

BA (HONOURS) IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

Duration:	CAO Points 2020:	NFQ Level:	CAO Code:
Four Years Full-Time	N/A	Level 8	N/A (This is a newly offered programme through CAO)



About the Course

This comprehensive honours degree programme in Early Childhood Education and Care is a four-year degree award. It is designed for people who are interested in pursuing opportunities in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector. This is a sector that is experiencing a growing demand, as research shows us the vital importance of early childhood education in shaping children and our society.

During the course you will cover a diverse range of subjects to gain a deep understanding of babies and children from birth to six years of age. This course will give you the knowledge and skills to work with children and their families during their crucial early childhood years.

The aim of the degree is to provide you with a firm foundation in Early Childhood Education and Care, to practice in a range of professional settings. It will give you a comprehensive foundation in the principles and pillars of professional practice, a solid

theoretical framework and exposure to practical experience through professional placements during your four years of study.

The course incorporates key topics including Holistic Child Learning/Development; Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing; Essential Legislation and Regulatory Practices; Music, Movement, Art and Drama; Creativity and Play; Methods and Approaches to ECEC; Working in Multi-Professional Environments; Parent/Family Involvement; as well as aspects of leadership, management and governance in the sector. Students are encouraged to critically think, reflect, inquire and investigate a range of theoretical and practical pedagogical approaches to learning and development in early childhood.

NCI has a long tradition of working with educators, and this exciting programme will equip you to achieve your ambitions in ECEC.

Course Structure and Award

The Bachelor of Arts Honours in Early Childhood Education is a four-year honours degree, awarded by QQI at level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

The course will be delivered over four years. Each year has two semesters for a duration of twelve weeks of teaching per semester.

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 professional awards criteria guidelines (PACG 2019).

This programme is also on the list of approved programmes by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) as acceptable qualifications for practice – or meeting the requirements of the regulations and the DCYA Childcare Programme of Contracts (DCYA, 2016).

Professional Placement

An essential and hugely beneficial element of the programme is the strong emphasis placed on supervised professional practice placement in diverse Early Childhood, included on the course from year one. Over the four years of the programme, more than 1,000 hours are specially allocated to supervised-placement-related activities. Among other skills, such as observations and ethical practice, the placement includes planning and developing curriculum for young children. The final year provides an opportunity for students to combine their experiences and skills in a capstone project.

Career Prospects

On completion, you will possess the skills to work as a room leader or supervisor, working directly with children, as a setting based practitioner or manager, in advisory, mentorship, training and leadership roles.

Government strategies have set out a vision for a graduate-led workforce in ECEC and the ECCE Scheme (free preschool years) also offers a higher capitation fee to providers where all leaders are degree qualified. These changes highlight the opportunities for graduates from this programme.



Who is the course for?

This course is ideally suited to those who would like to work with or for babies and young children from birth to six in the ECEC sector. You should apply for this course if you want to work as a setting based practitioner, manager in a crèche, if you'd like to work in a Naíonraí, special needs environment, as a childminder, home visitor, or work in early year's intervention programmes, or if you'd like to be an inspector/evaluator, mentor, for the Health Service Executive, DES or TUSLA (the child and family support agency and curriculum trainers).

Course Fees

This course qualifies under the Free Fees Initiative and Student Grant Scheme.

Further Study Options

Upon successful completion students may progress to the Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Practice in Teaching for Further Education at NCI or the NCI Master of Arts in Educational Practice or other postgraduate programmes. Alternatively, they may progress their studies into specialised graduate study areas such as, policy development, play therapy or childhood studies.

Minimum Entry Requirements

Minimum entry requirements for the programme are H5 in two subjects, and O6/H7 in four subjects in the Leaving Certificate or equivalent, which must include English and Mathematics. Applicants who successfully complete a Major QQI Award at level 5 may apply through the CAO's Higher Education and Links Scheme (HELs).

Students with a major award in Early Learning and Care/Early Childhood Education and Care at NFQ level 6 will be eligible for advanced entry into year two of the programme, subject to certain criteria.

The minimum entry requirement for this programme is a level 5 qualification in any discipline, including three distinctions, ideally with professional involvement in the delivery of learning in Early Childhood Education and Care.

Mature applicants, applicants with a disability or those applying through the DARE or HEAR access schemes should consult pages 70 and 71.

Garda Vetting

All applicants will be required to be Garda vetted as part of the admission process



A Guide to 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 (Foundations of Early Childhood Education and Care) (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
- Supervised Professional Practice Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice
- Play and Creativity in ECEC
- Diversity and Pluralism in Learning Language and Literacies

Year 3

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

Year 4

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

