

# BA (HONOURS) IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

## Duration:

Four Years  
Full-Time

## NFQ Level:

Level 8

## CAO Points Guide:\*

230 AQA\*\*

## CAO Code:

NC030



\*For each course we have given a guideline based on our points over the past 3 years. This is a guide only, points vary each year.

\*\*This course was listed under CAO's Available Places facility in 2022. All applicants who met the entry requirements could apply for the course regardless of points achieved. To find out more about Available Places visit [cao.ie](http://cao.ie).

## About the Course

NCI has a long tradition of working with educators, and this exciting programme will equip you to achieve your ambitions in the early childhood sector. The honours degree programme provides a firm foundation in Early Childhood Education and Care to practice in a range of early childhood settings. The four-year degree programme is fully aligned and recognised as a professional qualification by the Department of Education (DE) and by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Inclusion and Youth (DCEDIY).

During the course you will cover a range of subjects to gain a deep understanding of the holistic learning and development of babies and children from birth to six years of age. As such, this course will give you professional, practice-based knowledge, values and skills to work with children and their families during their crucial early childhood years. A specialised 'Education play-lab' at NCI will provide opportunities for 'hands on' student learning. The programme also has a strong component of supervised work-based professional practice during the four years of study.

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

## Course Structure and Award

The Bachelor of Arts 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.

The course will be delivered over four years. Each year has two semesters for a duration of twelve weeks of teaching per semester. Year 1 includes field visits to early childhood settings and from year 2 students will gain practical experience through supervised professional high quality practice placements.

## Professional Recognition

This degree is recognised by the Department of Education (DE) as Initial Professional Education (IPE), to practice as professional Early Childhood Educators in ECEC also called the Early Learning and Care sector in Ireland. This programme is also on the list of approved programmes by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) Early Years Recognised Qualifications for practice; meeting the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and DCEDIY Childcare Programme Contracts.

## Professional Placement

An essential and hugely beneficial key element of the programme is the strong emphasis placed on supervised professional practice placement in diverse Early Childhood settings. More than 1,000 hours are specially allocated to supervised-placement-related activities. Among other skills, such as observations and ethical practice, application of strategies in learning environments, 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 practice-based/led 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 such as Early Childhood Inspectors, Specialists in Better Start.

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. Recently, the Irish Government has restated their commitment by launching 'First Five'- Whole of Government Strategy to improve the lives of babies, young children and their families, over the next 10 years (2019-2028). This strategy aims to move progressively towards a graduate led professional workforce.





### Who is the course for?

This course is ideally suited to those who would like to work with or for babies and young children and their families from birth to six in the ECEC sector. You should apply for this course if you want to work as a setting-based educator, a 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 childhood intervention programmes, or if you'd like to be an inspector/evaluator, mentor, curriculum trainer for the Health Service Executive, DES or TUSLA (the child and family support agency).

### Laptop Requirements

NCI strongly advises that all students should have access to a suitable laptop for their course. A student laptop loan scheme may be available for certain eligible students. Details of the laptop loan scheme and laptop specifications, which can be different for each course, are available on our website.

### Course Fees

The BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care is a self-funded course that does not qualify under the Free Fees Initiative.

The fee for this course is €3,080 per annum however, to allow for the government's once-off fee contribution announced in the budget, the fee will be €2,080 for the academic year 2023.

### 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 (HELIS).

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 66 and 67.

### 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

## 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

