

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT	Play in Early Education and Childcare
CODE	DM41 10
COURSE	National 4 Early Education and Childcare

SUMMARY

This is an introductory Unit which allows candidates to develop a basic understanding of a variety of types of play and how play contributes to the development of the child. It should allow candidates to explore a variety of play types and describe a range of play experiences within each type of play. The candidates should demonstrate an understanding of the appropriateness and value of play opportunities for the development of children aged 0–12 years. The candidates will have the opportunity for practical play experiences.

This Unit is a mandatory Unit in the National 4 Course *Early Education and Childcare*, but is also suitable for candidates wishing to study the Unit on its own. The Unit is suitable for candidates who may be considering employment in the early education and childcare sector and who wish to progress to further levels of study in early education and childcare.

OUTCOMES

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of types of play for children aged 0–12 years.
- 2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how play promotes the care, learning and development of children aged 0–12 years.
- 3 Working with others, plan play experiences for children aged 0–12 years.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

Entry is at the discretion of the centre. However, centres should note that this Unit is at Intermediate 1 which is equivalent to Standard Grade, General level.

Administrative Information

Superclass:	PQ
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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare

CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Intermediate 1 (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4*).

**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 is no automatic certification of Core Skills in this Unit.

Opportunities for developing aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in *Guidance on Learning and Teaching Approaches for this Unit*.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of types of play for children aged 0–12 years.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Identify a range of types of play for children aged 0–12 years.
- (b) Describe a range of play experiences from the specified play types which are appropriate to the age range of the children.
- (c) Observe a range of types of play for children aged 0–12 years.
- (d) Participate in a range of types of play for children aged 0–12 years.
- (e) Maintain a record of observations and experiences of play.

OUTCOME 2

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how play promotes the care, learning and development of children aged 0–12 years.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Describe how different types of play contribute to children's care.
- (b) Describe how different types of play contribute to children's learning.
- (c) Describe how different types of play contribute to children's development.

OUTCOME 3

Working with others, plan play experiences for children aged 0–12 years.

Performance Criteria

- (a) Contribute to a group plan for play experiences.
- (b) Produce a play plan which supports the care, learning and development of children.
- (c) Contribute to the group presentation of the plan in the format agreed by the group.
- (d) Review own contribution to group plan and group presentation in terms of strengths and areas for improvement.

National Unit Specification: statement of standards (cont)

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Written/oral evidence is required for this Unit to demonstrate that the candidate has achieved all of the Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

Candidates will undertake group and individual assignments, producing a folio of evidence which may include written, photographic or recorded oral material. The folio will include:

- ◆ a list of different types of play
- ◆ a description of a different play experience for each type of play listed in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards
- ◆ a log sheet of play experiences observed
- ◆ a log sheet of play experiences in which the candidate has participated
- ◆ a description of how at least two types of play contribute to a child's care, learning and development in at least two different age groups in the age range 0–12 years
- ◆ a group plan for play experiences which support the care, learning and development of children from one age group within the age range 0–12 years
- ◆ a record of contribution to the group presentation of the plan
- ◆ a review of own contribution to the group planning and group presentation and suggestions for improvement

The folio should be supported by an assessor observation checklist which confirms that the candidate has participated in allocated group roles and that the items in the folio are the candidate's own work. The evidence for the folio may be gathered at different points throughout the Unit.

The National Assessment Bank item (NAB) for this Unit provides details of the assignments, an assessor checklist, a log sheet template, candidate review sheet template *and a case study*. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare

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

The content of this Unit is designed to raise the candidate's awareness of the nature and value of play and how it contributes to a child's care, learning and development.

It is important to recognise that some candidates who wish to work with children, may not have had the benefit of a wide variety of play experiences themselves. The Unit therefore includes candidate observation of and participation in play experiences. These experiences will be supplemented by teaching/learning activities to establish appropriate types of play and play experiences for the age range. Teacher-led activities will increase the candidate's awareness and understanding of the impact of play on the child's care, learning and development.

When candidates have developed an understanding of the nature of play and its importance, they will then contribute to group planning of relevant play experiences for children. Groups will present finished plans to their peers and then review the effectiveness of the planning process.

