

Early Learning and Childcare National 4: Skills for Work Course Specification

(C782 74)

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Please refer to the note of changes at the end of this course specification for details of changes from previous version (where applicable).

Course outline

Course title: Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare
SCQF level 4

SCQF credit points: (24 SCQF credit points)

Course code: C782 74

Mandatory units

The course comprises the following mandatory units:

HX1L 74	Child Development	6 SCQF credit points
HX1R 74	Play in Early Learning and Childcare	6 SCQF credit points
HX1V 74	Working in Early Learning and Childcare	6 SCQF credit points

Optional units

(One must be selected)

The course comprises the following optional units:

HX1M 74	Contemporary Families	6 SCQF credit points
HX1K 74	Care of Children	6 SCQF credit points
HX1T 74	Maintenance of a Safe Environment for Children	6 SCQF credit points

Recommended entry

Entry to this course is at the discretion of the centre. However, learners would normally be expected to have attained the skills, knowledge and understanding required by the following or equivalent qualifications and/or experience:

Learners should be working at SCQF level 4 when undertaking these units, particularly in English or Communications.

In terms of prior learning and experience, relevant experiences and outcomes may also provide an appropriate basis for doing this course.

Progression

This course or its components may provide progression to

- ◆ Early Learning and Childcare course at National 5 (Skills for Work)
- ◆ Other courses and units at National 5 or SCQF level 5, for example GL2Y 45 *Playwork and Childcare* (SCQF level 5) — National Progression Award
- ◆ Further study, employment and/or training

Core Skills

Achievement of this course gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill — *Problem Solving*

Core Skill component(s) — Critical Thinking

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the support notes of the unit specifications for this course.

Unit code	Unit name	Embedded Core Skills/Core Skill components
HX1T 74	Maintenance of a Safe Environment for Children	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4
HX1V 74	Working in Early Learning and Childcare	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4
HX1M 74	Contemporary Families	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4
HX1R 74	Play in Early Learning and Childcare	Problem Solving at SCQF level 4
HX1K 74	Care of Children	Problem Solving at SCQF level 4
HX1L 74	Child Development	Problem Solving at SCQF level 4

Links to National Occupational Standards

National Occupational Standards (NOS) are developed by the key employment sectors of the United Kingdom. These standards set the competences required for job roles within a particular employment sector.

The National 4 Early Learning and Childcare course has been designed to link closely to the National Occupational Standards for Social Services: children and young people, and also for Playwork at SCQF 6.

The course can support a basic understanding of some of the underpinning knowledge that is required for the occupational standards and also experience of the practical skills required to work at this level in the sector. This is particularly evidenced in areas such as 'facilitating play for children, 'helping to keep children safe', 'supporting children's development and wellbeing' and 'reflecting on your own practice'.

Further details are provided in the rationale section.

Equality and inclusion

This course arrangements 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.

Common rationale for Skills for Work courses

Skills for Work courses are designed to help learners to develop:

- ◆ Skills and knowledge in a broad vocational area
- ◆ Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work
- ◆ Core Skills
- ◆ An understanding of the workplace
- ◆ Positive attitudes to learning
- ◆ Skills and attitudes for employability

A key feature of these courses is the emphasis on *experiential and reflective learning*. This means learning through practical experience and learning by reflecting on these experiences.

Learning through practical experience

Teaching/learning programmes should include some or all of the following:

- ◆ Learning in real or simulated workplace settings
- ◆ Learning through role play activities in vocational contexts
- ◆ Carrying out case study work
- ◆ Planning and carrying out practical tasks and assignments
- ◆ Engaging in practical play experiences
- ◆

Learning through reflecting at all stages of the experience

Teaching/learning programmes should include some or all of the following:

- ◆ Preparing and planning for the experience
- ◆ Taking stock throughout the experience, reviewing and adapting as necessary
- ◆ Reflecting after the activity has been completed, evaluating and identifying learning points
- ◆ Reflecting on own learning, understanding and skills

The Skills for Work Courses are also designed to provide learners with opportunities for developing *Core Skills*, and *Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* with a focus on enhancing skills and attitudes for employability.

