

BACHELOR OF ARTS (HONS) IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

FACTFILE



Application

Apply online at www.ncirl.ie

Start Date

Sept 2023

Duration

4 calendar years

Delivery

Blended - Livestream with some Campus and/or Campus Stream classes, scheduled in advance. See page 4 for more information.

Indicative Timetable

Years 1-4:

This programme is mainly delivered on Monday and Wednesday 18:00-22:00.

Some classes may be delivered online. In addition, students are required to be in Supervised Professional Practice Placement. The schedule for supervised practice will depend on placement setting's schedules.

Fees

Year 1: €2,370

Year 2: €2,625

Year 3: €4,000

Year 4: €4,000

(Fees revised annually)

There is a daytime version of this course available through the CAO for school leavers. Visit www.ncirl.ie for more details.

Course Description

The Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care is a four-year, day and evening delivery programme, designed for people who are interested in pursuing opportunities in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector.

The aim of the BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care is to provide learners with a firm foundation in Early Childhood Education and Care so as to practice as Professional Early Childhood Educators in a range of ECEC environments. As such, the programme aims to present learners with a comprehensive foundation in the principles and pillars of professional practice of early childhood education and care in Ireland and internationally, underpinned by a solid theoretical framework.

The course incorporates key topics including holistic child development, child health, nutrition and wellbeing, essential legislation and regulatory practices in the Irish and international environments, early learning in a digital world, pedagogical practice in ECEC, working in multi-professional environments, parent/family participation besides aspects of leadership management and governance in the sector. Students are encouraged to reflect, inquire and investigate a range of theoretical and practical pedagogical approaches to learning and development in ECEC. The final year Capstone Project enables students to develop skills in researching Early Childhood Practice.

Professional Recognition

This degree is recognised by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) as Initial Professional Education (IPE), to practice as professional Early Childhood Educators in ECEC also called the Early Learning and Care sector in Ireland. The programme meets the approval of the QAB (Quality Assurance Board) at the Department of Education and Skills, as it meets the DES (2019) Professional Awards Criteria Guidelines (PACG).

This programme is also aligned with the professional profile of Early Childhood Educators the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (2019). The DCEDIY provides a list of acceptable qualifications for meeting the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and DCEDIY Childcare Programme Contracts.

Supervised Professional Practice Placement

A strong emphasis on professional, value-based practice placement in diverse Early Childhood settings is included on the course from year one. It offers students an opportunity to combine their knowledge and skills in a final year capstone project. The course provides a pathway to competence and professional employment in the Early Childhood Learning and Care environments. It offers a strong core of foundation modules in early childhood education and care and in personal and professional identity as an educator. Our pedagogy aims to develop Early Childhood Educators to practice with their head, heart and hand. Students will be enabled to go out into the workforce as innovators and leaders who are skilled in the abilities needed in the ECEC sector's changing and challenging landscape.

Who is the course for?

This course is ideally suited to those working with or wishing to work with babies and children from birth to six in the ECEC sector such as pre-schools, crèches, Naíonraí, special needs, childminding, home visiting (home based learning) including those currently working in early intervention programmes, the Health Service Executive and TUSLA (the child and family support agency). The course is for school leavers, mature learners returning to education, and/or international students.

Career Prospects

Graduates will possess the skills to work as room leaders or supervisors, working directly with children, setting managers, advisory, mentorship, training and leadership

roles. Further specialisation in play and digital competence can open up related careers in Play Therapy; Developing apps for Early Learning etc.

'First 5': A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families (2018) suggests a reform in the Early Learning and Care Sector moving towards a graduate-led workforce. The ECCE Scheme (free preschool years) also offers a higher capitation fee to Early Childhood Education and Care service providers where all leaders hold a Bachelor of Arts (Ord) Degree in Childhood/Early Education (Level 7 on the NFQ or equivalent) and have three years of experience in the sector. This and the recent Core Funding initiative of the Irish Govt indicates a government commitment towards a graduate-led workforce in ECEC.

Award and Progression

The Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (240 credits) is awarded by QQI at NFQ Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications. Students who successfully complete this course may progress to the Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Practice in Teaching for Further Education featured on page 72, or the Master of Arts in Educational Practice detailed on page 70.

The programme includes three related exit awards:

- BA (Ordinary) in Early Childhood Education and Care (Level 7 on NFQ) (180 credits)
- Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (Level 6 on NFQ) (120 credits)
- Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (Level 6 on NFQ) (60 credits)

Students may exit after Year 3, Year 2 or Year 1 and receive the relevant awards.

Entry Requirements

The minimum entry requirements are a level 5 qualification in any discipline, ideally with professional involvement in the delivery of learning in Early Childhood Education and Care. All applicants will be interviewed by the Programme Director.

Applicants with a Major Award in Early Learning and Care/Early Childhood Education and Care at NFQ level 6 may be eligible for an advanced entry into Year 2 of the programme.

Applicants who do not meet the entry requirements outlined above may apply through Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) which considers applicants based on relevant work experience.

Garda Vetting

Incoming students on the BA(Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care programme must undergo Garda Vetting. Garda Vetting is part of the admissions process. Garda Vetting applications must be submitted to NCI prior to commencing the programme. Guidelines on this process are provided by the Admissions Office.

Note: Students will not be permitted to begin their placement until their vetting application is processed and approved in accordance with NCI's Student Vetting policy.

Funding

The BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care is a four-year Honours Degree programme, approved by QQI for full-time delivery with 60 ECTS credits per academic year. The weekly contact teaching time is 15 hours. The course meets the requirements as an approved full-time course under the Student Grant Scheme (SUSI).

Laptop Requirement

All students applying to NCI must have access to a laptop that will allow them to attend classes online and, where relevant, to participate in on-campus learning. Some students may be able to avail of the Student Laptop Loan Scheme, subject to eligibility. See page 85 for more information.

COURSE CONTENT

Year 1

- Holistic Child Learning and Development
- Foundations of Early Childhood Education and Care
- Music, Movement, Art and Drama
- Academic Foundations and Scholarship
- Essential Legislation and Regulation in ECEC
- Child Health Nutrition and Wellbeing

*Field visits to diverse Early Childhood settings will be integrated within these theory modules (6 visits, 3 in each semester)

Year 2

- Core Pedagogies and Curriculum in ECEC
- Dispositions and Dynamics of Behaviour in Children
- Managing Your Learning and Academic Practice
- Diversity and Pluralism in Learning Language and Literacies
- Play and Creativity in ECEC
- Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice

Year 3

- Quality Assurance in ECEC Environments
- Early Learning in a Digital World
- Inquiry Learning – Design and Evaluation of Curriculum in ECEC
- The Child Family and Society – Stakeholders in ECEC
- Leadership and Governance in ECEC Environments
- Placement: Application of Strategies in Learning Environments in ECEC Practice

Year 4

- ECEC Inquiry and Research Methods
- Social, Political and Cultural Contexts of ECEC
- Working in Multi Professional Contexts
- Personal and Professional Identity
- Capstone ECEC Practice-based Project

This programme is approved by the Qualifications Advisory Board (instituted to review level 7 and level 8 degree programmes for the Early Learning and Care Sector) as meeting the requirements of the Professional Award Criteria and Guidelines standards.