



Placement Booklet for Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice

BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care

Year 2

September 2021

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INTRODUCTION

National College of Ireland offers the BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (BAHECEC) programme designed to provide Early Childhood Educators with a firm foundation in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), so as to practice as Professional Early Childhood Educators in a range of ECEC environments. The programme aims to present Early Childhood Educators with a comprehensive foundation in the principles and pillars of professional practice of ECEC through the placement component of the programme.

The BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care provides a pathway to competence and professional employment in Early Childhood Education and Care. The professional practice placement design combines a common core of foundational principles of practice, for example, following a code of professional ethics and essential legislation and regulation.

Underpinned by the Best Practice Guidelines (PLÉ, 2019), and DES (PCAG, 2019) the placement component accounts for at least 35% of the overall BAHECEC programme. The Professional Practice Placement is underpinned by all taught modules.

The programme exists as four different iterations:

- BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (240 credits)
- BA (Ordinary) in Early Childhood Education and Care (180 credits)
- Higher Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (120 credits)
- Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (60 credits)

The figure below shows all modules currently delivered on Year 2 of this programme:

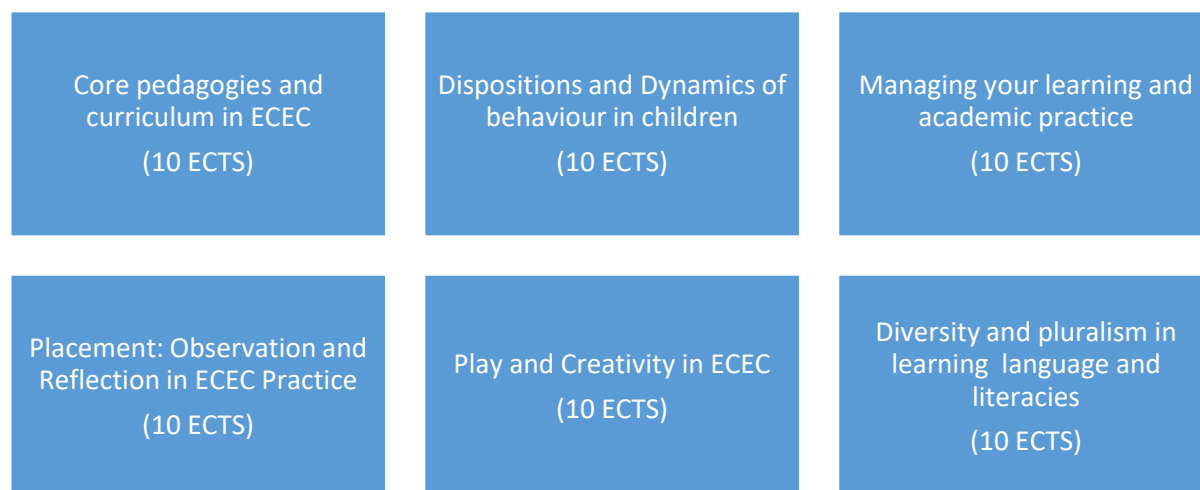


Figure 1: Modules in Year 2 of the BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care

This Placement booklet describes a module of the programme called ***Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice*** (also known as the ***Placement***). This 10-credit module must be completed by all Early Childhood Educators in year 2 of the BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (BAHECEC) programme. The purpose of this booklet is to provide information on the processes and procedures involved.

The aim of the module is to introduce students to the integration of theoretical principles, concepts and professional knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through the taught modules while observing staff and children in supervised practice in an early childhood education and care placement setting.

Specifically, the learning outcomes for *Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice* module are:

- ❖ LO1: Illustrate an awareness through observations of diversity and plurality in language learning and literacies.
- ❖ LO2: Recognise and display essential ethical considerations and approaches to working with children, including child protection and well-being.
- ❖ LO3: Develop a reflective stance in diverse early childhood environments.
- ❖ LO4: Recognise and demonstrate an understanding of the holistic nature of learning and Development in Early Childhood.

The module provides support to Early Childhood Educators as they engage in observation and reflection in an authentic Tusla registered ECEC environment from birth to six years of age such as a crèche, pre-school, after-school service, Montessori, Junior/Senior infant classes in Primary schools, 'Naionrai', childminders or other environment deemed appropriate by the Placement team. The quality of the placement is fundamental to the development of a competent, safe and effective educator. Effective governance of the programme requires a strong partnership between the academic and workplace personnel.

PLACEMENT GUIDELINES

The following general guidelines apply for the Placement:

- All ECEC placement environments must be registered with TUSLA: The Child and Family Agency. Examples of such environments are crèche, pre-school, after-school service, Montessori, Junior/Senior infant classes in Primary schools, 'Naionrai', childminders or other environment deemed appropriate by the Placement team. The quality of the placement is fundamental to the development of a competent, safe and effective early childhood educator.
- Early Childhood Educators are required to source and organise their placement environments and will be informed of this at the time of admission
- Strict adherence to national and institutional policies and protocols in relation to Covid-19 safety are regarded as core components of the placement module.
- Placement environments for placement will be where Early Childhood Educators can engage in activities with children from birth to six years of age.
- The Placement should involve an environment where there is direct interaction with children, i.e. it is not permissible to complete a full Placement that does not involve interaction with children.
- Early Childhood Educators must have a minimum of 100 contact hours with children between birth to six years of age in their placement environment. This works out at a minimum of 5 hours per week for 20 weeks throughout semesters 1&2 or may be completed in blocks over semester 1&2 with prior approval with the Placement Lead/Supervisor.
- The Placement activities will typically take place mid-week between Monday-Friday and between 9am-9pm. Saturday activities may also be accommodated by prior arrangement with the Placement Supervisor.
- ECEC placement environments will be graduate led wherever possible.

- The Placement environment designates a suitable mentor for the Early Childhood Educator
- Early Childhood Educators can complete the requirements of placement in their work environments.
- Placements will be completed within the academic year from October to May. Students may complete their Placement within a 3-semester window but this requires prior agreement with the Programme Director (see page 20 for further details).
- Attendance is required at the orientation workshop
- A learning agreement with the placement environment must be in place before commencing placement (see Appendix 1).
- Garda Vetting is required as part of the admissions process to the BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care programme. Early Childhood Educators may not commence their placement until this process has been completed.
- **Communication throughout the programme is managed exclusively through NCI e-mail, Moodle and Microsoft Teams systems.** It is the responsibility of Early Childhood Educators and Placement Tutors to access and check their NCI emails regularly.
- We use Moodle and Turnitin to support all submissions during the Placement. Submissions by other means such as email attachment are not accepted.
- Early Childhood Educators are required to adhere to the stated Code of Conduct and NCI's disciplinary codes of behaviours and policies (see Appendix 4).
- Early Childhood Educators are expected to adhere to the Child Protection Guidelines (see Appendix 5)
- Early Childhood Educators will adhere to essential legislation and regulatory practices in their environments. For instance, the environment may be guided by the [Aistear/Síolta Practice Guide](#) and [Early Year's Quality and Regulatory Framework \(TUSLA\)](#).
- Early Childhood Educators will not progress into year 3 of the BAHECEC Programme until the requirements of year 2 Placement and all modules have been completed.

ARRANGING AN APPROPRIATE ECEC ENVIRONMENT TO COMPLETE THE PLACEMENT

In advance of participation on the programme, Early Childhood Educators are expected to identify and make arrangements in a suitable ECEC environment in which the placement will be completed.

The responsibility for arranging placement rests with each Early Childhood Educator. National College of Ireland (NCI) recognises that Early Childhood Education and Care takes place in a wide variety of environments, locations and times. It is required that the environments are TUSLA (The Child and Family Agency) registered and inspected (as per the [Child Care Act 1991 \(Early Childhood Services\) Regulations 2016](#) and the [Child Care Act 1991 \(Early Childhood Services\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016 on May 4th and Dec 30th 2016](#) and [Child Care Act 1991 \(Early Years Services\) \(Registration of School Age Services\) Regulations 2018](#) respectively). This illustrates an awareness that children are in a safe and protected environment. The BAHECEC Programme endeavours to be as flexible as possible to support many different contexts. However, NCI also needs to be in a position to arrange supervision and to support the Early Childhood Educator throughout the Placement and therefore a number of practical considerations need to be taken into account when selecting the environment, location and time for the Placement.

