



Pearson
BTEC



Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification
BTEC National in

L3

Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate)

Specification

First teaching from September 2025

First certification from 2026

Issue 5

Qualification Number: 610/3966/4

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About Pearson

We are the world's leading learning company operating in countries all around the world. We provide content, assessment and digital services to learners, educational institutions, employers, governments and other partners globally. We are committed to helping equip learners with the skills they need to enhance their employability prospects and to succeed in the changing world of work. We believe that wherever learning flourishes so do people.

This specification is Issue 5. We will inform centres of any changes to this issue. The latest issue can be found on our website.

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Welcome

BTEC Nationals are widely recognised by higher education and industry as the vocational qualification of choice at Level 3. They provide students with meaningful and practical learning experiences across a range of career sectors to prepare them to progress to higher education as a route to graduate-level employment.

Recent data has shown that one in five adults of working age in the UK has a BTEC qualification. What's more, well over 90,000 BTEC students apply to UK universities every year and their BTEC Nationals are accepted by over 150 UK universities and other higher education institutions for relevant degree programmes either on their own or in combination with A Levels.

Why are BTECs so successful?

BTECs embody a fundamentally student-centred approach to the curriculum, with a flexible, unit-based structure and knowledge applied through a balanced combination of assignments and examinations. They enable the holistic development of the practical, interpersonal and thinking skills required to succeed in higher education and employment.

When creating these BTEC Nationals we focused on the skills and personal attributes needed to navigate the future, and have worked with many higher education providers, professional bodies, colleges and schools to ensure that their needs are met. Employers are looking for future employees with a thorough grounding in the latest industry requirements and work-ready skills such as critical thinking and problem solving. Higher education needs students who have experience of research, extended writing and meeting deadlines.

We have addressed these requirements by:

- Facilitating and guiding the development of transferable skills through the design and delivery of the qualifications, using a holistic and practical framework which is based on recent research into the most critical skills needed to navigate the future. This Transferable Skills framework has been used to embed transferable skills in the qualifications where they naturally occur and also to signpost opportunities for delivery and development as a part of the wider BTEC learning experience. See page 6 for further information.
- Supporting the delivery of Sustainability Education and Digital Skills development naturally through the content design of the qualifications. Mapping is provided for each qualification to identify where the opportunities for teaching and learning exist.
- Updating sector-specific content to ensure it is relevant and future-facing.
- Implementing a consistent approach to assessment with a balanced combination of internal and external assessments to better engage students, make the qualifications more accessible for them and more manageable for centres to deliver.

We are providing a wealth of support, both resources and people, to ensure that students and their teachers have the best possible experience during their course. See Section 5 for details of the support we offer.

This specification document should be used in conjunction with the [*Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National Specification Supplementary Information*](#) document which is available on our website.

A word to students

Today's BTEC Nationals will require commitment and hard work, as you would expect of the most respected applied learning qualification in the UK. You will have to complete a range of units, be organised, take some assessments that we will set and mark and undertake practical tasks and assignments. But you can feel proud to achieve a BTEC because, whatever your plans in life – whether you decide to study further, go on to work or an apprenticeship – your BTEC National will be your passport to success in the next stage of your life.

Good luck, and we hope you enjoy your course.

**Summary of changes to Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification
BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate)
specification Issue 5**

Summary of changes made between previous issue and this issue	Page number
Update to wording contained within the content warning	1
Unit 1: content C1.1 corrected to accurately refer to cognitive development	22
Unit 1: content D1.1 corrected to accurately refer to language development	24
Unit 1: content E1.1 corrected to accurately refer to emotional development	25
Unit 1: content F1.1 corrected to accurately refer to social development	26
Unit 3: content area B2 amended to include curriculum design only, and curriculum approaches that were previously in B2 have been moved to a new C1 focusing on curriculum approaches to learning and development. What was the previous C1 has been renumbered to C2. Spelling of Froebel corrected to Froebel.	47-48

Earlier issue(s) show(s) previous changes.

If you need further information on these changes or what they mean, please contact us via our website at: qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/contact-us.html.

Contents

1	Introduction	1
	Why choose Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate)?	1
	Total Qualification Time	2
	Qualification and unit content	3
	Assessment	3
	Externally assessed units	3
	Internally assessed units	4
	Synoptic assessment	4
	Language of assessment	4
	Grading for units and qualifications	5
	UCAS tariff points	5
	Preparing students for the future	6
	Transferable skills	6
	Digital Skills	6
	Sustainability Education	7
2	Qualification purpose	8
3	Structure	10
	Qualification structure	10
	Synoptic assessment	11
4	Units	12
	Understanding your units	12
	Internally assessed units	12
	Externally assessed units	14
	Index of units	15
5	Planning your programme	69
	Supporting you in planning and implementing your programme	69
	Is there a student entry requirement?	69

6	Understanding the qualification grade	70
	Awarding and reporting for the qualification	70
	Eligibility for an award	70
	Award of the qualification grade	70
	Points available for internal units	71
	Points available for external units	71
	Claiming the qualification grade	72
	Award of qualification grade	72
	Example grading table for Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate)	73
	Appendix 1 Glossary of terms used for internally assessed units	75
	Appendix 2 Transferable Skills framework	77
	Appendix 3 Digital Skills framework	82
	Appendix 4 Sustainability framework	85

1 Introduction

Why choose Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate)?

We've listened to feedback from all parts of the early years subject community, including higher education. We've used this opportunity of curriculum change to redesign qualifications so that they reflect the demands of a truly modern and evolving early years environment – qualifications that enable your students to apply themselves and give them the skills to succeed in their chosen pathway.

The Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate) allows students to engage in a broad investigation of the children's care and education sector (0-8 years). There are four mandatory units; two examined and two internally assessed. The internally assessed units give students the opportunity to engage in applied knowledge and understanding tasks to develop their early childhood development knowledge.

The qualification is designed to be taken alongside A Levels as part of a study programme and can link to learning in A Levels in Sociology, Psychology, Biology and English. It is intended for students that wish to progress into higher education as a pathway to employment.

Work placement

It is strongly recommended that students are given the opportunity to undertake a work placement whilst enrolled on this course. The work placement setting should be with children from birth up to eight years and support students with completion of *Unit 4: Research and Reflective Practice in an Early Childhood Setting*. However, please note that students who do not have the opportunity to complete a work placement can still achieve this unit.

Content warning

Please be aware that specification and assessments for the Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate) may contain sensitive topics which are related to the subject.

Total Qualification Time

For all regulated qualifications, Pearson specifies a total number of hours that it is estimated students will require to complete and show achievement for the qualification: this is the Total Qualification Time (TQT). Within TQT, Pearson identifies the number of Guided Learning Hours (GLH) that we estimate a centre delivering the qualification might provide. Guided learning means activities, such as lessons, tutorials, online instruction, supervised study and giving feedback on performance, that directly involve teachers and assessors in teaching, supervising and invigilating students. Guided learning includes the time required for students to complete external assessment under examination or supervised conditions.

In addition to guided learning, other required learning directed by teachers or assessors will include private study, preparation for assessment and undertaking assessment when not under supervision, such as preparatory reading, revision and independent research.

BTEC Nationals have been designed around the number of hours of guided learning expected. Each unit in the qualification has a GLH value of 60, 90 or 120. There is then a total GLH value for the qualification.

Each qualification has a TQT value. This may vary within sectors and across the suite depending on the nature of the units in each qualification and the expected time for other required learning.

The following table shows the qualifications in this sector and their GLH and TQT values.

Qualification title	Size and structure	Summary purpose
Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate)	360 GLH (480 TQT) Equivalent in size to one A Level. 4 mandatory units	The Extended Certificate is for students who are interested in learning about the children's care and education sector (0-8 years) alongside other fields of study, with a view to progressing to a wide range of higher education courses, not necessarily in early years-related subjects. It is designed to be taken as part of a programme of study that includes A Levels.

Qualification and unit content

Pearson has developed the content of the new BTEC Nationals in collaboration with representatives from higher education and relevant professional bodies. In this way, we have ensured that content is up to date and that it includes the knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes required in the sector.

Centres should ensure that delivery of content is kept up to date. Some of the units within the specification may contain references to legislation, policies, regulations and organisations, which may not be applicable in the country you deliver this qualification in (if teaching outside of England), or which may have gone out-of-date during the lifespan of the specification. In these instances, it is possible to substitute such references with ones that are current and applicable in the country you deliver subject to confirmation by your Standards Verifier.

Assessment

Assessment is specifically designed to fit the purpose and objective of the qualification. It includes a range of assessment types and styles suited to vocational qualifications in the sector. There are three main forms of assessment that you need to be aware of: external, internal and synoptic.

Externally assessed units

Each external assessment for a BTEC National is linked to a specific unit. All of the units developed for external assessment are of 60, 90 or 120 GLH to allow students to demonstrate breadth and depth of achievement. Each assessment is taken under specified conditions, then marked by Pearson and a grade awarded. Students are permitted to resit the examination twice. This equates to three attempts in total: one inclusive of registration, the remaining two attempts as resits. If students resit an examined unit, the best grade achieved will count towards their overall qualification grade, not necessarily the most recent sitting. External assessments are available twice a year. For detailed information on the external assessments, please see the table in *Section 3*. For further information on preparing for external assessment, see the [Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National Specification Supplementary Information](#) document which is available on our website.

Internally assessed units

Internally assessed units are assessed by a Pearson Set Assignment Brief (PSAB), which is set by Pearson, marked by you and subject to external standards verification. Before you assess you will need to become an approved centre, if you are not one already. You will need to prepare to assess using the guidance in the [Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National Specification Supplementary Information](#) document, which is available on our website. You will make grading decisions based on the requirements and supporting guidance given in the units. Where a student has not achieved their expected level of performance for an assignment, they may be eligible for one resubmission of improved evidence for each assignment submitted if authorised by the Lead Internal Verifier.

To ensure any resubmissions are fairly and consistently implemented for all students, the Lead Internal Verifier can only authorise a resubmission if certain conditions are met. If the Lead Internal Verifier does authorise a resubmission, it must be completed within 15 working days of the student receiving the results of the assessment.

Feedback to students can only be given to clarify areas where they have not achieved expected levels of performance. Students cannot receive any specific guidance or instruction about how to improve work to meet assessment criteria or be given solutions to questions or problems in the tasks.

If a student has still not achieved the targeted pass criteria following the resubmission of improved evidence for an assignment, the Lead Internal Verifier may authorise, under exceptional circumstances, one retake opportunity to meet the required pass criteria. The retake can be of a task or subset of the Pearson Set Assignment Brief that is of evidence in a new or revised form. The deadline for submission of the retake must fall within the same academic year.

Synoptic assessment

Synoptic assessment requires students to demonstrate that they can identify and use effectively, in an integrated way, an appropriate selection of skills, techniques, concepts, theories and knowledge from across the whole sector as relevant to a key task. Synoptic links between units are flagged within the units. Please refer to *Unit 4: Research and Reflective Practice in an Early Childhood Setting* for further details.

Language of assessment

Assessment of the internal and external units for these qualifications will be available in English. All student work must be in English. A student taking the qualifications may be assessed in British or Irish Sign Language where it is permitted for the purpose of reasonable adjustment.

