

Early Years Team Leader

Our Vision

To create a safe and joyful place where every child is nurtured and inspired to grow with confidence, curiosity and pride.

Our Mission

Through strong relationships, skilled teaching and a culture of kindness, we support children to develop the foundations they need to grow, achieve and feel proud of who they are.

Our RECIPE Curriculum

As an Early Years Team Leader, through high-quality interactions, meaningful experiences and child-led learning opportunities, you will inspire children to become:



Our Values

All team members will:

- Demonstrate kindness, respect and professionalism in all interactions.
- Promote children's emotional security and wellbeing.
- Build nurturing relationships with children, families and colleagues.
- Foster inclusive environments where every child feels valued and respected.
- Work collaboratively to support the success of the nursery and wider organisation.
- Actively contribute to a culture of continuous improvement and learning.

Job Purpose

To lead and inspire a team of Early Years Educators to deliver exceptional care and education, ensuring every child feels safe, valued and inspired to learn. Through strong leadership, role modelling and coaching, you will promote high-quality practice, support continuous improvement and ensure high-quality outcomes for children. Working in partnership with families, colleagues and external professionals, you will embed the First Steps Vision, Mission, Values and RECIPE curriculum while supporting children to thrive and reach their full potential.

Key Responsibilities

Child Development and Learning

- Lead the delivery of high-quality early years education in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the First Steps curriculum.
- Support the team to create stimulating, inclusive and enabling learning environments that inspire curiosity, creativity and independence.
- Champion the RECIPE curriculum and support children to become Resilient, Empathetic, Curious, Independent, Passionate and Educated.
- Monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment within the room or area of responsibility.

- Support colleagues to use observations and assessments effectively to identify and plan for children's next steps.
- Ensure children's individual learning and developmental needs are met and that all children are supported to achieve their full potential.
- Role model high-quality interactions and teaching practice that promote children's language, communication, confidence and critical thinking.

Leadership and Team Development

- Lead by example, modelling the standards, behaviours and expectations of First Steps.
- Motivate, support and coach colleagues to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence.
- Contribute to and lead staff inductions, supervision meetings, performance reviews and appraisal processes.
- Support colleagues to reflect on and continuously improve their practice.
- Facilitate effective team communication and contribute to a positive and collaborative working culture.
- Lead team meetings and professional discussions that promote high-quality practice and continuous improvement.
- Support the Nursery Manager in implementing nursery improvement priorities and action plans.

Key Person and Family Partnerships

- Maintain responsibility as a Key Person for an allocated group of children, ensuring their learning, development and wellbeing needs are met.
- Build secure attachments and positive relationships with children in your care.
- Maintain accurate and meaningful records of children's learning, development and achievements.
- Monitor the quality of observations, assessments and learning records across the team, providing support and guidance where required.
- Support colleagues to deliver effective key person practice and maintain high standards of care and education.
- Ensure children's individual needs, interests and routines are understood and reflected in daily practice.

Inclusion and Child Wellbeing

- Champion inclusive practice and ensure every child feels valued, respected and able to participate fully.
- Support colleagues to meet the needs of all children, including those with SEND, additional needs or health requirements.
- Work collaboratively with parents, colleagues and external professionals to secure the best outcomes for children.
- Promote children's emotional wellbeing, resilience and sense of belonging.
- Support the development of nurturing environments where children feel safe, secure and confident.

Safeguarding and Welfare

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of all children at all times.
- Maintain a high level of professional curiosity and ensure safeguarding concerns are recognised, responded to, recorded and reported appropriately.
- Support coach and challenge colleagues to understand and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Ensure all relevant policies, procedures and statutory requirements are consistently followed.
- Act as a deputy for the Nursery Manager when required, making appropriate decisions to ensure children's safety and wellbeing.
- Contribute to a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and children remain at the heart of decision-making

Partnership Working

- Develop and maintain positive, professional relationships with children, families, colleagues and external professionals.
- Promote open, honest and effective communication, ensuring families feel valued, informed and actively involved in their child's learning and development.
- Support and guide team members to build strong, respectful and collaborative partnerships with families.
- Work in partnership with external agencies and professionals to support children's individual needs and achieve positive outcomes.
- Foster a culture of teamwork, mutual respect and shared responsibility across the nursery.
- Support effective communication and collaboration between rooms, teams and First Steps locations.
- Represent First Steps professionally and positively at all times.

Professional Practice

- Demonstrate and promote the First Steps values of Kindness, Safety and Emotional Security, Nurture and Relationships, Growth and Learning, Teamwork and Professionalism, and Inclusion and Respect.
- Maintain confidentiality and professionalism at all times.
- Keep up to date with developments in early years education and childcare legislation.
- Participate fully in supervision, appraisal, professional development and training opportunities.
- Support quality improvement initiatives and contribute to achieving high standards across the organisation.
- Adhere to all First Steps policies, procedures and professional standards.

Safeguarding

First Steps is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment. All appointments are subject to satisfactory safeguarding and employment checks.