The Placement will be undertaken in a Tusla registered ECEC environment which is either sessional, full/part time care, such as play groups, nurseries/crèche, pre-school, after-school service, Montessori, Junior/Senior infant classes in Primary schools, 'Naionrai' or childminders or other environment deemed appropriate by the Placement team.

Placement may take place in more than one ECEC environment, but only with the prior agreement of the Placement Supervisor and Programme Director. The suitability of the placement environment will be determined by the Placement Supervisor in dialogue with the programme team.

PLACEMENT ORIENTATION

The Placement orientation will be held online on Wednesday 6th October from 8-10pm and attendance at this is essential. Early Childhood Educators will be provided with an overview of the placement and processes that support it. Part of the workshop will focus on observation techniques.

If you are unable to attend the orientation workshop, you must contact your Placement Supervisor directly to set up a suitable time to meet online.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For Placement queries, the first point of contact for Early Childhood Educators should always be their assigned Placement Supervisor.

Role	Name	Email Address
Placement Supervisors	Anna Barr Criona Blackburne Sharon Byrne Chloe Cole Katarina Filipovic Bronagh Flynn Samantha Hallows Natasha O'Donnell	Anna.barr@ncirl.ie criona.blackburne@ncirl.ie sharon.byrne@ncirl.ie chloe.cole@ncirl.ie katarina.filipovic@ncirl.ie bronagh.flynn@ncirl.ie TBC natasha.odonnell@ncirl.ie
Placement Lead	Anna Barr	anna.barr@ncirl.ie
Placement Coordinator	Stephanie Roe	stephanie.roe@ncirl.ie
Programme Director	Meera Oke	meera.oke@ncirl.ie
Programme Coordinator	Ariadny Bittencourt	ariadny.bittencourt@ncirl.ie

Roles and Responsibilities for each stakeholder are based on PLÉ's "Best Practice Guidelines for Professional Practice Placement Experience in Initial Early Childhood Education and Care Professional Development", 2019.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF NCI

1. Essential Requirements of Early Childhood Educators Prior to Placement

Prior to undertaking placement, NCI expect Early Childhood Educators to:

- Participate in all workshops, lectures, modules and meetings relating to placement
- Prepare all necessary paperwork (e.g., Garda vetting, checklist, consent form, learning agreement) in advance of placement
- Undertake a pre-placement visit to the environment, introduce themselves, exchange paperwork, familiarise themselves with the environment, and become aware of any expectations the environment may have of them while engaging in placement

Failure to attend workshops, lectures, modules and meetings relating to placement without extenuating circumstances will result in the Early Childhood Educator not being allowed to undertake placement experience.

2. Preparing Early Childhood Educators for Placement

Early Childhood Educators are provided with a copy of the Placement booklet prior to commencing the placement and are advised of the following within the booklet:

- Duration and hours of placement
- When to report to Placement Supervisor for placement
- When placement supervision will happen, the duration and what they entail
- Details of the documentation which the Early Childhood Educator must undertake prior to commencing and during Placement
- Details of the assessment requirements and associated timeline
- Child Protection guidelines, policies and procedures
- Code of Conduct for Early Childhood Educators
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidelines, policies and procedures

NCI will provide Early Childhood Educators with:

- A letter indicating their level of insurance cover while on placement
- An assessment timeline at the beginning of each semester indicating the timing and duration of placement during the semester, the intended learning outcomes and an overview of assessment details
- The learning agreement (see appendix 3) which the Early Childhood Educator must be completed in partnership with the placement environment mentor. This contract documents what is to be achieved in the placement to meet the Early Childhood Educator's learning needs within a realistic time frame. It should also set out the responsibilities of the Placement Supervisor, Placement Mentor and the Early Childhood Educator so it is a shared responsibility.

3. Supporting Early Childhood Educators during Placement

To support Early Childhood Educators throughout placement, NCI have:

- A full-time placement coordinator

- An NCI Placement Supervisor appointed to each Early Childhood Educator who is part of the BAHECEC programme team
- A letter of introduction for Early Childhood Educators to give their placement environment;
- Liaise with NCI Placement Supervisors to identify any particular challenges for Early Childhood Educators/environments/supervisors, and to take steps to redress these including provision of additional supervision/support for the Early Childhood Educator, and/or meet with the placement environment mentor.

4. Responsibilities in relation to maintaining a positive relationship with the Placement environment.

Clear and open communication between all partners is essential. It is incumbent upon NCI to nurture positive relationships with placement environments. Accordingly, NCI will:

- Communicate with placement environments using email;
- Provide the environment with a copy of the Placement booklet at the beginning of the academic year indicating roles and responsibilities, the timing and duration of placement, the intended learning outcomes and an overview of assessment details;
- Provide details of the Early Childhood Educator/s undertaking placement in a timely manner;
- Clarify NCI expectations of the environment with regards to facilitating placement including how supervision occurs
- Ensure a learning agreement is completed by the Early Childhood Educator in partnership with the placement environment. This agreement documents what is to be achieved in the placement to meet the Early Childhood Educator's learning needs within a realistic time frame. The learning agreement will also set out the responsibilities of the Placement Mentor, Placement Supervisor and the Early Childhood Educator so that it is a shared responsibility to be undertaken by the Early Childhood Educator, the Placement Supervisor and the Placement Mentor;
- Encourage the environment to communicate any concerns relating to placement;
- Share NCI's complaints policy and procedure with the environment, if required, ensuring to work to redress any concerns in a timely manner;
- Send a letter of thanks to the environment following placement

5. Responsibilities in relation to Supervisors and Mentors

- Provide NCI Placement Supervisor and mentors with an induction to Placement
- Provide NCI Placement Supervisors and placement environment mentors with a copy of the Placement booklet at the beginning of the academic year indicating roles and responsibilities, the timing and duration of placement, the intended learning outcomes and an overview of assessment details;
- Meet with NCI Placement Supervisors and clarify expectations prior to placement;
- Provide opportunities for CPD during each semester

Role of Placement Coordinator

The Placement Coordinator has overall administrative responsibility for the BAHECEC placements. She will assign Placement Supervisors to each Early Childhood Educator. She will monitor progress to ensure that Early Childhood Educators keep up-to-date submissions. The placement coordinator will also act a liaison person with the placement environment.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

1. Selection Criteria for Host Placement Environments

Details provided in Placement Guidelines section on page 2.

2. Preparing for Placement

- Attend the placement orientation workshop
- Attend and participate in all lectures, modules and meetings relating to placement
- Review the placement requirements i.e. duration, times, assessment details
- Become familiar with Child Protection Guidelines, policies and procedures
- Become familiar with Code of Conduct for Early Childhood Educators
- Become familiar with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidelines, policies and procedures
- Prepare all necessary paperwork in advance of placement
- Complete the Placement checklist, consent form and learning agreement with the mentor.
- Prepare Garda Vetting paperwork in advance of placement
- Undertake a pre-placement visit to the environment, introduce yourself, complete paperwork, familiarise yourself with the environment and become aware of any expectation the environment may have of you while engaging in placement;
- Ensure a learning agreement is completed in partnership with the placement environment. This contract documents what is to be achieved in the placement to meet the Early Childhood Educator's learning needs within a realistic time frame. The learning agreement will also set out the responsibilities of the Placement Mentor, Placement Supervisor and the Early Childhood Educator so that it is a shared responsibility to be undertaken by the Early Childhood Educator, the Placement Supervisor and the Placement Mentor;
- Failure to attend lectures, modules and meetings relating to placement may result in the Early Childhood Educator not being allowed to undertake placement experience, with the exception of extenuating circumstances.