The objectives of the Unit are that the candidates will:

- ◆ learn about play through experiencing it
- ◆ be able to describe play and how it might contribute to the child's development at a basic level
- ◆ in groups, plan simple play experiences from within the specified age range and different types of experiences
- ◆ present plans to their peers
- ◆ reflect on how their plan worked — what was good about it and what could have been improved

Employability Skills

In this Unit candidates will have the opportunity to be assessed for:

- ◆ presentation skills
- ◆ working co-operatively with others
- ◆ planning and preparation
- ◆ reviewing and evaluating own skills development
- ◆ time management skills
- ◆ maintaining tidy, organised and safe environment
- ◆ gathering, collating and evaluating information
- ◆ organisational skills

Through teaching and learning the Unit provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of:

- ◆ dressing appropriately for working with children
- ◆ demonstrating a responsible attitude in all aspects of working with children

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare

Outcome 1

Teacher/lecturer led activities should cover key aspects of knowledge and understanding about types of play and appropriate play experiences in the age range. In discussions and other teaching/learning activities, candidates should consider such questions as:

- ◆ what is play?
- ◆ why do children play?
- ◆ do all children play?
- ◆ is play good for children?

Candidates should be encouraged to consider their own childhood play experiences, and those of the group. They may also wish to consider their 'best play' experience and compare with others in the group. This should start to introduce the candidates to different types of play. Candidates could consider the different types of play and explore:

- ◆ what experiences do they like?
- ◆ what do they least like and why?
- ◆ what do others like and why?

Candidates should, for example, through workshop sessions or visits, observe and experience a variety of play types at first hand. The Appendix to the Statement of Standards states the mandatory types of play which **must** be covered. Other types of play may be included in addition. In the following list, there are suggested play experiences. Not all experiences should be covered and the list of experiences is not prescriptive.

Symbolic play

- ◆ play with toys
- ◆ junk modelling
- ◆ role play
- ◆ imaginative play
- ◆ dance and drama

Books and play which supports language enrichment

- ◆ reading stories
- ◆ sharing stories and making up stories
- ◆ making books with children
- ◆ imaginative play
- ◆ role play
- ◆ puppets
- ◆ story boards
- ◆ drama
- ◆ songs with actions
- ◆ poetry and rhymes
- ◆ traditional stories

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare

Creative play

- ◆ musical activities
- ◆ crafts
- ◆ construction
- ◆ drawing, painting, etc
- ◆ clay, dough, sculpting, etc
- ◆ movement and dance
- ◆ imaginative play and drama
- ◆ junk modelling
- ◆ sewing, weaving, tie-dye, t-shirt painting and textiles

Discovery play

- ◆ sensory play
- ◆ exploratory play
- ◆ water play
- ◆ sand play
- ◆ play using natural elements
- ◆ environmental activities
- ◆ ‘loose parts’ (*items that can be moved from place to place, carried, rolled, lifted, piled one on top of the other or combined to create new structures or experiences*)

Vigorous Play

- ◆ running, jumping, racing, chasing
- ◆ group games
- ◆ parachute games
- ◆ dance
- ◆ wheels — bikes, scooters, tricycles, go-karts, roller blades, skateboards, etc
- ◆ play with equipment — climbing frames, swings, slides, tunnels, etc
- ◆ outdoor activities
- ◆ adventure play
- ◆ circus skills
- ◆ earth balls, egg balls, etc
- ◆ soft play or bouncy castles, etc

Play with technology

- ◆ using real tools
- ◆ cooking, baking
- ◆ working with wood and tools
- ◆ scientific play
- ◆ taking things apart — clocks, radios, etc
- ◆ using computers
- ◆ using the internet
- ◆ audio/visual activities, ie making films, taking photographs, etc
- ◆ using CAD/games software

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare

Games

- ◆ physical games
- ◆ group games
- ◆ ball games
- ◆ team games
- ◆ board games
- ◆ dance and singing games
- ◆ traditional games
- ◆ sports

Outcome 2

Teacher/lecturer led activities should cover knowledge and understanding of how play supports the care, learning and development of the child, for each age group within the age range. Candidates should be able to identify the value of play and play types for children aged 0–12 years, in terms of their well-being, learning and development. Candidates should understand that children are the centre of play, and that children play for play's sake. They should understand that children play regardless of social or cultural backgrounds, individual needs, age or the resources available. Candidates should understand that while children learn and develop by playing, their motivation to play is because it is fun and enjoyable.

