



Course report 2025

Higher Childcare and Development

This report provides information on candidates' performance. Teachers, lecturers and assessors may find it useful when preparing candidates for future assessment. The report is intended to be constructive and informative, and to promote better understanding. You should read the report with the published assessment documents and marking instructions.

We compiled the statistics in this report before we completed the 2025 appeals process.

Grade boundary and statistical information

Statistical information: update on courses

Number of resulted entries in 2024: 245

Number of resulted entries in 2025: 292

Statistical information: performance of candidates

Distribution of course awards including minimum mark to achieve each grade

Course award	Number of candidates	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Minimum mark required
A	51	17.5	17.5	91
B	58	19.9	37.3	78
C	75	25.7	63.0	65
D	45	15.4	78.4	52
No award	63	21.6	100%	Not applicable

We have not applied rounding to these statistics.

You can read the general commentary on grade boundaries in the appendix.

In this report:

- 'most' means greater than or equal to 70%
- 'many' means 50% to 69%
- 'some' means 25% to 49%
- 'a few' means less than 25%

You can find statistical reports on the [statistics and information](#) page of our website.

Section 1: comments on the assessment

Question paper

The question paper performed as expected. It was fair and accessible.

The question paper covered the three mandatory sections. The mark allocation was as follows; Child Development 15 marks, Child Development: Theory 10 marks, and Services for Children and Young People 15 marks. Questions used a balance of command words to allow candidates to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and understanding of the mandatory content.

Project

This year candidates were able to choose from the following briefs:

- Brief 1 How do Government initiatives support outdoor learning?
- Brief 2 How can literacy development be supported for children and young people?
- Brief 3 What are the benefits of play to the holistic development of children and young people?

The briefs performed as intended.

Most of the projects presented this year were generally well referenced.

Section 2: comments on candidate performance

Areas that candidates performed well in

Question paper

Generally, candidates performed well in the question paper.

Section 1

- Question 1: most candidates identified appropriate health checks as a method of assessment for a child aged 0-3 years.
- Question 2(a): many candidates were able to explain the effectiveness of using a checklist to assess a child aged 5-8 years.
- Question 2(b): many candidates were able to describe two cognitive milestones that a checklist would assess for a child aged 5-8 years.
- Question 3: most candidates were able to evaluate how technology influences the holistic development of a child aged 8-12 years.

Section 2

- Question 4: many candidates were able to describe a theory of language development for a child aged 0-3 years.
- Question 5(a): many candidates were able to identify a theory of social and emotional development in children aged 3-5 years.

Section 3

- Question 8: many candidates were able to evaluate the importance of partnership working between a social worker and an Early Years practitioner to support children in Early Learning and Childcare.

Project

- Prompt A — Many candidates explained aspects of development and their interrelationship.
- Prompt C — Many candidates explained theories of development related to the child and the brief.
- Prompt E — Many candidates explained strategies or initiatives that were relevant to the child and the brief.
- Prompt G — Many candidates explained the role and responsibilities of two professionals.
- Prompt I — Many candidates were able to provide a conclusion to the question posed in the brief.
- Prompt J — Many candidates were able to reference well.

Areas that candidates found demanding

Question paper

Questions that required description and explanation in the question paper continue to be challenging for some candidates. This type of question allows candidates to demonstrate and apply their knowledge. This allows for the differentiation between an A candidate who should be able to demonstrate knowledge fully in their explanation, whilst a C candidate may demonstrate a basic understanding of their knowledge but might not be able to provide an explanation of any depth.

In section 2, question 5(b) some candidates were not able to explain how the theory identified in 5(a) could be applied by practitioners when working with children aged 3-5 years.

In section 3, question 6(a) some candidates were not able to identify the legislative Act recently introduced by the Scottish Government in 2024 to ensure that children's rights are respected and protected in the law in Scotland.

In section 3, question 6(b) some candidates were unable to explain how the Act, identified in 6(a) is applied in practice.

In section 3, question 7 some candidates were unable to explain why registration with a regulatory body is vital to ensure the safeguarding of children.