3. Responsibilities during Placement

- Become familiar with all policies and procedures of the environment;
- Adhere to the Covid-19 protocols and policies of the placement setting
- Present a professional demeanour including professional dress, a positive attitude, good attendance, time keeping, confidentiality and any other professional behaviour required by the host placement environment.
- Engage in any induction training provided in the environment
- Show initiative, become proactive and get involved as much as possible in the daily routine.
- Respect the rights of children and act in their best interests at all times.
- Become familiar with the diverse cohort of children in the environment, backgrounds, languages, cultural heritage and interests
- Build positive relationships with children, listen to and respond appropriately to them
- Be prepared, plan for and participate in all activities and children's learning experiences in the environment.
- Consult with the Placement Supervisor about any activities s/he wishes to undertake with the children
- Interact positively with, and respect the staff team and their contributions
- Seek permission from the placement environment mentor, parent/guardian and children to

- undertake child observations as necessary
- Adapt learning experiences to meet the children’s diverse backgrounds, abilities, needs and interests
- Notify the placement coordinator and supervisor as soon as possible of any absence
- Attend all placement related meetings as scheduled. This includes placement supervision meetings or on-site visits where possible.
- Complete all paper work and assignments associated with placement in a professional and timely manner
- Engage in reflective discussions with placement supervisor and environment mentor
- Discuss any issue or concern relating to placement in confidence with the placement supervisor
- Uphold the professional integrity of NCI and the BAHECEC programme
- Resist engaging in any activity that would bring NCI or the programme into disrepute e.g. Social media, exchanging stories about children etc.)
- In keeping with GDPR, safeguard the confidentiality of information about children, parents and families that the Early Childhood Educator may be exposed to in the placement environment. Keeping information confidential protects Early Childhood Educators, the environment and the relationship between NCI and the environment.

4. Responsibilities following Placement

Following placement, Early Childhood Educators must:

- Participate in all meetings relating to placement
- Submit paperwork and assignments associated with placement in a timely and professional manner
- Send a letter of thanks to the placement environment

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR

The Placement Supervisor is part of the National College of Ireland programme team. The role of the Placement Supervisor is as a facilitator, guide and assessor using a strengths-based approach during the Placement. Placement Supervisors will look for a cycle of continuous improvement and evidence of a professionally and academically appropriate reflective stance on the part of the Early Childhood Educator.

1. Responsibilities prior to Placement

Prior to engaging in Early Childhood Educator supervision, the Placement Supervisor must:

- Review the placement booklet to become familiar with the Placement programme, duration, intended learning outcomes, placement supervision and assessment requirements.
- Determine the number of Early Childhood Educators for whom s/he is responsible. The Placement Coordinator will allocate each supervisor a number of Early Childhood Educators.
- Act as a facilitator, guide and assessor using a strengths-based approach during the Placement
- Prepare a schedule of placement supervision which will entail online supervision meetings or onsite visits where possible
- Liaise with the placement environment mentor for introduction and planning visits where possible
- Review and complete a learning agreement in partnership with the Early Childhood Educator and placement environment
- Participate in induction and scheduled CPD events

2. Responsibilities during Placement

- Observe, facilitate, guide and review the Early Childhood Educator in practice using a strengths-based approach in the ECEC environment
- Help Early Childhood Educators to explore their learning needs and what sort of learning opportunities they look for, and how they can add to children’s learning experiences in the environment.
- Agree a variety of practice tasks that Early Childhood Educators can engage in within the environment in conjunction with the learning outcomes. Collectively these will provide the range of learning opportunities for the Early Childhood Educator to attain the learning outcomes of the placement and learning agreement.
- Ensure that regular and timely supervision and mentoring of Early Childhood Educators occur.
- Contact the placement mentor prior to all observations to ensure they are aware you will be onsite observing the Early Childhood Educator
- Ensure you adhere to the Covid-19 guidelines of the placement setting when you are onsite
- Use the placement supervision to reinforce the learning outcomes set and the kind of learning experiences Early Childhood Educators wish to have in the placement.
- Use supervision meetings as an opportunity to provide guidance and feedback to the Early Childhood Educator.
- State clearly at what is being looked for, and what sort of performance evidence will be used, based upon the assessment criteria.
- Use supervision meetings to support and motivate Early Childhood Educators
- Provide follow up meetings to Early Childhood Educators who may not be meeting the requirements of the programme.
- Participate in scheduled meetings relating to placement with NCI
- Support and work in conjunction with the placement environment mentor.

3. Responsibilities following Placement

- Participate in scheduled meetings relating to placement with NCI
- Complete and submit any outstanding paperwork, assessment and marking
- Follow up with Early Childhood Educators in instances where there may have been concerns during placement.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PLACEMENT ENVIRONMENT MENTOR

A mentor is an experienced Educator who works in the Placement environment. He/she will support and guide the Early Childhood Educator through the Placement and act as a point of contact between NCI and the environment.

As stated in Best Practice guidelines (PLÉ 2019), ‘A mentor is involved in a variety of tasks such as coaching, advising, modelling best practice, engaging in reflection with Early Childhood Educators and prompting and supporting their interest in and commitment to working in the sector’.

The mentor plays a significant role in the formation of the Early Childhood Educator. The importance of the relationship between the mentor and the Early Childhood Educator cannot be over emphasised. The Early Childhood Educator will depend on the mentor to gradually introduce them to the professional practices of educating in an Early Childhood Education and Care environment.

1. Responsibilities prior to Placement

- Review the Placement booklet to become familiar with the Placement overall, duration, intended learning outcomes and assessment requirements
- Attend an online induction workshop with NCI
- Review and complete the learning agreement with the Early Childhood Educator to ensure ethicality is maintained in practice.
- Meet with Early Childhood Educator
- Provide Early Childhood Educators an orientation to the ECEC environment.
- Ensure Early Childhood Educators are aware of the practices, procedures, location of rooms and resources etc.
- Support the Early Childhood Educator to complete the Placement checklist and consent form.
- Provide an induction in compliance with the [Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005](#) and ensure the Early Childhood Educator is aware of workplace policies and procedures as appropriate.
- Discuss expectations for the Early Childhood Educators regarding ethical practice and Code of Conduct including confidentiality, responsibility during working hours, timekeeping and dress code
- Seek clarification from the placement coordinator in NCI with regards to any areas of uncertainty

2. Responsibilities during Placement

- Mentor the Early Childhood Educator providing feedback throughout the placement
- Model professional ethical behaviour for the Early Childhood Educator
- Mentors will guide Early Childhood Educators in carrying out tasks such as planning, integrating ideas from theory and managing environment activities.
- Allow Early Childhood Educators to complete the requirements of the Placement
- Introduce the Early Childhood Educator to method of management and curricular approach
- Maintain a professional relationship with the Early Childhood Educator
- Identify Early Childhood Educator's strengths and areas for attention
- Encourage Early Childhood Educator to be innovative in his/her work with children - Early Childhood Educators may be a source of fresh ideas, new energy and provide theory based good practice that can be applied within the ECEC environment.
- Provide analysis of practice opportunities for Early Childhood Educators to reflect respectfully and confidentially about their placement experience
- Accommodate the Placement Supervisor when they are onsite for observations
- Collaborate with NCI Placement Supervisor and placement coordinator

3. Responsibilities following Placement

- Participate in scheduled meetings relating to placement with NCI Placement Supervisor
- Follow up with NCI Placement Supervisor and placement coordinator in instances where there may have been concerns during the placement.

PLACEMENT OVERVIEW

The Placement module content focuses on the following:

- **Identify ethical reflective practice in Early Childhood and Care environment through Observations.** Observation of and reflection on how the core principles of early childhood education underpinned by National frameworks such as Aistear and Siolta. Recognising child-centred, democratic, rights-based and ethical practice. Developing values and attitudes required of the reflective early childhood educator. Students will begin the development of writing a reflective journal.
- **Recognise how to plan for diversity, plurality, inclusion in learning and practice in ECEC environments.** Observation of and reflection on practice in ECEC - play, creativity, music, art, drama, problem-solving, early language, literacy and mathematics are supported through observation, planning and assisting curriculum implementation in practice. How planning is differentiated for the various emerging interests and strengths of the children.
- **Recognise common aspects in relation to child health nutrition and well-being.** Observation of preparing a healthy holistic development. Considering nutrition, exercise, conditions such as high temperatures, prevention of infectious diseases, awareness of hygiene practices and infant care needs. Reflection on personal learning in this area.
- **Illustrate the elements involved in protecting children.** Observation of working within a setting's policies and procedures in relation to Children First and other statutory regulations to provide a safe environment, assessing risk, reporting and inter-professional collaboration. Reflection on personal learning in this area

The work of the student will be guided by placement criteria. These criteria centre on students' practice in relation to: 1. Children (Observing -building relationships, embracing diversity in children's needs). 2. Collaborating with staff (building relationships with staff, receiving and contributing to the setting). 3. Engaging in professional practice (adhering to the setting's policies and procedures, curriculum, pedagogical approach, professional behaviours such as punctuality and confidentiality). Students will develop a variety of methods to integrate their knowledge in placement including observation, critical reflection, discussion/supervision, collaboration, planning and conducting appropriate early learning experiences and other placement-based assignments. The content of the module is underpinned by the principles and themes of 'Aistear' and the principles and standards of 'Siolta'.

