

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

CODE DM41 12

COURSE Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

SUMMARY

This Unit requires the candidate to have knowledge and understanding of how play supports the process of child development in a childcare and education setting. Candidates should be able to demonstrate an understanding of how the play environment affects children's play experiences and they should be able to explain how play benefits the developing child aged 0-12 years. They should demonstrate an understanding of the role the adult takes in supporting the organisation and processes of children's play in an early education and childcare setting.

This Unit is a mandatory Unit in the National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare and also a mandatory Unit in the Course: Play in Early Education and Childcare. It is also suitable for candidates wishing to study the Unit on its own. The Unit is suitable for candidates who wish to gain employment, or may already be employed, in the childcare and education sector support working under supervision or to progress onto higher level early education and childcare qualifications.

OUTCOMES

1. Analyse a play environment in an early education and childcare setting.
2. Evaluate the importance of play to the developing child.
3. Explain how you would set up different types of play in an early education and childcare setting.

Administrative Information

Superclass: GA

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National Unit Specification: general information (cont)

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CREDIT VALUE

1 credit at Higher (6 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 6*)

**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 or Core Skills components in this Unit.

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 the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

OUTCOME 1

Analyse a play environment in an early education and childcare setting.

Performance Criteria

- a) Describe factors which are important in creating a play environment.
- b) Explain ways in which the adult can effectively support the creation of a play environment.
- c) Analyse ways in which a play environment can affect children's play.

OUTCOME 2

Evaluate the importance of play to the developing child.

Performance Criteria

- a) Describe a range of different types of play.
- b) Explain how play can support a child's development.
- c) Evaluate the importance of the role adults take in supporting different types of play.

OUTCOME 3

Explain how you would set up different types of play in an early education and childcare setting.

Performance Criteria

- a) Explain how different play experiences can be adapted to meet the needs of the child.
- b) Explain why effective preparation is important in supporting different play experiences.
- c) Explain ways in which the adult would ensure the child is involved in setting up play experiences.

EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS UNIT

Written and/or recorded oral evidence is required to demonstrate that the candidate has achieved all Outcomes and Performance Criteria.

The evidence for this Unit should be obtained under controlled, supervised conditions and should last no more than one hour. A single question paper with both extended and restricted response questions, such as one that is illustrated in the National Assessment Bank item for this Unit, could be used. This single question paper should be administered on the completion of the Unit. Achievement can be decided by the use of a cut off score.

Specific Advice:

- Outcome 1 pc (a): Candidates should describe **three** factors which are important in creating a play environment.
- Outcome 2 pc (a): Candidates should give examples of at least **three** different types of play.
- Outcome 3: Candidates should give examples of at least **three** different types of play.

National Unit Specification: support notes

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

This part of the Unit Specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory. While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

Outcome 1

PC (a): Candidates should have the opportunity to learn about and discuss factors which are important in creating the environment for play in a variety of early education and childcare settings. These factors will include:

- ◆ Different types of areas of play environment (including outdoor play areas). These may include areas for creativity; areas for quiet reflection; areas which encourage reading and language enrichment; areas which allow children to experiment and explore. Candidates should be encouraged to add to this list.
- ◆ How children and adults move from one area to another without disrupting other children's play or concentration.
- ◆ Possible hazards.
- ◆ Possible log jams.
- ◆ Need for quiet in some areas.
- ◆ Need for space in some play areas.
- ◆ How the organisation of the environment allows children's play to flow.
- ◆ The visual impact of the play environment.
- ◆ How play materials need to be well looked after and maintained.
- ◆ Ensuring visual levels are appropriate for the children.

PC (b): Candidates should have opportunities to discuss and investigate which factors enable the adult to create a play environment for children. Candidates and lecturers should expand this list to take into account a variety of childcare settings. The factors may include:

- ◆ Good teamwork.
- ◆ Good communications skills.
- ◆ How planning is important and how they as support workers would be involved in the process.
- ◆ How you set up, tidy away and replenish.
- ◆ How adults could involve children in the process.
- ◆ The need for organisation, appropriate storage and labelling of equipment boxes.
- ◆ Devices which will help children, such as clear guidance on where to tidy away resources

PC (c): Candidates should analyse the way play environments affect children's play by examining the factors described above and looking at the ways that they can support the child development. They may also wish to look at the negative impact that certain factors may have on children's play.

Outcome 2

PC (a): The different types of play to be covered in this Unit are listed within the mandatory context in the Appendix to the Statement of Standards. Teachers/lecturers are free to choose other types of play in addition to this list.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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PC (b): Candidates should explore how different models of play are favoured at different developmental stages, e.g. playing alone, playing alongside others and playing together and the significance of that to the child. They should also be given the chance to consider how play can support the child's overall development i.e. cognitive, physical, emotional social and linguistic by considering what is meant by age appropriate play. Candidates should give due consideration to children who may have additional support needs and whose play may not be age appropriate. Candidates should be encouraged to draw on their knowledge and understanding of child development when considering this aspect of the Unit.

