Higher National Unit Specification

General information

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Early Learning (SCQF level 9)

Unit code: FD75 36

Superclass:	PN
Publication date:	March 2019
Source:	Scottish Qualifications Authority
Version:	03

Unit purpose

This unit has been designed to allow you to analyse the leadership and management of contemporary ideas and research on cognition and language development and other factors that influence early learning. This unit will provide you with the opportunity to analyse and evaluate and the relationship to leadership and management of early learning services within the context of Childhood Practice.

Outcomes

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

1 Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of contemporary research and ideas of early learning.
2 Analyse and evaluate other factors that influence early learning.
3 Evaluate leadership and management perspectives of early learning.

Credit points and level

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

Higher National Unit Specification: General information (cont)

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Recommended entry to the unit

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

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

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

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.

Learners 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

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.

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

Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of contemporary research and ideas of early learning.

Knowledge and/or skills

♦   Contemporary research into:
  –   cognition in young children
  –   language development in young children
  –   social and emotional development in young children
  –   physical health and wellbeing
♦   Critically analyse and apply particular research to practice
♦   Relate relevant contemporary research to practice in supporting early learning

Outcome 2

Analyse and evaluate other factors that influence early learning.

Knowledge and/or skills

♦   Current policy and guidance for early learning
♦   Current legislation relating to early learning
♦   Parental rights and involvement in early learning
♦   Current initiatives to support early learning

Outcome 3

Evaluate leadership and management perspectives of early learning.

Knowledge and/or skills

♦   Knowledge of leadership styles for early learning
♦   Knowledge of management skills for early learning
♦   Understand the difference between management and leadership styles in relation to early learning
♦   Understand the importance of dispersive leadership
♦   Understand the female perspective

Higher National Unit Specification: Statement of standards (cont)

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Evidence requirements for this unit

Learners will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills across all outcomes by showing that they can:

Outcome 1

♦ critically analyse contemporary research:
   – cognition in young children
   – language development in young children
   – social and emotional development in young children
   – physical health and wellbeing
   – critically analyse and apply particular research to practice

♦ knowledge of how to access, and apply relevant research into practice
♦ relate relevant contemporary research to practice

Outcome 2

♦ analyse policy and guidance influencing early learning
♦ demonstrate and understand of current legislation underpinning early learning
♦ evaluate the impact of parental involvement on early learning
♦ evaluate the impact of current initiatives to support early learning

Outcome 3

♦ identify a range of management styles for early learning
♦ identify the role of the leader in early learning
♦ analyse the links between leadership and management skills and how these relate to early learning
♦ evaluate your role facilitating dispersive in leading and managing early learning

Higher National Unit Support Notes

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Early Learning (SCQF level 9)

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 an optional unit within the Mandatory/Optional section of the PDA Childhood Practice at SCQF level 9.

The unit may also be used as a freestanding unit by learners in relevant employment who wish to develop and/or enhance their skills as a form of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The unit is linked to the unit: *Leadership and Management Practice* and there will be opportunities for the learner to utilise many of the transferable skills developed. These may include but are not confined to:

♦   critical evaluation
♦   self motivation
♦   knowledge of current best practice
♦   investigative skills
♦   professional papers
♦   government policies, etc

This unit has been designed to allow learners to explore their own leadership and management role in facilitating access to contemporary ideas and research into, amongst other aspects, development in young children and parental involvement and how these factors influence the delivery of early learning.

Learners will demonstrate their own knowledge of contemporary research and analyse how this knowledge underpins their practice in their settings. They will also demonstrate their knowledge of policy, guidance and initiatives which currently support the delivery of early learning.

Finally learners will evaluate their own approach to leadership and management within their role as a lead practitioner in early learning. This should include an exploration of the difference between being a manager and being a leader in their own role. They should also evaluate their approach to ensuring that leadership roles, within their own setting, are dispersed through the staff team.

Higher National Unit Support Notes

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In Outcome 1 learners could interpret the ideas from contemporary research and what these ideas mean for their own practice as lead practitioners.

Current research could include research into:

♦   New techniques and discoveries in neuroscience
♦   The role that social and cultural experiences play in informing child development
♦   The dynamic process of interaction between mind and environment
♦   The community aspect which supports children social wellbeing
♦   Multiple and emotional intelligence
♦   Social and emotional development and how it relates to gender race and ethnicity
♦   Language development and how it can be supporting identity and diversity
♦   The optimum hours for children in daycare

The field of early learning has commonly expressed set of beliefs and values linked to contemporary research. Learners could define their views on such things as:

♦   The role of play
♦   The learning environment
♦   Active learning
♦   Scaffolding learning
♦   Holistic subjectivity
♦   Children's participation
♦   Provocations in learning

Learners could evaluate current practice to identify where this research is visible in their own settings and further identify where this contemporary research could be integrated into and improve their pedagogical practice.

The work of Gopnic, Karmiloff-Smith, Elfer, Goldschmeid and Selleck may be useful as might the work of the Scottish Government's 'Growing up in Scotland' research (GUS).

In Outcome 2 learners should demonstrate their familiarity with current policy and guidance, from both central and local government, which relates to our youngest children. They could also evaluate the impact of these factors on children, families and communities.