Early Childhood Educators will:

- Develop observation and reflection skills in using a range of techniques in a variety of curriculum areas.
- Focus on application of observation and reflection in developing a child's holistic learning and development story, which includes all areas of development including the child's health and wellbeing.
- Develop skills in inclusive practice
- Write a Final Reflective Professional Practice Report based on the experience of their participation throughout the Placement.
- Take part in activities in the ECEC environment, which are appropriate to their level of knowledge, skills and competences, which may develop as the Placement progresses.

The placement will require Early Childhood Educators to document their learning through components detailed later in the booklet.

DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO COMMENCING PLACEMENT

The following documents must be completed before Early Childhood Educators can commence their Placement. These documents must be completed and uploaded to Moodle before Friday the 16th October.

- ❖ Placement Information – Early Childhood Educators are required to provide the programme team with details such as the name of the placement environment, mentor name, contact details etc. (see link on Moodle)
- ❖ Pre-Placement Documentation (see appendix 1) - Early Childhood Educators must complete the following documents with the placement environment mentor
 - Placement Checklist
 - Consent Form
 - Learning Agreement

WHEN CAN I COMMENCE?

Early Childhood Educators must complete a Schedule of Observations which is shared and agreed with their Placement Supervisor and Placement Mentor. The Schedule is uploaded to Moodle and the **Placement Supervisor must approve this before Early Childhood Educators can commence their Placement.** Early Childhood Educators will not commence their placement until after they attend the orientation session and submit their Schedule of Observations.

MEETING MY PLACEMENT SUPERVISOR

Placement Supervisors support, guide, mentor and facilitate the Early Childhood Educator throughout their placement.

At the beginning of the placement (mid-October), Placement Supervisors will schedule an introductory meeting with the early childhood educator. If possible, this introductory meeting will take place in the placement setting. If the placement setting cannot accommodate the Placement Supervisor onsite due to Covid-19 restrictions, the meeting will take place via Microsoft Teams.

OBSERVATION VISITS

Each Early Childhood Educator will have a minimum of two observation visits from their Placement Supervisor throughout the placement. The observation visits will take place onsite in the placement setting. These visits are entirely formative and designed to give students useful feedback on their practice. The Placement Supervisor will arrange a suitable time after each observation visit to provide the Early Childhood Educator with formative feedback. Typically, Placement Supervisors will give verbal feedback before leaving the setting and written feedback will be provided at a later date.

Typically, the observation visits will take place as follows:

- First observation visit: Early February
- Second observation visit: Early April
- Placement Supervisors may arrange further observation visits if they deem it necessary.

Placement Supervisors are required to contact the Placement Mentor prior to their observation visits to ensure they can accommodate the visit. The Placement Supervisor may also meet with the Placement Mentor.

SUPERVISION MEETINGS

Each Early Childhood Educator will have a minimum of two supervision meetings with their Placement Supervisor throughout the placement. The supervision meetings will be booked through a scheduler on Moodle and take place online via Microsoft Teams.

Prior to the supervision meetings, Early Childhood Educators are required to collect up to two moments of practice and upload them to Moodle at least 48 hours before each supervision meeting. This provides the opportunity to share insights in their ECEC environment in relation to working with children, the ECEC environment or the Placement in general.

These moments of practice will provide a starting point for discussion between the Early Childhood Educator and the Placement Supervisor. The discussion on moments of practice will be supported using the Reflections on placement criteria document available on Moodle. Extra moments of practice may be requested by your Placement Supervisor if they deem it necessary.

Examples of moments of practice include:

- Before/ after photos of a change to the learning environment
- A voice recording where the Early Childhood Educator tells a story, leading open-ended questioning with the children, leading a circle time discussion/ activity
- Photos of children's artefacts or displays or arrangement of the play space
- A voice or video recording of the Early Childhood Educator reflecting on a moment of practice/ an interaction or collaboration with parents, other professionals, colleagues, children
- A video or photo of preparing for an activity or showing after the activity has happened

Typically, the supervision meetings will take place as follows:

- First supervision meeting: End November
- Second supervision meeting: Early March
- Placement Supervisors may arrange further supervision meetings if they deem it necessary.

Arranged observation visits and supervision meetings are part of the evaluation process and absence is equivalent to not presenting at formal assessment/examination.

Early Childhood Educators can also communicate with their Placement Supervisors throughout the Placement using NCI systems such as NCI mail, Moodle and Microsoft Teams.

SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF PLACEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Placement documentation consists of the following. All documentation must be uploaded to Moodle.



Note: Every document that you upload to Moodle for the above components should clearly state the following information at the top of the page:

Assessment: For example, Holistic Child Learning and Development Story

Name:

Student Number:

Date:

PLACEMENT LOG

Early Childhood Educators are required to maintain the Placement Log approximately **once every 14 days** throughout the period of the Placement. Each entry on the Log will be between 100-150 words, dated and state the number of hours completed to date.

The Placement Log is characterised by brief comments and factual information – it is not intended for commentary or reflection. The Log is used by the programme team to keep track of the Early Childhood Educator’s progress through the Placement activities. Changes to expected observations, activities, unique incidents observed, unexpected absences, meetings with Placement Supervisors, meetings with mentor may all be signalled in the Log. If the placement deviates from your intended schedule of activities, record a brief update of this in your Log. No personal or inappropriate information will be added to the Log.

Logs cannot be back dated so it is important that Early Childhood Educators upload their logs every 14 days. Failure to keep the Log up-to-date may be considered during grading of the Placement.

Note: See appendix 6 for assessment rubric.

PORTFOLIO

The grading of the Portfolio will be based on progress observed by Placement Supervisors during placement supervision, written submissions uploaded to Moodle, discussions with Placement Mentor and implementing feedback provided throughout each part.

SCHEDULE OF OBSERVATIONS

The Schedule of Observations sets out the plan/timetable of intended observations (see appendix 2 for template). The observations must be directly related to Early Childhood Education and Care within the Placement environment. The observations must reflect an awareness of ethical practice, which includes ethicality in practice such as obtaining confidentiality, obtaining consent etc. in working with children.

Early Childhood Educators will outline and develop their skills in observations by completing **twelve observations in total. Early Childhood Educators will record three observations in each of the four methods listed below.** (see appendix 3 for description of each method)

- i) Running Record x 3
- ii) Event Sampling x 3
- (iii) Time Sampling x 3
- (iv) Reggio Approach x 3

Early Childhood Educators will complete their observations in three parts, parts A&B in semester 1 and Part C in semester 2. See below timeline for further clarification on the submission dates. Each part consists of recording and reflecting on four observations and receiving feedback from the Placement Supervisor after each part is completed. There will be a different focus for each part which is as follows:

- Part A: The focus is for Early Childhood Educators to develop their observation skills
- Part B: The focus is for Early Childhood Educators to observe a child/children and use their recordings on observations to aid them in developing their holistic child learning and development story in semester 2.
- Part C: The focus is for Early Childhood Educators to observe children in diverse contexts as part of instances of inclusive practice.

The placement workshops that are scheduled in the timetable will guide and support Early Childhood Educators in their observation skills.

Observations should include a diversity of experiences and are to be completed on curriculum areas within the Placement environment. Depending on the Placement environment, curriculum areas might include:

- ❖ **Health and well-being routines** such as feeding/snack time, toileting/nappy changing, dressing, sleep/nap time etc.
- ❖ **Transitions** such as arrival and departure, in between activities.
- ❖ **Activities focusing on play and learning (indoor or outdoor)** such as free play, guided

activities like circle time, story time, music and movement, field trips etc.