For information on reasonable adjustments see the [Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National Specification Supplementary Information](#) document, which is available on our website.

Grading for units and qualifications

Achievement in the qualification requires a demonstration of depth of study in each unit, assured acquisition of a range of practical skills required for progression to higher education, and successful development of transferable skills. Students achieving a qualification will have completed all units.

Units are assessed using a grading scale of Distinction (D), Merit (M), Pass (P), Near Pass (N) and Unclassified (U). The grade of Near Pass is used for externally assessed units only. All mandatory and optional units contribute proportionately to the overall qualification grade, for example a unit of 120 GLH will contribute double that of a 60 GLH unit.

BTEC National qualifications are graded using a scale of P to D*, **or** PP to D*D*, **or** PPP to D*D*D* depending on the size of the qualification. Please see *Section 6* for more details. The relationship between qualification grading scales and unit grades will be subject to regular review as part of Pearson's standards monitoring processes on the basis of student performance and in consultation with key users of the qualification.

UCAS tariff points

The BTEC Nationals attract UCAS points. Please go to the UCAS website for full details of the points allocated.

Preparing students for the future

Transferable skills

Recent future skills reports have highlighted the growing importance of transferable skills for students to succeed in their careers and lives in this fast-changing world.

Following research and consultation with FE educators and higher education institutions, Pearson has developed a Transferable Skills Framework to facilitate and guide the development of transferable skills through this qualification. The Framework has four broad skill areas, each with a cluster of skills as shown below:

1. **Managing Yourself:** (1) Taking personal responsibility; (2) Personal strengths and resilience; (3) Career orientation planning; (4) Personal goal setting
2. **Effective Learning:** (1) Managing own learning; (2) Continuous learning; (3) Secondary research skills (4) Primary research skills
3. **Interpersonal Skills:** (1) Written communications; (2) Verbal and non-verbal communications; (3) Teamwork; (4) Cultural and social intelligence
4. **Solving Problems:** (1) Critical thinking (2) Problem solving; (3) Creativity and innovation

Each transferable skill has a set of descriptors that outline what achievement of the skill looks like in practice. Each unit in the qualification will show whether a transferable skill has been:

1. fully embedded through the design of the teaching and learning content and assessment of the unit. Skills that are embedded are 'naturally occurring' in that they are inherent to the unit content and don't require extension activities to deliver.
2. signposted as an opportunity for delivery and development and would require extension activities to deliver.

Units will show a summary of the transferable skills that have been embedded or signposted and *Appendix 2* shows the descriptors for each skill across all the skill clusters.

More information on the framework, its design and relevance for student progression is available in the *BTEC Transferable Skills Guide for Teachers*. Resources and guidance to support teachers in the delivery and development of these skills will be available in the Planning and Teaching Guide for this qualification and through our training offer.

Digital Skills

Digital skills are required in every industry as well as in everyday life and with the acceleration of automation and AI in industry it is critical for students to understand how digital technologies are relevant and applied in the context of the sector they are studying.

With this in mind, we have used the Digital Skills Framework published by IFATE as a frame of reference to identify opportunities for the delivery and development of digital skills in this qualification.

This Digital Skills framework has five categories with specific digital characteristics that apply in varying extent across sectors:

1. **Problem Solving** – The use of digital tools to analyse and solve problems
2. **Digital Collaboration and Communication** – Using digital tools to communicate and share information with stakeholders
3. **Transacting Digitally** – Using digital tools to set up accounts and pay for goods/services
4. **Digital Security** – Identify threats and keep digital tools safe
5. **Handling Data Safely and Securely** – Follow correct procedures when handling personal and organisational data

Opportunities to develop these digital skills are identified where they are relevant and appropriate to a sector, meaning that:

- where they naturally occur
- where they add no assessment burden
- where they will enhance a student's skills and knowledge in the sector.

Appendix 3 shows a mapping of the teaching and learning content to the five categories of the framework to show where opportunities to develop these digital skills exists in this qualification.

Sustainability Education

To help students develop sustainability skills, practices and mindset, we have designed content in this qualification, aligned to the [UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals](#) (17 SDGs), that are relevant and appropriate to the sector. The SDGs are the most common point of reference for content that addresses sustainability and provides a useful and pragmatic way of organising this content.

Sustainability knowledge and understanding may be included in the teaching and learning content but not directly assessed. Alternatively, it could be assessed – the approach chosen for each unit is based on the relevance of the sustainability skills, knowledge and understanding to the purpose and scope of the unit.

Appendix 4 shows a mapping of the teaching and learning content to the relevant SDGs to show where sustainability concepts have been included in this qualification.

2 Qualification purpose

Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate)

In this section you will find information on the purpose of this qualification and how its design meets that purpose through the qualification objective and structure. We publish a full 'Statement of Purpose' for each qualification on our website. These statements are designed to guide you and potential students to make the most appropriate choice of qualification at recruitment.

Who is this qualification for?

The Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate) is an Alternative Academic Qualification (AAQ) designed for post-16 students with an interest in Education and Early Years and aiming to progress to higher education as a route to graduate level employment.

Equivalent to one A Level in size, it is suitable for students looking to develop their applied knowledge and skills in Education and Early Years as part of a study programme alongside A Levels.

What will the student study as part of this qualification?

The qualification has been developed in consultation with higher education representatives and sector experts to ensure students have the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to progress to, and thrive in, higher education.

The qualification has four mandatory units covering the following topics:

Children's development – Children's developmental progress from birth up to eight years, including the theories, principles and factors relating to development, and the potential impact of a range of factors on a child's progress through the developmental milestones.

Keeping Children Safe – Health and safety and safeguarding responsibilities of an individual working in an early years setting; emergency best practices and when to address concerns about a child's welfare.

Play and Learning – The concept of play, the influence of theories and approaches to play, and the benefits of play and learning activities for children.

Research and Reflective Practice – The influence of research findings on policy and provision for children and how this influences the behaviours and expectations of an individual working in an early years setting.

What knowledge and skills will the student develop as part of this qualification and how might these be of use and value in further studies?

Students will develop the following knowledge and skills:

- Knowledge and understanding of children's development, importance of play and learning in development, and health and safeguarding practices
- Knowledge and understanding of how research findings influence legislation, policy and provisions for children
- Skills to support the safeguarding and maintenance of children's safety, including in emergencies
- Skills to support children's play and learning experiences, including numeracy and literacy
- Critical thinking, secondary research and reflective practice skills.

Understanding children's development and safeguarding gives students a good foundation for transition to degrees such as nursing, teaching, and social work. Through the work placement in this qualification, students develop professional practice and interpersonal skills as well as resilience, which will help them to better cope with the demands of the placement in many of these degree courses. In addition, transferable skills such as critical thinking and research are important for academic success.

Which subjects will complement this qualification?

The following subjects would be suitable to combine with this qualification:

- Sociology
- Psychology
- Biology
- English.

What further learning will this qualification lead to?

- Nursing – BSc (Hons) Adult Nursing, Nursing – Child – BSc (Hons)
- Teacher Training – Childhood and Early Years Studies BA (Hons)
- Social Work – BA (Hons) Social Work
- Psychology – Psychology BSc (Hons).

3 Structure

Qualification structure

Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate)

Mandatory units

Students must complete 4 mandatory units.

See Section 6 for rules on qualification awarding.

Mandatory units – students complete all units

Unit number	Unit title	GLH	Type	How assessed
1	Children's Development	90	Mandatory	External
2	Keeping Children Safe	90	Mandatory	External
3	Play and Learning	90	Mandatory	Internal
4	Research and Reflective Practice in an Early Childhood Setting	90	Mandatory	Internal

External assessment

50% of the total qualification GLH is made up of external assessment. A summary is given below. See the unit content and sample assessment materials for more information.

Unit	Type	Availability
Unit 1: Children's Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">An external examination set and marked by Pearson80 marks	January and May/June First assessment May/June 2026
Unit 2: Keeping Children Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">An external examination set and marked by Pearson80 marks	January and May/June First assessment May/June 2026

Synoptic assessment

The assessment of synoptic knowledge requires students to apply learning from one unit to the assessment in another unit. Within the assessment for *Unit 4: Research and Reflective Practice in an Early Childhood Setting*, students will be assessed on underpinning knowledge, ideas and concepts from *Unit 1: Children's Development* and *Unit 2: Keeping Children Safe*. Synoptic links are flagged within the units.

There might be some further naturally occurring synoptic opportunities across the qualification where students can synthesise their learning. These will be outlined in the Planning and Teaching Guide to help with planning for your teaching.

4 Units

Understanding your units

The units in this specification set out our expectations of assessment in a way that helps you to prepare your students for assessment. The units help you to undertake assessment and quality assurance effectively.

Each unit in the specification is set out in a similar way. There are two types of unit format:

- Internally assessed units
- Externally assessed units.

This section explains how the units work. It is important that all teachers, assessors, internal verifiers and other staff responsible for the programme review this section.

Internally assessed units

Section	Explanation
Unit number	The number is in a sequence in the sector. Numbers may not be sequential for an individual qualification.
Unit title	This is the formal title that we always use and it appears on certificates.
Unit level	All units are Level 3 on the national framework.
Unit type	This confirms that the unit is internally assessed. See structure information in <i>Section 3</i> for full details.
GLH	Units may have a Guided Learning Hours (GLH) value of 120, 90 or 60. This indicates the numbers of hours of teaching, directed activity and assessment expected. It also shows the weighting of the unit in the final qualification grade.
Unit in brief	A brief formal statement on the content of the unit that is helpful in understanding its role in the qualification. You can use this in summary documents, brochures etc.
Unit introduction	This is designed with students in mind. It indicates why the unit is important, how learning is structured and how learning might be applied when progressing to employment or higher education.
Learning aims	These help to define the scope, style and depth of learning of the unit. You can see where students should be learning standard requirements ('understand') or where they should be actively researching ('investigate'). You can find out more about the verbs we use in learning aims in <i>Appendix 1</i> .

Section	Explanation
Summary of unit	This helps teachers to see the main content areas against the learning aims and the structure of the assessment at a glance.
Content	This sets out the required teaching content of the unit. Content is compulsory except where shown as 'e.g.'. Students should be asked to complete summative assessment only after the teaching content for the unit or learning aim(s) has been covered.
Assessment criteria	Each learning aim has Pass and Merit criteria. Each assignment has at least one Distinction criterion. A full glossary of terms used is given in <i>Appendix 1</i> . Distinction criteria represent outstanding performance in the unit. Some criteria require students to draw together learning from across the learning aims.
Transferable skills	This summarises the transferable skills present within this unit. The key helps to identify whether they are signposted but require additional assessment, embedded and achieved on completion or not present in this unit.
Essential information for Pearson Set Assignment Brief (PSAB)	This shows a brief summary of the activities required for the mandatory Pearson Set Assignment Brief. Centres must download and use the mandatory PSAB without alteration or contextualisation.
Further information for teachers and assessors	This gives you information to support the implementation of assessment. It is important that this is used carefully alongside the assessment criteria and PSAB.
Resource requirements	Any specific resource requirements that you need to be able to teach and assess are listed in this section.
Essential information for assessment decisions	This information gives guidance for each learning aim or assignment of the expectations for Pass, Merit and Distinction standard. This section contains examples and essential clarification.
Links to other units	This shows you the main relationship between units. This can help you to structure your programme and make best use of materials and resources.