Core Skills

The five Core Skills are:

- ◆ *Communication*
- ◆ *Numeracy*
- ◆ *Information and Communication Technology*
- ◆ *Problem Solving*
- ◆ *Working with Others*

Employability

The skills and attitudes for employability, including self-employment, are outlined below:

- ◆ Generic skills and attitudes valued by employers
- ◆ Understanding of the workplace and the employee's responsibilities, for example, time-keeping, appearance, customer care, etc
- ◆ Self-evaluation skills
- ◆ Positive attitude to learning
- ◆ Flexible approaches to solving problems
- ◆ Adaptability and positive attitude to change
- ◆ Confidence to set goals, reflect and learn from experience
- ◆ Specific vocational skills and knowledge
- ◆ Course specifications highlight the links to national occupational standards in the vocational area and identify progression opportunities

Opportunities for developing these skills and attitudes are highlighted in each of the course and unit specifications. These opportunities include giving learners direct access to workplace experiences or, through partnership arrangements, providing different learning environments and experiences which simulate aspects of the workplace. These experiences might include visits, visiting speakers, role play and other practical activities.

A Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive, 2004) identifies aspirations for every young person. These are that they should become:

- ◆ Successful learners
- ◆ Confident individuals
- ◆ Responsible citizens
- ◆ Effective contributors

The learning environments, the focus on experiential learning and the opportunities to develop employability, Skills for Learning, Skills for Life, Skills for Work and Core Skills in these courses contribute to meeting these aspirations.

Developing the Young Workforce (Scottish Government 2014) sets out a strategy for developing vocational skills for young people moving into the workforce.

Some of the aims are met by the design and delivery of Skills for Work courses:

- ◆ More schools will be delivering a broader range of qualifications for young people from S4–S6 in partnership with colleges and other providers
- ◆ School and college staff and other practitioners across Scotland will be supported to have a greater understanding of the world of work and routes into work to improve young people's learning
- ◆ More schools will offer a fuller range of vocational qualifications, in partnership with colleges and other training providers

Course rationale for Early Learning and Childcare National 4

All new and revised National Courses reflect Curriculum for Excellence values, purposes and principles. They offer flexibility, provide more time for learning, more focus on skills and applying learning, and scope for personalisation and choice.

In this course, and its component units, there will be an emphasis on skills development and the application of those skills. Assessment approaches will be proportionate, fit for purpose and will promote best practice, enabling learners to achieve the highest standards they can.

This Skills for Work Course is also designed to provide learners with opportunities for developing Core Skills and Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work, with a strong focus on enhancing skills and attitudes for employability.

Purposes and aims of the course

- ◆ Introduce learners to the factors which impact on the lives of children and their families
- ◆ Introduce learners to the rights of all children (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- ◆ Provide basic insight into working in early learning and childcare
- ◆ Introduce learners to the interrelationship between component units
- ◆ Introduce learners to the necessity of viewing all aspects of early learning and childcare holistically
- ◆ Enable learners to draw upon the experiences gained in the outcomes of the component Units to inform their understanding of what can be considered as effective early learning and childcare provision
- ◆ Introduce learners to the scope of the early learning and childcare sector
- ◆ Allow learners to develop key life skills
- ◆ Allow learners to develop communication skills by working in groups and with others in a variety of contexts
- ◆ Allow learners to develop investigative skills using a variety of research methods
- ◆ Allow learners to develop presentation skills
- ◆ Allow learners to develop self-evaluation skills
- ◆ Give learners confidence to set achievable goals
- ◆ Allow learners the opportunity to develop skills required for possible employment in the early learning and childcare sector, particularly personal/interpersonal, basic communication and practical skills
- ◆ Allow learners to develop skills required for employment in other sectors

Information about typical learners who might do the course

This course will form an important part of the menu of provision, both for those who have identified the field of early learning and childcare as their possible career path, and also for any learners following a programme of study at SCQF level 4 who may wish to extend their educational experience:

- ◆ Pupils from mainstream schools or other education establishments working at SCQF 4
- ◆ School leavers
- ◆ Adult returners to education
- ◆ Learners in employment who wish to enhance their career prospects
- ◆ Learners participating in 16+ programmes
- ◆ College students wishing to develop their skills and knowledge in relation to Early Learning and Childcare
- ◆ Individuals involved in voluntary activities

The knowledge and experiences acquired in the areas of child development, play for children and working in the early learning and childcare sector may be transferable to other academic or career pathways, particularly those that involve working with children in other care settings.

Course structure and conditions of award

Summary of course content

Units are statements of standards for assessment and not programmes of learning and teaching. They can be delivered in a variety of ways; however, Skills for Work units are designed to provide an experiential learning process.

This course consists of three mandatory units and a choice of one unit from a selection of optional units.

