



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Childhood: Play in a Social Context

Unit code: FD7F 36

Superclass: PN

Publication date: August 2010

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to enable candidates to draw on theories from policy analysis and the social studies of childhood in order to develop a critical understanding of the policy context for play.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Show an understanding of the processes, structures and institutions involved in the making and implementation of policy affecting children's play.
- 2 Critically analyse current social policies affecting play.
- 3 Reflect on the relationship between policy and practice.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Candidates should be working at a lead practitioner or manager level and have some awareness of the policies that influence their work through policy requirements such as registration and inspection and legal responsibilities.

Candidates should already have qualifications that meet the requirements of the Scottish Social Services Council for practitioner (SCQF level 7) and have relevant qualifications at SCQF level 8.

Candidates should be working at lead practitioner or manager level within a day care service for children and young people.

Candidates should have well-developed communication and interpersonal skills and be able to demonstrate the ability to think analytically and reflectively.

General information (cont)

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 9: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 9*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication, Working with Others and Problem Solving* in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Candidates who use the Internet to conduct research will also have opportunities to develop skills in *Information and Communications Technology* and *Numeracy* depending on the variety of data gathered and how the data is presented.

Context for delivery

This Unit is an optional Unit within the Childhood Practice award (SCQF level 9).

Assessment

The Unit has one holistic assessment in the form of a portfolio with specific tasks related to each Outcome (2000 words).

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Please refer to *Knowledge and/or Skills for the Unit* and *Evidence Requirements for the Unit* after the Outcomes.

Outcome 1

Show an understanding of the processes, structures and institutions involved in the making and implementation of policy affecting children's play.

Knowledge and/or Skills

Candidates should demonstrate ability to:

- ◆ Understand *Play in a Social Context*
- ◆ Apply approaches to policy analysis to their work context

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ Critically review the *Play in a Social Context*
- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of processes, structure and institutions affecting children's play, in their setting and in relationship to their own role
- ◆ Evaluate processes, structure and institutions affecting children's play
- ◆ Critically evaluate theories of policy implementation with reference to their own work context

Outcome 2

Critically analyse current social policies affecting play.

Knowledge and/or Skills

Candidates should demonstrate ability to:

- ◆ Identify the theories underpinning relevant policy
- ◆ Identify models of welfare and policy paradigms within current policies affecting their work
- ◆ Identify constructs of childhood and play within current policies affecting their work

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Childhood: Play in a Social Context

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of the theory underpinning relevant policy
- ◆ Critically analyse models of welfare and policy
- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of constructs of childhood and play within current policies

Outcome 3

Reflect on the relationship between policy and practice.

Knowledge and/or Skills

Candidates should demonstrate ability to:

- ◆ Identify information from a range of sources in order to reflect on the relationship between policy and practice in play, including the Playwork Principles
- ◆ Identify relevant theory on social policy and practice in play

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ Demonstrate knowledge of the relationship between Policy and Practice in Play
- ◆ Demonstrate an understanding of social policy and practice in Play and Playwork

Assessment Guidelines

The assessment for this Unit is holistic, in the form of a portfolio comprising:

- ◆ a 'rich picture' detailing the policy network within which the candidate operates
- ◆ a commentary on the rich picture showing an understanding of the relationships between the policy players, drawing on approaches to policy analysis covered in the Unit
- ◆ a critical analysis of a key national policy document relevant to their work, explaining the context for the policy's development and identifying the underpinning theories, paradigms and constructs of childhood and play
- ◆ a fully referenced and evidenced reflective account on the relationship between policy and practice in playwork, including reference to the Playwork Principles

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Childhood: Play in a Social Context

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

Outcome 1 – Show an understanding of the processes, structures and institutions involved in the making and implementation of policy affecting children’s play.

- ◆ distinguishing between policy studies and policy analysis
- ◆ key elements of policy analysis
- ◆ theories of decision making
- ◆ policy network analysis
- ◆ levels of analysis: macro, meso, micro
- ◆ theories of policy implementation
- ◆ approaches to policy evaluation

Outcome 2 – Critically analyse current social policies affecting play.

- ◆ data analysis, including comprehension to identify underpinning theory
- ◆ policy paradigms, particularly relating to policies for children and young people
- ◆ models of welfare
- ◆ social constructions of childhood and play and how these are identified in policies
- ◆ alternative understandings of childhood and play

Outcome 3 – Reflect on the relationship between policy and practice.

- ◆ competing understandings of the value of play (intrinsic/instrumental)
- ◆ Lester and Russell’s (2008) tension triangle, Holden’s (2006) value triangle – critical realist approaches to navigating the tensions
- ◆ approaches to reflective writing

Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

As the Unit is designed to be delivered to candidates who are experienced in the sector, it is expected that those delivering will have the required experience and occupational competence at an appropriate level in order to guide the candidate towards the relevant research and appropriate documents. It must be remembered that the candidate is expected at this level, to have a broad knowledge and understanding of the scope, main areas and boundaries of the play and social policy.

