



Higher National Unit specification

General information

Unit title: Working With Children 3–6 Years (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: H9PM 34

Superclass: PN

Publication date: November 2015

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 02

Unit purpose

This Unit is designed to enable learners to gain an understanding of working with children age 3–6 years, and to gain the knowledge and skills required to support the play, active learning and holistic development of this age group. Learners will also become familiar with the national legislation and policy guidance relating to children 3–6.

The Unit is intended to introduce the learners to the promotion of play, active learning and holistic development of children aged 3–6, including those for whom additional support is required, through the provision of quality active learning in a safe, challenging and enriched environment, with adults as facilitators.

This Unit is intended for learners who are on work placement or employed in the Early Learning and Childcare sector. Learners who are undertaking an HNC in Childhood Practice will have the opportunity to relate theoretical approaches to practice.

Outcomes

On successful completion of the Unit the learner will be able to:

- 1 Investigate theoretical approaches to play, active learning and development for children aged 3–6.
- 2 Explore the value of play and active learning in supporting the child 3–6 years.
- 3 Explore the development of supportive, enabling environments.
- 4 Reflect on and evaluate the role of the adult in working with children aged 3–6.

Higher National Unit specification: General information (cont)

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Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7)

Recommended entry to the Unit

It is recommended that learners should have, or be able to demonstrate, a thorough understanding of theoretical approaches to play, learning and development of the child aged 3–6. This may be evidenced by significant experience working with children aged 3–6. Evidence could also be through achievement of current NQ Units or equivalent, which assess knowledge and understanding of children in this age group.

Core Skills

Achievement of this Unit gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill Problem Solving at SCQF level 6

Core Skill component None

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the Support Notes of the Unit Specifications for this Course.

Context for delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

This Unit is included within the framework for the HNC in Childhood Practice. The age range for this Unit is 3–6 years. It forms one of the optional Units. It could also be undertaken as continuing professional development for practitioners wishing to update or develop their skills.

Equality and inclusion

This Unit specification has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment. The individual needs of learners should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards

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Acceptable performance in this Unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the Unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to SQA.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Learners should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Investigate theoretical approaches to play, active learning, and development for children aged 3–6.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Theories of play, active learning and development
- ◆ Frameworks and guidance: national and local
- ◆ Legislation and policy: national and local

Outcome 2

Explore the value of play and active learning in supporting the child 3–6 years.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Play and active learning in promoting development and learning
- ◆ Planning play and active learning experiences
- ◆ Interaction with children and adults
- ◆ Observation and planning
- ◆ Meeting individual needs
- ◆ Resources to support play and active learning

Outcome 3

Explore the development of supportive, enabling environments.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Supportive, enabling environments.
- ◆ Social, cultural and physical spaces
- ◆ Child centred environments
- ◆ Consultation and co-operation
- ◆ Observation and planning

Higher National Unit specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Outcome 4

Reflect on and evaluate the role of the adult in working with children aged 3–6.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Values and principles
- ◆ The role of the adult
- ◆ Child-centred, holistic approaches
- ◆ Children's views and opinions
- ◆ Reflection on practice
- ◆ Non-intervention and sensitive intervention
- ◆ Theoretical perspective on practice

Evidence Requirements for this Unit

To achieve this Unit each learner will need evidence to demonstrate his/her Knowledge and/or Skills for Outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4. The Unit will be holistically assessed in the form of a reflective report on a number of play and active learning activities to promote all aspects of play, learning and holistic development for children aged 3–6 in an Early Learning and Childcare setting or in early primary school.

