Natalija Grbic (L4) <u>K2373506@kingston.ac.uk</u> Abigail Mcleod-Haylock (L4) <u>K2374267@kingston.ac.uk</u> Chelsea Gair (L5) <u>k1614524@kingston.ac.uk</u>

#### **Kingston College**

Isabel Dance (L4) <u>k2356820@kingston.ac.uk</u> Jessica-Fay Hammond (L4) <u>k2366553@kingston.ac.uk</u> Imogen Flood (L5) <u>k2250647@kingston.ac.uk</u> Aya Guenouni (L5) <u>k2260781@kingston.ac.uk</u>

West Thames College

Kushi Kaur Sneh (L5) K2256831@kingston.ac.uk

Flourish Learning Trust (Whitefield) Emma Watford (L5) K2235671@kingston.ac.uk

Morley College

Level 4 TBC – if you would like to act as Course Rep please contact your Course Leader Level 5 TBC – if you would like to act as Course Rep please contact your Course Leader

For more information about Student Voice, please access: <u>https://kingstonuniversity.sharepoint.com/sites/mykingston/myuni/studentvoice/</u>



# Alumni Advocates

So far this year, we have been very fortunate to host three Alumni students as expert guest speakers as part of our Top Up Programme. Leona Cronogue, Stephanie Curtain and Dawn Kiefer have all shared their expertise with our current cohorts as they reflect on Transitions in early childhood.

Leona spoke to the Teaching and Learning students about her important role as a Community Nursery Nurse in Hillingdon. Leona introduced students to Five to Thrive programme and discussed the delicate task of navigating multi professional relationships and those with families during moments of transition.



thrive The things you do every day that help your child's growing brain

five to

Stephanie, a Teaching Assistant, spoke about the significance of promoting children's self regulation skills in Primary school. Specifically, Stephanie shared her professional expertise working with children with Autism through horizontal transitions. Stephanie's fascinating session supported our students to think about the uniqueness of transitions for children with autism.

Dawn joined the ELP group to share her professional work with Refugee families in Feltham. Dawn is currently working on some nationwide projects and offered students insight into the challenges refugee families face, particularly in relation to meeting their basic dietary and emotional needs when in temporary accommodation.

Later in the year we are looking forward to welcoming back Liz Lord, Childminder and Giorgia Floridi who will be sharing their perspectives on Leadership.

If you feel you have valuable knowledge and expertise to share and share your expertise with upcoming graduate, we would love to see you!



## **CPD Opportunities** Dates for your diary

### SEFDEY National Conference, 4th November 2023 A Celebration of Children

SEFDEY support, celebrate and champion Foundation Degrees in Early Years. This year SEFDEY celebrates 20 years of Foundation Degrees in the Early Years.

The conference will feature two eminent keynote speakers:



Tamsin Grimmer: author Developing a Loving Pedagogy

Sir Al Aynsley-Green: author The British Betrayal of Childhood



Students can use the promo code below to purchase tickets at a reduced entry fee (from £50 to £10) SEFDEYSTUDENT https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-celebration-of-early-childhood-registration-718438046537

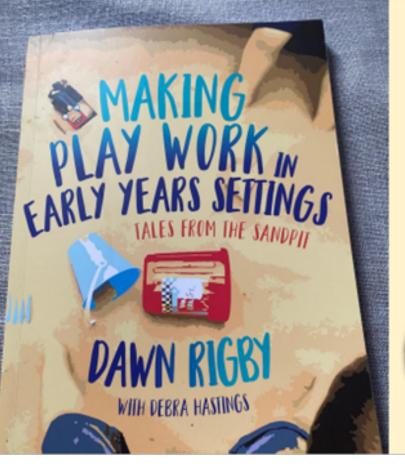
Did you miss The Froebel Trust's Annual Lecture with Professor Tina Bruce's speaking about Play and Creativity? You can still access a recording of the event below. https://www.froebel.org.uk/trai ning/films/froebel-trust-lecture-2023-professor-tina-bruce



Froebel Trust Lecture 2023: Professor Tina Bruce Play and creativity - The Froebel Trust Annual Lecture



Location: Guildford Nursery School and Family Centre, Hazel Avenue, Guildford, Surrey GU1 1NR To book your ticket: <u>Using Froebel's approach in</u> today's early years curriculum Tickets, Fri 3 May 2024 at 08:30 | Eventbrite



#### Kingston University Early Years Graduate Community of Practice

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 19:00-20:30

(please email c.guard@kingston.ac.uk for Teams link)

#### Author, Educator and Advocate of Play, Dawn Rigby

Dawn will share her philosophy of early education and talk to members about her recent publications and interest in developing environments that promote children's right to play.