Externally assessed units

Section	Explanation
Unit number	The number is in a sequence in the sector. Numbers may not be sequential for an individual qualification.
Unit title	This is the formal title that we always use and it appears on certificates.
Unit level	All units are Level 3 on the national framework.
Unit type	This confirms that the unit is externally assessed. See structure information in <i>Section 3</i> for full details.
GLH	Units may have a Guided Learning Hours (GLH) value of 120, 90 or 60. This indicates the numbers of hours of teaching, directed activity and assessment expected. It also shows the weighting of the unit in the final qualification grade.
Unit in brief	A brief formal statement on the content of the unit that is helpful in understanding its role in the qualification. You can use this in summary documents, brochures etc.
Unit introduction	This is designed with students in mind. It indicates why the unit is important, how learning is structured and how learning might be applied when progressing to employment or higher education.
Summary of assessment	This sets out the type of external assessment used and the way in which it is used to assess achievement.
Assessment outcomes	These show the hierarchy of knowledge, understanding, skills and behaviours that are assessed. Includes information on how this hierarchy relates to command terms in sample assessment materials (SAMs).
Content	For external units all content is obligatory. The depth of content is indicated in the assessment outcomes and sample assessment materials (SAMs). The content will be sampled through the external assessment over time, using the variety of questions shown.
Transferable skills	This summarises the transferable skills present within this unit. The key helps to identify whether they are signposted but require additional assessment, embedded and achieved on completion or not present in this unit.
Key terms typically used in assessment	These definitions will help you analyse requirements and prepare students for assessment.
Resources	Any specific resource requirements that you need to be able to teach and assess are listed in this section.

Index of units

Unit 1: Children's Development	17
Unit 2: Keeping Children Safe	31
Unit 3: Play and Learning	43
Unit 4: Research and Reflective Practice in an Early Childhood Setting	57

Unit 1: Children's Development

Level: 3

Unit type: External

Guided learning hours: 90

Unit in brief

Students explore children's developmental progress from birth up to eight years. They will examine theories, principles and factors relating to development.

Unit introduction

Learning about child development is vital for any professional working with children, whether that be within the education, health, or social care sectors. It gives you a background of the key theories which will inform all aspects of your understanding of how children develop from birth, up to the age of eight years. You will then be able to use this understanding to inform your work and provide the best for the children.

In this unit, you will learn about the principles of children's development and milestones across each of the five areas of development. You will learn how to apply theories and models of children's development, as well as develop an understanding of the potential impact of a range of factors which may affect how a child progresses through the developmental milestones.

The knowledge and understanding covered in this unit will help you progress to higher education and professional qualifications, either in teaching, nursing, or social work. It will also help you to progress to employment in the children's care and education sector (birth up to 8 years).

Summary of assessment

The unit will be assessed through one examination of 80 marks lasting 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Students will be assessed through a number of short- and long-answer questions. Students will need to explore and relate to case studies. The questions will assess understanding of principles, patterns, theories and models of child development and potential factors that impact upon children's development from birth up to eight years.

The assessment availability is twice a year in January and May/June. The first assessment availability is May/June 2026.

Sample assessment materials will be available to help centres prepare students for assessment.

Assessment outcomes

- AO1** Demonstrate knowledge of the principles, patterns, theories and models of child development and factors that impact on children's development from birth up to eight years
- AO2** Demonstrate understanding of the principles, patterns, theories and models of child development and factors that impact on children's development from birth up to eight years
- AO3** Apply knowledge and understanding of the principles, patterns, theories and models of child development that impact on children's development from birth up to eight years
- AO4a** Analyse information related to children's holistic development in context, demonstrating the ability to interpret theory of children's development and predict the potential impact of factors on children's development and provision and practice for children from birth up to eight years
- AO4b** Evaluate information related to children's holistic development in context, demonstrating the ability to interpret theory of children's development and predict the potential impact of factors on children's development and provision and practice for children from birth up to eight years

[SP-CT]

Content

The essential content is set out under content areas. Students must cover all specified content before the assessment.

A: The principles of development and how they are applied

A1 Principles and patterns of development

A1.1 Definitions of growth and development:

A1.1.1 growth refers to an increase in physical size, the rate of which is variable as different parts of the body grow at different rates

A1.1.2 development refers to the acquisition and refining of skills proceeding through a set order, becoming more complex and sophisticated.

A1.2 Principles of development:

A1.2.1 Typical development occurs in an orderly sequence

- Cephalo-caudal, physical development begins with control of head movement and continues down the body
- Proximal-distal, inner parts develop before outer parts, arm control comes before finger control
- uncontrolled large movements become more precise and refined
- all areas of development are interrelated
- rate of development differs between all children; each child is unique.

A1.3 Areas of development:

A1.3.1 Physical development is the process by which children acquire and refine fine and gross motor skills. This includes:

- gross motor involves the movement of whole limbs
- fine motor involves manipulative movements of the fingers

A1.3.2 Cognitive development is the process of a change in intellectual abilities which become more sophisticated. This includes:

- reasoning
- problem solving
- understanding
- concentration
- memory

A1.3.3 Language development, how children interact with others through verbal and non-verbal communication. This includes children who have English as an additional language

UNIT 1: CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

A1.3.4 Emotional development, how children develop:

- awareness of their own feelings
- self-esteem
- self-image and self-concept
- confidence
- a sense of security
- awareness of the feelings of others

A1.3.5 Social development, how children develop skills to create and maintain relationships with others:

- appropriate behaviour
- being able to follow rules
- understanding boundaries.

A1.4 Factors affecting development:

A1.4.1 Nature/Nurture:

- nature – genes are the main influence on developmental potential
- nurture – the environment is the main influence on developmental potential

A1.4.2 Nature/Biological factors:

- genetic disorders inherited traits

A1.4.3 Nurture factors related to children:

- premature birth
- poverty
- diet and nutrition
- exercise and access to outdoors
- rest and sleep requirements, appropriate to age
- access to health care
- access to a range of play opportunities.

A1.5 Atypical development is that which does not follow the usual pattern:

A1.5.1 the impact on children if atypical development is not identified promptly.

A1.6 Children can experience delay in one or more areas of development, which can be temporary or ongoing:

A1.6.1 delay in one area of development can impact on other areas

A1.6.2 how early intervention by education and health professionals can reduce the impact of delay in reaching developmental milestones.

A1.7 Factors affecting development:

- physical disability – paralysis in one or more limbs
- sensory disability – visual impairment, hearing impairment
- social disability – inability to interact with others, struggles to participate in everyday situations
- language disability – speech difficulties, receptive language difficulties (understanding others), difficulties in expressive language (communicating with others)
- cognitive disability – memory issues, concentration issues, lack of ability to take in new concepts
- global developmental delay.

B: Physical development from birth up to eight years**B1 Physical development milestones**

B1.1 Normative age/stage developmental patterns of physical development, covering gross and fine motor skills, from birth up to two years, two years up to five years, five years up to eight years.

B2 Aspects of physical development

B2.1 Motor development proceeds in an invariance sequence controlled by the central nervous system; development is the outcome of interplay between the nervous system, the Musculo-skeletal system, and the environment.

B2.1.1 Gross motor skills:

- locomotion
- balance
- spatial awareness
- co-ordination
- jumping
- dancing
- throwing, catching
- riding scooter, tricycles, bikes

B2.1.2 Fine motor skills:

- hand-eye co-ordination skills, including:
 - threading
 - sewing
 - drawing, painting
 - digital technology skills, using computers, tablets
 - using scissors

UNIT 1: CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

- dressing skills, doing up laces, buttons, zips
- development of handwriting skills
 - palmar grasp
 - pincer grasp
 - primitive tripod grasp
 - tripod grasp
 - dynamic tripod grip.

B3 Promoting physical development

B3.1 Activities appropriate to age of the child:

B3.1.1 to encourage each of the gross motor skills

B3.1.2 to encourage fine motor skills.

B3.2 Role of the adult, to include:

- encouraging children to explore, try new activities and resources
- modelling skills
- providing age-appropriate resources
- providing positive risk-taking activities.

C: Cognitive development from birth up to eight years

C1 Cognitive development milestones

C1.1 Normative age/stage developmental patterns of cognitive development, covering aspects of cognitive development and linked theories, from birth up to two years, two years up to five years, five years up to eight years.

C2 Aspects of cognitive development

C2.1 How children observe and explore their environment.

C2.2 How understanding becomes more sophisticated as children acquire new knowledge.

C2.3 How children investigate materials, to learn about their properties, changes, patterns, similarities and differences.

C2.4 How children develop problem-solving skills through cause and effect, experiencing different activities, developing logic.

C2.5 The role of concentration and memory in children's learning.

C2.6 Role of adult and activities to promote all aspects of cognitive development.

C3 Theories linked to cognitive development

Students should apply concepts of theories from 0 up to 8 years.

C3.1 Piaget

C3.1.1 Four stages:

- sensorimotor (0 – 2)
- pre-operational (2 – 7)
- concrete operational (7 – 11)
- formal operational stage (11+)

C3.1.2 Cognitive development establishes schema through the processes of:

- assimilate
- disequilibrium
- accommodation
- adaptation
- equilibrium.

C3.2 Vygotsky's theory:

C3.2.1 zones of development (actual, proximal)

C3.2.2 more Knowledgeable Other

C3.2.3 scaffolding.

C3.3 Bruner's modes of cognitive representation:

C3.3.1 enactive – learning through physical movements; iconic – learning through visual images, symbolic – learning through the use of symbols, writing, numerals.

C3.4 Information Processing Theory:

C3.4.1 sensory memory, receive sensory input, most is ignored, can be transferred to short-term memory

C3.4.2 short-term memory, lasts around 30 seconds, can encode into long-term memory

C3.4.3 long-term memory, unlimited amount of space, methods used to store information, repetition, chunking information, relating to meaningful experience.

D: Language development, including communication from birth up to eight years

D1 Language development

D1.1 Normative age/stage developmental patterns of language development, covering aspects of language development and linked theories, from birth up to two years, two years up to five years, five years up to eight years.

D2 Aspects of language development

D2.1 Verbal and non-verbal communication development:

D2.1.1 non-verbal communication

D2.1.2 sequence of verbal communication development:

- pre-linguistic
- linguistic phases

D2.1.3 expressive and receptive language.

D2.2 Children who have English as an additional language:

D2.2.1 impact on a child of multilingualism

D.2.2.2 how to support a child with multilingualism, including taking home context into consideration and working with parents.

D2.3 Promoting language development:

- activities
- role of the adult

D3 Theories linked to language development

D3.1 Chomsky's language theory:

D3.1.1 Language Acquisition Device (LAD), innate

D3.1.2 critical period 0-10 years

D3.1.3 language rich environment.

D3.2 Brown's language theory:

D3.2.1 five stages of language development

D3.2.2 mean length of utterance.

D3.3 Skinner's theory that language is a socially learned behaviour:

D3.3.1 positive reinforcement and repetition of children's verbal utterances.

D3.4 Bruner's Language Acquisition Support System (LASS):

D3.4.1 language allows symbolic and abstract thinking.