- ❖ **Interactions and relationships** such as parent partnerships, between children, between colleagues and between children and adults.
- ❖ **Activities related to planning and preparations** such as preparing for transitions, documenting etc.

Early Childhood Educators are required to submit the Schedule of Observations before they commence the observations. Early Childhood Educators can share draft schedules with their Placement Supervisor but are required to upload the final schedules to Moodle for approval. **Only when the Schedule of Observations is agreed and approved by the Placement Supervisor can the Early Childhood Educator commence the specified observations.** If there are changes to the Schedule of Observations, the Early Childhood Educator must inform their Placement Supervisor. It is the responsibility of the Early Childhood Educator to ensure that the ECEC placement environment are provided with a copy of the schedule also.

RECORDING AND REFLECTION ON OBSERVATIONS

Once your Schedule of Observations have been agreed and approved, you can commence recording and reflecting on the observations that you have listed in your schedule. **The recording and reflection on these observations should be completed on the template provided and uploaded to Moodle by the submission deadlines.** See appendix 6 for assessment rubric.

All observations will include the following:

Brief description of context: Provides the context of the observation, for example, outdoor play, greeting time, circle time, snack time etc. The child /children's unique context; a child settling in, a child's birthday, following a child's emerging interest.

Observation rationale: Provide the context, for example, Rita has recently started attending the creche, and you want to know more about her interactions/friendships.

Observation method: Select method depending on context and purpose of observation. Focus use of appropriate method, for example, use a time sample for making sense of a child's interactions during the free play session.

Evaluation: Making meaning of the observation of the observation, for example, what does the time sample tell you about the child's interactions/friendships, do you, for instance, notice any patterns? Provide links with theoretical principles. Also, include related health and safety concerns and child protection issues.

Recommendations: Based on the observations, recommend activities or learning opportunities to support the child further, making links to good practice and national frameworks. Recommendations should support high quality practice.

Reflection on personal learning: Reflection of personal skills and technique in using the observation method, and in maintaining ethicality. What did you learn from this observation experience? Would you choose this method again next time for the same context?

SCHEDULE, RECORDING AND REFLECTION ON OBSERVATIONS TIMELINE

	Documentation	Submission Dates
Part A (Semester 1)	Schedule of Observations	Friday 22 nd October 2021
	Recording and Reflection on Observations	Sunday 14 th November 2021
	Feedback from Placement Supervisor	Monday 29 th November 2021
Part B (Semester 1)	Schedule of Observations	Friday 26 th November 2021
	Supervision Meeting	Tuesday 7 th December 2021
	Recording and Reflection on Observations	Friday 17 th December 2021
	Feedback from Placement Supervisor	Monday 31 st January 2022
Part C (Semester 2)	Schedule of Observations	Friday 4 th March 2022
	Supervision Meeting	Tuesday 8 th March 2022
	Recording and Reflection on Observations	Sunday 3 rd April 2022
	Feedback from Placement Supervisor	Monday 25 th April 2022

HOLISTIC CHILD LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STORY

Early Childhood Educators are required to select a child and create a Holistic Learning and Development journey for the chosen child.

The Holistic Child Learning and Development Story will be approximately 800 words and will be submitted to Moodle.

The Holistic Child Learning and Development Story will be structured as follows:

Introduction: Provide a brief description of the child's background and source of information on the basis of which the story emerges. Include a rationale as to why the child was selected (approx. 250 words)

Body: Provide a description of the learning, development and wellbeing of the child. Include a section on how the child's learning, development and wellbeing can be facilitated or supported. Link this with theory. (approx. 450 words) You can append completed observations to support the story.

Possibilities and Implications for future planning: Outline the plan you would recommend for this child to enhance their capabilities and holistic learning, development and wellbeing (approx. 100 words)

Note: See appendix 6 for assessment rubric.

FINAL REFLECTIVE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REPORT

Early Childhood Educators are required to write a Final Reflective Professional Practice Report. The report will be approximately 1000 words and will be submitted to Moodle. This report will reflect all the learning outcomes for the module (see page 2).

The report should focus on the entire learning journey of the Early Childhood Educator over the duration of the Placement. This includes experiences related to the elements of the Portfolio as well

as discussions and feedback with your Placement Supervisor, Placement mentor and peers. It will also include theoretical principles linked to year 2 modules.

The report must include an introduction, body and conclusion. Specific guidelines are provided below. Early Childhood Educators are encouraged to send a draft report to their Placement Supervisor for feedback before they submit the final version to Moodle at the end of the placement.

Guidelines for writing a Final Reflective Professional Practice Report:

- ❖ Include an introduction, body and conclusion
- ❖ How positive or otherwise do you feel about your learning experience?
- ❖ Did you engage with enthusiasm and energy?
- ❖ In what ways was it successful / unsuccessful for you?
- ❖ What did you learn about observing, the curriculum, holistic child learning and development, planning for diversity?
- ❖ How did you handle any challenges?
- ❖ Were your interactions with the children/environment professional? Did you develop their thinking and give them positive feedback?
- ❖ Did you manage to make any observations and evaluations of the children's learning?
- ❖ What aspects would you have enjoyed the most/least if you had been one of the children?
- ❖ Have you discussed how it went with your supervisor – what was their feedback?
- ❖ Were you able to relate theory/knowledge to practice?
- ❖ What would you do differently next time?

Note: See appendix 6 for assessment rubric.

CONTRIBUTION TO LEARNING COMMUNITY

Early Childhood Educators will post as well as respond to insightful experiences on the Contribution to Learning Community forum on Moodle. Each Early Childhood Educator will post **at least one event** and provide **at least one response** to a post of a peer online.

Example topics for discussion would be 'What are your thoughts about including smart phones/i-pads in children's learning environments?' or 'What are the strategies that can be used by parents, to help them to support children with additional learning needs?'

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY & SUBMISSION DATES

Below is the assessment strategy and submission dates for Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice. All components must be submitted on Moodle via the appropriate links by the submission dates. **It is not possible to pass by compensation for the BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care programme. All assessment elements must be attempted and passed.** See Appendix 6 for assessment rubrics.

Note: The grading of the Portfolio will be based on progress observed by Placement Supervisors during placement supervision, written submissions uploaded to Moodle, discussions with Placement Mentor and implementing feedback provided throughout each part.

Documentation		Submission Dates	LO's achieved	Grade
Schedule of Observations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Part A: Friday 22nd October 2021 - Part B: Friday 26th November 2021 - Part C: Friday 4th March 2022 	LO1 & 2	10%
Placement Log		Ongoing every 14 days	LO3	10%
Portfolio	Recording and Reflection on Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Part A: Sunday 14th November 2021 (15%) - Part B: Friday 17th December 2021 (15%) - Part C: Sunday 3rd April 2022 (15%) 	LO1 & 2	45%
	Holistic Child Learning and Development Story	Sunday 27 th February 2022	LO3 & 4	10%
Final Reflective Professional Practice Report		Sunday 24 th April 2022	LO3	20%
Contribution to Learning Community in Practice		Anytime throughout the placement	LO1,2,3&4	5 %

REQUESTING AN EXTENSION OR DEFERRAL

Early Childhood Educators who are unable to meet a deadline submission due to extenuating circumstances such as illness may apply for an extension. This must be done by emailing the Placement Coordinator cc'ing the Placement Supervisor and Programme Director requesting an extension to a particular element of the Placement. They will then confirm if you have been approved extra time to submit the assessment element.

Early Childhood Educators who are unable to complete a Placement due to extenuating circumstances such as illness, bereavement etc. may apply for a module deferral. This means the Early Childhood Educator can pause the Placement and continue the following academic year. Email your Placement Coordinator cc'ing your Placement Supervisor for details on applying for a deferral.

Early Childhood Educators who fail the Placement are permitted to repeat the module subject to NCI's regulations.

Where circumstances in the ECEC environment change during placement and the ECEC environment is not in a position to provide placement anymore to the Early Childhood Educator, the Early Childhood Educator will be allowed to repeat the placement without penalties if they cannot find another ECEC placement environment in sufficient time of the academic year.