"A key principle of my practice is that all those working with children need a good level of understanding of knowledge and theory and an outstanding practitioner needs to be able to demonstrate this knowledge by putting it into practice.

I believe that young children need a special environment in which to grow and deserve practitioners who are inspiring, dynamic, reflective and passionate about their learning."

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Two day event: Building a Sustainable Future for Early Childhood Building a Sustainable Future for Early Childhood:

Empowering Early Childhood Educators for Ouality

Two day event: Building a Sustainable Future for Early Childhood Building a Sustainable Future for Early Childhood: Empowering Early Childhood Educators for Quality Education and Children's Rights. Friday 10th and Saturday 11th November, Liverpool.

This two day event is only £15.00 for students to attend.

To book your place: <u>Two day event: Building a Sustainable Future for Early</u> <u>Childhood Tickets, Fri 10 Nov 2023 at 10:00 | Eventbrite</u>



## Helen ToveyProfessor Tina Bruce CBE Thursday 2nd November 5.00pm - 6.30pm

## Richmond, Putney and Wandsworth Froebel Network

Our Community

..plus an exclusive peak at our new Kindergarten

Event address:

Linden Tree Old Town

18 Old Town, London SW4 0LB Froebelians and all welcome



Limited spaces available



# **Student Reflections**



Made Suseni took up the opportunity to attend the Advantage Childcare Conference for free on Saturday 7th October at Kingston Hill.

Made reflects on the conference day, which saw two distinguished key note speakers, Richard McCann and Rob Dembrey.

The day opened with a welcome from Hazel Moody, Director and Manager of Advantage Childcare and Kingston Alumni who welcomed delegates to the day.

The first two and a half hours was a motivational speech by Richard McCann of iCan. Richard is the son of Wilma McCan. Peter Sutcliffe's (The Yorkshire Ripper) first victim, and he started the first keynote by sharing some of his experiences (personal and professional). His childhood experiences were heartbreaking the whole speech was vet inspiring; he brought this positive energy and shared his successful adulthood experience with the whole audience as the impact of his positivity through all his worst and best life experiences. His words resonated with me and made me reflect on my own life and made me consider how to change my mind set to adopt this positive energy to bring into my personal and professional practice.

Extraordinary man. Extraordinary story.

The afternoon session featured Rob Dembrey, Achieving for Children SEND Officer and National Trainer & Speaker. He shared his early experiences in the Early Years sector. My taking point from his experiences that as educators, we must be critical with our practice to develop well and offer the best we can for all children. Adopting positivity an a personal narrative has a huge impact on our teaching of children and the services we offer.

Following on from the conference, Made told Caroline, "I could on and on and on talking about it, which shows how much I enjoyed it. It has helped me to see a bright light ahead of me despite all the professional challenges out there at the moment!".

"Having lost his mother to one of Britain's most notorious serial killers, Yorkshire Ripper, Peter Sutcliffe, in 1975, Richard was raised in poverty by his often drunk and violent father on a tough council estate in Leeds, England, and was on the at-risk register before he could even walk and talk. What followed was foster parents and time in a care home, and he left school with no qualifications, stumbling from one mistake to the other until he eventually found himself with no prospects after a spell in prison. The same prison as his mother's killer! When he was released, he had few prospects and entered into a suicide pact with one of his sisters. He had reached his rock bottom". Taken from https://richardmccann.co.uk/about/



## **Student Reflections**



Do you have something you want to write about? Do you have any reflections about your practice or a burning desire to share your thoughts on something Early Years?

Send in your reflections for the next newsletter!

c.guard@kingston.ac.uk



## **Congratulations!**

We know that our Kingston Early Years alumni always go on to achieve many amazing things in their settings and local communities. As a team we LOVE to hear from you, even if you graduated years ago.

As a sector it is often said that we don't shout loudly enough about the wonderful things we are doing and the impact we are making on babies, children and families.

Two of our Kingston Alumni students have recently been recognised for their outstanding contribution to Early Years at the Annual Nursery World Awards 2023.

Hazel Moody, Director and Manager of Advantage Childcare received a 'Highly Commended' commendation as a Nursery Manager. Hazel completed her Top Up degree with Kingston in 2010 and continues to be an advocate for Early Years and making a huge impact across the local area with her work.