E: Emotional development from birth up to eight years

E1 Emotional development

E1.1 Normative age/stage developmental patterns of emotional development, covering theories of attachment, from birth up to two years, two years up to five years, five years up to eight years.

E2 Development of attachment

E2.1 Theories of attachment

E2.1.1 Bowlby:

- monotropy, the importance of forming a bond between primary carer and baby
- attachment behaviour: clinging, crying, vocalising by baby to elicit carer response
- responding to attachment behaviour reduces attachment demands
- a secure attachment provides a base for the baby to explore from.

E2.1.2 Ainsworth:

- quality of attachment (strange situation scenario)
- three classifications of attachment:
 - Type A – insecure/anxious/avoidant
 - Type B – secure
 - Type C – insecure ambivalent/resistant.

E2.1.3 Schaffer and Emerson:

- developing multiple attachments.

E3 Development of self

E3.1 Development of:

- self-esteem
- self-image
- self-concept
- self-confidence.

E3.2 Development of feelings:

- understanding and then learning to control own feelings
- becoming aware of the feelings of others.

E3.3 Effects of transitions:

E3.3.1 moving house

E3.3.2 new sibling

E3.3.3 starting at, or moving to, a new early years setting.

E3.4 How adults can support children to express feelings:

- provide routines
- provide a consistent approach
- provide opportunities and encouragement to develop children's confidence.

F: Social development from birth up to eight years

F1 Social development

F1.1 Normative age/stage developmental patterns of social development, covering aspects of social development and linked theories, from birth up to two years, two years up to five years, five years up to eight years.

F2 Aspects of social development

F2.1 How children create and maintain relationships.

F2.2 How children create and maintain friendships with other children.

F2.3 How children develop an understanding of social norms and learn how to behave in different situations:

- sharing
- turn-taking
- respecting boundaries
- following rules.

F2.4 How adults support children to develop relationships and friendships:

- role modelling
- promoting cooperation
- having a consistent approach.

F3 Theories linked to social development

F3.1 Bandura's social learning theory:

F3.1.1 children observe and model the behaviour of others by:

- attention
- retention
- reproduction
- motivation.

F3.2 Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory:

F3.2.1 children's development is influenced through many levels of care and interaction with their environment:

- microsystem
- mesosystem
- exosystem
- macrosystem
- chronosystem.

F3.3 Skinner, linked to supporting behaviour and social norms:

F3.3.1 positive reinforcement

F3.3.2 primary and secondary reinforcement.

Transferable skills

Managing Yourself	Effective Learning	Interpersonal Skills	Solving Problems
MY – TPR	EL – MOL	IS – WC	SP – CT *
MY – PS&R	EL – CL	IS – V&NC	SP – PS
MY – COP	EL – SRS	IS – T	SP – C&I
MY – PGS	EL – PRS	IS – C&SI	

Table key

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√	Embedded in teaching, learning and assessment.
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Key terms typically used in assessment

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Define	Give exactly the nature, scope, or meaning of something.
Discuss	Consider the different aspects in detail of an issue, situation, problem, or argument and how they interrelate. Does not require a conclusion.
Evaluate	Consider various aspects of a subject's qualities in relation to its context such as: strengths or weaknesses, advantages or disadvantages, pros or cons. Come to a judgement supported by evidence which will often be in the form of a conclusion.
Explain	Requires identification of a point and linked justification / exemplification of that point. The answer must contain some linked reasoning.
Give/State/Name	All of these command words are synonyms. They generally all require recall of one or more pieces of information
Identify	Requires some key information to be selected from a given stimulus/resource.

Unit 2: Keeping Children Safe

Level: 3

Unit type: External

Guided learning hours: 90

Unit in brief

Students explore the responsibilities of a professional to maintain health and safety as well as ensuring effective safeguarding measures are in place. They will understand what to do in an emergency and when to address concerns about a child's welfare.

Unit introduction

It is essential that parents know that their children will be safe whilst being in someone else's care, in addition to wanting them to learn and be happy. They expect everything to be done to ensure their children are safe and that those who work with them know the procedures to follow should there be an accident or an emergency whilst the child is in their care.

In this unit we will examine the legislation and guidance in place which ensures health, safety and safeguarding procedures are in place within children's care and education (0-8 years) settings.

You will investigate the approaches to ensure a safe environment is in place, supported by policies and procedures to control and prevent the spread of infection. You will learn how to recognise hazards, address health and safety risks and respond to emergency situations in children's care and education (0-8 years) settings. It is important that you know how to safeguard children, including ways to empower them so they become confident in protecting themselves. You will discover how to ensure children are safe when using technology online and how to protect the rights of the child in relation to safeguarding measures. You will also need to know the correct procedures for responding to concerns about abuse.

This unit will allow progression to higher education studies in related fields and prepare you for a range of careers within the children's care and education sector (0 – 8 years).

Summary of assessment

The unit will be assessed through one examination of 80 marks lasting 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Students will be assessed through a number of multiple-choice, short- and long-answer questions. Students will need to explore and relate to case studies presented. The questions will assess understanding of health, safety and safeguarding in early years settings.

The assessment availability is twice a year in January and May/June. The first assessment availability is May/June 2026.

Sample assessment materials will be available to help centres prepare students for assessment.

Assessment outcomes

- AO1** Demonstrate knowledge of health and safety and safeguarding in early years settings
- AO2** Demonstrate understanding of health and safety and safeguarding in early years settings
- AO3** Apply knowledge and understanding of health and safety and safeguarding in early years settings
- AO4a** Analyse information and potential issues relating to health and safety and safeguarding in early years settings
- AO4b** Evaluate information and potential issues relating to health and safety and safeguarding in early years settings

[MY-TPR]

Content

The essential content is set out under content areas. Students must cover all specified content before the assessment.

A: Investigate legal responsibilities and approaches to health and safety in early years settings

A1 Responsibilities and guidance for children's health and safety

A1.1 Responsibilities to children's health and safety:

- A1.1.1** children's right to be healthy, safe, and secure, with reference to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- A1.1.2** the duty of care of those working with children to protect them from harm and to promote their welfare
- A1.1.3** everyone working with children has a duty to report child protection or welfare concerns to Children's Services or the police.

A1.2 Legislation, regulations and guidance relevant to health and safety

A1.2.1 Health and Safety Act 1974, to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff and children

A1.2.2 Regulations:

- Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013, food safety, ensure food is safe
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2004 (COSHH), storage of hazardous materials

A1.2.3 The requirements of the statutory early years curriculum relevant to health and safety to include:

- floor spaces and outdoor areas are fit for purpose and appropriate for the age of children
- emergency evacuation procedures are in place
- detection and control equipment, for example fire alarms are working properly
- hygiene and fire requirements should be in place

A1.2.4 Qualified paediatric first aider to be in the setting.

A1.3 Policies and procedures

A1.3.1 The responsibilities of early years settings to have policies relevant to health and safety, to include:

- child protection
- safe recruitment
- information sharing
- data protection.

(Legislation, regulations and guidance must be current at time of delivery and applicable to where the qualification is being delivered).

B: Recognise hazards and risks to children

Students need to be able to demonstrate understanding of health and safety and safeguarding in early years settings.

B1 Maintaining health and safety

B1.1 Recognise hazards:

B1.1.1 a hazard is anything that has the potential to cause harm.

B1.2 Recognise risk:

B1.2.1 likelihood harm will be caused by the identified hazard

B1.2.2 risk control is about minimising danger

B1.2.3 risk assessment is about what is likely to cause danger relevant to early years settings and activities.

B1.3 Risk assessments:

B1.3.1 managing risk

B1.3.2 carrying out a risk assessment

- Step 1: identify risk and hazards
- Step 2: determine who is at risk and how they might be affected
- Step 3: evaluate the risks and decide on control measures
- Step 4 record your findings and implement them
- Step 5: monitor and review.

B1.4 Approaches to promoting children's health and safety:

B1.4.1 the role of early years professionals in keeping children safe and secure, to include supervision, keeping registers, role modelling safe behaviour

B1.4.2 the importance of observation

B1.4.3 recognising and reporting hazards in the indoor and outdoor environments, to include outings

B1.4.4 equipment and resources that can be used to minimise hazards

B1.4.5 the importance of resources and equipment appropriate to children's age/stage of development.

B1.5 Balanced approach to risk management:

B1.5.1 children have rights, keep in mind what is right for the child

B1.5.2 take children's views into account

B1.5.3 develop skills by taking risk

B1.5.4 promoting confidence building makes children aware of own capabilities

B1.5.5 opportunity to take risk under supervision

B1.5.6 take risks in a controlled environment to learn to assess risks for themselves

UNIT 2: KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

B1.5.7 early years practitioner as role model for children to copy risk

B1.5.8 children learn from mistakes

B1.5.9 child safety is paramount

B1.5.10 provide equal opportunities of risk in a safe environment.

B1.6 Accurate records and reporting

B1.6.1 The importance of maintaining accurate records and reporting, to include:

- risk assessments
- accident records
- Outbreaks of infection.

B2 Measures to prevent and control infection in the setting

B2.1 Statutory requirements and procedures for infection prevention and control:

B2.1.1 reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR), statutory reporting of illness and accidents

B2.1.2 current regulations and guidance that apply to infection prevention and control in early years settings

B2.1.3 the importance of policy and procedures for infection prevention and control in early years settings.

B2.2 Prevention and spread of infection:

B2.2.1 how infection may be spread in early years settings

B2.2.2 common childhood infections and how they are spread

B2.2.3 infection prevention and control procedures, to include:

- hand-washing routines for adults and children
- personal protective clothing/equipment (PPE)
- safe handling and disposal of waste
- management of spillages of blood and body fluids

B2.2.4 decontamination/cleaning of environment, equipment, and toys

B2.2.5 food and kitchen hygiene

B2.2.6 the immunisation programme for children and its role in infection control.

C: The Early Years Framework and Safeguarding

The student needs to explore health and safety and safeguarding in early years settings.

C1 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and safeguarding

C1.1 The legal status of the EYFS:

C1.1.1 the scope and legal status of the EYFS

C1.1.2 legislation behind the safeguarding and welfare requirement regulations in the EYFS.

C1.2 Safeguarding and welfare requirements:

C1.2.1 the rationale behind the safeguarding and welfare requirements

C1.2.2 the requirement for a safeguarding policy, to include child protection

C1.2.3 requirements for staff recruitment, to include suitable people policies, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

C1.2.4 requirements for training, ongoing supervision and staff appraisal

C1.2.5 the requirements of the key person role

C1.2.6 the requirements for the health, safety and security of children, to include:

- administering medicines
- provision of food and drink
- accident and injury
- Circumstances when Ofsted must be notified
- Equality.

C1.3 Support the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS:

C1.3.1 how to act on own responsibilities in relation to:

- safeguarding and promoting health and safety
- safety and security

C1.3.2 how to assess risk

C1.3.3 how to identify and provide for children's physical welfare needs

C1.3.4 the importance of recognising and recording changes in children's behaviour

C1.3.5 inclusion, to value diversity and promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, self-awareness

C1.3.6 how to record and manage accurate and coherent information about children

C1.3.7 how to pass information to those who need to know, to include maintaining confidentiality.

D: Respond to Child Abuse

D1 Recognising Abuse

The student needs to explore information and issues relating to health and safety and safeguarding in early years settings.