WITHDRAWAL

On the advice of the Placement Supervisor, the Programme Director may withdraw an Early Childhood Educator from a placement where there is serious infringement of the ECEC environment's policies, code of practice or where the Early Childhood Educator fails to follow the procedures. An Early Childhood Educator may appeal this decision in accordance with National College of Ireland's Appeals Process.

Where an Early Childhood Educator fails to maintain a Placement, they will forfeit their place on the BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education programme.

NOT-PROGRESSING/ FITNESS TO LEARN

In certain circumstances Early Childhood Educators may be deemed to be 'not-progressing' during the placement. The placement is in-effect paused.

- This may happen for a variety of reasons, for example substantial changes to a Schedule of Observations brought about by changes in employment, change of venue, problems with an ECEC environment or changes in the Early Childhood Educator's circumstances.
- In some cases, this may be beyond the control of the Early Childhood Educator and if this is the case, the programme team will endeavour to work with the Early Childhood Educator to find a suitable alternative ECEC environment.
- In other cases, the Early Childhood Educator may be deemed as 'not progressing' by the programme team (usually the Programme Director in conjunction with the Placement Supervisor) due to a deficit in 'fitness to learn' on placement. This can occur when the Early Childhood Educator is deemed to be unable or unwilling to follow guidance from the Placement Supervisor, and/or in the event of persistent failure to maintain an up-to-date Log of Activities, absence of communication with the Placement Supervisor and programme team, failure to act and

communicate professionally and within the standards required of the placement environment and failure to prepare adequately to carry out the placement tasks.

- Failure to adhere to the Code of Conduct for Early Childhood Educators (including adherence to Covid-19 protocols and policies) may result in the Early Childhood Educator deemed to be 'not progressing'.
- Where an Early Childhood Educator is deemed 'not progressing' due to fitness to learn issues (including adherence to Covid-19 protocols and policies) the Early Childhood Educator will be provided with communication outlining the issues of concern and will be required to demonstrate that these issues have been rectified before the placement may re-commence.

INFORMATION FOR HOST SETTINGS SUPPORTING PLACEMENTS

The Placement forms an integral part of the BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care programme where Early Childhood Educators are required to demonstrate that they have achieved the appropriate level of competence in the practice of observation and reflection in an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) environment of their choosing. This requires that the Early Childhood Educator is enabled and supported to assume the role, responsibilities, values and practices associated with professional practice in an ECEC environment.

The cooperation of the Placement environment is an important aspect in the running of this programme and the information as set out here is intended to provide assurances on what is required and the supports in place. It also outlines the benefits of such cooperation.

WHY SHOULD AN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT PLACEMENTS?

- Early Childhood Educators may be a source of fresh ideas, new energy and provide theory based good practice that can be applied within the ECEC environment.
- Placements help to promote and reinforce a lifelong learning culture within an organisation through links with National College of Ireland (NCI) and to encourage staff to mentor Early Childhood Educators.
- Early Childhood Educators are willing to support many of the activities that take place in support of learning.
- Participating ECEC environments will be invited to attend and engage in professional development events in Early Childhood Education and Care that take place from time to time in NCI.
- Early Childhood Educators will be supported throughout their Placement by the programme team i.e. Placement Supervisor, Placement Coordinator, Programme Director and lecturing staff.

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF THE HOST SETTING

- Provide the Early Childhood Educator with a placement that facilitates fulfilment of the requirements of the programme i.e. the opportunity to observe ECEC environments.
- Provide appropriate induction in compliance with the [Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005](#) and ensure the Early Childhood Educator is aware of workplace policies and procedures as appropriate.
- Allow Early Childhood Educators to complete the requirements of the Placement such as observations, holistic child learning, development and wellbeing story and instances of inclusive practices.
- Support the Early Childhood Educator to complete the Placement checklist. The purpose of the Placement checklist is to ensure that the Placement environment is Tusla registered to meet with essential regulation and legislation in ECEC environments.
- Review and sign the Early Childhood Educator's consent form to consent to the educator completing their placement in the environment and ensure they maintain ethicality in practice.
- Support and provide guidance to the Early Childhood Educator where required.
- Where possible, facilitate observation visits by the Placement Supervisor on behalf of National College of Ireland.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: PRE-PLACEMENT DOCUMENTATION

Name:

Student Number:

Date:

The pre-placement documentation consists of the following three sections:

- i) Placement checklist
- ii) Consent form
- iii) Learning agreement

All sections of are to be read, completed by the student Early Childhood Educator and their Placement Mentor and signed before commencing the Placement. When completed, scan the document and upload to Moodle under the relevant section.

(i) Placement Checklist

This Placement Checklist is based on [Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate Quality and Regulatory Frameworks](#). In the case where certain items on the checklist are not available in the Placement environment, please indicate with an 'X'.

Please Check	Response
Preschool regulations and Inspections (TUSLA)	
Where is the Registration certificate displayed?	
Staff	
Is there a complaints policy?	
Is there a supervision and training policy?	
Do the staff have the minimum required qualifications? Please specify.	
Is there a recruitment policy?	
Is there a policy on staff absences?	
Are adult/child ratios maintained as per regulatory framework?	
Is there a complaint policy for staff, parents and other stakeholders?	
Insurance	
Indicate the type of insurance held	
Name of the Insurance Company	
Policy Number and expiry date	

Where is the insurance certificate displayed?	
Health and Safety	
Is there a written Health and Safety statement?	
Is there a policy on infection control?	
Is there a policy on guidance/restrictions related to Covid-19 health?	
Is there a risk management policy?	
Is there a policy on accident and incidences?	
Who is the qualified first aider in post?	
What is the expiry date of their certificate?	
Where is the first aid box located	
When was its contents last checked?	
Is there a policy on administration of medication?	
Fire Precaution	
Is there a fire safety policy?	
Is there a fire certificate, if so what is the date of issue?	
Where are the fire assembly points?	
Where are the fire extinguishers located and what type are they (foam, powder)?	
Safeguarding Child Protection	
Are you aware of your role and responsibility under the Child Protection Policy?	
Is there a Child Safeguarding Statement?	
Who is the designated Liaison Officer in the environment?	
Has all staff been Garda Vetted?	
Is there a policy on managing behavior?	
Is there a policy on safe sleep?	
Is there a policy on outings?	
Is children's learning and development documented?	

Is there a policy on healthy eating?	
Is there a policy on allergies?	
Is there a policy on outdoor play?	
Is there a policy on authorisation to collect children?	
Is there a parent/family participation policy?	
Is there a settling in policy?	
Is there the allocated space per child as per regulatory framework?	
Is there a policy on the use of the internet and photographic and recording digital advices?	
Inclusion	
Is there a nominated inclusion coordinator in the environment?	
Is there an inclusion policy?	
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)	
Is there a data retention and recording policy?	
Covid-19	
Has the staff completed required training in relation to Covid-19? E.g. Infection control, Covid-19 safe operations for staff, Covid-19 safe operations when working with children	
Other	
Are there any other policy/ies in your environment that is not listed above? Please specify.	

(ii) Consent Form

I am currently an Early Childhood Educator on year 2 of the BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care programme in National College of Ireland.

As part of the course, I am required to complete the Placement: Observation and Reflection in Practice module. As part of Placement, I am required to:

- Identify ethical reflective practice in Early Childhood and Care environment through observations
- Recognise how to plan for diversity, plurality, inclusion in learning and practice in ECEC environments
- Recognise common aspects in relation to child health nutrition and well-being
- Illustrate the elements involved in protecting children.

The documentation I record will be shared with the Programme team for education and assessment purposes. All identifying features will be anonymised and kept confidential.

(iii) Learning Agreement

The goal of the student Early Childhood Educator is to achieve the module learning outcomes outlined below:

- LO1: Illustrate an awareness through observations of diversity plurality in language learning and literacies.
- LO2: Recognise and display essential ethical considerations and approaches to working with children, including child protection and well-being.
- LO3: Develop a reflective stance in diverse early childhood environments.
- LO4: Recognise and demonstrate an understanding of the holistic nature of learning and Development in Early Childhood.

The student Early Childhood Educator, Placement Supervisor and Placement Mentor agrees to abide by the roles and responsibilities set out for each stakeholder in the learning process in the Placement booklet. The Early Childhood Educator also agrees to abide by the Code of Conduct for Early Childhood Educators (appendix 3 in booklet).

