

Skills Pledge shows parents that nursery cares

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Husband and wife team Drew and Becky Pike are backing the Skills Pledge, which they say has helped create a consistent and trustworthy workforce dedicated to providing the best childcare possible.

Since its launch in 2007, the Skills Pledge has already helped 2, 638 employers in the East Midlands to make the public commitment to drive their organisations forward, training more than 371,235 employees.

Drew and Becky, who own Hollies Day Nurseries Ltd, first made the Skills Pledge in April 2008 when they started to run the family-owned business together and have renewed the pledge again this year.

With 31 staff members, looking after 160 children across two sites in Arnold and Sherwood, Drew and Becky knew that in order to take their business forward, they needed to adopt a structured approach to training.

With help from Business Link, who encouraged the nursery to sign up to the Skills Pledge, a training programme was put in place which requires all members of staff to complete a Level 2 NVQ in basic childcare.

Once complete, staff members have the option of proceeding to the next level either in childcare or something related, like Carly, the nursery's training and development officer who completed a Level 3 NVQ in training and development.

Drew said: "In the past, the nursery had a high turnover of staff and people were following their own training programmes so the workforce was really inconsistent in terms of skills and abilities.

"The relationships that we build with the parents and the care that we provide to the children are key to the success of the business and we knew that to get both of these elements right, we needed to keep the staff on track and provide up to date, relevant, training.

"We went to see a Business Link Adviser to discuss how we could move the business forward and what was best practice within the industry, and they suggested putting a structured training programme in place for all staff. They also pointed us in the direction of lots of Government grants that we could access.

"In addition to the Level 2 NVQ in childcare, each training programme is tailored to individual needs, which means we can bring out the best in people so staff feel valued.

"Since completing the Level 3 NVQ in training and development, Carly is our full time training and development officer, observing staff at all times to ensure that our people are right for our business and to identify any training needs."

So committed to having a fully skilled workforce, one staff member at Hollies has completed her foundation degree in childcare with another three currently on the course and all management staff and key workers are due to go on an effective

communication training course to further their relationships with parents, colleagues and children.

Sarah Radford who is completing a Level 3 in business management said: “I think it’s great that Hollies invests in training in the way it does. As well as my childcare qualification, the business management NVQ has allowed me to work across other areas of the company like finance and budgets.”

Kath Wilkinson, Business Link Adviser, who has supported the company for almost two years said: “Drew and Becky have both demonstrated their commitment to training and development. They understand the importance of providing staff with training that is relevant and timely and which is going to have a significant impact on their business.

“The Skills Pledge has provided the organisation with an opportunity to highlight their continued commitment to training.”

Kevin McCann, Partnership Director LSC, said: “We are delighted that so many employers have made the Skills Pledge. Skills are vitally important to any organisation but it’s more important than ever in the current climate for individuals and their future employability and for the success of organisations throughout the UK.

“By making the Skills Pledge, Hollies Day Nurseries has committed to ensuring their workforce receive the training and development necessary to keep their skills up to date.”

Nationally more than 17,000 employers have made the Skills Pledge which means almost 6.5million employees now have the opportunity to embark on training

programmes at work – far exceeding the original employee target.

To find out more about the Skills Pledge call 0800 015 5545 or visit

<http://inourhands.lsc.gov.uk/employers-pledge.html>

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Notes to Editors

- Photos of Hollies Day Nurseries are available from Laura Gurnett on 0115 852 4358.
- **The Skills Pledge is** a public commitment made by the leader of an organisation confirming that they will develop the skills of their employees, including all of those lacking **basic skills or a first full Level 2 qualification**. It is a promise that, through training, they will work to boost the productivity and efficiency of their organisation and realise the potential of their employees by developing their basic skills and working towards relevant, valuable qualifications. Level 2 is the minimum standard, however as understanding skills needs and priorities is the key to an organisation's success, employers are encouraged to upskill their people to the level required by their industry and their specific organisational needs.
- Research shows that one of the most significant benefits from making the Skills Pledge is the public demonstration of an organisation's commitment to valuing employees
- Employers see the Skills Pledge as a valuable way to increase productivity, retain and develop their staff and enhance their reputation
- By developing tailored action plans, the Skills Pledge enables organisations to take control of training and focus on the skills that they need to succeed
- Making and implementing the Skills Pledge enables organisations to drive forward one comprehensive, strategic training programme for the entire workforce, resulting in cost and time efficiencies

- By making the Skills Pledge, employers are driving a culture change in the workplace, which improves morale and provides staff with the opportunity to improve their wider careers and life prospects
- NVQ Level 2 is equivalent to five good GCSEs and Level 3 is equivalent to two A Levels.

Learning and Skills Council

- The LSC aims to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: To improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.
- The LSC will cease to exist from April 2010 as a result of provisions in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. From April 2010, the **Skills Funding Agency** will be the single contractor for all publicly funded Post-19 education and training and all Apprenticeship provision in England, outside of higher education. Funding for young people (16-18) currently within the remit of the LSC will be transferred to local authorities and a new national body – the Young People's Learning Agency will support these new arrangements.

Issued on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council by COI News & PR East Midlands. Media enquiries to Laura Gurnett on 0115 852 4358 or laura.gurnett@coi.gsi.gov.uk