The candidate should be able to distinguish between types of play and to understand the value of different types of play. For example, the candidate should understand how physical play can be used to promote a child's emotional development; they should begin to recognise when a child needs a stimulus or indeed a quiet time.

Outcome 3

The content for this Outcome involves candidates working in groups to plan play, drawing on experiences and work done for the previous Outcomes. They will then present their play plans to the class group and review the planning process.

They should consider what needs to be done prior to the play experience, during the experience and after the experience. In planning play experiences candidates should consider:

- ◆ what is the play experience?
- ◆ what do we hope to achieve?
- ◆ will the child have fun?
- ◆ is it important to the child?
- ◆ what is the child learning?
- ◆ will the child learn anything new?
- ◆ what resources do we need? (human, physical and material resources)
- ◆ what will the role of the adult be?
- ◆ are there any policies we need to consider?
- ◆ how do we take into account the individual needs of children?

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare

If possible, they should be given the opportunity to carry out their plans, in a real or simulated context. As part of the group process candidates should, if possible, present their plans in an interactive way. They may choose to set up a play area and explain their plan. They may produce a pictorial plan of the area. The means of presentation should be agreed by the group.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

It would be appropriate to integrate Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 of this Unit, bringing theory and practice together. Teaching/learning approaches should include experiential learning where the candidate learns through carrying out practical activities and reflects on the experiences. Teacher-led activities should also be a feature at this level, in particular to establish knowledge and understanding. Candidates should be given opportunities for practical workshop sessions, covering all of the types of play mentioned in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards. Centres should organise the teaching/learning programme and resources to ensure that candidates experience a real or simulated play environment appropriate to the age range.

Candidates should have access to up-to-date topical periodicals and magazines and catalogues. Visits to, or visiting speakers from early education and childcare settings and libraries would be beneficial for candidates. When inviting speakers and arranging visits, candidates should be encouraged, under supervision, to write letters and make phone calls to arrange hospitality.

A variety of teaching/learning methods could be used throughout the Unit:

- ◆ small group discussion
- ◆ case studies
- ◆ individual and group research — paper-based and web-based reference material could be used
- ◆ outside speakers from early education and childcare settings
- ◆ video/audio material
- ◆ practical workshop sessions
- ◆ teacher/lecturer-led activities

By using a combination of these methods, candidates will appreciate:

- ◆ the information needed in order to plan
- ◆ the way in which the children respond to play experiences
- ◆ the need for adult intervention

In this Unit there are opportunities to build up an understanding of the challenges of working in an early education and childcare setting; of the need for careful planning of play experiences, the wide variety of different play activities and their importance to the child's development. Through observation, experience and reflection, the candidates will become more aware of the demands of working in the sector and the skills, qualities and knowledge-base required of prospective employees.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare

Core Skills

Opportunities for developing aspects of Core Skills should be incorporated where they arise naturally in the teaching and learning process. In this Unit, candidates will work with others to carry out a practical investigation into play. They will work co-operatively with others to plan and present play experiences to the class group. Opportunities for developing aspects of written and oral communication will arise during class discussions, group interactions and presentation of play plans.

GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT

The assessment for this Unit is laid out clearly in the Evidence Requirements section of the Statement of Standards of this Specification. The standard to be applied is exemplified in the National Assessment Bank item for this Unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this Unit, they should be of a comparable standard. Assessment should be carried out under supervision.

CANDIDATES WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. Further advice can be found in the SQA document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (www.sqa.org.uk).

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the Statement of Standards

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare

Mandatory list of play types:

- ◆ symbolic play
- ◆ books and play which supports language enrichment
- ◆ creative play
- ◆ discovery play
- ◆ vigorous play
- ◆ play with technology
- ◆ games

The age range for this Unit is 0–12 years, divided into the following age groups:

- ◆ 0–3 years
- ◆ 3–5 years
- ◆ 5–8 years
- ◆ 8–12 years