By signing below, I confirm that I have read, completed and agree to the details in the three sections i.e. (i) placement checklist, (ii) consent form and (iii) learning agreement.

Student Early Childhood Educator Name Printed: _____

Student Early Childhood Educator Signature: _____

Date: _____

Placement Mentor Name Printed: _____

Placement Mentor Signature: _____

Name & address of ECEC Placement Environment: _____

Date: _____

Early Childhood
Education and Care
environment - Stamp
Here.

APPENDIX 2: TEMPLATE FOR SCHEDULE OF OBSERVATIONS

Assessment: Schedule of Observations Part A/B/C (Circle which part the schedule is for)

Name:

Student Number:

Date:

Date	What are you observing?	Method Used	Location	Approximate Duration of the observation

APPENDIX 3: DESCRIPTION OF OBSERVATIONAL METHODS

Running Record

A running record is a very detailed observation of holistic behaviour of a child or an event, which is recorded as it happens. It has a similar approach to a sports commentator in that detail is given of exactly what happened within a particular time frame. Running records are used mainly to provide very objective information about a particular area of development or to note down a child's interest as they occur.

Event Sample

Event samples focus on observing a child's behaviour or activity. For example, how often a child asks for help, or hits/pushes others. Using this method helps to discover if there is a trigger and how often the activity or event takes place and where it takes place within the learning environment for example indoor, outdoor, circle time, sleep time, snack time etc. Event samples provide evidence to show whether the behaviour is increasing, has slowed down or has ceased.

Time Sample

Time samples are useful to use in conjunction with event samples in relating to examining a particular behaviour in question. They provide information on what is happening at regular intervals- for example every 10 minutes during outdoor play. Time samples are also useful to examine the overall participation of children within the learning environment by either focussing on a part of the environment or a particular child.

Reggio Approach

The Reggio Approach to observation is designed to be as open as possible, with the observer noting children's comments, body language and actions, through the use of note taking, photos, video or audio recordings. These observations reveal traces of children's experiences, making their learning visible. An important part of this method is the early childhood educators interpretation of the child's experiences and learning using the prompts: **What do I see?, What do I think?, What do I wonder?** Using this method helps build a rich picture of the child.

APPENDIX 4: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to inform Early Childhood Educators of the professional behaviour expected from them while undertaking the Placement element of the BAHECE Programme. Early Childhood Educators must abide by the terms, conditions and policies of their ECEC environment as well as NCI's policies and procedures.

The responsibility of the Early Childhood Educator

Early Childhood Educators engage in a learning process where they will be guided and supported by their Placement Supervisor. They will come into contact with children and their parents. Early Childhood Educators are expected to actively participate in activities appropriate to their level of knowledge and practical experience, under the supervision and guidance of a Placement Supervisor. As their knowledge, skills and competences develop, it is expected that they will increasingly accept more responsibility. It is not expected that they will undertake unsupervised activities for which they are not prepared for.

Professional code for Early Childhood Educators

- Approach your work diligently, take responsibility and show a willingness to use your initiative
- Always act in a professional, respectful manner with supervisors, colleagues and clients.
- Fully adhere to the working practices and terms and conditions of the placement organisation – working conditions, health and safety, confidentiality and child protection
- Have strict adherence to national and institutional policies and protocols in relation to Covid-19 safety
- Ensure that your health and safety needs are met.
- Be sensitive and responsive to the needs of the ECEC environment and its clients
- Be aware of your limitations and seek help when necessary
- The use of drugs or alcohol by an Early Childhood Educator is a serious breach of conduct and will not be condoned. The use of drugs or alcohol by any Early Childhood Educator during their placement period will necessitate a disciplinary action
- Remember the principles of equal opportunities and implement them with respect to everyone you work with.
- Be willing to learn from all the professionals you work with in the ECEC environment.
- Organise thoroughly for all your activities by ensuring resources and activity plans are prepared in advance and in consultation with your Placement Supervisor/the group leader as appropriate.
- Always notify the ECEC environment as early as possible on the day if you are unable to come in during school placement, for example, due to illness.
- Be punctual; you should be in the environment approximately 15 minutes before you are due to start work and remain long enough to clear up, review the activity with the room leader if s/he is available, and make provisional plans for your next session.
- Involve yourself in the wider life of the environment.
- Dress appropriately in accordance with the dress codes operating in the environment.
- Do not leave the premises during the duration of the Placement activity, unless it is essential, in which case seek permission and let a senior member of staff know.
- Offer, and be available to attend, informal and formal meetings, which may be outside working hours.
- Attend the ECEC environment on the agreed days. Any changes to the agreed Schedule of Observations should be notified to both the Placement Supervisor and the ECEC environment.

APPENDIX 5: CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

NCI's Child Protection Policy is based on the [Children's First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children \(2017\) and Our Duty of Care – The Principles of Good Practice for the Protection of Children and Young People](#) (or any revisions of such guidance/principles). NCI acknowledges that the Child Protection responsibility applies whether the child is an Early Childhood Educator of the College or is otherwise under the care or supervision of College staff or Early Childhood Educators. NCI is obliged to report any incident reported to them by a third party in respect of;

- suspicion of child abuse
- child welfare

Staff and Early Childhood Educators have a responsibility at all times to:

- Refrain from any inappropriate behaviour towards children
- Avoid situations which could give rise to allegations of abuse
- Report bullying of children
- Report disclosures, suspicions or concerns of abuse that relate to children

Children's First National Guidance, states that if in the event, that judicial proceedings ensue, protection of the anonymity of the person who has witnessed and/or reported the incident of child abuse/ welfare cannot be guaranteed.

To access NCI's Child Protection Guidelines please click [here](#).

APPENDIX 6: ASSESSMENT RUBRICS

SCHEDULE OF OBSERVATIONS

The weighting for the Schedule of Observations is 10%. Please highlight appropriate score in the following grid.

CRITERIA	1=Novice (< = 40 %)	2=Developing (41-55%)	3= Proficient (56-69%)	4= Accomplishing (> = 70%)
Timeliness and appropriateness of schedule of activities for portfolio (80%)	Does not submit schedule of observations for approval.	Submits a sketchy incomplete proposed schedule, and/or submits after agreed deadline.	Submits a complete proposed schedule prior to commencing the observations within agreed deadline.	Submits a complete proposed schedule according to agreed deadline providing sufficient time for feedback.
Structure (20%)	Poorly structured and does not follow guidelines.	Overall structure is somewhat appropriate and follows guidelines.	Good structure, appropriate and meaningful to the scheduled observations. Follows suggested guidelines.	Well-structured and tailors the suggested guidelines appropriate to the observations.

PLACEMENT LOG

The weighting for the Placement Log is 10%. Please highlight appropriate score in the following grid.

CRITERIA	1=Novice (< = 40 %)	2=Developing (41-55%)	3= Proficient (56-69%)	4=Accomplishing (> = 70%)
Timeliness (40%) Submission of logs on a regular basis as per guidelines.	Does not submit logs.	Submits logs but inconsistently.	Logs are submitted consistently most of the time.	Follows guidelines and all logs submitted as per requirement.
Quality of log (40%) Description of activities and observations.	No clarity and succinctness.	Somewhat clear but not succinct.	Essentially clear and succinct.	Clearly relates log with ongoing placement and succinctly written.
Structure (20%) Structured and submitted as per guidelines.	Little or no structure.	Follows a structure, but not signposted.	Follows accepted guidelines and signposted most of the time.	All logs clearly structured, signposted and meets requirements.

PORTFOLIO: RECORDING AND REFLECTIONS ON OBSERVATIONS

The weighting for recording and reflection on observations is 45%. Please highlight appropriate score in the following grid.