D1.1 Types of abuse

D1.1.1 Types of abuse, to include:

- physical abuse and injury
- neglect
- emotional abuse
- sexual abuse
- domestic abuse.

D1.1.2 Why it is important to be vigilant for signs of child abuse.

D1.2 Indicators of abuse

D1.2.1 Indicators, to include:

- changes in personality or behaviour
- physical marks and injuries
- signs of neglect
- inappropriate behaviour or language for age and stage of development
- being unusually dependent on a key person
- disclosure by a child, parent, or other adults.

D1.2.2 How abuse may impact on children's health and development.

D1.2.3 People who may abuse children.

D2 Protecting and safeguarding in the Early Years Setting

The student needs to explore information and issues relating to health and safety and safeguarding in early years settings.

D2.1 Safeguarding children:

D2.1.1 legislation, policies and procedures relevant to child protection in early years, to include safe working practices, whistleblowing

D2.1.2 the role of observation in recognising changes in children's behaviour

D2.1.3 why children may be more vulnerable to abuse, to include those with disabilities and babies

D2.1.4 the importance of children having their voice heard

D2.1.5 how to recognise and support children's feelings

D2.2.6 the importance of supporting social and emotional development, to include independence

- D2.1.7** how to be an approachable adult, to include active listening
- D2.1.8** how to empower children
- D2.1.9** how to support children to protect themselves through games and activities
- D2.1.10** how to ensure the safety of children in an online environment
- D2.1.11** how to ensure children use technology safely.

D2.2 Own safeguarding in setting:

- D2.2.1** full supervision whilst on placement
- D2.2.2** supervised whilst working with children
- D2.2.3** risk assessment conducted to ensure placement is suitable and safe
- D2.2.4** school/college notified of any accident
- D2.2.5** key person in place.

D3 Reporting concerns

D3.1 Responding to concerns about abuse:

- D3.1.1** how to respond to a child who discloses abuse
- D3.1.2** how to respond to parents, colleagues and others who raise concerns about the welfare of a child
- D3.1.3** the importance of responding appropriately to concerns
- D3.1.4** why it is important to believe a child, avoid judgements and not jump to conclusions
- D3.1.5** why professionals must follow the reporting procedure of the setting
- D3.1.6** how information should be recorded and shared, to include confidentiality
- D3.1.7** child protection procedures, to include the process of investigation, assessment, Child Protection Conference, Child Protection Plan
- D3.1.8** how agencies work together to safeguard children
- D3.1.9** statutory agencies involved at a local level, to include police, social services, health services, Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LCSB)
- D3.1.10** the role of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

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Managing Yourself	Effective Learning	Interpersonal Skills	Solving Problems
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Give/State/Name	All of these command words are synonyms. They generally all require recall of one or more pieces of information.
Identify	Requires some key information to be selected from a given stimulus/resource.

Unit 3: Play and Learning

Level: 3

Unit type: Internal

Guided learning hours: 90

Unit in brief

Students explore the concept of play, the influence of theories and curriculum approaches to play, and the benefits of play and learning activities for children.

Unit introduction

Play is an important way in which children learn and develop. In this unit, you will learn about the types of play and the opportunities that should be made available to children at different ages and stages of development. You will consider why play is important and how it supports children's learning and development. You will explore the development of children's understanding and skill development and the role of the adult in supporting these.

There are several theoretical perspectives, philosophies and curriculum approaches to play that have been developed over many years. You will investigate these and consider how they continue to influence practice in children's care and education (0- 8 years) settings.

You will explore the skills that are essential for professionals working with children aged 0 – 8 years in the care and education sector and understand how they can be applied to support play and learning experiences.

This unit will provide progression into higher education and into roles in the children's care and education sector (0 – 8 years).

Learning aims

In this unit you will:

- A** Examine types of play and learning activities and how they promote children's learning and development
- B** Investigate theoretical perspectives to learning and development in early childhood
- C** Understand curriculum approaches to play and their impact on practice in early childhood environments
- D** Understand how to plan activities and experiences to support children's play, learning and development

Summary of unit

Learning aim	Key content areas	Assessment approach
A Examine types of play and learning activities and how they promote children's learning and development	A1 Types of play and learning opportunities A2 The benefits of play for children's learning and development	A task to investigate types of play and produce guidance for professionals, including the benefits of play for children
B Investigate theoretical perspectives of learning and development in early childhood	B1 Theoretical perspectives of learning and development B2 The impact of theoretical perspectives on curriculum design B3 Different theoretical perspectives for supporting children's learning and development in the early years	A task to create guidance materials on theoretical perspectives and their impact on early years provision and practice in a quality learning environment
C Understand curriculum approaches to play and their impact on practice in early childhood environments	C1 Curriculum approaches to learning and development C2 Influences on current early years practice	A review of curriculum approaches to play and their influence on curriculum development for children aged 0 up to 8 years
D Understand how to plan activities and experiences to support children's play, learning and development	D1 Professional skills for planning play and learning D2 Planning activities to support children's learning and development	A task to create activity plans linked to a curriculum

Content

The essential content is set out under content areas. Students must cover all specified content before the assessment.

Learning aim A: Examine types of play and learning activities and how they promote children’s learning and development [SP-CT]

A1 Types of play and learning opportunities

The essential content topics require students to apply knowledge

- Types of play:
 - physical
 - imaginative
 - sensory
 - creative art and design
 - construction.
- Social stages of play, to include Mildred Parten’s classifications:
 - unoccupied
 - solitary
 - onlooker
 - parallel
 - associative
 - co-operative play.
- Definitions of play:
 - free-flow play
 - structured play.
- Approaches to play:
 - adult-initiated
 - adult-led
 - child-initiated.
- Play and learning opportunities for babies and children from birth up to two years:
 - treasure basket play
 - heuristic play
 - sensory play
 - music
 - picture books.

UNIT 3: PLAY AND LEARNING

- Play and learning opportunities for children from two up to five years:
 - heuristic play
 - sensory play
 - music
 - role play
 - small-world play
 - painting
 - story boxes/sacks
 - mark-making
 - natural and malleable materials, e.g., water, sand, play dough, clay.
- Play and learning opportunities for children from five up to eight years:
 - role play
 - small-world play
 - painting
 - mark-making
 - board games
 - music
 - books
 - puzzles
 - natural and malleable materials, e.g., water, sand, play dough, clay.
- The importance of suitable resources:
 - health and safety considerations and practices
 - indoor/outdoor play
 - different ages/stages of development.

A2 The benefits of play for children's learning and development

- The importance of different types of play to children's holistic development:
 - physical development, co-ordination, stamina, control of fine and gross movements
 - cognitive development, problem-solving, creativity, working with adults
 - communication and language development
 - oral language development as a pre-cursor to children's literacy
 - promoting children's understanding of numeracy: mathematical language, mathematical concepts
 - promoting children's early literacy development: reading skills, early writing skills
 - social development: building relationships, social skills
 - emotional development: self-awareness, confidence, independence
 - how play helps children to make sense of the world
 - how play enables children the freedom to make mistakes
 - how play helps children to cope with transitions and significant events.

Learning aim B: Investigate theoretical perspectives of learning and development in early childhood [SP-CT]

Students will understand how different theoretical perspectives are applied in early years provision to encourage different areas of children's development, including children's literacy and numeracy development.

B1 Theoretical perspectives of learning and development

- Theorists:
 - Piaget – stages approach to cognitive development
 - Vygotsky – scaffolding
 - Bruner – spiral curriculum
 - Athey – schemas in child development
 - Froebel – holistic child-led learning through direct experiences
 - Montessori – learning independently through structured sensory experiences.

B2 The impact of theoretical perspectives on curriculum design

- Reggio Emilia – self directed experiential learning.
- Montessori – learning independently through structured sensory experiences.
- Forest schools – supervised experiential learning in natural environments.
- High Scope – child selected activities in early years environments.
- Freeflow classrooms – child led activities in mixed age group classrooms.
- Foundation Stage curriculum.
- Key stage 1 – national curriculum delivery in home country school environment.

B3 Different theoretical perspectives for supporting children's learning and development in the early years.

- Range and scope of theoretical perspectives.
- Strengths and limitations of theoretical perspectives.
- Outcomes for children.
- Opportunities for wider experiences.

Learning aim C: Understand curriculum approaches to play and their impact on practice in early childhood environments

C1 Curriculum approaches to learning and development

- Reggio Emilia – self directed experiential learning.
- Montessori – learning independently through structured sensory experiences.
- Forest schools – supervised experiential learning in natural environments.
- High Scope – child selected activities in early years environments.
- Steiner – experiential learning, learning is in the context of the whole child.
- Froebel – development is about free expression of what is in the child's soul.

C2 Influences on current early years practice

- How curriculum approaches to learning and development and approaches to play have influenced early years practice.
- How views of play can affect the early years professional's role.
- How curriculum approaches to play influence the provision of:
 - child-initiated play
 - hands on/exploratory play
 - outdoor play
 - the use of natural materials
 - sensory play.
- How curriculum approaches to play and learning have influenced practice in observing and planning play appropriate to age/stage of development.
- How curriculum approaches have placed the child at the centre of learning.

Learning aim D: Understand how to plan activities and experiences to support children's play, learning and development

D1 Professional skills for planning play and learning

- Skills that early years professionals need:
 - understanding children's play interests
 - modelling new skills
 - engaging in sensitive interactions
 - engaging children and encouraging participation.
- Knowledge that early years professionals need:
 - how to recognise children's individual needs
 - how to scaffold children's learning and development
 - how to use play and learning activities to meet the requirements of the early years curriculum framework for children aged 0 up to 8 years, in home country
 - how to balance adult-led and child-initiated activities
 - the skills for adult-directed play, to include observing and assessing children's stage of development and interests
 - the skills for supporting child-directed play, to include how to engage with children and extend their play.

D2 Planning activities to support children's learning and development

- How to organise play and learning environments indoors and outdoors.
- How to select resources appropriate for:
 - play type
 - the learning environment
 - the age and stage of the children.
- How to support purposeful play:
 - building supportive relationships
 - extending children's physical, communication and social skills
 - encouraging higher-level thinking skills
 - being a play partner.
- How to support children's group learning and socialisation.
- The importance of recognising the learning potential of spontaneous or unplanned events.
- How to respond to children's individual needs, to include adapting activities.
- How to balance safety and purposeful and challenging play.
- Strategies to extend children's learning.

Assessment criteria

Learning aim A: Examine types of play and learning activities how they promote children’s learning and development

Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>A.P1 Explain types of play for children at different ages and stages of development from birth up to 2 years, 2 up to 5 years and 5 years up to 8 years.</p> <p>A.P2 Explain how play and learning activities support the physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development of children from birth up to 2 years, 2 up to 5 years and 5 years up to 8 years.</p>	<p>A.M1 Assess the benefits of different types of play and learning activities for children’s learning and development from birth up to 2 years, 2 up to 5 years and 5 years up to 8 years.</p>	<p>A.D1 Evaluate the extent to which different examples of play and learning activities support the holistic development of children from birth up to 2 years, 2 up to 5 years and 5 years up to 8 years.</p>

Learning aim B: Investigate theoretical perspectives of learning and development in early childhood

Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>B.P3 Describe a range of theoretical perspectives relating to early years learning and development, including children’s literacy and numeracy skills.</p>	<p>B.M2 Analyse the impact of theoretical perspectives relating to early years learning and development, including children’s literacy and numeracy skills.</p>	<p>B.D2 Evaluate different theoretical perspectives to supporting children’s learning and development, including children’s literacy and numeracy skills, in the early years.</p>

Learning aim C: Understand curriculum approaches to play and their impact on practice in early childhood environments

Pass	Merit	Distinction
C.P4 Discuss curriculum approaches to play and learning in early years' environments.	C.M3 Assess the extent to which play and learning provision in early years environments has been influenced by specific curriculum approaches.	

