

National Unit Specification: general information

UNIT Supporting Playwork Practice (Higher)

CODE DM68 12

COURSE

SUMMARY

This Unit is intended to introduce candidates to current playwork practice. It should allow candidates to explore the value base for playwork, identify quality playwork practice and investigate the role of the adult in playwork practice. It should allow candidates to develop knowledge and understanding of professionalism in the playwork field and to explore the benefits and value of playwork for children, aged three to twelve years.

This Unit is an optional Unit in the *National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare (Higher)* but 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 be employed, in the early education and childcare sector working under supervision or to progress onto higher level early education and childcare qualifications.

OUTCOMES

1. Evaluate the underpinning values of playwork practice and provision.
2. Evaluate the role of the adult within a playwork context.
3. Evaluate the benefits of quality playwork practice for children, aged three to twelve years.

RECOMMENDED ENTRY

While entry is at the discretion of the centre there are a variety of prior learning experiences which are relevant to candidates wishing to undertake this Unit.

However, candidates would also normally benefit they had some knowledge and understanding of child development within the age range three to twelve years and an understanding of the basic principles of play.

Administrative Information

Superclass: GA

Publication date: August 2005

Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

Version: 01

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They may also benefit from having attained one of the following, or equivalent:

- ◆ Standard Grade at Credit level in any relevant subject
- ◆ A Course or Unit in Care at Intermediate 2
- ◆ Courses or Units in any relevant subject at Intermediate 2
- ◆ Scottish Group Award at Intermediate 2
- ◆ SVQ or SVQ Units at level 2 in a related subject.

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

Evaluate the underpinning values of playwork practice and provision.

Performance Criteria

- a) Investigate current quality playwork practice and provision.
- b) Describe the value base that underpins playwork practice in relation to current legislation, policy and national care standards.
- c) Evaluate the impact of this value base on playwork practice and provision.

OUTCOME 2

Evaluate the role of the adult within a playwork context.

Performance Criteria

- a) Explain the role of the adult as ‘facilitator of play’.
- b) Explain the adult’s role in supporting play spaces and play opportunities.
- c) Explain the adult’s role in supporting playwork values in a play setting.
- d) Assess the importance of the role of the adult in a playwork context.

OUTCOME 3

Evaluate the benefits of quality playwork practice for children, aged three to twelve years.

Performance Criteria

- a) Explain the benefits of quality playwork practice for a child’s emotional and social well-being and personal identity.
- b) Explain the benefits of quality playwork practice for a child’s cognitive and language development.
- c) Explain the benefit of play spaces for a child’s physical well-being.
- d) Describe the negative factors associated with lack of play for children, aged three to twelve years.
- e) Assess the importance of quality playwork practice.

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 based on a case study with associated extended and restricted response questions, such as illustrated in the National Assessment Bank item for this Unit, could be used. This should be taken on the completion of the Unit. Achievement can be decided by the use of a cut off score.

National Unit Specification: support notes

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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

Candidates will need to know about:

- ◆ current values of playwork practice
- ◆ current and relevant legislation, for example, Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- ◆ charters, national policies and quality standards, for example, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the National Care Standards, The New Charter for Children's Play, Skills Active Playwork Standards.

Candidates should have the opportunity to explore the value base for playwork practice that underpins working with children, three to twelve years. They should be helped to identify and understand that:

- ◆ All children have the right to play and that play is essential for a child's well-being.
- ◆ The child is at the centre of all playwork practice.
- ◆ Playwork should empower children and support their needs, rights and views.
- ◆ Children have the right to make choices in play and that these should be supported by the adult.
- ◆ Individuality, differences and diversity should be valued and celebrated.
- ◆ Equality of opportunity and anti discriminatory practice must be promoted.
- ◆ Teamwork is essential in supporting quality playwork practice.
- ◆ Play involves exploration, risk and challenge.
- ◆ The health and safety of the child must be paramount in any playwork practice.
- ◆ Confidentiality and agreements about confidential information are respected, unless a child's well-being is at stake.
- ◆ Partnership with parents/carers, colleagues and other professionals should be fostered.
- ◆ Reflecting on, evaluating and improving practice are essential for maintaining quality playwork provision.

Candidates should be given opportunities to explore what this value base means in practice. Candidates should be encouraged to reflect on their own values as they learn about the values that underpin work with children, aged three to twelve years.

Outcome 2

For Outcome 2 candidates need to be assisted in developing their understanding of the role of the adult as 'facilitator of play'. This should include discussions on the role of the adult in providing and supporting children's play choices; allowing the child to direct their own play; and develop an understanding that children have an innate desire to play, regardless of adult support.