Each learner must provide evidence that he/she can:

- ◆ demonstrate the underpinning values and principles of working with children 3–6.
- ◆ analyse current evolving, theoretical approaches to play, active learning and holistic development of children aged 3–6.
- ◆ analyse and understand the influence of legislation, policy, frameworks and guidance, national and local, for play and active learning.
- ◆ plan and support play and active learning experiences which meet the development needs of the child 3–6.
- ◆ understand the importance of a supportive, enabling environments and the social, cultural and physical space which promotes children's potential.
- ◆ understand interaction, intervention and non-interventionist approaches with children and adults.
- ◆ demonstrate active participation and involvement of children aged 3–6 through consultation and cooperation.
- ◆ understand the role of observation and planning in promoting development and learning.
- ◆ evaluate approaches to meeting individual needs.
- ◆ develop the resources necessary to support play and active learning.
- ◆ reflect on and evaluate the role of the adult in working with children aged 3–6.
- ◆ evaluate the relationship between theoretical perspective and the practice of working with children 3-6 years.



Higher National Unit Support Notes

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Unit Support Notes are offered as guidance and 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

This Unit is included in the framework of the HNC in Early Education and Childcare. It is recommended that it should be delivered within an Early Learning and Childcare setting.

Outcome 1

Investigate theoretical approaches to active learning and development for children aged 3-6.

Play, Active learning and Development

Play and active learning is a healthy, essential part of childhood and learners should explore their views and how these views relate to the current thinking on play and active learning.

We know from all kinds of research that childhood and play should go hand in hand and as a result of this it is enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and in much of Scottish legislation, policy and guidance, eg:

- ◆ *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*. The Act makes provision in relation to aspects of children's services so as to: improve the way services work to support children, young people and families by: ensuring there is a single planning approach for children who need additional support from services; creating a single point of contact around every child or young person; ensuring coordinated planning and delivery of services with a focus on Outcomes, and providing a holistic and shared understanding of a child's or young person's wellbeing.
- ◆ *Child at the Centre: self-Evaluation in the early years (2007)*. The framework provides tools to support self-evaluation and improvement for early learning and childcare and the early stages of primary school. It links very closely with *How good is our school?* The quality indicators and illustrations in the *Child at the Centre* were written to support those working with children aged 3 and over.
- ◆ *Early Years Framework (2009)*. This framework is about giving children the best start in life and the steps the Scottish Government, local partners and practitioners in early years services need to take to start on that journey.
- ◆ *Play Strategy for Scotland: our vision (2013)*. The publication of the *Play Strategy for Scotland* confirms the government's commitment to play as an important part of their vision for Scotland's children.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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- ◆ *Curriculum for Excellence, Building the curriculum 2: active learning in the early years (2007)*. Details how active learning in the early years can support children’s development of the four capacities underpinning the curriculum.
- ◆ *Building the Ambition’ National Practice guidance on Early Learning and Childcare Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014* highlights the difficulties in defining play and the misinterpretation of the intrinsic value of play to children and young people.
- ◆ *Growing Up in Scotland (GUS)* is the longitudinal research study tracking the lives of thousands of children and their families from the early years, through childhood and beyond. The main aim of the study is to provide new information to support policy-making in Scotland but it is also intended to provide a resource for practitioners and learners should be encourages to explore this resource

Learners could research the various theories of cognitive development and the relationship to the current thinking around brain development.

Some of the current theory can be found in the work of Tina Bruce, Kathy Sylva, Pamela May, Linda Pound, Bob Hughes, Gordon Sturrock and Perry Else, and others.

Outcome 2

Explore the value of play and active learning in supporting the child 3-6 years.

Brain development

Learners could research the various theories of play, active learning and development and the relationship to the current thinking around brain development.

In Scotland active learning is seen as an appropriate way for children to develop vital skills and knowledge and a positive attitude to learning. Active learning... Takes full advantage of Spontaneous play, and planned purposeful play.

Building the Curriculum 2

Learners should discuss and be familiar with all current theory, policy, guidance and legislation about the place of play and active learning in development and should use this knowledge to review the practice in their setting.

Outcome 3

Explore the development of supportive, enabling environments.

