



Donna Young

Supporting young children to understand their feelings

Impact ...

- Children understand that all feelings are valid, and it is their actions that matter
- They talk openly about emotions and use calming strategies independently
- Children return to play more quickly after experiencing big emotions
- Parents notice children expressing feelings more freely at home

Background

Donna Young runs a small childminding setting in the Vale of Glamorgan. After reducing her working days, she completed additional early years and playwork training, which helped her focus more on children's social and emotional wellbeing. The children now spend more time outdoors and follow a calm, play-based routine that helps them explore and understand their feelings.

What are they doing differently?

Donna introduced simple daily social and emotional learning that young children can easily understand. Children learn that all feelings are valid. It is their actions that can be "OK" or "not OK."

Donna embeds this learning into everyday play by:

- encouraging children to ask each other, "How are you feeling today?" and talking openly about emotions
- using a simple calming routine that includes taking a deep breath, hugging themselves, and sharing what made them feel a certain way
- reading books about feelings using a puppet to make discussions engaging and easy to follow
- supporting children to learn which actions help when emotions feel "big" and which actions are not appropriate
- encouraging children to give and receive compliments to help build confidence and positive relationships

"The way I promote and educate my little ones in social and emotional awareness is just wonderful and I really couldn't be prouder."