Learning aim D Understand how to plan activities and experiences to support children's play, learning and development

Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>D.P5 Describe skills that are required by early years professionals to support purposeful play and learning activities.</p> <p>D.P6 Plan an adult led play and learning activity for a group of children.</p> <p>D.P7 Plan a play situation/area for child- initiated play with individual children.</p>	D.M4 Justify strategies used in the plans and how they support adult-led and child-initiated play, with examples.	D.D3 Evaluate each aspect of your plans, considering the suitability and creativity of the chosen activities and how they support learning and development, suggesting areas for improvement.

Transferable skills

Managing Yourself	Effective Learning	Interpersonal Skills	Solving Problems
MY – TPR	EL – MOL	IS – WC	SP – CT *
MY – PS&R	EL – CL	IS – V&NC	SP – PS
MY – COP	EL – SRS	IS – T	SP – C&I
MY – PGS	EL – PRS	IS – C&SI	

Table key

*	Signposted to indicate opportunities for development as part of wider teaching and learning.
√	Embedded in teaching, learning and assessment.
blank	TS not embedded or signposted in unit

Essential information for Pearson Set Assignment Brief(PSAB)

Pearson sets the assignment for the assessment of this unit.

The PSAB will take 15 hours to complete.

The PSAB will be marked by centres and verified by Pearson.

The PSAB will be valid for the lifetime of this qualification.

Assessing the PSAB

You will make assessment decisions for the PSAB using the assessment criteria provided.

Section 1 gives information on PSABs and there is further information on our website.

Further information for teachers and assessors

Resource requirements

For this unit, students must have access to:

- Birth to five matters www.birthto5matters.org.uk
- Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum for home country
- Key Stage 1 curriculum for home country
- 1001 days Research Report (UK)

Essential information for assessment decisions

Learning aim A

For distinction standard, students must articulate their arguments on the importance and significance of their selected play and learning activities for children's learning and development. They must reach a judgement about the extent each one promotes children's holistic development, making clear links between the examples given and the specific aspect of learning and development that is promoted.

For merit standard, students must carefully consider all the factors relating to the provision of play and learning activities and reach a reasoned judgement about ways in which each of the selected play and learning activities promotes children's learning and development. Students must make clear links between the examples given and the specific aspect of learning and development that is promoted.

For pass standard, students could use a case study for each of the age ranges (birth up to 2 years, 2 up to 5 years and 5 years up to 8 years).

Students must recall different play types and use examples from their own research to support their work. Students must make links between play types and their suitability for children of different ages and stages of development, birth up to 2 years, 2 up to 5 years and 5 years up to 8 years.

Students must select two play and learning activities from each age range (birth up to 2 years, 2 up to 5 years and 5 years up to 8 years) to examine in detail. Students must give a clear explanation of ways that play and learning activity can promote children's learning and development. Students must make relevant links, giving reasons for how each example supports different areas of development.

Learning aim B

For distinction standard, students will consider in detail how three theoretical perspectives are used in early years provision. Students will show their understanding of how each perspective is used to encourage different areas of children's development, including the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective in different situations. They should reach judgements on which perspective is the most appropriate to use to encourage different areas of a children's development, including literacy and numeracy skills. They should reach judgements on which perspectives are the most appropriate to use, justifying their response with clear reasons and detailed, relevant examples.

For merit standard, students will examine in detail how three theoretical perspectives are used in early years provision to encourage children's development. Students will show their understanding of how theoretical perspectives can be used in different situations to encourage different areas of developing using detailed relevant examples to support their response. They will consider the potential strengths and weaknesses of each approach for different situations and how the theoretical perspectives encourage different areas of children's development, including literacy and numeracy skills.

For pass standard, students must give a clear account of three theoretical perspectives from the list given in the content and how these are used in early years provision. They will describe how the chosen theoretical perspectives are used to encourage children's development including literacy and numeracy development, supporting their description with some relevant examples.

Learning aim C

For merit standard, students show an in-depth understanding of two curriculum approaches to play. They must come to a reasoned conclusion on their influence on how play and learning is organised in an early years setting. Students must use examples, referring to the organisation of play, the role of the professional and resources.

For pass standard, students must describe how two curriculum approaches to play and learning can influence provision in early years settings. They must consider these in terms of how they have developed in relation to the way play and learning is organised, the organisation of the curriculum and the role of the professional in supporting play and learning. Students must refer to strength and limitations of each approach and their influence on the provision of play and learning in an early years setting.

Learning aim D

For distinction standard, students must examine the relevance and significance of each aspect of their plans, taking account of strategies to support children, their choice of activity and play situation/area and the extent to which they are likely to promote learning and development. They will show imagination and creativity in their planning and choice of resources, so they fully engage children in their play and learning. Students will reach a valid and justified conclusion about the strengths and weaknesses of their planning, making realistic recommendations for improvement.

UNIT 3: PLAY AND LEARNING

For merit standard, students must give supported reasons for their choice of activity and play area/experience, timing, environment and resources and the role of the adult. Students will arrive at a reasoned conclusion about the strengths of their plans for promoting children's learning and development in both adult-led and child-initiated play and learning.

For pass standard, students must recall the different skills required for supporting adult-led and child-initiated play and with children at different ages and stages. They must make links between the skills identified and their importance and relevance to supporting children's play and learning.

Students must produce one coherent plan for small groups of children. The plan will be professionally produced and suitable for implementation in an early years setting. Students must show how they have planned an adult led activity that take into account the capabilities and needs of children, the environment, timing and resources. They will identify how the activity supports the children's learning and development and the role of the adult in supporting the activity.

Students must produce a plan for a play area/experience which supports child-initiated play for individual children. Students must show how they have taken into account the capabilities and the needs of children, the environment and resources. They will identify how the activity supports children's learning and development and the role of the adult in child-initiated play.

Students must choose two different age groups to base their plans on, birth up to two years, two years up to five years, or five years up to eight years.

Unit 4: Research and Reflective Practice in an Early Childhood Setting

Level: 3

Unit type: Internal

Guided learning hours: 90

Unit in brief

Students understand how research findings influence policy and provision for children and are able to reflect on how this influences their own behaviour and expectations in the work placement environment.

Unit introduction

As a result of research findings, the importance of children's development and the provision of services needed to support them is now recognised and used to inform legislation, policy, and practice in the services available for them.

In this unit you will review the research carried out into issues in the sector and consider how the research findings may benefit children's care and education (0-8 years) and improve practice for professionals.

You will also explore the importance of reflective practice and explore theories and approaches to reflection. This will help you to understand how reflective practice can help you to develop an understanding of the links between research and practice. You will understand how research findings are used to inform work with children through their incorporation into legislation, provision, and practice in the sector.

The unit will help you to develop effective research and reflective skills that will be useful for higher education programmes, where these skills often form part of the programme. It can also be used as a foundation for progress into a practice role.

To complete the assessment tasks for this unit, you will complete a report explaining how research is used to inform practice in the sector and use a Model of Reflection to review your experience of how research findings influence practice in the workplace.

Learning aims

In this unit you will:

- A** Understand types of information and data related to research into provision and practice in children's care and education (0 – 8 years)
- B** Understand the purpose and impact of research in the children's care and education sector (0 – 8 years)
- C** Know the purpose of reflective practice for those working in the children's care and education sector (0 – 8 years)
- D** Understand and apply theories and approaches for reflective practice

Summary of unit

Learning aim	Key content areas	Assessment approach
A Understand types of information and data related to research into provision and practice in children's care and education (0 – 8 years)	A1 Types of information and data A2 Sources of reliable research A3 Analysis of secondary data	A task introducing basic research practices and explaining how research is used to inform practice in the sector, using examples of legislation, policy and practices
B Understand the purpose and impact of research in the children's care and education sector (0 – 8 years)	B1 Informing the development of legislation, policy and practice B2 Improving outcomes for children, parents and carers B3 Identifying gaps in provision	
C Know the purpose of reflective practice for those working in the children's care and education sector (0 – 8 years)	C1 Reflecting on practice in the children's care and education sector (0 – 8 years)	Reflective practice guidance for early years' professionals, to help them understand the purpose and benefits of reflective practice.
D Understand and apply theories and approaches for reflective practice	D1 Theories of reflective practice D2 Approaches to reflective practice	

Content

The essential content is set out under content areas. Students must cover all specified content before the assessment.

Learning aim A: Understand types of information and data related to research into provision and practice in children's care and education (0 – 8 years) [EL – SRS]

A1 Types of information and data

The essential content topics require students to apply knowledge:

- Primary data:
 - open and closed questionnaires
 - interviews
 - case studies
 - scientific experiments
 - checklists
 - covert and overt participant observation
 - advantages and disadvantages of forms of primary data.
- Secondary data:
 - Research and commentary from other researchers.

A2 Sources of reliable research

- Data sources:
 - local authorities, government departments, e.g. The Children's Commissioner (Wales, England and Northern Ireland)
 - Charities e.g. National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)
 - professional publications e.g. journals, professional bodies, textbooks, periodicals, websites, research organisations
 - relevant numerical data, including graphs, tables and statistics
 - searches – academic search engines, databases, keywords, advanced search tools.

A3 Analysis of secondary data

- Methods of data analysis:
 - statistical analysis
 - interpreting graphs and tables, understanding bias in graphs, tables and statistics.
 - literature reviews, case studies, content analysis
 - ethical principles, confidentiality, conflicts of interest, fair representation of individuals.

Learning aim B: Understand the purpose and impact of research in the children's care and education sector (0 – 8 years)

B1 Informing the development of legislation, policy and practice

- Legislation and statutory guidance for the early years sector:
 - legislation e.g. Children and Families Act 2014, Health and Care Act 2022
 - statutory guidance e.g. EYFS 2021
 - local policies, practices and processes in the early years sector.

B2 Improving outcomes for children, parents and carers

- Know the outcomes that have value for children's futures:
 - achieving in education
 - career success
 - being healthy
 - positive relationships
 - meaningful
 - enjoyable activities.
- Understand the importance of improving life outcomes for children:
 - educational attainment
 - employment status
 - health and behaviour.

B3 Identifying gaps in provision

- Identify opportunities for developing services to meet children's needs based on appropriate research findings:
 - increased availability of early years provision - statutory, private, voluntary
 - entitlement to nursery/school places - age ranges/hours
 - access to support e.g., Midwife, Health Visitor, Social Worker, Family Centres
 - benefits of early interventions - speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, opticians, hearing tests.