Project

- Prompt B: some candidates did not analyse factors of development. Candidates were not specific in their analysis of one positive and two negative factors. Candidates were not specific in analysing the relationship between factors, and their relationship to the brief and the chosen child.
- Prompt D: some candidates were not specific in their analysis of theories of development. Candidates were not specific in showing the relationship between the theories and their relationship to the child or young person. Candidates were not specific in exploring contradictions, comparing and contrasting, or inconsistencies and different views relating to theories of development.
- Prompt H: some candidates were not evaluating the effectiveness of partnership working. Candidates were not specific in their evaluation in terms of making a judgement about the effectiveness of partnership working. Candidates were not specific in their evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and/or advantages and disadvantages in relation to the chosen child.

Section 3: preparing candidates for future assessment

The question paper allows candidates to demonstrate the knowledge and understanding of the mandatory content not assessed in the project. Centres should ensure candidates have a sound understanding of all aspects of development and can effectively discuss and relate them to children.

In Section 1: Child Development, candidates should ensure they can effectively evaluate appropriate methods of assessment.

In Section 2: Child Development Theory, candidates should ensure that they are able to describe theories of language development and apply them to the planning of appropriate play activities. Candidates should ensure that they are able to identify and explain theories of social and emotional development and be able to apply them to the settling in process.

In Section 3: Services for Children and Young People, candidates should ensure that they are able to identify current legislation and how it influences practice. Candidates should ensure that they are able to describe articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Candidates should ensure that they are able to explain the purpose of the Scottish Social Services Council as a regulatory body.

Candidates should not use acronyms to structure responses to the questions within the question paper.

Question paper

Centres should continue to ensure that candidates:

- are specific in explaining how theory can be applied by practitioners when working with children
- understand current developments in legislation changes such as the incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- are able to explain how current legislation is applied in practice

- are specific in their explanation of the importance of a regulatory body when safeguarding children

Project

Centres should continue to ensure that candidates:

- are specific in their analysis of factors that influence development in relation to the brief and chosen child (Prompt B)
- are specific in their analysis of their chosen theories and to effectively relate this to the brief and chosen child (Prompt D)
- are specific in their evaluation of partnership working in relation to the two professionals identified in Prompt H
- understand that strategies/and or initiatives chosen for Prompt E, link to the services chosen for Prompt F, and to the professionals chosen in Prompt G.
- understand that all prompts should respond to the brief and the chosen child. The project coursework assessment task has detailed marking instructions which clearly state that 'candidate responses must be clearly related to the brief and the chosen child or young person'

Centres should continue to use the most up-to-date version of the coursework assessment task which contains marking instructions and instructions for candidates.

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Appendix: general commentary on grade boundaries

Our main aim when setting grade boundaries is to be fair to candidates across all subjects and levels and to maintain comparable standards across the years, even as arrangements evolve and change.

For most National Courses, we aim to set examinations and other external assessments and create marking instructions that allow:

- a competent candidate to score a minimum of 50% of the available marks (the notional grade C boundary)
- a well-prepared, very competent candidate to score at least 70% of the available marks (the notional grade A boundary)

It is very challenging to get the standard on target every year, in every subject, at every level. Therefore, we hold a grade boundary meeting for each course to bring together all the information available (statistical and qualitative) and to make final decisions on grade boundaries based on this information. Members of our Executive Management Team normally chair these meetings.

Principal assessors utilise their subject expertise to evaluate the performance of the assessment and propose suitable grade boundaries based on the full range of evidence. We can adjust the grade boundaries as a result of the discussion at these meetings. This allows the pass rate to be unaffected in circumstances where there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more, or less, difficult than usual.

- The grade boundaries can be adjusted downwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been more difficult than usual.
- The grade boundaries can be adjusted upwards if there is evidence that the question paper or other assessment has been less difficult than usual.
- Where levels of difficulty are comparable to previous years, similar grade boundaries are maintained.

Every year, we evaluate the performance of our assessments in a fair way, while ensuring standards are maintained so that our qualifications remain credible. To do this, we measure evidence of candidates' knowledge and skills against the national standard.

For full details of the approach, please refer to the [Awarding and Grading for National Courses Policy](#).