Although the content of each component unit does not presuppose knowledge and skills acquired in the other units, there are significant opportunities to integrate both knowledge and skills while studying the course. Whenever an opportunity to integrate knowledge and skills across the units arises, learners should be made aware of this and encouraged to maximise this potential.

Detailed guidance on opportunities for integration and development can be found in the guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment in this course specification.

Summary of unit content

Mandatory units (All three must be undertaken)

There are three mandatory units in the National 4 Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare course. The content of these units would support learners wishing to gain an insight into the stage from pre-birth to 12 years whilst in or seeking employment in the Early Learning and Childcare sector. These units would also support learners who wish to progress to further levels of study in Early Learning and Childcare and can be studied individually outwith the National 4 Course.

HX1L 74 Child Development (SCQF level 4)

This unit is designed to introduce learners to aspects of child development and the key milestones of development from pre-birth to 12 years. An investigation will build upon this knowledge through research of one particular aspect of child development. Presentation of these findings will be supported by an evaluation which will develop this skill as well as the skill of reflection.

A placement experience is not mandatory for the completion of this unit. Learners would however benefit from vocational visits to Early Learning and Childcare settings to gain a contextualised insight into child development.

Outcomes

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

- 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of child development.
- 2 Investigate aspects of child development.

HX1R 74 Play in Early Learning and Childcare (SCQF level 4)

This is an introductory unit which allows learners 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 learners to explore a variety of play types and describe a range of play experiences within different types of play. The learners should demonstrate an understanding of the appropriateness and value of play opportunities for the learning and development of children. The learners will have the opportunity to plan for practical play experiences.

Outcomes

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

- 1 Explain how play contributes to children's learning and development.
- 2 Explain the potential benefits of a planned play experience for children's learning and development.

HX1V 74 Working in Early Learning and Childcare (SCQF level 4)

This unit allows the learner to develop a basic understanding of different types of provision in the Early Learning and Childcare sector and to describe how the sector supports children and families. Learners will discuss some of the main skills and qualities required to work with children aged 0–12 years. There is no requirement for learners to have a placement within an Early Learning and Childcare setting, but the learner will investigate Early Learning and Childcare provision within an area identified by the learner. This may require the learner to visit workplace settings.

Outcomes

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

- 1 Describe provision in the Early Learning and Childcare sector.
- 2 Explain the employability skills and values required of professionals to work in Early Learning and Childcare.

Optional units (One must be selected)

These units are optional units in the Course Early Learning and Childcare (National 4) but are also suitable as stand-alone units. These units are suitable for learners who may be considering employment in the Early Learning and Childcare sector and who wish to progress to further levels of study in Early Learning and Childcare.

HX1M 74 Contemporary Families (SCQF level 4)

This unit is designed to give learners an awareness and understanding of the range of families in a modern society and the range of skills and values required to meet the needs of children. Learners will develop practical skills, and will engage in a range of learning experiences to secure their knowledge and understanding.

Outcomes

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

- 1 Investigate the term 'family'.
- 2 Investigate family skills and values required to meet the needs of children.
- 3 Review a demonstration of practical family skills.

HX1K 74 Care of Children (SCQF level 4)

This unit is designed to allow the learner to gain a basic understanding of how the needs of children can be met. Learners are required to plan, demonstrate and review caring skills that meet these needs. Learners are not required to have a work placement to complete this unit but would benefit from visiting Early Learning and Childcare settings.

Outcomes

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

- 1 Investigate ways in which the needs of children can be met.
- 2 Plan and carry out a demonstration of practical caring skills that would support the needs of children.
- 3 Review the planned demonstration of practical caring skills that would support the needs of children.

HX1T 74 Maintenance of a Safe Environment for Children (SCQF level 4)

This unit enables the learner to develop an awareness of the key aspects of current health and safety legislation related to an Early Learning and Childcare environment. It allows learners the opportunity to identify potential risks within settings and to demonstrate possible strategies for dealing with these. These strategies should give learners an awareness of their own responsibilities and the employer's responsibilities in maintaining a safe environment. There is no requirement for learners to have a placement to complete this unit but they may visit workplace settings or other appropriate settings.

Outcomes

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

- 1 Demonstrate an awareness of current health and safety legislation which relates to working in an Early Learning and Childcare environment.
- 2 Explain potential risks in an Early Learning and Childcare environment for children.
- 3 Explain the benefits of strategies for minimising risks in an Early Learning and Childcare environment.