This guidance and policy should include amongst others:

♦   Early Years Framework
♦   Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)
♦   The National Care Standards (revised 2017)
♦   Child at the Centre
♦   How Good is our Early learning and Childcare
♦   Pre-birth to Three: supporting our youngest children
♦   Parents as Partners
♦   Building the Ambition: National Practice Guidance (2015)

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Local guidance and initiatives may include:

♦ Support for families facing challenging circumstances
♦ Partnership working with families and communities
♦ Levels of funding and resources available to under 3 provision

In Outcome 3, learners could identify a range of leadership and management styles to include recent research and the issues arising from it such as:

♦ Leadership as interactive and interpersonal engagement
♦ The introduction of female perspectives in leadership and management
♦ Leaderships as the function of a group and not an individual
♦ The value of the team process and collaboration which leads to dispersive leadership
♦ The effect of organisational culture on management and leadership
♦ The effect of the psychological environment which staff experience mentally and emotionally

Learners should be familiar with Scottish Social Services resources to promote the development of leadership within the workforce and Enhancing leadership capability: The strategy for enhancing the leadership capability of Scotland's social services: Delivery plan 2017-2020.

Learners should also explore their own definitions of management and leadership and evaluate their approach to management and leadership in their specialist roles in respect of:

♦ Co-ordination
♦ Direction
♦ Policy making
♦ Decision making
♦ Problem solving
♦ Communicating
♦ Motivating
♦ Evaluating
♦ Delegating

They could further evaluate their approach to authority and the six factors of authority: power, freedom, trust, rights, duties, planning and organising.

Learners may find the work of Susan Jeffers, Jillian Rodd and P Friere useful for this outcome.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Early Learning (SCQF level 9)

Guidance on approaches to delivery of this unit

As the unit is designed to be delivered to learners who are experienced in the industry, it is expected that those delivering will have the required experience and occupational competence at an appropriate level in order to guide the learner towards the relevant research and appropriate documents. It must be remembered that the learner is expected at this level, to have a broad knowledge and understanding of the scope, main areas and boundaries of the subject. Learners will further be required to undertake a critical evaluation of the research they have undertaken. It is again noted that not all theorists agree on some of the issues and that learners may be given credit for their work as long as any conclusions are supported by research and a well reasoned argument.

It may be possible to integrate some delivery and assessment task with the unit: *Leadership and Management Practice (Workplace Practice)*.

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.

Outcome 1 — the learner will be required to produce briefing paper (500 words) to support a piece of action research. The briefing paper should include two pieces of contemporary research into your practice. (250 words each)

Outcomes 2 and 3 — has an integrated assessment in which the learner will be required to deliver a presentation. The presentation should last up to 10 minutes and be followed by a further 5 minutes of questions from the audience. Learners will also be asked to produce written notes on their presentation.

The presentation will allow learners to show their knowledge of differing styles and skills required for managing early learning and how these are applied in their own practice. The presentation should be based upon your leadership and management of early learning, and should include learner's knowledge and understanding of two factors which may influence the early learning of children, for example, the role of the parent and a new initiative or policy.

Higher National Unit Support Notes (cont)

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Assessment guidelines

Outcome 1

Learners will be required to produce briefing paper (500 words) to support a piece of action research. The briefing paper should include two pieces of contemporary research into your practice of 250 words each.

Outcome 2

The assessment for Outcomes 2 and 3 are integrated. See assessment guidance for Outcome 3.

Outcome 3

Integrated assessment for Outcomes 2 and 3.

Learners will be required to deliver a presentation. The presentation should last up to 10 minutes and be followed by a further 5 minutes of questions from the audience. Learners will also be asked to produce written notes on their presentation.

The presentation will allow learners to show their knowledge of differing styles and skills required for managing early learning and how these are applied in their own practice. The presentation should be based upon your leadership and management of early learning, and should include learner's knowledge and understanding of two factors which may influence the early learning of children, for example, the role of the parent and a new initiative or policy.

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**.

Opportunities for developing Core and other essential 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.

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

History of changes to unit

Version	Description of change	Date
03	Minor revisions to the support notes. Unit updated into new template and formatted in line with latest house style.	26 March 2019
02	Revised due to legislation and regulation changes within Industry. Also clarification of assessment for centres	28 September 2017

General information for learners

Unit title: Childhood Practice: Early Learning (SCQF level 9)

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 a mandatory option within the SCQF level 9 Award — Childhood Practice. The unit may also be used as a freestanding unit if you are in relevant employment and wish to develop and/or enhance your skills as a form of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

This unit has been designed to allow you to analyse the leadership and management of contemporary ideas and research on cognition and language development and other factors that influence early learning. This unit will provide you with the opportunity to analyse and evaluate and the relationship to leadership and management of early learning services within the context of Childhood Practice.

On completion of the unit you should be able to:

1   Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of contemporary research and ideas of early learning.
2   Analyse and evaluate other factors that influence early learning.
3   Evaluate leadership and management perspectives of early learning.

For Outcome 1, you will be required to produce a briefing paper (500 words) to support a piece of action research. The briefing paper should include two pieces of contemporary research into your practice. (250 words each)

Outcomes 2 and 3 has an integrated assessment in which you will develop and deliver a presentation. The presentation should last up to 10 minutes and be followed by a further 5 minutes of questions from the audience. You will also be asked to produce written notes on their presentation of 1,000 words.

The presentation will allow you to show your knowledge of differing styles and skills required for managing early learning and how these are applied in your own practice. The presentation should be based upon your leadership and management of early learning, and should include your knowledge and understanding of two factors which may influence the early learning of children, for example, the role of the parent and a new initiative or policy.