

WOMEN WHO INSPIRE US

To mark International Women's Day, we asked a range of people throughout Bright Horizons which women inspired them and why. Would they be on your list? Who would you pick?



They say it takes a village to raise a child. Similarly, it takes the world to create equality.

The theme of this year's [International Women's Day](#) on 8th March is to **#BreaktheBias**. We're all individually striving towards, but collectively take responsibility for, creating a gender equal world.

To this end, we asked some of our key people in Bright Horizons for their female role models, which women most inspire them and why. We got a broad brush of responses from nursery managers and support staff to the Managing Director.

This is a fabulously interesting and eclectic list of private and public personalities who provide inspiration for us here at Bright Horizons - we hope they do the same for you.

My piano teacher, Judith: I met her when I was three years old. She taught me how to play over the next 15 formative years of my life and encouraged me to compete and perform in public. Her high standards of personal and professional presentation, including platform manners, live with me to this day, as does her guidance on work ethic, and that 'practice makes perfect'.
Ros Marshall, Managing Director, UK

Michelle Obama: What an inspiration, on so many levels! I think the most impressive thing is I feel I know her. She's an authentic presence, clearly guided by what she believes about humanity and relationships. That's incredibly refreshing in a world where a great number of those in the public eye simply say what they think (certain) people want to hear. Michelle Obama's warmth, calmness and vulnerability are powerful. For me, she personifies 'leadership' and we can all learn from her on using power with care.
Emma Willars, Work+Family Academy Manager

Mrs Davies - Teacher: With a rather troubled home life, well hidden from all, my history teacher recognised my rain clouds and she started to help me see sunshine. I was quiet and fearful at school, desperate to be invisible, but my teacher could see me clearly, and wanted me to have the strength to be seen by all. Silenced by fear and self-doubt, she gave me a voice and encouraged me to use it. Under her wing and her leadership, she coached and entered me into public speaking competitions. I wasn't hugely academic, yet she taught me not to limit myself. She took me on road trips to see university options and helped me to believe in myself and my future. She taught me that I was the very best at being me. I now try hard to pay this forward and do all I can to give what I learnt from her away to others; I admire all women who do the same.

Emma, Senior Account Marketing Executive

Wonder Woman: She is strong, fearless, and resilient in so many ways. Her awesome superpowers enhance her strengths for the greater good of everyone. I feel she is very similar to a real-life nursery nurse who works long shifts, has to be able to multitask, and is always looking out for everyone else! Not all superheroes wear capes- especially nursery practitioners!

Maddiy, Nursery Manager

My sister-in-law: She has a hereditary condition called 'Polycystic Kidney Disease' which means that she had to have both kidneys removed and survived on dialysis three times per week, at home for about 10 years. The painful and grueling dialysis took six hours at a time, and she has been hospitalised many times and in a critical condition. Against all odds, she has come through every time without a single complaint or moan. Thankfully she was able to receive a donor kidney about 3 years ago, which has enhanced her life so much. She always remained positive with everything she has been through, and she inspires me every day with her tenacity.

Ann, Early Childhood Area Director

Rosa Parks: She stood up for what she believed in and what was right. It reminds us we are all equal and should also stand up for what we believe in and what's right. There's a lesson to be learnt to have the confidence to stand our ground for what we believe in.

Sarah Burge, Nursery Manager, Fulham

Thuli Madonsela: A South African advocate, professor of law and single working mother who served as the Public Protector of South Africa from 2009 to 2016. An amazing woman who bravely took on the President and government in SA to investigate and publish the "State Capture" report which provided evidence of widespread state capture and corruption - all in the face of death threats, public protests and ongoing legal challenges. The best description of her is "a bad-ass public servant who uses her office for good at a pivotal moment in South African politics," as exposed in the documentary "Whispering Truth To Power". Her legacy continues in the ongoing investigations and prosecutions around state corruption and a widespread public awareness that began with her work and continues with @thumafoundation.

Iole Matthews, Coaching & Consultancy Manager

Taylor Swift: Her songwriting, finesse, and talent aside, Swift is a tenacious pursuer of equality and fair treatment in the music industry, an LGBTQ+ ally, and a staunch advocate of women's rights. She is a brilliant example of someone who uses her position and platform to speak out where it matters, to empower those without a listening audience.

Fay, Content Producer

My mother: She is an incredible person and role model. Being a mother myself now, I have deeper appreciation of everything she has done for me. Her kindness and ability to listen without passing any judgement has been healing during a time when I really needed the extra support. Unfortunately, since the Pandemic I've not able to see her often because she lives in a different country, but the connection we have is still very strong even though we have to rely on technology to connect.

Marketa, Social Media Context Executive

Dr Frances Atherton: A faculty research coordinator and senior lecturer at the University of Chester, who was my lecturer and course lead whilst studying for my Post Grad in Early Years Practice. Although I already knew I wanted to work in the sector, she inspired me to learn more about how young children learn, and the importance of what practitioners do to promote learning within the early years. Whilst lecturing, she was completing her MA in early years, and shared her research with us which really ignited the spark of learning and passing on that knowledge to others.

Nichola Griffin, Bright Horizons Warrington Manager