In the guidance to approaches to delivery. Two of the bullet points suggest visiting early learning and childcare settings/visit to relevant settings ie creches, toy libraries, baby clinics.

Conditions of award

To achieve the award of **Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare National 4**, learners must achieve all the required units as outlined in the course outline. They will be assessed pass/fail within centres. Skills for Work courses are not graded.

Assessment

Assessment objectives

The assessment strategies used in this course will allow the learner to demonstrate competency in knowledge, skills and values required to be employed in the early learning and childcare sector. These include:

Knowledge and understanding of:

- ◆ The importance of the development of children
- ◆ The role of the adult in supporting and facilitating play for children
- ◆ The importance of play to the developing child
- ◆ The scope of the early learning and childcare sector
- ◆ The qualifications required to work in the early learning and childcare sector
- ◆ Develop and understanding of the Rights of the Child
- ◆ The basic care needs of children
- ◆ How to keep children safe
- ◆ The roles and responsibilities within contemporary families

Skills in:

- ◆ How to support play
- ◆ How to care for children
- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Working within a team
- ◆ Presentation of information
- ◆ Using a variety of research methods
- ◆ Self-evaluation and personal reflection
- ◆ Setting achievable goals through personal development planning

Values such as:

- ◆ Reliability
- ◆ Consistency
- ◆ Honesty
- ◆ Trust
- ◆ Confidentiality

Unit assessment

The assessment of the units in this course will be as follows:

For each of the units, evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all outcomes and performance criteria.

Evidence can be gathered in a range of ways which will assess learners' knowledge, understanding, and application across the learning outcomes and performance criteria.

Where learners have worked in a group, there should be evidence of their individual contribution.

Mandatory units: (all three must be undertaken)

HX1L 74 Child Development (SCQF level 4)

Outcome 1

Written and/or oral evidence is required for this outcome.

Evidence must show the learner has an understanding of the aspects of development and key milestones including:

- ◆ Physical
- ◆ Cognitive
- ◆ Linguistic
- ◆ Social and emotional

Outcome 2

Evidence of planning an investigation into one aspect of development must show the learner has a deeper understanding of their chosen aspect of development.

The evidence required is:

- ◆ A plan containing timescales of how the investigation will be carried out.
- ◆ A specified format for the presentation of the findings.
- ◆ Evidence of the sources of information.
- ◆ A description of the selected aspect of development and how this relates to each stage.
- ◆ A reflection on the whole task. Learners should reflect on the employability skills developed during this process of investigation and presentation.

The investigation will reflect an understanding of their chosen aspect of development throughout all stages.

Learners can choose to complete the investigation alone or in groups. When completed in groups, each learner will choose a different aspect to investigate and individual evidence must be generated.

HX1R 74 Play in Early Learning and Childcare (SCQF level 4)

Outcome 1

Learners must identify a minimum of five different types of play.

Learners must describe a play experience from three of the identified types of play and explain how these experiences contribute to children's learning and development.

Outcome 2

Learners must produce a play plan for one identified play experience and explain a minimum of three potential benefits for this type of play.

Evidence is required to demonstrate that learners have achieved all outcomes and performance criteria.

The types of play identified below must be incorporated as a minimum into evidence requirements for the unit.

- ◆ Symbolic play
- ◆ Books and play which supports language enrichment
- ◆ Creative play
- ◆ Discovery play
- ◆ Vigorous play
- ◆ Play with technology
- ◆ Games

The standard to be applied is exemplified in the assessment support pack for this unit. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

HX1V 74 Working in Early Learning and Childcare (SCQF level 4)

Outcomes 1 and 2:

The learner must provide evidence that they can describe and identify provision available in the Early Learning and Childcare sector and explain the skills and values required to work within Early Learning and Childcare.

Optional units: (one must be selected)

HX1M 74 Contemporary Families (SCQF level 4)

Written and/or oral evidence is required for these outcomes.

Outcome 1:

Evidence of a minimum of two family types are required and how they support children.

Outcome 2:

Evidence of a minimum of three family skills and/or values are required.

Outcome 3:

In addition to performance evidence which must be evidenced.

Evidence of a minimum of three practical family skills are required, in addition to a review of the skills demonstrated.

HX1K 74 Care of Children (SCQF level 4)

Outcome 1

Written and/or oral evidence is required for this outcome demonstrating that the learner has investigated the needs of children and can describe ways in which these needs can be met.

