

# Men in the Early Years: Mohammed Bilal



Initially I always wanted to become a teacher but when I applied to universities I was declined. Although I had the UCAS points required to get in, I lacked experience of working with children.

Speaking to a career advisor, I was offered a one year course at Bradford College in childcare; this would provide me with some experience at a primary school and a nursery setting. This seemed like the perfect plan as I could use this childcare course as a stepping stone for me to get in to university.

Whilst doing my childcare course I completed 30 days work experience in a primary school setting and I was just going into my second work experience placement at St Edmund's Nursery School and Children Centre. Coming to St Edmund's opened my eyes to a world which I never knew existed; EARLY YEARS! I really enjoyed my time playing and interacting with the younger children and looking in/studying their files to see children's development.

When I finished my course I decided that maybe I didn't want to go into teaching just yet and I secured a L2 support worker post here at St Edmund's. A year later I got promoted to a L3 practitioner post.

I then considered applying to university again in order for me to have something to rely on in the future and to further progress my career in early years; I felt the time was right to do my degree as I have fewer responsibilities in life. However, I really enjoy working here at St Edmund's, and I feared if I left and went to go study at university I might not be able to secure a job where I was so happy in the future.

My headteacher at St Edmund's always reassured me that they will help staff to achieve career/life goals and offer professional development. Later on in the year I was introduced to a 'Workforce

Development Leader who suggested I do the Foundation Degree, which I can study right here at my setting, whilst I work!

It was a no brainer and I applied as soon as I could. Later on the management made it clear that after the Foundation Degree I can top up my degree in order to make it a full degree.

Staff are already aware of the Teaching School that is set up and running here at St Edmund's; this would also be an option to consider after my one year top up if I wanted to go on to become a teacher.

Overall, I am very happy the way my career/life turned out. It seems to have really worked for me, and it has made me realise that even if I want to become a teacher, I can do so within the early years sector.