Candidates should be encouraged to view the adult as an observer of a child's play, have an awareness of children's play cues, and then use this understanding as a means of supporting and facilitating the development of play.

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Candidates should also develop an understanding that the adult has a choice to intervene or not intervene in a child's play and that this can have positive or negative impacts on that play frame. The adult must be sensitive to the children, their play and their play cues, in order to positively support and facilitate quality play.

The candidates should consider the adult role in supporting play spaces and play opportunities. This means that the candidates must be given opportunities to explore different types of playwork settings, consider the play practice in each, and the value of each in meeting children's play needs, i.e. mobile play, open access play provision, adventure playgrounds, out of school care.

Candidates must be given the opportunity to identify 'play spaces' that meet children's play needs, i.e. open spaces, dens, dressing up areas, climbing frames, trees. Candidates should consider the wide variety of play opportunities that should be available to children, i.e. physical play, environmental play, creative play, cultural play, imaginative play, challenging play, exploratory play. They should be supported to identify quality playwork practice and play spaces, which are stimulating and challenging and enabling environments for children.

Candidates need to consider the current policies and procedures of these playwork settings and play spaces, and understand that Playworkers always work within the boundaries to ensure the safety and well-being of the children, whilst encouraging and facilitating positive play experiences.

Candidates should be encouraged to explore the modelling of the adult by children, and that they should be a positive role model. Children absorb attitudes and values from the people, experiences and situations that they come into contact with. Candidates should consider that how they relate to and show respect for children, will influence how children treat and relate to others. Candidates should consider the importance and impact of respecting the rights of the child, valuing and celebrating diversity and upholding the other values of playwork.

In all of these explorations of play and playwork, the candidates should consider the need for the adult to continually work within the playwork value base in order to support the child and facilitate their play.

Outcome 3

For Outcome 3, candidates need to identify the benefits to children, aged three to twelve years, of quality playwork practice. They should have an understanding of developmental factors affecting children aged three to twelve, and how these factors can support, positively or negatively, a child's progress.

Candidates need to explore the positive impact on a child's confidence and self-esteem of playwork. Playwork should allow children to try out new experiences and develop skills in a manner that meets their individual needs. These challenges should support and develop self confidence and their sense of self esteem and self worth. This requires sensitive handling on the part of the adult to identify play cues and be aware of each individual child. This should allow each child to extend their play experience at their own pace and in their own way through their own positive choices.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to explore the benefits of playwork for a child's social and emotional well-being and on their developing sense of self identity. Children, between three and twelve years, move through many stages in their growth and development; including starting school,

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pre-adolescence and moving into puberty. Children depend less on adults and the importance of their peer group grows. Candidates need to identify the value of playwork in supporting a child through these stages and of helping their growing sense of self, and of allowing the child to explore their personal identity, and their developing sense of morality, values and beliefs.

Candidates should start to understand the ‘therapeutic’ nature of playwork, in that it allows children to explore and express their feelings through play, and in allowing the child to develop understanding of the world around them and of their own experiences.

Candidates should identify the benefits of quality playwork practice for a child’s cognitive and language development. In a quality playwork environment, children will be encouraged to make positive choices in play, set their own goals and targets, be involved in discussions with their peer group, solve problems, work as part of a team, agree rules, rise to challenges, and develop thinking skills. The candidates should be able to identify the positive benefits of this provision for cognitive and language development.

Candidates should be able to explain the benefit of play spaces for a child’s physical well-being. There should be opportunities for children to take part in physical activity during play. This has many benefits for the development of muscles, coordination, growth, and confidence in physical abilities, improvements in skills, among others. They should be given the opportunity to identify long term benefits of an active childhood for good health in adult life.

Candidates should consider the problems associated with lack of play for children, aged three to twelve years. They should have a general understanding of the lack of social skills, including the impact of an inactive childhood on health and well-being, the emotional immaturity that might develop, and the sense of isolation. (Any negative factors should be identified at the same time as considering positive benefits and not as a separate activity.)

Candidates should offer a clear definition of quality playwork practice, i.e play that is defined by the child’s and not the adults’ experience.

The candidates should consider that the child is at the centre of the playwork process and that there are many positive outcomes for children from the playwork process. These extend into all areas of the child’s life and experience, and support their emotional well-being; their impact on the environments surrounding them; their sense of self identity and their place in the world; and in their ability to cope and adapt (evolve) to the many changes and challenges they face in their life.

GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

This Unit is included in the framework of the *National Certificate Group Award: Early Education and Childcare (Higher)*. It is recommended that it should be delivered within the context of this qualification and be integrated with the Unit, *Supporting Playwork Practice: Workplace Experience*. These Units can be delivered together, to support the process of continuous professional development of those working under supervision across the early education and childcare workforce.