Person Specification

Qualifications	
<i>Essential Criteria</i>	<i>Desirable Criteria</i>
• Full and relevant Level 3 Early Years qualification (or equivalent). • Paediatric First Aid Certificate • Safeguarding training • Food Hygiene Certificate • GCSE English (Grade 4/C or above) or equivalent.	• Level 2 or Level 3 qualification in Leadership and Management (or equivalent). • Foundation Degree, Early Childhood Studies Degree or other relevant higher qualification. • Designated Safeguarding Lead training or willingness to undertake. • SEND-related qualifications or training.
Experience	
<i>Essential Criteria</i>	<i>Desirable Criteria</i>
• Experience working within an early years setting following achievement of a relevant qualification. • Experience as a Key Person supporting children's learning and development through play-based learning. • Experience supporting and guiding other practitioners. • Experience planning, delivering and evaluating learning opportunities that support positive outcomes for children.	• Experience leading a room, team or area of provision. • Experience completing staff supervisions, mentoring or coaching colleagues. • Experience supporting children with SEND. • Experience contributing to quality improvement initiatives or action plans. • Experience using online learning journals and assessment systems
Knowledge	
<i>Essential Criteria</i>	<i>Desirable Criteria</i>
• Strong understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). • Understanding of child development and how children learn through play. • Understanding of the importance of attachment and positive relationships. • Understanding of safeguarding and child protection responsibilities. • Understanding of inclusive practice and supporting individual needs. • Understanding of Ofsted expectations and quality standards within early years provision. • Understanding of health and safety requirements within an early years environment. • Commitment to the First Steps Vision, Mission, Values and RECIPE curriculum.	• Knowledge of the SEND Code of Practice. • Knowledge of coaching and mentoring approaches. • Understanding of change management and continuous improvement processes.

Skills and abilities	
Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
• Ability to lead by example and inspire high-quality practice. • Ability to build positive relationships with children, families, colleagues and external professionals. • Strong communication skills, both verbal and written. • Ability to manage challenging conversations professionally and constructively. • Ability to mentor, coach and support colleagues in their professional development. • Ability to observe, assess and monitor children's learning and development. • Ability to monitor the quality of practice and provide constructive feedback. • Ability to plan, organise and prioritise workload effectively. • Ability to work independently and make sound decisions. • Ability to reflect on practice and support others to improve. • Competent IT skills, including email and nursery management or learning journal systems.	• Experience delivering presentations, meetings or training sessions. • Confidence analysing assessment information and identifying areas for improvement.
Personal attributes	
Essential Criteria	
• Kind, caring and nurturing approach. • Positive role model for children and colleagues. • Leads by example and demonstrates accountability. • Passion for early years education and child development. • Commitment to inclusion, equality and respect. • Professional, reliable and trustworthy. • Motivated to achieve high standards and continuous improvement. • Resilient and solution-focused approach. • Ability to motivate and support others. • Commitment to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. • Able to demonstrate the First Steps values of Kindness, Safety and Emotional Security, Nurture and Relationships, Growth and Learning, Teamwork and Professionalism, and Inclusion and Respect.	

Other requirements
Essential Criteria
• Able to work flexibly within the nursery operating hours and participate in an agreed shift pattern. • Able to attend and lead staff meetings, training events, parent consultations, open events and other nursery activities. • Willingness to undertake occasional evening or weekend work to support nursery events, training, professional development or business needs. • Willingness to work across different First Steps locations, where required, to support children, families, colleagues and the operational needs of the organisation. • Able to travel to alternative First Steps locations when required. Transport arrangements may be supported by the organisation where appropriate. • Demonstrates a commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. • Satisfactory completion of all required pre-employment checks, including Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service check (including any relevant overseas checks), references, legal entitlement to work in the UK, qualifications, health assessment and compliance with childcare disqualification regulations.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

Any appointment is subject to the Company's terms and conditions of service.

Working hours per week:	37
Working weeks per year:	52
Salary range:	£27,975 - £28,361 per annum
Salary progression:	Salary progression is achieved through annual increments, in accordance with the Company's Performance Management Scheme.
Holiday entitlement:	The annual leave year runs from 1 January to 31 December. 24 days per annum. In addition, the days between Christmas and New Year are not deducted from your leave entitlement.
Holiday restrictions:	Leave cannot be taken on certain days designated by the Company, e.g. development days. Leave is to be agreed in advance with the line manager.
Pension scheme:	Permanent and fixed term staff (regardless of how many hours they are contracted to) will automatically be entered into the National Employment Savings Trust ("NEST"), provided their appointment is for at least three months in duration. Participation is subject to its terms and conditions. The Company's policy is to contribute as an employer to staff in membership of the NEST only. Should staff opt out of the NEST, the Company will comply with the employer duties under Part 1 of the Pensions Act 2008 in respect of staff and it will automatically enrol or re-enrol staff into a pension scheme as and when required by law.