Outcome 2 and 3

Written and practical evidence is required for this outcome to cover:

- ◆ A plan of how to demonstrate three practical caring skills covering two of the following age groups:
 - 0–3 years
 - 3–5 years
 - 5–8 years
 - 8–12 years
- ◆ An assessor checklist covering the learner’s demonstration of three practical caring skills for two of the age groups specified.
- ◆ A review sheet relating to the demonstration of three practical caring skills that would support the needs of children.

HX1T 74 Maintenance of a Safe Environment for Children (SCQF level 4)

Outcome 1:

Learners should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the key aspects of current health and safety legislation in relation to employer/employee responsibilities.

Outcomes 2 and 3:

A minimum of two potential risks for both indoor and outdoor Early Learning and Childcare environments should be identified.

A minimum of two strategies and benefits for minimising risks in both indoor and outdoor Early Learning and Childcare environments should be identified with an explanation of the benefits of each.

Exemplification of possible assessment approaches for these units will be provided in the assessment support pack. If a centre wishes to design its own assessments for this unit, they should be of a comparable standard.

Quality assurance

All instruments of assessment used within this course should be internally verified, using the appropriate policy within the centre and the guidelines set by SQA.

External verification will be carried out by SQA to ensure that internal assessment is within the national guidelines for these qualifications.

Further information on internal and external verification can be found in *SQA’s Guide to Assessment* (www.sqa.org.uk/GuideToAssessment).

Development of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work

It is expected that learners will develop broad, generic skills through this Course. The skills that learners will be expected to improve on and develop through the Course are based on SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work* and drawn from the main skills areas listed below.

These must be built into the course where there are appropriate opportunities.

1 Literacy

This is the ability to communicate by reading, by writing, and by listening and talking.

1.1 Reading

Reading means the ability to understand and interpret ideas, opinions and information presented in texts, for a purpose and within a context. It includes handling information to make reasoned and informed decisions.

1.2 Writing

Writing means the ability to create texts which communicate ideas, opinions and information, to meet a purpose and within a context.

1.3 Listening and talking

Listening means the ability to understand and interpret ideas, opinions and information presented orally for a purpose and within a context, drawing on non-verbal communication as appropriate.

Talking means the ability to communicate orally ideas, opinions and information for a purpose and within a context.

3 Health and wellbeing

This is the ability to take care of yourself and others, and to be responsible for your learning and welfare. It includes managing your feelings, developing a positive and active attitude to life, and building relationships with others.

3.1 Personal learning

Personal learning means being actively engaged in learning and how it can be planned, sourced, implemented, and sustained. It also includes following-up on curiosity, thinking constructively, reflecting, and learning from experience.

3.2 Emotional wellbeing

Emotional wellbeing includes taking responsibility for yourself and being aware of the impact your behaviour may have on others; developing ways to manage your feelings; developing positive attitudes and resilience; practising assertive behaviours; building confidence; and, based on an understanding of any risks, making informed decisions.

3.4 Planning for, and making, choices and changes

This includes planning, making decisions and taking action based on achievements for the next stage in life then making a successful move to the next stage of education or work.

3.5 Relationships

This includes building various types of social and working relationships and practising interpersonal skills successfully, showing respect and a sense of care for self and others.

4 Employability, enterprise and citizenship

This is the ability to develop the skills, understandings and personal attributes — including a positive attitude to work, to others and to the world's resources.

4.1 Employability

Employability is the ability to gain employment by developing the personal qualities, skills, knowledge, understanding, and attitudes required in rapidly changing economic environments. It is the ability to maintain employment by making transitions between jobs and roles, and the ability to obtain new employment if, and when, required.

4.3 Working with others

Working with others means knowing and practising what is involved in working co-operatively and sensitively with others; having the ability to recognise need and opportunity; to influence and negotiate with others to take ideas forward; being adaptable and having a determination to succeed; being able to discuss, set and meet roles and expectations in a working environment; and accessing, providing and creating information.

5 Thinking skills

This is the ability to develop the cognitive skills of remembering and identifying, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating, and creating.

5.1 Remembering

Remembering is the ability to identify, recognise and recall facts, events and sequences.

5.2 Understanding

Understanding is the ability to demonstrate the meaning of items of information, to explain the order of events in a sequence, and to interpret in a different setting or context.

5.3 Applying

Applying is the ability to use existing information to solve a problem in a different context, and to plan, organise and complete a task.