CRITERIA	1=Novice (< = 40 %)	2=Developing (41-55%)	3= Proficient (56-69%)	4= Accomplishing (> = 70%)
Observation Method (30%) Selects method depending on context and purpose of observation.	Limited or no intentionality in selecting an observation method. Does not link with purpose i.e. selects a checklist for observing how child 'A' uses materials in the home corner.	Limited understanding shown of using appropriate methods for observing. Needs help to select appropriate observation method. Limited recognition of the link between observations and informed planning development.	Demonstrates some understanding of using appropriate methods for observing i.e. using an event sample for a specific behaviour incident displays intentionality with method chosen. Recognises the link between observations and informed planning development.	Demonstrates an understanding of the need to select appropriate observational methods. Recognises that enriching and informing all aspects of practice within the setting requires cycles of observation, evaluation and planning on a regular basis.
Diversity of events/context observed (20%)	No focus on observing a diverse events and experiences. Observations capture only an aspect of the experience.	Limited focus on observing diverse events and experiences that capture each child's unique context. Limits observations experiences i.e. focusing on motor skills/cognitive/ literacy development.	Observes a diversity of events and experiences that capture each child's unique context and holistic learning and development.	Actively seeks to observe a diversity of events and experiences that capture each child's unique context and holistic learning and development.
Recording, evaluation and recommendations (20%) Appropriate recording formats for observations. Evaluate and make meaning of the observation, providing links to theoretical principles. Recommends	Incomplete and/or inaccurate recording format used for the observation method. Inappropriate or no evaluation and/or recommendations.	Errors with recording format used for the observation method. Needs help to make meaning of observations, with limited or no links to theoretical principles.	Uses appropriate recording format suited to the observation method. Attempts to evaluate and make meaning of observation with some links to theoretical principles.	Uses appropriate recording format suited to the observation method, that also ensures the voice of the child to be heard. Evaluates and clearly able to make meaning of observation, making

activities or learning opportunities to support the child further, making links to good practice and national frameworks (i.e. Aistear, Diversity, Equality and Inclusion guidelines).		Suggests some recommendations; not always appropriate to observations with limited or no links to good practice and national frameworks.	Provides recommendations for further learning, making some links to good practice and national frameworks.	relevant links to theoretical principles. Provides specific and tailored recommendations for further learning that support the child's active participation, wellbeing and sense of identity and belonging, making relevant links to good practice and national frameworks.
Reflection on personal learning/ethical practice (20%): Reflection on personal skills, observation technique, maintaining ethicality.	Limited or no evaluation of personal skills and/or poor ethical practice in observations	Limited evaluation of personal skills in relation to observation techniques being used and/or overly focussed on insights gained from the observation data rather than own technique. Maintains ethicality in observations.	Some evaluation of personal skills in relation to observation techniques being used. Models and maintains ethicality in observations of children.	Critically evaluates personal skills in relation to observation techniques being used. Highlights and models the importance of maintaining confidentiality at all times in line with the setting and procedures.
Structure (10%) Structured and timely submissions, submitted as per guidelines.	Little or no structure and/or submits after agreed deadline.	Follows a structure, but not signposted and/or submits after agreed deadline.	Good structure, follows accepted guidelines and agreed deadlines with some signposting.	Clearly structured, signposted and meets requirements including agreed deadlines.

PORTFOLIO: HOLISTIC CHILD LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STORY

The weighting for Holistic Child Learning and Development Story is 10%. Please highlight appropriate score in the following grid.

CRITERIA	1=Novice (< =40 %)	2=Developing (41-55%)	3=Proficient (56-69%)	4= Accomplishing (>=70%)
Child Selection (30%) Child selection takes into account child's uniqueness: age, gender, strengths, interests, needs, nationality etc.	Shows little or no intentionality in reason why a child was identified.	Needs help to identify and develop a rationale to select a child.	Demonstrates an understanding and sensitivity towards selecting a child with a clear rationale.	Demonstrates a clear understanding and sensitivity towards selecting a child. Selection process takes account of child's uniqueness, and the concept of promoting the voice of the child at all times.
Child Background details (30%) Provides child's context, including holistic information: learning, development and wellbeing. Highlights child's strengths, interests and needs	Limited or no background information provided. Restricts information to only one aspect of the child. Limited or no awareness of the relevance of contextual information on holistic learning and development.	Limited background information provided. Restricts information only to basic aspects such as age, gender etc. No links made to previous child observations. Limited awareness of the relevance of contextual information on holistic learning and development.	Some background information provided, although not holistic. Attempts made to link to previous child observations. Demonstrates some awareness of the relevance of contextual information on holistic learning and development.	Relevant and holistic background information provided, including insights gained from previous child observations. Demonstrates a clear awareness of the relevance of contextual information on holistic learning and development.
Possibilities and Implications for Learning (30%) Tunes in to the child's unique context, strengths, interests	Does not see possibilities to support child's holistic learning and development. Restricts learning and/or misses opportunities.	Identifies some opportunities and possibilities, however needs help to identify appropriate child-led experiences and strength-based strategies.	Identifies retrospectively possibilities and opportunities to implement child-led experiences and strength-based strategies that support the child's	Spontaneously tunes in to the child's unique characteristics, and identifies and implements strength-based strategies to

and needs and bases strategies on these. Makes links to: theoretical principles and national frameworks (e.g. Aistear, Diversity, Equality and Inclusion guidelines).	No or limited attempt to link to theoretical principles and/or national frameworks.	Limited attempt to link to theoretical principles and/or national frameworks.	holistic learning and development. Makes some links to theoretical principles and/or national frameworks.	support the child's holistic learning and development. Makes relevant links to theoretical principle and national frameworks.
Structure (10%) Structured and timely submissions, submitted as per guidelines.	Little or no structure and/or submits after agreed deadline	Follows a structure, but not signposted and/or submits after agreed deadline.	Good structure, follows accepted guidelines and agreed deadlines with some signposting.	Clearly structured, signposted and meets requirements including agreed deadlines.

FINAL REFLECTIVE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE REPORT

The weighting for the Final Reflective Professional Practice Report is 20%. Please highlight appropriate score in the following grid.

CRITERIA	1=Novice (< = 40 %)	2=Developing (41-55%)	3=Proficient (56-69%)	4= Accomplishing (> = 70%)
<p>Reflection on learning (50%) Reflects on learning in relation to portfolio elements, theoretical principles linked to year 2 modules, as well as discussions with Placement Supervisor, Placement Mentor and/or peers.</p>	Shows little insight into learning; narrates experience.	Needs encouragement to reflect on experience.	Demonstrates an understanding of reflection and critical discussion with placement supervisor, placement mentor and/or peers. Recognises the link between experience and informed planning development.	Demonstrates an understanding of critical reflection and initiates discussion with placement supervisor, placement mentor and/or peers. Recognises that enriching and informing all aspects of practice within the environment requires cycles of reflective practice on a regular basis.
<p>Integrates feedback (30%) Integrates feedback from Placement Supervisor, Placement Mentor and/or peers and reflects on experience.</p>	Focus is on aspects of the experience; does not integrate feedback.	Hesitant to integrate feedback; restricts only to certain experiences.	Integrates feedback and from placement supervisor, placement mentor and/or peers, and reflects on experience.	Looks out for opportunities to integrate feedback from placement supervisor, placement mentor and/or peers, and critically reflects on experience.
<p>Documenting and reflection/ Structure (20%) Reflects all the learning outcomes for the module. Structured and timely submission, submitted as per guidelines.</p>	Does not meet the learning outcomes. Little or no structure and/or submits after agreed deadline.	Barely or mostly meets learning outcomes. Follows a structure, but not signposted and/or submits after agreed deadline.	Meets all learning outcomes. Follows accepted guidelines and agreed deadlines with some signposting.	Meets all learning outcomes. Clearly structured, signposted and meets requirements including agreed deadlines.

CONTRIBUTION TO LEARNING COMMUNITY IN PRACTICE

The weighting for the Contribution of Learning Community in Practice is 5%. Please highlight appropriate score in the following grid.

CRITERIA	1=Novice (< =40 %)	2=Developing (41-55%)	3=Proficient (56-69%)	4= Accomplishing (> =70%)
Shared Topic (80%)	Does not participate in the online community of practice i.e. online forum	Participates with brief comments to a peer's post. No topic of their own.	Participates by posting a topic of relevance and contributes relevantly to peer posts.	Extends shared topics and draws out implications and suggestions for practice as well as engaging in peer's posts.
Online Presence (20%)	No presence in the online community of practice i.e. online forum.	Minimal presence on the online community of practice with no posts.	Responsive presence, relating to shared topics.	Frequent and meaningful online presence.