



Alannis' words

When Liz Pemberton (The Black Nursery Manager) came to speak at ECCC

Having Liz Pemberton come to ECCC felt like such an honour, especially as we're a centre in which anti-racist practice is at the forefront of everything we do and where BEYFARP is held. Liz and Shaddai touched on a range of super interesting and important topics from Liz's journey with driving forward anti-racist practice in early years to Ofsted and their interpretations of best practice and how anti-racism is rarely on their agenda. One thing that really stuck out to me was how powerfully Liz spoke about the political nature within early years. Not just relating to racism but linking it back to things like ratios, policies and procedures and the accessibility of resources and places within settings for children and families. It was something I had never even thought about or considered.



The session with Liz and Shaddia made me reflect on how as a senior within ECCC, I have such an influence on the wider team and it's super important for me to regularly discuss anti-racist practices to support their own confidence with being proactive as well as developing the skills to deal with any potential conflicts. It's also important for me to ensure that when leading and planning the environment, I'm doing so with an inclusive and critical lens so all children and families feel as though they belong here with us at ECCC.



Niasha's words

When Liz Pemberton (The Black Nursery Manager) came to speak at ECCC

As a Black woman working in early years, this event left me feeling both seen and empowered. Hearing Liz Pemberton speak openly about her experiences highlighted the challenges and responsibilities that many Black people still face within the sector. It reinforced the importance of using our voices, even when conversations feel uncomfortable, and recognising that anti-racist practice should be part of our everyday work with children and families.

It was particularly eye opening to hear about the experiences of a Black owned, family run nursery being judged before inspectors had even stepped through the door. This highlighted the prejudice and barriers that many Black people continue to face when starting or running a business.

The discussion around unconscious bias also stayed with me, particularly the example of Black children being disproportionately refused places in specialist autism provisions. This showed how inequality can affect children's opportunities and outcomes from a very young age.



Overall, the event reinforced that racism remains a safeguarding issue and that we cannot shy away from difficult conversations with young children. It left me feeling inspired and more determined to continue advocating for inclusive and anti-racist practice here at ECCC.



Izzy's words

When Liz Pemberton (The Black Nursery Manager) came to speak at ECCC

It's sad to say that it took the death of George Floyd, another Black man, to open my eyes to the racism woven through the fabric of our society. I knew racism existed, and I had a strong sense of social justice, but it wasn't until I truly stood back and listened to the voices of Black and Brown women that I began to question the well-meaning Early Years practices I had been part of.



The women at ECCC helped me understand the deep-rooted inequalities that I was unknowingly continuing to perpetuate. Naomi Thouray, Chantelle Douglas, and others spent many vulnerable moments sharing their experiences and helping awaken me to the impact of racism on our youngest members of society. In 2020, I first heard the powerful voice of Liz Pemberton. Her willingness to confront uncomfortable truths, unravel systemic inequality, and call us towards meaningful activism profoundly shaped my thinking. Inspired by Liz's work, we established the Bristol Forum for Anti-Racist Practice at ECCC, creating a space where settings could come together, learn, challenge one another, and support each other through this uncomfortable but essential journey.

We were stunned when Shaddai told us that Liz wanted to deliver an in-person event in Bristol, and even more honoured that she would do so in our pre-school. The feelings from that day will stay with me forever: empathy, sadness, fury, pride, hope, and a renewed sense of purpose.



Liz Pemberton and Dr Shaddai Tembo on Anti-Racism in Early Years — Critical Early Years | ...
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I will always be proud to work alongside the incredible team at ECCC and grateful for the friendships and connections I have with Erin, Beth, and Shaddai. They continue to inspire me to keep learning, listening, and striving to create a more equitable future for every child.