Amplification of these skills is given in SQA's *Skills Framework: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work*. The level of these skills will be appropriate to the level of the course.

Employability skills profile

Employability skills covered in this course are detailed in the table below. For the purposes of the table, the units are referred to as A, B, C, D, E and F as indicated.

Child Development	=	A
Play in Early Learning and Childcare	=	B
Working in Early Learning and Childcare	=	C
Contemporary Families	=	D
Care of Children	=	E
Maintenance of a Safe Environment for Children	=	F

Employability skill/attitude	Evidence
◆ Working co-operatively with others	A, B, C, D, E, F
◆ Taking advice and accepting feedback	B, D
◆ Planning and preparation	A, B, C, D, E, F
◆ Reviewing and evaluating own skills development	A, B, C, D, E, F
◆ Presentation skills	A, B, C, D, E, F
◆ Time management skills	A, B, C, D, E, F
◆ Demonstrating a responsible attitude in all aspects of working with children	B, C, D, E, F
◆ Good communication skills	A, B, C, D, E, F
◆ Maintaining an organised and safe environment	C, E, F
◆ Health, safety and security awareness	C, E, F
◆ Gathering, collating and evaluating information	A, B, C, D, E, F
◆ Organisational skills	A, B, C, D, E, F
◆ Understanding roles and responsibilities	A, B, C, D, E, F
◆ Reflective practice	A, B, C, D, E, F

Assessment evidence in all units:

- A = Investigation evidence of investigation into aspects of child development
- B = Investigation evidence of play practice, planning and benefits for children
- C = Investigation evidence on early learning and childcare provision and skills and values required
- D = Investigation evidence into contemporary families and practical family skills
- E = Investigation evidence covering the care needs of children and practical caring skills
- F = Investigation evidence covering the risks and benefits for children within an early learning and childcare environment

Course support notes

Course support notes are not mandatory; they provide advice and guidance on approaches to delivering and assessing the Skills for Work course. They are intended for teachers and lecturers who are delivering the course and its units.

Guidance on approaches to delivery and assessment for this course

This course and its component units are at SCQF level 4. Teachers/lecturers should be aware of the content and structure of this level prior to delivering this course. This will give a clear indication of the level of content, assessment and delivery.

The methodology for this course is experiential and practical, with lecture style presentations kept to a minimum. Reflecting good practice within the early learning and childcare sector, the teaching approach should be learner-centred with learners being helped to draw on previous learning and their own experience.

Teachers/lecturers should be up-to-date with current developments in the early learning and childcare sector.

Sequencing/integration of units

To allow learners to maximise opportunities for the development of key knowledge, skills and values, the course units should be integrated. However, the preferred order for the delivery of the course units is a matter which individual centres must decide for themselves.

This may depend upon the number of staff members who are delivering the course and the organisation of individual timetables. However, it is strongly recommended that the unit *Child Development (National 4)* is studied at the beginning of the course followed by, or simultaneously with, the units *Play in Early Learning and Childcare* and the chosen unit from the optional section.

The unit *Working in Early Learning and Childcare* may be the unit which is split across delivery of the course to ensure that each section is delivered to coincide with learners' objectives, for example, when considering a career path and applying for further study.

The order and pattern of delivery may be dependent upon whether the learner has the opportunity for a work placement, this is not essential. Where two or more members of staff are delivering separate units, care must be taken to adopt a common approach when developing key knowledge, skills and particularly values. This will avoid confusion for learners and maximise opportunities to develop and refine these skills in the variety of contexts available.

Guidance on approaches to delivery

The teaching methodology for this course should be experiential and practical, with lecture style presentations kept to a minimum. Teachers/lecturers should ensure that learners have the opportunity to:

- ◆ Learn through practical experiences, achievable by learners through:
 - supporting and facilitating play and play spaces
 - observing children, in practice or through video
 - visiting early learning and childcare settings
 - inviting appropriate speakers
 - experiencing, in a simulated context, the responsibilities within families

- ◆ Learn through reflecting on all stages of the experience, achievable by learners through:
 - planning group investigation
 - planning personal investigation
 - reflecting on the group process
 - reviewing personal skills and qualities
 - producing a personal development plan

The focus of the course is one of investigation and presenting findings in a variety of ways. Learners should have access to a variety of research tools, which may include:

- ◆ the internet
- ◆ personal testimony
- ◆ using books, magazine and periodicals eg, Practical Parenting
- ◆ visits to relevant settings eg, crèches, toy libraries, baby clinics
- ◆ outside speakers: parents, community health practitioners, children
- ◆ interviews with parents and children

Where outside speakers and visits are arranged, learners should, where possible, take responsibility for this by making phone calls, arranging hospitality, thank you letters and follow-up actions. Learners should have the opportunity to be able to participate in workshop sessions, particularly related to the units *Play in Early Learning and Childcare*, and *Care of Children*. Learners should have access to play materials to enable them to set up realistic play spaces. Centres should consider purchasing realistic or interactive dolls.