In delivering this Unit, there should be a balance between tutor/lecturer led delivery and candidate centred research. Where possible, candidates should be given opportunities for practical workshop sessions. It is not necessary for candidates to have work or placement experience to achieve this

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Unit, but this would be desirable. Where candidates have experience of playwork practice within an early education and childcare setting, they should be encouraged to reflect on their own practice and the practice of others. Candidates should have access to relevant documentation and guidelines, as well as up-to-date topical periodicals and magazines.

Outcome 1, 2 and 3 can be explored using a variety of methods:

- ◆ Small group discussion
- ◆ Case studies
- ◆ Individual research, candidates should be encouraged to use both paper based and web based reference material
- ◆ Examination of relevant curricular documentation and guidelines
- ◆ Outside speakers from child care settings
- ◆ Video/audio material
- ◆ Practical workshop sessions.

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 and should not exceed 1 hour.

CANDIDATES WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

This Unit 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 document *Guidance on Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Disabilities and/or Additional Support Needs* (SQA, 2004).

National Unit Specification: Appendix to the Statement of Standards

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Types of Play Opportunities:

physical play; environmental play; creative play; cultural play; imaginative play.

ASSUMPTIONS

The first assumption is that:

Children's play is freely chosen, personally directed behaviour, motivated from within. Through play, the child explores the world and his/her relationship with it, elaborating all the while a flexible range of responses to the challenges he/she encounters. By playing, the child learns and develops as an individual.

The second assumption is that:

Whereas children may play without encouragement or help, adults can, through the provision of an appropriate human and physical environment, significantly enhance opportunities for the child to play creatively and thus develop through play. In this way the competent playworker always aims to provide opportunities for the individual child to achieve her or his full potential while being careful not to control the child's direction or choice.

PLAYWORK VALUES

1. *Child-centred process*

The child must be at the centre of the process. The opportunities provided and the organisation which supports, co-ordinates and manages these should always start with the child's needs and offer sufficient flexibility to meet these.

2. *Empowerment*

Play should empower children, affirm and support their right to make choices, to discover their own solutions, to play and develop at their own pace and in their own way.

3. *Not controlled by adults*

Whereas play may sometimes be enriched by the Playworker's participation, adults should always be sensitive to children's needs and never try to control a child's play so long as it remains within safe and acceptable boundaries.

4. *Stimulation and challenge*

Every child has a right to a play environment which stimulates and provides opportunities for risk, challenge and the growth of confidence and self-esteem.

5. *The right to play safely*

The contemporary environment in which many children grow up does not lend itself to safe and creative play; all children have the right to a play opportunity which is free from hazard, one which ensures physical and personal safety, a setting within which the child ultimately feels physically and personally safe.

6. *Individual respect*

Every child is an individual and has the right to be respected as such; each child should feel confident that individuality and diversity are valued by the adults who work and play with them.

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7. *Care and consideration*

A considerate and caring attitude to individual children and their families is essential to competent playwork and should be displayed at all times.

8. *Equal opportunity*

Prejudice against people with disabilities or who suffer social and economic disadvantage, racism and sexism have no place in the environment which seeks to enhance development through play. Adults involved in play should always promote equality of opportunity and access for all children, and seek to develop anti-discriminatory practice and positive attitudes to those who are disadvantaged.

9. *Extending experience*

Play should offer the child opportunities to extend her or his exploration and understanding of the wider world and therefore physical, social and cultural settings beyond their immediate experience.

10. *Co-operation*

Play is essentially a co-operative activity for children both individually and in groups. Playworkers should always encourage children to be sensitive to the needs of others; in providing play opportunities, they should always seek to work together with children, their parents, colleagues and other professionals and, where possible, make their own expertise available to the wider community.

11. *The legislative framework*

Play opportunities should always be provided within the current legislative framework relevant to children's rights, health, safety and well-being.

12. *An accessible environment*

Every child has a right to an environment for play, and such environments must be accessible to children.

The Ten Newcastle Points

That quality play experiences will help children to:

1. think for themselves and make their own decisions
2. develop their mental and physical abilities and confidence in them
3. develop an empathy for others
4. develop a set of values that bring benefits to themselves and others
5. test out strategies for survival and development without the stigma of failure
6. resolve the contradictions and inconsistencies that arise as their experience develops
7. be able to communicate their needs, beliefs and desires more clearly
8. have an understanding of the life process as part of the context of their own identity
9. develop an understanding of the interrelationship of everything with everything else
10. question the relevance, truth, reasons, justice and values behind all information.