Learning aim C: Know the purpose of reflective practice for those working in the children's care and education sector (0 – 8 years) [EL – CL]

C1 Reflecting on practice in the children's care and education sector (0 – 8 years)

- Why professionals in the early years sector use reflective practice:
 - to improve own skills and practical competence through monitoring, evaluating, and revising practice
 - to support continuous quality improvement and build on progress
 - to appreciate the impact of factors that shape own and others' behaviours, beliefs, values, attitudes, and approaches
 - to facilitate a shared understanding through collaboration and dialogue between professionals when implementing research-based practice.

Learning Aim D: Understand and apply theories and approaches for reflective practice [EL-CL]

D1 Theories of reflective practice

- Knowledge of reflective theories:
 - Schön – reflection in action and reflection on action.
 - Gibbs – reflective cycle.
 - Kolb – experiential learning.

D2 Approaches to reflective practice

- Application of reflective theories:
 - communication: verbal and non-verbal
 - principles and values for working with children
 - current best practice in the sector
 - working co-operatively with colleagues, children, their families and other professionals.
- Critical thinking in reflective practice:
 - questioning relevance of information and challenging own biases
 - breaking information into parts and identifying relationships and connections
 - identify strengths and weaknesses and significance of information
 - objectivity, open-mindedness and being self-critical without negativity
 - drawing conclusions supported by structured reasoning and evidence.

Assessment criteria

Learning aim A: Understand types of information and data related to research into provision and practice in children's care and education (0 – 8 years)

Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>A.P1 Explain the types of research used to investigate and inform practice for work with children.</p> <p>A.P2 Select and review data from a range of sources used to investigate care and education provision for children aged 0 – 8 years.</p>	<p>A.M1 Interpret descriptive and numerical data from sources used to investigate care and education provision for children aged 0 – 8 years.</p>	<p>A.D1 Evaluate the quality of data from a range of sources with reference to ethical principles, confidentiality, conflicts of interest and fair representation of individuals. [SP-CT]</p>

Learning aim B: Understand the purpose and impact of research in the children's care and education sector (0 – 8 years)

Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>B.P3 Research and describe legislation or statutory guidance relevant to provision for care and education for children aged 0 – 8 years.</p> <p>B.P4 Explain key opportunities and outcomes that have value for children relevant to provision.</p>	<p>B.M2 Identify a policy derived from legislation or statutory guidance and explain its implications for practice in the children's care and education sector (0 – 8 years).</p> <p>B.M3 Analyse the impact of accessing relevant provision for children aged 0 – 8 years on outcomes for children.</p>	<p>B.D2 Evaluate the impact of legislation and policy on practice for organisations, parents, children and practitioners in the children's care and education sector (0 – 8 years). [SP-CT]</p>

Learning aim C: Know the purpose of reflective practice for those working in the children’s care and education sector (0-8 years)

Learning aim D: Understand and apply theories and approaches for reflective practice

Pass	Merit	Distinction
<p>C.P5 Explain the purpose of reflection for practice in children’s care and education sector (0 – 8 years).</p> <p>D.P6 Explain theories used to underpin reflective practice for professional development.</p>	<p>C.M4 Analyse the effectiveness of reflective practice in supporting continuous quality improvement in provision for children’s care and education settings (0 – 8 years).</p> <p>D.M5 Analyse the impact of using reflective theoretical approaches on professional development.</p>	<p>CD.D3 Evaluate the effectiveness of reflective theoretical approaches in informing changes in provision and professional practice to support continuous quality improvement in children’s care and education settings (0 – 8 years). [SP – CT]</p>

Transferable skills

Managing Yourself	Effective Learning	Interpersonal Skills	Solving Problems
MY – TPR	EL – MOL	IS – WC	SP – CT ✓
MY – PS&R	EL – CL *	IS – V&NC	SP – PS
MY – COP	EL – SRS *	IS – T	SP – C&I
MY – PGS	EL – PRS	IS – C&SI	

Table key

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Assessing the PSAB

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Section 1 gives information on PSABs and there is further information on our website.

Further information for teachers and assessors

Resource requirements

Alongside this unit, it is recommended that students gain access to 50 hours of work placement in an early years' setting, however, this is not mandated in the qualification.

Essential information for assessment decisions

Learning aim A

For distinction standard, students must provide a well-articulated and justified evaluation of the quality of data from a range of sources and research findings into early years, including reference to ethical principles, confidentiality, conflicts of interest and fair representation of individuals.

For merit standard, students will use reasoned judgements to interpret descriptive and numerical data from research into early years provision or practice. They will show how legislation and guidance inform policy and practice for early years provision using at least two examples.

For pass standard, students will explain how research is used to investigate and inform practice for work with children providing at least two suitable examples to demonstrate their understanding. They will be able to select research information of reliable quality using a range of search methods or techniques. Students should identify legislation or statutory guidance that is relevant to early years provision.

Learning aim B

For distinction standard, students will provide a considered and clearly expressed account of the impact of legislation and policy on practice for organisations, parents, children and practitioners in the children's care and education sector (0-8 years) by evaluating research findings linking research informed practice in early years to outcomes and achievements for children and young people.

For merit standard, students will identify a suitable policy derived from legislation or statutory guidance and give a sound explanation of its implications for practice in the children's care and education sector (0-8 years). Students will provide a full explanation and analysis to illustrate the impact of children accessing high quality early years provision on their future achievements and outcomes.

For pass standard, students should research and select legislation or statutory guidance relevant to provision for care and education for children aged 0-8 years. They should be able to discuss key opportunities and outcomes that have value for children. They will identify links between the legislation or guidance and policy or practice in early years provision and show how research has informed provision linked to opportunities and outcomes for children.

Learning aims C and D

For distinction standard, students must articulate arguments and views concisely to evaluate how two relevant theories of reflective practice can support improvement in the knowledge and competence of professionals working in the children's care and education sector (0-8 years).

Students must provide detailed analysis and research of theories of reflective practice, including identifying the strengths and weaknesses and questioning relevance and importance of information in order to reach justified conclusions of their significance for quality improvement in early years provision and practice.

For merit standard, students must develop their evidence, using examples from less familiar situations, to come to a reasoned conclusion about the importance of and extent to which reflective practice can contribute to the improvement of early years provision.

Students must consider the process involved when using two different theories of reflection and use their research and analyse analysis how each theory can be used to support professional development as a result of engaging in reflective practice.

For pass standard, students must explain details of two theories of reflective practice, including their purpose, and explain how each theory can be used to support professionals working in the children's care and education sector (0-8 years) to engage in reflective practice.

Students must explain why reflective practice is important for professionals working in children's care and education (0-8 years) settings. They must provide evidence to support their opinions and views, relating reflective practice to occupational roles and expectations, to explain how reflective practice can contribute to quality improvement and improve skills and practice in children's care and education (0-8 years) settings.

Links to other units

The assessment for this unit allows students to draw on knowledge, understanding and skills developed from:

Unit 1: Children's Development

Unit 2: Keeping Children Safe.

5 Planning your programme

Supporting you in planning and implementing your programme

There will be lots of free teaching and learning support to help you deliver the new qualifications, including:

- Our Planning and Teaching Guide will help you to plan how to deliver the content and assessments that make up Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate) qualification. It also highlights opportunities to develop the transferable skills identified within the units in this specification.
- Sample Assessment materials are available for each external unit to help you to plan and prepare for assessments.
- Our mapping document highlights key differences between the new qualification and Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Children's Play, Learning and Development 601/7569/2, which this qualification replaces.

Is there a student entry requirement?

As a centre it is your responsibility to ensure that students who are recruited have a reasonable expectation of success on the programme. There are no formal entry requirements, but we expect students to have qualifications at or equivalent to Level 2.

Students are most likely to succeed if they have:

- five GCSEs at good grades, and/or
- BTEC qualification(s) at Level 2
- achievement in English and mathematics through GCSE or Functional Skills.

Students may demonstrate ability to succeed in various ways. For example, students may have relevant work experience or specific aptitude shown through diagnostic tests or non-educational experience.

6 Understanding the qualification grade

Awarding and reporting for the qualification

This section explains the rules that we apply in awarding a qualification and in providing an overall qualification grade for each student. It shows how all the qualifications in this sector are graded.

The awarding and certification of these qualifications will comply with regulatory requirements.

Eligibility for an award

To achieve any qualification grade, students must:

- complete and **have an outcome** (D, M, P, N or U) for all units within a valid combination
- achieve the **minimum number of points** at a grade threshold.

Award of the qualification grade

The final grade awarded for a qualification represents an aggregation of a student's performance across the qualification. As the qualification grade is an aggregate of the total performance, there is some element of compensation in that a higher performance in some units may be balanced by a lower outcome in others.

BTEC Nationals are Level 3 qualifications and are awarded at the grade ranges shown in the table below.

Qualification	Available grade range
Extended Certificate	P to D*

The *Award of qualification grade* table, shown further on in this section, shows the minimum thresholds for calculating these grades. The table will be kept under review over the lifetime of the qualification. The most up-to-date table will be issued on our website.

Pearson will monitor the qualification standard and reserves the right to make appropriate adjustments.

Students who do not meet the minimum requirements for a qualification grade to be awarded will be recorded as Unclassified (U) and will not be certificated. They may receive a Notification of Performance for individual units. The *Information Manual* gives full information.

Points available for internal units

The table below shows the number of **points** available for internal units. For each internal unit, points are allocated depending on the grade awarded.

Grade	Unit size (90 GLH)
U	0
Pass	9
Merit	15
Distinction	24

Points available for external units

Raw marks from the external units will be awarded **points** based on performance in the assessment. The table below shows the **minimum number of points** available for each grade in the external units.

Grade	Unit size (90 GLH)
U	0
Near Pass	6
Pass	9
Merit	15
Distinction	24

Pearson will automatically calculate the points for each external unit once the external assessment has been marked and grade boundaries have been set. For more details about how we set grade boundaries in the external assessment please go to our website.

Claiming the qualification grade

Subject to eligibility, Pearson will automatically calculate the qualification grade for your students when the internal unit grades are submitted and the qualification claim is made. Students will be awarded qualification grades for achieving the sufficient number of points (with valid combinations) within the ranges shown in the relevant *Award of qualification grade* table for the cohort.

Award of qualification grade

Applicable for registration from August 2025.

Extended Certificate (360 GLH)

Grade	Points threshold
U	0
Pass	36
Merit	52
Distinction	74
Distinction *	90

The table is subject to review over the lifetime of the qualification. The most up-to-date version will be issued on our website.