When supporting learners in practical tasks, teachers/lecturers should ensure the health and safety of learners. Teachers/lecturers should ensure that appropriate permissions are sought if learners are visiting settings outwith the centre. This may have resourcing implications for centres but teaching sessions should not be wholly classroom/paper based.

Learners are not required to have a work placement to complete the course but they should have the opportunity to visit early learning and childcare settings and community resources that support families.

When visiting early learning and childcare settings learners should be encouraged to gather evidence and information for a variety of purposes and covering several units. This will allow learners to see the holistic nature of working in early learning and childcare eg, if visiting a nursery school, they could find out about the support offered to families, which could contribute towards the unit *Contemporary Families* (National 4). They could also find out about the career options within the sector which could contribute towards the unit *Working in Early Learning and Childcare*.

Guidance on approaches to assessment

To achieve the course award the learner must successfully achieve all of the units which make up the course.

Evidence can be generated for some or all of the outcomes using the following types of assessment, such as:

- ◆ Practical activity — real or simulated
- ◆ Peer assessment or group tasks
- ◆ Case study
- ◆ Leaflets, booklets and posters
- ◆ Mind maps and floor books
- ◆ Presentations
- ◆ Reflective journal
- ◆ Role play, drama, creative activity
- ◆ Practical simulation observation
- ◆ Short answer questions/multiple choice tests — digitally if available
- ◆ Digital evidence such as an e-portfolio, website, blog, wiki, video, digital platform
- ◆ SOLAR assessment

Evidence can be generated using many different types of assessment. These are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to learners and their needs. Evidence can be generated holistically across the outcomes or individually. There may also be opportunities for integration of assessment across units within the group award.

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.

Opportunities for e-assessment

There may be opportunities for the introduction of e-learning; e-assessment and information technology during the teaching and delivery of the award. The learning and assessments of the knowledge based outcomes can be conducted by either using e-learning methods, or by more formal techniques. For example, assessments may make the use of internet systems and facilities when available, or alternatively can also use the standard mode of supervising learners during classroom paper based assessments.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

HX1L 74 *Child Development* — this unit has the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* embedded in it, so when learners achieve this unit their Core Skills profile will be updated to show that they have achieved *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 4.

Opportunities for developing aspects of Core Skills should be incorporated where they arise naturally in the teaching and learning process. In this unit, learners will participate in group discussion to develop communication skills. Presentation skills will also be enhanced when the learner submits the findings from the investigation.

HX1R 74 *Play in Early Learning and Childcare* — this unit has the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* embedded in it, so when learners achieve this unit their Core Skills profile will be updated to show that they have achieved *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 4.

Opportunities for developing aspects of Core Skills should be incorporated where they arise naturally in the teaching and learning process. In this unit, learners 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.

HX1V 74 *Working in Early Learning and Childcare* — this unit has the Critical Thinking component of *Problem Solving* embedded in it. This means that when learners achieve the unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4.

Opportunities for developing aspects of Core Skills should be incorporated where they arise naturally in the teaching and learning process. In this unit, learners will be working co-operatively with others in carrying out a practical investigation into Early Learning and Childcare provision in evaluating provision. Problem solving will be a key element of the work as the learners will decide what information needs to be gathered. Opportunities for developing aspects of written and oral communication will arise during the practical investigation.

HX1M 74 *Contemporary Families* — This unit has the Critical Thinking component of *Problem Solving* embedded in it. This means that when learners achieve the unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4.

Opportunities for developing aspects of Core Skills should be incorporated where they arise naturally in the teaching and learning process. In this unit, learners will work co-operatively with others in carrying out group investigations into the support available to parents. Opportunities for developing aspects of written and oral communication will arise during class discussions, group interactions, the presentation of group findings and in reviewing their own contribution to the group work.

