

# Meet the Playworker

**Name:** Rebecca McGowen

**Setting:** Dexters Holiday Club, Bridgend



"I always remember growing up, we were lucky that we had quite a large garden - lots of nooks and crannies to hide in and play in. I remember playing with my brother, building tree houses and having the freedom to just pretty much go out and do what we wanted to do. We would go out with friends on bikes in the streets, come home when it started to get dark. I think it's very different today, which is why it is so important today having Out of School Clubs and Playworkers because children are so limited now with what they can do outside of school and limited in accessing those authentic play opportunities.

I started primary school teaching eight years ago - a career that I loved. But recently, I've decided to make a change. I've been working as a Playworker in a setting that I love since October 2018 and I have decided to work as a Playworker full time. A few of the things that appealed to me about playwork were that I thought I could still use my teaching skills because some of the elements of the roles are quite similar. You still need to plan activities (to an extent), you still need to develop resources. And obviously, you're still in charge and looking after a large group of children, putting their welfare and their safeguarding at the forefront of everything you do. However, I feel with playwork you have more of a chance to build a stronger relationship with the children, you get to enjoy the role and have more fun with it really! I think a lot of what appealed to me is that the children have free rein, they get to choose what they want to do. As Playworkers, we provide the equipment, the materials, the resources, we provide the children with a play space, we provide them with a range of loose parts to use and most importantly, they have the time to develop and you know, create their imaginative play, independent play. And they get so much from having that free rein and those opportunities to play without interruption – they have a sense of ownership over their time and they get such a sense of achievement when they discover something new about themselves or about the world through play - and being part of that process as a Playworker... well, it's magic.

I think being in a setting like Dexters, children have the freedom to do what they want to do. They're not under time restrictions, they're not forced to do something they don't want to do. As playworkers, yes, we plan activities for the children. But if they don't want to do it, they don't have to do it. They can choose something else to do, you know, anything that comes to their mind. They can do it.

I've recently completed my Level 3 in Playwork with Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs. I think what I found hard with playwork when I first started was that I very much had my teacher head on. And if a child started climbing up a tree, I'd be like "no, get down, you're not allowed to climb the tree" because obviously in school that's what you do. But in playwork you need to learn to sit back, observe the children, and just trust that they know their limits, they know their restrictions, and only intervene when it's absolutely necessary. And that's something I've learned over the last year when I completed my playwork qualification, which was obviously very beneficial for me, but really enjoyable as well. I love being a Playworker – I don't think there's any other job quite like it."



# Cwrdd â'r Gweithiwr Chwarae

**Enw:** Rebecca McGowen

**Lleoliad:** Clwb Gwyliau Dexters, Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr



“Rwyf bob tro'n cofio bod yn blentyn yn tyfu, ro'n ni'n lwcus i fod â gardd eitha mawr - digon o dyllau a chorneli i guddio a chwarae ynddynt. Dwi'n cofio chwarae gyda'm brawd, adeiladu tai coeden a chael y rhyddid i fynd allan a gwneud fel y mynnem fwy neu lai. Byddem yn mynd allan gyda ffrindiau ar feics yn y strydoedd, a dod adre pan fyddai'n dechrau nosi. Dwi'n meddwl bod pethau'n wahanol iawn heddiw, a dyna pam ei bod hi mor bwysig bod â Chybiau Allysgol a Gweithwyr Chwarae, a phlant mor gyfyngedig nawr o ran yr hyn y gallant ei wneud y tu allan i'r ysgol, a chyfyngedig o ran cael mynediad at y gwir gyfleoedd chwarae hynny.

