

Purpose Statement

Name of regulated qualification	
QAN: 601/7572/2	Title: BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Children's Play, Learning and Development (Early Years Educator) (1080 GLH)

Overview***The early years sector***

The early years sector in England is made up of over 80 000 settings with 1.3 million childcare places for children under five. This ranges from childminders and nannies, to nurseries, crèches and preschools. Alongside the care provision, the sector has further career paths for students interested in working with children. Degree courses in speech therapy, social work, special education and playwork offer additional opportunities in the sector.

Who is this qualification for?

The Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Children's Play Learning and Development (Early Years Educator) is intended as a Tech Level, equivalent in size to 3 A levels, and will confer Early Years Educator status on students, qualifying them to work directly in the sector. When studied alongside level 3 mathematics and the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), it would be eligible for the Tech Bacc measure.

This size qualification is particularly appropriate for those with an interest in progressing directly to a career as an Early Years Educator (for example, nursery worker, childminder or nanny). It is also appropriate for those wishing to progress to higher education to specialise in a related field.

No prior study of the sector is needed, but students should normally have a range of achievement at level 2, in GCSEs or equivalent qualifications. In order for a student to practise as an Early Year Educator, they will also need to achieve at least grade C or GCSE in English and in mathematics.

What does the qualification cover?

This qualification has been developed in consultation with employers and professional bodies to confirm that the content is appropriate for those interested in working in the sector. Academics have also been involved to ensure it meets requirements for entry to related courses in higher education.

The qualification provides students with a sector specialism by developing a deep common core of knowledge, understanding and skills in the sector through mandatory content, and specialist knowledge through a selection of option units.

Students taking this qualification will study eleven mandatory units, which cover the following topics:

- children's development
- supporting children's early learning
- play
- keeping children safe

- working with parents
- reflective practice
- observation, assessment and planning
- the early years foundation stage
- research.

Option units have been designed to support progression to relevant occupational areas and to the range of sector-related courses in HE. They cover content areas such as:

- promoting children's development outdoors
- an introduction to working in a Montessori setting
- working with children with additional needs.

All students taking this qualification will be required to engage with sector employers as part of their course. This includes 750 hours in mandatory work experience, and production of a Practical Evidence Portfolio to record evidence of engagement in continuing professional development and reflective practice in different early years settings.

What could this qualification lead to?

Will the qualification lead to employment, if so, in which job role and at which level?

The qualification is a licence to practice in the early years sector. Students will be able to progress to roles such as early year practitioners, nursery nurses and childminders.

Will the qualification support progression to further learning, if so, what to?

The Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Children's Play, Learning and Development will normally be the only qualification in a two-year study programme. It is particularly for the student looking for a full-time course specialising in this sector.

The qualification is intended to carry UCAS points and is recognised by HE providers as meeting admission requirements to many relevant courses, for example:

- BA(Hons) Special Education
- BSC (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy
- BA (Hons) Primary Education.

Students should always check the entry requirements for degree programmes at specific HE providers.

If there are larger and/or smaller versions of this qualification, or it is available at different skills levels, why should the student choose this one?

The **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Children's Play, Learning and Development (Early Years Educator)** is equivalent in size to 3 A levels and is for students who know they want to work with children as an Early Years Educator, either directly on achievement of this qualification, or after further study for a sector-related degree.

The suite also includes the following qualifications.

The **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Children's Play, Learning and Development** is the smallest qualification in the suite and is equivalent in size to one A level. It is for students interested in learning about the early years sector alongside other fields of study, probably with a view to progressing to a wide range of HE courses, but not necessarily in the early years sector.

The **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Foundation Diploma Children's Play, Learning and Development** is equivalent in size to 1.5 A levels and is for students looking for a one-year course, perhaps after taking further level 2 and/or level 3 qualifications, and who wish to enter employment directly to caring roles with children. It can also be taken alongside another area of study that contrasts or complements this qualification over a two-year full-time study programme.

The **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Children's Play, Learning and Development (Early Years Educator)** is equivalent in size to 2 A levels and is for students wanting to progress directly into work as an Early Year Educator, on achieving the qualification. Its size means there is time in a study programme to improve English and mathematics qualifications, if necessary, or to take an additional level 3 qualification to support progression.

This qualification is supported by the following organisations

Professional and trade bodies

Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years
British Association for Early Childhood Education
Pre-school Learning Alliance

Employers

The Hall Road Kindergarten
Smaller Earth

Higher education

University of Huddersfield
University of Chichester
University College Birmingham
University of the West of England