PC (c) Candidates should evaluate the importance of the role of the adult in supporting play opportunities, taking into account:

- ◆ the child's age
- ◆ the developmental appropriateness of the play
- ◆ the child's preferred play
- ◆ the play setting.

They should be aware of how the adult can extend the potential of play by sensitively intervening where appropriate or standing back from the play to allow children to take the play forward. It is important that candidates are aware of the role adults take in developing play by considering the following:

- ◆ How they will support the child in making choices
- ◆ How they will provide an environment in which play can thrive
- ◆ How they will enable the child to develop resilience in their play without endangering him/her
- ◆ How they will ensure equality of provision and opportunity for all children
- ◆ How they will engage with other colleagues in the planning and observation process.

Outcome 3

PC (a): Candidates should show how adults can take different types of play and adapt it to meet the varying needs of children. Examples of this would be:

- ◆ Mixing a variety of different types of paint
- ◆ Understanding the potential of different types of brushes, rollers and other print making materials
- ◆ Showing how they would use "found materials" effectively with children
- ◆ Making boxes which contain a variety of different materials e.g. "Topic" boxes, boxes with dressing up materials, Seasonal or Occasions boxes and "Treasure" boxes
- ◆ Setting up a reading corner and a quiet area
- ◆ Understanding the value of display and appropriate lettering or signage
- ◆ Developing areas for cooking, baking and making snacks
- ◆ Using materials creatively, e.g. making music, making puppet theatres, discovery materials
- ◆ Showing how sand, water and similar materials can be altered and adapted
- ◆ Developing the outdoors
- ◆ Adapting materials or areas to develop enquiry and curiosity
- ◆ Considering which play materials best support sharing, turn taking and citizenship.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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PC (b): Candidates need to consider the role of effective preparation in supporting play experiences for children. This will include an understanding of the role they and other adults play in developing useful resources for the children. They should be aware that effective preparation is not only about preparing materials but that it is also about effectively working with others to ensure the smooth running of the setting. Therefore, candidates should know about:

- ◆ The need to communicate ideas
- ◆ Discuss plans
- ◆ Maintain and develop materials
- ◆ The need to be vigilant about health and safety.

In showing an awareness of the above processes, candidates should also know how the play which is provided is linked to the care, learning and development of the child and how they will ensure continuity and progression in play. An example of this would be that candidates are aware of when children have mastered specific skills, e.g. riding a bicycle and are ready for the next challenge – using Road Signs to negotiate a track.

PC(c): Candidates should understand their role in enabling the child to make choices about his/her preferred play. They should consider the child as an active agent who is entitled to make decisions about how the play might be adapted and should show consistency and fairness in embracing the child's ideas. The candidate needs to be aware of the practical implications of offering choices to children and discuss how conflicts with children over play options would be resolved. They should also be aware that they may have to support the child in making choices and in ensuring that all children regardless of race, ability or gender have equal opportunity to play experiences. They should finally, but importantly understand the process of active listening to ensure they listen to children.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

In delivering this Unit there should be a balance between teacher/lecturer presentation and candidate-centred learning. The suggested approach to learning and teaching in this Unit is by use of practical workshops where possible. It is important that candidates not only understand the concepts which are identified in this Unit but that they can apply them practically as well.

Case studies which exemplify some of the issues identified in the Unit should be used to support practical workshops and it is suggested that commercially produced videos, particularly those from Learning and Teaching Scotland might be an appropriate way of showing the candidates different play based scenarios. Question and answer sheets could be used to support the use of video materials.

Candidates may also be encouraged to keep a log book of practical ideas which will serve as a useful reference tool in their professional life. This log book might include sections on some of the more practical skills of making dough and paint, possible floor plans for a play setting, general ideas or examples of creative ideas such as music making, or mask making. It might also be adapted to include books, stories, poetry and songs they have used with children. Candidates should be encouraged to use ICT throughout this Unit.

National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

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Other methods that could be used could include:

- ◆ Small group exercises
- ◆ Individual research, including the use of appropriate websites
- ◆ Visiting speakers
- ◆ Visits to early education and childcare settings
- ◆ Reading list and access to reference material
- ◆ Use of text books, periodicals and journals.

This Unit can be delivered in a flexible manner, i.e as distance learning.

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 always be carried out under supervision. Assessment time allocated for this Unit should not exceed 1 hour.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Course Specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. 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. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on assessment for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Need* (SQA, 2004).

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the statement of standards

UNIT Play in Early Education and Childcare (Higher)

Outcome 2 PC (a): Candidates should have opportunities to investigate different types of play which children engage in and why this variety of play is important to children. These will include:

- ◆ Symbolic Play
- ◆ Creative Play
- ◆ Discovery Play
- ◆ Vigorous Play
- ◆ Play with Technology
- ◆ Books and play which support language enrichment
- ◆ Games.