HX1K 74 *Care of Children* — this unit has the Core Skill of *Problem Solving* embedded in it, so when learners achieve this unit their Core Skills profile will be updated to show that they have achieved *Problem Solving* at SCQF level 4.

Opportunities for developing aspects of Core Skills should be incorporated where they arise naturally in the teaching and learning process. In this unit, learners will be working co-operatively with others in carrying out a practical investigation into the caring skills needed to work as an Early Learning and Childcare professional. *Problem Solving* will be a key element of the work as the learners will decide what information needs to be gathered.

HX1T 74 *Maintenance of a Safe Environment for Children* — this unit has the Critical Thinking component of *Problem Solving* embedded in it. This means that when learners achieve the unit, their Core Skills profile will also be updated to show they have achieved Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4.

When planning, discussing and participating in group activities, learners will have opportunities to work co-operatively with others. Aspects of oral and written communication could be developed in group discussions and group planning in completing reports.

General information for learners

The National 4 Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare is an entry level qualification for those who wish to work with children in an early learning and childcare setting. It is suitable for a wide range of learners, including:

- ◆ Pupils from mainstream schools or other education establishments working at SCQF 4
- ◆ School leavers
- ◆ Adult returners to education
- ◆ Learners in employment who wish to enhance their career prospects
- ◆ Learners participating in 16+ programmes
- ◆ College students wishing to develop their skills and knowledge in relation to Early Learning and Childcare
- ◆ Individuals involved in voluntary activities

This Skills for Work course has been designed to provide you with opportunities for developing Core Skills, and Skills for Learning, Skills for Life and Skills for Work with a focus on enhancing skills and attitudes for employability.

The Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare National 4 course supports you to gain knowledge, skills and values that will help you to support and facilitate play and contribute to the development of children in personal and professional contexts.

The Skills for Work: Early Learning and Childcare National 4 course provides you with knowledge, skills and values related to development, play and care of children.

The course carries 24 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 4. You must achieve the three mandatory units and one optional unit to gain the course.

Mandatory units

The course comprises the following mandatory units:

HX1L 74	Child Development	6 SCQF credit points
HX1R 74	Play in Early Learning and Childcare	6 SCQF credit points
HX1V 74	Working in Early Learning and Childcare	6 SCQF credit points

Optional units (one must be selected)

The course comprises the following optional units:

HX1M 74	Contemporary Families	6 SCQF credit points
HX1K 74	Care of Children	6 SCQF credit points
HX1T 74	Maintenance of a Safe Environment for Children	6 SCQF credit points

All of these units contain knowledge, skills and values which are key areas of learning and practice for working with children. This is a practical-based qualification, with opportunities to develop your own knowledge, skills and values.

You will generate evidence for some or all of the outcomes using the following types of assessment:

- ◆ Practical activity — real or simulated
- ◆ Peer assessment or group tasks
- ◆ Case study
- ◆ Leaflets, booklets and posters
- ◆ Mind maps and floor books
- ◆ Presentations
- ◆ Reflective journal
- ◆ Role play, drama, creative activity
- ◆ Practical simulation observation
- ◆ Short answer questions/multiple choice tests — digitally if available
- ◆ Digital evidence such as an e-portfolio, website, blog, wiki, video, digital platform
- ◆ SOLAR assessment

Evidence can be generated using many different types of assessment. These are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable to you and your needs. Evidence can be generated holistically across the outcomes or individually. There may also be opportunities for integration of assessment across units within the course.

You will consider your personal values, your knowledge and skills in relation to early learning and childcare, and develop your employability skills. These knowledge, skills and values are required for progression to further academic qualifications or moving into apprenticeships, training or employment.

Achievement of this course gives automatic certification of the following:

Complete Core Skill — *Problem Solving*

Core Skill component(s) — Critical Thinking

Unit code	Unit name	Embedded Core Skills/Core Skill components
HX1T 74	Maintenance of a Safe Environment for Children	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4
HX1V 74	Working in Early Learning and Childcare	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4
HX1M 74	Contemporary Families	Critical Thinking at SCQF level 4
HX1R 74	Play in Early Learning and Childcare	Problem Solving at SCQF level 4
HX1K 74	Care of Children	Problem Solving at SCQF level 4
HX1L 74	Child Development	Problem Solving at SCQF level 4

There are also opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills which are highlighted in the support notes of the unit specifications for this course.

Administrative information

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History of changes to National Course specification

Course details	Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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Note: You are advised to check SQA's website (www.sqa.org.uk) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of the Course Specification.

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