Fe wnes ddechrau dysgu mewn ysgol gynradd wyth mlynedd dyn ôl - gyrfa yr oeddwn i'n ei mwynhau'n fawr. Ond yn ddiweddar penderfynais newid. Rwyf wedi bod yn gweithio fel Gweithiwr Chwarae mewn lleoliad yr wy'n hoff iawn ohono ers mis Hydref 2028, a dwi wedi penderfynu gweithio fel Gweithiwr Chwarae llawn amser. Rhai o'r pethau a apeliodd ata i ynglŷn â gwaith chwarae oedd i mi feddwl y gallwn ddal i ddefnyddio fy sgiliau dysgu am fod rhai elfennau o'r rolau'n eithaf tebyg. Y mae dal angen i chi gynllunio digwyddiadau (i raddau), ac mae'n dal angen i chi ddatblygu adnoddau. Ac wrth gwrs, ro'ch chi'n dal â gofal dros grŵp mawr o blant, gan roi'r lle blaenaf i'w lles a'u diogelwch ym mhob peth a wnewch. Ond yn achos gwaith chwarae, rwy'n teimlo bod gennych chi fwy o gyfle i feithrin perthynas gryfach â'r plant, mae cyfle i chi fwynhau'r rôl a chael hwyl ynddi a dweud y gwir! Dwi'n credu bod mai rhan fawr o'r hyn a apeliodd ata i yw bod y plant yn cael rhyddid i wneud fel y mynnant, nhw sy'n dewis beth maent am ei wneud. Fel Gweithwyr Chwarae, ni fydd yn darparu'r cyfarpar, y defnyddiau, yr adnoddau; rydym yn darparu man chwarae ar gyfer y plant, yn darparu amrywiaeth o rannau rhydd y gallant eu defnyddio, ac, yn bwysicaf oll, maen nhw'n cael amser i ddatblygu, a, chi'n gwybod, i greu eu chwarae dychmygus, chwarae annibynnol. Ac maen nhw'n cael cymaint o gael y rhyddid hwnnw a'r cyfleoedd hynny i chwarae heb ymyrraeth - maen nhw'n â'r synnwyr o berchnogaeth dros eu hamser, a chymaint o synnwyr o fod wedi cyflawni pan fyddant yn darganfod rhywbeth newydd amdany'n nhw eu hunain - neu am y byd - drwy chwarae, ac mae bod yn rhan o'r broses honno fel Gweithiwr Chwarae yn .... wel, yn llawn swyn.

Dwi'n meddwl bod plant mewn lleoliad fel Dexters â'r rhyddid i wneud beth maen nhw am ei wneud. Dy'n nhw ddim yn gyfyngedig o ran amser, dy'n nhw ddim yn cael eu gorfodi i wneud rhywbeth nad y'n nhw am ei wneud. Fel gweithwyr chwarae, ydyn, ry'n ni cynllunio gweithgareddau ar gyfer y plant. Os os nad ydyn nhw am eu gwneud, does dim rhaid iddyn nhw. Gallan nhw ddewis rhywbeth arall i'w wneud, ch'n gwybod, unrhyw beth sy'n dod i'w meddwl. Gallan nhw wneud hynny.

Fe wnes gwblhau fy Lefel 3 mewn Gwaith Chwarae gyda Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs yn ddiweddar. Dwi'n meddwl mai'r hyn ro'n i'n ei chael yn anodd ynghylch gwaith chwarae pan ddechreuais gynta oedd mod i'n meddwl yn debyg iawn i athrawes. Ac os byddai plentyn yn dechrau dringo coeden byddwn i'n gwneud pethau fel “na, lawr â ti, wyt ti ddim i ddringo'r goeden” achos, yn amlwg, mewn ysgol dyna beth fyddai rhywun yn wneud. Ond yn achos gwaith chwarae mae angen ichi ddysgu i eistedd yn ôl, arsylwi ar y plant ac ymddiried yn y ffaith eu bod nhw'n gwybod eu terfynau, yn gwybod eu cyfyngiadau, a dim ond yn ymyrryd pan fydd hi'n gwbl angenrheidiol. Ac mae hynny'n rhywbeth rwyf wedi ei ddysgu dros y flwyddyn ddiwethaf pan ro'n i'n gwneud fy nghymhwyster gwaith chwarae, a oedd, mae'n amlwg, o werth mawr i mi, ond yn bleserus iawn hefyd. Dwi'n dwlu bod yn Weithiwr Chwarae - dwi ddim yn meddwl bod unrhyw swydd arall cweit yr un peth ag e.”

