

BA (HONOURS) IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE



Duration:
Four Years
Full-Time

CAO Code:
NC030

CAO Points Guide:*
230

NFQ Level:
Level 8



*This is a guide only, points vary each year.



About the Course

NCI's BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care combines academic learning with professional practice experience, preparing students for a wide range of career and postgraduate opportunities. Throughout the programme, you will study a variety of modules, building the knowledge, skills, and confidence to support the learning and development of babies and young children from birth to six years of age. A dedicated Education Play Lab at NCI provides opportunities for hands-on, practice-based learning.

A key feature of the programme is the strong emphasis on professional practice placement. Students complete placement in every year of the programme, gaining experience across the birth-to-six age range in a variety of early childhood settings while building their knowledge, skills, confidence, and professional identity. Placements support students to connect theory with practice through observation, reflection, ethical practice, and planning, implementing, and evaluating learning experiences for young children. In the final year, students bring together their academic learning and professional practice experience through a practice-based capstone project, demonstrating the knowledge and professional confidence they have developed to support their future career and postgraduate aspirations.

Who is the course for?

This course is ideal for those who are passionate about supporting the learning, development, and wellbeing of babies and young children while also making a positive difference in the lives of children and families. It is suited to those who wish to pursue a career in early childhood education and care, as well as those interested in progressing to postgraduate study or careers in related professions.

Career Prospects

Graduates are well prepared for a wide range of career opportunities within the early childhood education and care sector, including graduate lead educator, room leader, manager, early years mentor, inspector, and other specialist and leadership roles. Graduates may also progress into advisory roles within early intervention initiatives and other services that support children and families.

As the sector continues to evolve, there is increasing recognition of the value of highly qualified early childhood professionals. National workforce initiatives continue to strengthen career pathways, support professional development, and promote a graduate-led workforce, creating exciting opportunities for graduates of this programme.

Course Structure and Award

The BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care is a four-year honours degree, awarded by QQI at Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications, with exit awards available. Each academic year consists of two twelve-week semesters.

Professional practice is a core element of the programme. Students complete supervised placement in every year, beginning with a block placement in Year 1 and progressing to increasingly independent professional practice throughout the programme. Placements provide opportunities to gain experience across the birth-to-six age range in a variety of early childhood settings, supporting the development of practical skills, confidence, and professional identity.

Professional Recognition

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.



"I gained invaluable skills from studying ECEC such as communication and working as part of a team. I was on placement for the duration of my Undergrad and it supported me massively as I was witnessing what I was learning in the classroom, in practice."

EMILY WILLIAMSON
BA Hons in Early
Childhood Education
and Care

Further Study Options

Upon successful completion of the programme, graduates may progress to the NCI Postgraduate Diploma or Master of Arts in Educational Practice or other postgraduate programmes. The programme provides a strong foundation for further academic and professional development across a wide range of education, child, family, and social science disciplines.

Admission Requirements and Policies

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 from a PLC/further education course must have a full level 5/6 award, three distinctions and meet the CAO points requirement. 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.

Mature applicants, applicants with a disability or those applying through the DARE or HEAR access schemes should refer to our Admissions section on p56, which also includes our admission policies, including laptop requirements.

Garda Vetting

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

Course Fees (EU)

€4,800 per annum payable by the student. (Fees revised annually). Students who qualify for SUSI can use their grant to pay some or all of their course tuition fees.

COURSE CONTENT

Year 1

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

Year 2

- Core Pedagogies and Curriculum in ECEC
- Dispositions and Dynamics of Behaviour in Children
- Managing Your Learning and Academic Practice
- Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice
- Equity and Sustainability in ECEC
- Language, Literacy and the Plurilingual Child
- Play and Creativity for Learning in ECEC*

Year 3

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

Year 4

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

*Placement will be integrated within these modules