Candidates will further be required to undertake a critical evaluation of the research they have undertaken. It is again noted that theorists may offer different or contradictory views of the issues and that candidates may be given credit for their work as long as any conclusions are supported by research and a well reasoned argument.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Childhood: Play in a Social Context

The assessment for this Unit is holistic, in the form of a portfolio comprising:

- ◆ a 'rich picture' detailing the policy network within which the candidate operates
- ◆ a commentary on the rich picture showing an understanding of the relationships between the policy players, drawing on approaches to policy analysis covered in the Unit
- ◆ a critical analysis of a key national policy document relevant to their work, explaining the context for the policy's development and identifying the underpinning theories, paradigms and constructs of childhood and play
- ◆ a fully referenced and evidenced reflective account on the relationship between policy and practice in playwork, including reference to the Playwork Principles

Suggested resources

- Archard, D. (2004) *Children: Rights and childhood*, 2nd edition, Abingdon: Routledge.
- Archard, D. (2006) The moral and political status of children, in *Public Policy Research*, Vol. 13 (1) pp. 6-12.
- Archard, D. and Macleod, C.M. (eds.) (2002) *The Moral and Political Status of Children*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bochel, C. and Bochel, H. M. (2004) *The UK Social Policy Process*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Children in Scotland (2006) *Better Lives for Scotland's Children and Young People*, [online] Edinburgh: Children in Scotland. Available from <http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/docs/policy/manifesto2007.pdf> [accessed 23/12/08].
- Cohen, B. and Milne, R. (2007) *Northern Lights: Building better childhoods in Norway*, Edinburgh: Children in Scotland.
- Colebatch, H. K. (2002) *Policy*, 2nd edition, Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Dahlberg, D. and Moss, P. (2005) *Ethics and Politics in Early Childhood Education*, London: Routledge Falmer.
- France, A. and Utting, D. (2005) 'The Paradigm of "Risk and Protection-Focused Prevention" and its Impact on Services for Children and Families', *Children and Society*, **19**, pp77-90.
- Hendrick, H. (ed.) (2005) *Child Welfare and Social Policy*, Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Heywood, A. (2007) *Politics*, third edition, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, chapter 20: Policy Process and System Performance'
- Holden, J. (2006) *Cultural Value and the Crisis of Legitimacy: Why culture needs a democratic mandate*, [online] London: Demos. Available from <http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/culturallegitimacy> [Accessed 29/12/09] specifically the concept of a triangle of 'cultural value' and the relationship triangle between key players (chapters 3 and 4).
- Hudson, J. and Lowe, S. (2004) *Understanding the Policy Process: Analysing welfare policy and practice*, Bristol: The Policy Press.
- James, A. and James, A.L. (2004) *Constructing Childhood: Theory, policy and social practice*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lavalette, M. and Pratt, A. (eds) (2001) *Social Policy: Theories, concepts and issues*, 3rd edition, London: Sage.
- Lester, S. and Russell, W. (2008) *Play For a Change: Play, policy and practice, a review of contemporary perspectives*. London: National Children's Bureau.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Childhood: Play in a Social Context

- Meire, J. (2007) 'Qualitative Research on Children's Play: A review of recent literature' [online], in Jambor, T. and Van Gils, J. (eds) *Several Perspectives on Children's Play: Scientific reflections for practitioners*, Antwerp: Garant. Available from <http://www.k-s.be/docs/LITERATUURSTUDIE%20SPELEN.pdf> [Accessed 29/12/09].
- Moss, P. (2007) 'Meetings Across the Paradigmatic Divide', *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, **39 (3)**: pp229-245.
- Moss, P. and Petrie, P. (2002) *From Children's Services to Children's Spaces*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Pawson, R. (2006) *Evidence-based Policy: A realist perspective*, London: Sage.
- Pawson, R., Greenhalgh, T., Harvey, G. and Walshe, K. (2004) *Realist synthesis: An introduction*, [online] Manchester: ESRC Research methods Programme (Research Paper 2/2004) Available from www.ccsr.ac.uk/methods/publications/documents/RMPmethods2.pdf [Accessed 10/12/08].
- Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group (2005) *The Playwork Principles*. [online] Cardiff: Play Wales. Available from <http://www.playwales.org.uk/page.asp?id=50> [Accessed 30/12/08].
- Powell, S. and Wellard, I. (2008) *Policies and Play: The impact of national policies on children's opportunities for play* [online], London: National Children's Bureau. Available from <http://www.playengland.org.uk/resources/policies-and-play.pdf> [Accessed 30/12/08].
- Prout, A. (2005) *The Future of Childhood*, Abingdon: Routledge Falmer.
- Roberts, H. and Petticrew, M. (2006) 'Policy for Children and Young People: What is the evidence and can we trust it?', *Children's Geographies*, **4 (1)**, pp19-36.
- Wyness, M. (2006) *Childhood and Society*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to develop the Core Skill(s) of *Communication, Working with Others and Problem Solving* in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Candidates who use the Internet to conduct research will also have opportunities to develop skills in *Information and Communications Technology* and *Numeracy* depending on the variety of data gathered and the form in which the data is presented.

Open learning

It may be possible to deliver the Unit by this route and if the Unit is delivered by open learning methods, additional resources will be required for candidate support, assessment and quality assurance.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for candidates

Unit title: Childhood: Play in a Social Context

This Unit is designed to enable you to draw on theories from policy analysis and the social studies of childhood in order to develop a critical understanding of the policy context for play.

You will consider the processes, structures and institutions involved in the making and implementation of policy affecting children's play. You will have the opportunity to distinguish between policy studies and policy analysis, understand the theories of decision making, network analysis, theories of policy implementation and approaches to policy evaluation.

You will be able to critically analyse current social policies affecting play including underpinning theories related children and young people, models of welfare and social constructions of childhood and play as well as considering alternative understandings of childhood and play.

Finally you will have the opportunity to reflect on the relationship between policy and practice and the competing understandings of the value of play.

For the assessment for this Unit you will be asked to produce a portfolio, comprising:

- ◆ a 'rich picture' detailing the policy network within in which you work
- ◆ a commentary on the rich picture showing an understanding of the relationships between the policy players, drawing on approaches to policy analysis covered in the Unit
- ◆ a critical analysis of a key national policy document relevant to your work, explaining the context for the policy's development and identifying the underpinning theories, paradigms and constructs of childhood and play
- ◆ a fully referenced and evidenced reflective account on the relationship between policy and practice in playwork, including reference to the Playwork Principles