Matthew Langton, from Outdoor Owls, jointly won the Nursery Practitioner Award of the year. Matthew completed his Top Up year with us in the most recent 2022 student cohort. During his time with us, Matt shared his professional expertise and advocacy for young children's learning in the outdoors with the Teaching and Learning students.

# To say that we are proud of both Hazel and Matt's achievements is an understatement. MASSIVE Congratulations!

In early October Caroline Guard successfully defended her Froebel Trust funded PhD research on hearing babies' voice in formal day care. Caroline is now officially a Dr after five and half years of studying. Congratulations! A summative report of her findings will be available at www.froebel.org.uk in due course and the main thesis on The British Library website soon.



# KU Alumni Where are they now?



Gemma Hoosain, Early Years Practitioner and Early Years Graduate

As a mature student, the last three years has been a reflexive transformation for me. I completed my foundation degree in Early Years with a non-partner college, then chose to complete the BA top-up program with Kingston University. Balancing the roles of home life with my husband and two daughters, as well as the professional, and student life was incredibly challenging. Nevertheless, it has also proven to be immensely rewarding for me personally and professionally - my daughters tell me they are proud of me and I hope they have been inspired by watching my academic growth.

The specialised focus on Early Years Education within the BA top up has been invaluable, allowing me to dive deep into the intricacies, allowing me to relate more with the children and their families I work with so closely. I have been challenged in the best ways, adding to the enriching experience. My dissertation on anti-racism in the Early Years was eye opening and as a result I have developed unconscious bias training, which I presented to my nursery setting during a coaching day. With positive feedback, I feel I achieved my goal, impacting my fellow colleagues and practitioners to think about, reflect on, and act on this important issue.

Despite the challenges of juggling work, family life, and studies, my degree has strengthened my determination as I continue my academic studies with Kingston University to complete my Early Years PGCE and Masters. I am passionate and believe that my continued study demonstrates my commitment to improving my practice and the lives of the young children and families I work with. I am so grateful to my academic peers and tutors, but realise I am most grateful to my family for their support and encouragement. They are the best!



## KU Alumni Where are they now?

Giorgia Floridi, Nursery Manager and Early Years Graduate

A letter to you....



Hello everyone!

My name is Giorgia and I am originally from Umbria in Italy, and I moved to London in August 2015.

Studying towards my BA Hons degree has improved me as a person, practitioner and a leader. Now I feel very confident and fearless to express my opinion with anyone. I have so much knowledge that I am able to share with the staff and the parents to support the children and with other professionals. I am really pleased that I attended university here in England, my well-being and my opinion were considered and valued. My advice is: study, study study! Please do not waste your time, time is very important, balance your life between working, studying and person life. Your success starts from yourself, please do not forget.

I had a very significant career progression in the last three years thank you to my university experience and the support I had, and thank you to myself for working and studying hard.

Like my mother used say to me when I was younger in Italian "dal niente non viene niente" which means if people are lazy, they want to achieve a goal, and do nothing, you will get nothing in return, so do your best. *"Your success starts with yourself!"* 

**Best of luck** 

Giorgia

Do you have an update you would like to share? Please email c.guard@kingston.ac.uk to be included in the next newsletter.



## KU Alumni Where are they now?

Liz Lord, Childminder and Early Years Graduate



My name is Liz Lord and I have been a Registered Childminder running my business for 16 years. Some 12 years ago, I completed a level 3 qualification in childcare which I enjoyed immensely. So, when my friend who completed the level 3 with me encouraged me to apply for a degree in early years in 2020, I didn't have to think for long before applying.

I have to admit, I wasn't sure how I would fit in as a middleaged person running a childcare business on my own. But once I met the tutors and my fellow students and after a little adjustment to my routine to fit in the study, I absolutely loved it! The lectures and assignments felt like a deep dive into all areas of my work in early years, adding a new depth of knowledge and confidence to my practice. In addition, collaborating with fellow students and sharing experiences added even more validity.

Moving onto the BA degree last year was a culmination of all the new skills I had learnt on the foundation degree. I became an independent learner with the confidence to lead my childcare business into the future. However, I haven't stopped my learning journey there as I am an enthusiastic graduate volunteering as a guest speaker at the university whenever invited! This gives me the opportunity to consider further studying leading to a teaching role in the future



# outdoor owls

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