

# Alison Wicks

Global citizens: Exploring world cultures in childcare

## Background

Little Candlewicks is a childminding, family-run setting. What began as a solo venture for Alison has grown into a family team, with Alison's youngest daughter joining as a registered childminder in 2023 and her middle daughter becoming an assistant in 2024. The name represents the three Wicks women working together.

## What are they doing differently?

Little Candlewicks know how important it is for children to understand they are part of a wider world. They focus on building cultural awareness through engaging, age appropriate experiences, including:

- selecting a monthly country to focus on, often chosen by the children (such as Korea to explore K-pop!)
- creating "travel passports" for each child to stamp when learning about new countries
- exploring a range of world religions throughout the year, from Sikhism, Judaism and Pagan festivals
- learning greetings in different languages, locating countries on maps, and cooking authentic cuisine from across the world
- involving parents who share their cultural artefacts, like kimonos from Japan and African drums

This child-led approach to cultural exploration makes learning exciting and relevant, with their mascot Phileas Mouse even joining families on holiday adventures!

## Impact ...

- Children develop rich vocabularies and cultural awareness from an early age
- Enthusiastic participation in music, dance and cooking from diverse cultures
- Building cultural sensitivity and appreciation for differences
- Expanding children's worldview beyond their immediate environment
- Nurturing curiosity and an "insatiable appetite for knowledge" about the wider world

“Always expect children to surprise you and exceed expectations at every turn and if you're excited about learning then they will be too”