The environments created in settings can support children’s development by providing safe and secure spaces for learning where the four pillars of learning as defined by UNESCO (1996) can be provided for and learners could consider whether the four pillars are being supported by the environment with which they are familiar.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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- ◆ Learning to know
- ◆ Learning to do
- ◆ Learning to live together
- ◆ Learning to be.

Learners could also reflect on the work of Professor Laevers (2011), at the centre for Experiential Education in Belgium, who has developed a 'Process Oriented Monitoring System' better known as the *Wellbeing Involvement Scale* which is useful in the evaluation of children's involvement with environments and resources.

(Well-being and Involvement in Care Settings. A Process-oriented Self-evaluation Instrument, Ferre Laevers (Ed.) Research Centre for Experiential Education, Leuven University. ISBN: 978-90-77343-76-8).

Learners should also consider the resources available in their settings. Do the resources promote equality and fairness? Are they age appropriate? Do they encourage children and young people to take risks in a secure and safe environment? Are they open ended? Do they encourage creativity and imagination? Do they provide a link to the natural world and natural elements?

Observation and planning

Learners should reflect on why observation of children is considered to be so important to ensure that adults capture the children's agenda.

They could discuss the methods and types of systematic observation of children they see in settings to include a range of techniques:

Techniques fall broadly into two categories:

Narrative methods

- ◆ Naturalistic 'story' form, Target child, *Documentation, Journals*

Sampling Methods

- ◆ *Time sample, Event sample, Tracking, Sociogram, Record of progress*

It would be helpful to analyse the benefits of practical examples of recording observations such as:

- ◆ Floor books/learning wheels, pictorial planning across the early levels, children's self and peer evaluation, children's evaluation of staff, photographs, audio, video, learning journals or shared profiles If young children are to learn from play, helpful adults need to reflect on how they get involved and how to avoid over involvement that becomes interference.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Learners should be asked to consider the approach taken to daily observation of children in their setting. There is a move away from the traditional approach where educators use developmental observations to determine areas of strength and weakness in children to decide the type of learning experience to offer to children to support their development.

However more contemporary approaches to observation are beginning to focus on socio-cultural observations of children's learning and development which shape what is recorded in educator's observations. This approach emphasises the role that social interactions, cultural experiences and context play in development and learning.

Early Childhood Education and Care: A sociocultural approach (2010)

Outcome 4

Reflect on and evaluate the role of the adult in working with children aged 3–6.

Learners should consider the principles and values in the curriculum guidance.

'Children can develop their confidence through thinking about and reflecting on their own learning. They should have regular time to talk about their work and to identify and reflect on the evidence of their progress and their next steps including through personal learning planning' *Curriculum for Excellence: Building the Curriculum 2*.

Underpinning Principles and Values: taken from Building the Curriculum 2

- ◆ The rights of the children should be respected, including the right to be heard and have their views taken into account
- ◆ Adults must listen and respond
- ◆ Participation takes time
- ◆ Consultation and Participation is different from getting what you want.
- ◆ Consultation is not enough

Reflective practice

Learners should be asked to consider what a reflective practitioner should do.

Responses may include:

- ◆ A reflective practitioner:
 - Identifies their learning style and is aware of those of others in the team.
 - Considers quality experiences for children.
 - Keeps up to date with current initiatives and research.
 - Shares and discusses observations and issues about children.
 - Engages in professional reading.

They could also be asked to think about how reflection happens in the workplace with which they are familiar. This could include how reflection can support theoretical practice.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Non Intervention and Intervention in children's play

Learners could discuss how they can facilitate the child's play and active learning without directing it with Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development' theory in mind.

They could also consider when intervention might be necessary.

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this Unit

As specified in Support Notes. Additionally this Unit is likely to form part of an award designed to provide learners with technical and professional knowledge and skills related to working with children aged 3–6 years from a childcare perspective.

Learners require sufficient placement time in order to achieve the Unit Outcomes.

It is suggested this Unit be delivered concurrent with the Unit *Support for Play Learning and Development* whenever possible this Unit should have the practical application of knowledge and skills as its focus.