Example grading table for Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate)

Unit number	GLH	Type (Int/Ext)	Grade	Unit points
1	90	Ext	Merit	15
2	90	Ext	Near Pass	6
3	90	Int	Pass	9
4	90	Int	Merit	15
TOTAL	360		Pass	45

Appendix 1 Glossary of terms used for internally assessed units

Term	Definition
Adequate	Student work is satisfactory or acceptable in quality and quantity.
Analyse	Students break the issue/situation down into the key elements and show their understanding of the issues/situation applied to the scenario/context. Responses would be significantly beyond generic.
Apply/use/employ	Students implement a method, technique, process or approach in an activity.
Assess	Students give careful consideration to all the factors or events that apply, identify which are the most important or relevant and make a judgement on the importance of the factors.
Carry out	Students demonstrate skills through practical activities, in line with certain requirements.
Clear/ly	The qualities required are well demonstrated, unambiguous and beyond a basic level.
Coherent	Student intentions are clear, logically structured and can be interpreted by others.
Compare	Students show knowledge and understanding by identifying the main factors relating to two or more items/situations or aspects of a subject that is extended with the required explanations, e.g. similarities/differences, advantages/disadvantages, impacts.
Comprehensive	Used to describe either scope or depth, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student work is well developed and thorough covering all aspects/information in terms of both depth and breadth Or: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students demonstrate in-depth and accurate understanding of the aspects being assessed.
Confident	Student work demonstrates well-developed and secure application of skills or processes that are significantly beyond a basic level.
Consistent	Students demonstrate reliable and constant practice that maintains a set standard.
Create/produce	Students generate an idea/outcome to specific criteria.
Demonstrate	Students carry out and apply knowledge, understanding and/or skills in a practical situation.
Describe	Students provide an account of something, or highlight a number of key features of a given topic or process that shows a level of understanding.
Detailed	Students cover most if not all of the expected requirements and demonstrate a high level of understanding.

Term	Definition
Develop	Students apply a process of improving/progressing skills, concepts or work in order to produce outcomes.
Discuss	An issue, situation, process will be presented and the student will need to break the issue/situation/process down into the key elements, show their understanding of the issues/situation/process applied to the scenario/context (so generic answers are not acceptable), and show interrelationship in their answers.
Effective	Students demonstrate skills or provide outcomes that are well developed with a range of proficient qualities and that achieve objectives
Evaluate	Students consider various aspects of a subject's qualities in relation to its context such as: strengths or weaknesses, advantages or disadvantages, pros or cons. They will come to a judgement supported by evidence which will often be in the form of a conclusion.
Examine	Students demonstrate an ability to thoroughly inspect something in order to determine its qualities beyond a basic exploration.
Explain	Students can give an insight into the topic showing some level of understanding by providing reasons or examples.
Explore	Students undertake practical research or investigation to develop their skills or understanding of the topic/activity.
Implement	Students take actions or measures to put something into effect.
Investigate	Students perform a systematic inquiry into a topic using research skills, usually to demonstrate their understanding of a topic.
Justify	Students give relevant and logical reasons or evidence to support their actions or opinions.
Partial/some	To an extent, but not completely. Students do not include all of the requirements.
Perform	Students demonstrate a range of skills required to complete a given activity.
Prepare	Students organise a task/equipment/individuals/activities in advance of carrying it out.
Realistic/feasible	Students demonstrate insight into the logistics and manageability of proposals/plans/objectives/ideas and show consideration of the potential to achieve the outcomes.
Refine/optimize	Students make considered improvements to outcomes.
Review	Students consider evidence in order to make judgements about the qualities.
Understand	Students demonstrate insight or ability to interpret a subject.
Undertake	Students demonstrate skills through practical activities, often referring to given processes or techniques.

Appendix 2 Transferable Skills framework

Code = transferable skill initials-skill cluster initials

Managing yourself

Code	Skill cluster	Performance Descriptor
MY-TPR	Taking personal responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of their role and responsibilities and the expected standards of behaviour. • Demonstrates compliance with codes of conduct and ways of working. • Makes use of available resources to complete tasks. • Manages their time to meet deadlines and the required standards. • Demonstrates accountability for their decisions or actions.
MY-PS&R	Personal strengths and resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies own personal strengths and demonstrates the ability to use these in relevant areas. • Demonstrates the ability to adapt own mindset and actions to changing situations or factors. • Uses challenges as learning opportunities.

Code	Skill cluster	Performance Descriptor
MY-COP	Career orientation planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertakes research to understand the types of roles in the sector in which they could work. • Reviews own career plans against personal strengths and identifies areas for development to support progression into selected careers. • Takes part in sector-related experiences to support career planning.
MY-PGS	Personal goal setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets SMART goals using relevant evidence and information. • Reviews progress against goals and identifies realistic areas for improvement. • Seeks feedback from others to improve own performance.

Effective learning

Code	Skill cluster	Performance Descriptor
EL-MOL	Managing own learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains a focus on own learning objectives when completing a task. • Demonstrates the ability to work independently to complete tasks. • Reviews and applies learning from successful and unsuccessful outcomes to be effective in subsequent tasks.
EL-CL	Continuous learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages with others to obtain feedback about own learning progress. • Responds positively to feedback on learning progress from others. • Monitors own learning and performance over the short and medium term.
EL-SRS	Secondary research skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines the research topic or question. • Uses valid and reliable sources to collate secondary data. • Interprets secondary data and draws valid conclusions. • Produces a reference list and cites sources appropriately.
EL-PRS	Primary research skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines the research topic or question. • Carries out primary data collection using appropriate and ethical research methodology. • Interprets primary data to draw valid conclusions

Interpersonal skills

Code	Skill cluster	Performance Descriptor
IS-WC	Written communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces clear formal written communication using appropriate language and tone to suit purpose.
IS-V&NC	Verbal and non-verbal communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses verbal communication skills confidently to suit audience and purpose. • Uses body language and non-verbal cues effectively. • Uses active listening skills and checks understanding when interacting with others.
IS-T	Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages positively with team members to understand shared goals and own roles and responsibilities. • Respectfully consider the views of team members and shows courtesy and fairness. • Completes activities in line with agreed role and responsibilities. • Provide support to team members to achieve shared goals.
IS-C&SI	Cultural and social intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates awareness of cultural and social biases. • Demonstrates diversity, tolerance and inclusivity values in their approach to working with others.

Solving problems

Code	Skill cluster	Performance Descriptor
SP-CT	Critical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates understanding of the problem or issue to be addressed. • Makes use of relevant information to build ideas and arguments. • Assesses the importance, relevance and/or credibility of information. • Analyses, interprets and evaluates information to present reasoned conclusions
SP-PS	Problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a clear definition of the problem. • Gathers relevant information to formulate proposed solutions. • Selects relevant and significant information to formulate proposed solutions. • Identifies negative and positive implications of proposed solutions. • Presents and justifies selected solutions to problems.
SP-C&I	Creativity and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies new and relevant ideas to help solve a problem. • Refines ideas into workable solutions based on test results and/or feedback.

Appendix 3 Digital Skills framework

Problem solving

Using digital tools to analyse and solve problems:

Performance descriptor	Unit mapping
Use digital tools and techniques for research, collaboration and resolution of problems.	Unit 4, A2 – Sources of reliable research Unit 4, A3 – Analysis of secondary data
Have up-to-date knowledge of ways that technology is used within a sector.	Unit 2, D2 – Protecting and safeguarding in the Early Years Setting Unit 3, A1 – Types of play and learning opportunities
Present ideas and findings using digital tools.	Unit 4, A1 – Types of information and data
Use digital tools to manipulate data.	Unit 4, A2 – Sources of reliable research Unit 4, A3 – Analysis of secondary data

Digital collaboration and communication

Using digital tools to communicate and share information with stakeholders:

Performance descriptor	Unit mapping
Understand and use digital collaboration and communication platforms.	Unit 2, A1 – Responsibilities and guidance for children’s health and safety Unit 2, C1 – The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and safeguarding Unit 2, D2 – Protecting and safeguarding in the Early Years Setting Unit 4, C1 – Reflecting on practice in the children’s care and education sector (0-8 years)
Use collaboration tools to meet with, share and collaborate with customers and colleagues.	Unit 2, A1 – Responsibilities and guidance for children’s health and safety Unit 2, C1 – The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and safeguarding

Performance descriptor	Unit mapping
	Unit 2, D2 – Protecting and safeguarding in the Early Years Setting Unit 4, C1 – Reflecting on practice in the children’s care and education sector (0-8 years)

Transacting digitally

Using digital tools to set up accounts and pay for goods/services:

Performance descriptor	Unit mapping
Use online systems to access and update digital records.	Unit 2, B1 – Maintaining health and safety Unit 2, C1 – The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and safeguarding
Set-up accounts to complete transactions.	N/A

Digital security

Identify threats and keep digital tools safe:

Performance descriptor	Unit mapping
Understand the types of malware.	N/A
Understand the threats involved in carrying out online activities.	Unit 2, D2 – Protecting and safeguarding in the Early Years Setting
Protect personal and organisation information and data.	Unit 2, D2 – Protecting and safeguarding in the Early Years Setting
Keeping systems secure.	Unit 2, D2 – Protecting and safeguarding in the Early Years Setting

Handling data safely and securely

Follow correct procedures when handling personal and organisational data:

Performance descriptor	Unit mapping
Manage passwords and keep them secure.	Unit 2, D2 – Protecting and safeguarding in the Early Years Setting
Identify website and services that are secure and insecure.	Unit 2, D2 – Protecting and safeguarding in the Early Years Setting
Understand the digital policy for a sector.	Unit 2, D2 – Protecting and safeguarding in the Early Years Setting
Understand the impact of online data.	Unit 2, D2 – Protecting and safeguarding in the Early Years Setting
Understand copyright and intellectual property.	N/A

Appendix 4 Sustainability framework

Sustainable development goal	Unit mapping
SDG 1: No poverty	Unit 1, A1 – Principles and patterns of development Unit 2, D1 – Recognising abuse
SDG 2: Zero hunger	Unit 1, A1 – Principles and patterns of development Unit 2, D1 – Recognising abuse
SDG 3: Good health and wellbeing	Unit 1, A1 – Principles and patterns of development Unit 2, D1 - Recognising abuse
SDG 4: Quality education	Unit 3, A1 – Types of play and learning opportunities Unit 3, A2 – The benefits of play for children’s learning and development Unit 3, D2 – Planning activities to support children’s learning and development Unit 4, B2 – Improving outcomes for children, parents and carers
SDG 5: Gender equality	Unit 2, C1 – The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and safeguarding Unit 3, A2 – The benefits of play for children’s learning and development
SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation	Unit 1, A1 – Principles and patterns of development Unit 2, D1 – Recognising abuse
SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy	Unit 1, A1 – Principles and patters of development Unit 2, D1 – Recognising abuse
SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth	Unit 1, A1 – Principles and patterns of development Unit 2, D1 – Recognising abuse
SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Unit 1, A1 – Principles and patterns of development

Sustainable development goal	Unit mapping
SDG 10: Reduced inequalities	Unit 1, A1 – Principles and patterns of development Unit 2, D1 – Recognising abuse
SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities	Unit 1, A1 – Principles and patterns of development Unit 2, D1 – Recognising abuse
SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production	N/A
SDG 13: Climate action	Unit 3, A1 – Types of play and learning opportunities
SDG 14: Life below water	N/A
SDG15: Life on land	Unit 3, A1 – Types of play and learning opportunities Unit 3, A2 – The benefits of play for children’s learning and development Unit 3, C1 – Influences on current early years practice Unit 3, D2 – Planning activities to support children’s learning and development
SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions	Unit 2, A1 – Responsibilities and guidance for children’s health and safety Unit 2, B2 – Measures to prevent and control infection in the setting Unit 2, C1 – The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and safeguarding Unit 2, D2 – Protecting and safeguarding in the Early Years Setting Unit 2, D3 – Reporting concerns
SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals	Unit 1, F1 – Social development Unit 2, C1 – The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and safeguarding Unit 2, D3 – Reporting concerns

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