Guidance on approaches to assessment of this Unit

Evidence can be generated using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners.

Centres are reminded that prior verification of centre-devised assessments would help to ensure that the national standard is being met. Where learners experience a range of assessment methods, this helps them to develop different skills that should be transferable to work or further and higher education.

It is possible to integrate assessment of this Unit with the portfolio assessment for Support for Play, Learning and Development.

This Unit will be assessed holistically by one instrument of assessment covering all Outcomes. Typically this will consist of the learners being set a task in the form of a reflective report on a programme of play or activities in a setting for children 3–6 years such as a childcare or learning setting.

The task set should be relevant to the promotion of play, learning and development and to the provision of a child-focussed environment and be assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

This Unit will be assessed holistically by one instrument of assessment covering all Outcomes. Typically this will consist of the learners being set a task in the form of a written reflective report on a number of play activities to promote all aspects of play, learning and holistic development for children aged 3–6 in an Early learning and Childcare setting or in early primary school.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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The task set should be relevant to the promotion of children's play, learning and holistic development and to the provision of a child-centred environment.

The report should contain the following:

- ◆ Demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the developmental progress of children aged 3–6
- ◆ Demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the evolving, as well as well-established, theoretical approaches to play, active learning and development for children 3–6 years
- ◆ Awareness of the individual child's learning and development needs through observation, consultation and theoretical understanding
- ◆ Demonstration of effective observation skills and the development of effective consultation and planning with children
- ◆ Implementation of appropriate play and active learning for children 3–6 years
- ◆ Evaluation of the planned and implemented play and active learning as a reflective practitioner

Opportunities for e-assessment

E-assessment may be appropriate for some assessments in this Unit. By e-assessment we mean assessment which is supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software. Centres which wish to use e-assessment must ensure that the national standard is applied to all learner evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. The most up-to-date guidance on the use of e-assessment to support SQA's qualifications is available at www.sqa.org.uk/e-assessment.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Opportunities for developing Core and other essential skills

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or a Core Skill component in this Unit.

However there may be opportunities to develop the Core Skills of *Communication, Working with Others, Information and Communication Technology (ICT)* and *Problem Solving* to levels required by occupations in early education and childcare or progression pathways supported by the HNC Early Education and Childcare.

This Unit has the Core Skill of Problem Solving embedded in it, so when candidates achieve this Unit their Core Skills profile will be updated to show that they have achieved Problem Solving at SCQF Level 6

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date
02	Core Skill Problem Solving at SCQF level 6 embedded.	24/11/2015

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General information for learners

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This section will help you decide whether this is the Unit for you by explaining what the Unit is about, what you should know or be able to do before you start, what you will need to do during the Unit and opportunities for further learning and employment.

This Unit is designed to enable you to gain an understanding of working with children age 3–6 years, and to gain the knowledge and skills required to support play, active learning and holistic development of this age group. It will also enable you to become familiar with the current legislation and policy guidance which promote the role of play and active learning for this age group.

The Unit is intended to introduce you to the promotion play, active learning and holistic development of children aged 3–6, including those for whom additional support is required, through the provision of quality active learning in a safe, challenging and enriched environment, with you, the adult, as facilitator.

This Unit is intended for you, when you are on work placement or employed in the Early learning and Childcare sector or the early level of primary school. If you are undertaking an HNC in Childhood Practice, you will have the opportunity to relate theoretical approaches to practice.

On completion of the Unit, you should be able to:

- ◆ investigate theoretical approaches to play, active learning and development for children aged 3–6.
- ◆ explore the value of play and active learning in supporting the child 3–6 years.
- ◆ explore the development of supportive, enabling environments.
- ◆ reflect on and evaluate the role of the adult in working with children aged 3–6.

In order to complete this Unit successfully, you will be required to achieve a satisfactory level of performance on one piece of assessed work which will be a reflective account of your planned programme of activities/play opportunities.