

Childcare - Departmental Curriculum Statement

Curriculum Intent Statement

The Childcare industry is a rewarding and exciting sector to work in. Our courses will help you to develop the qualities required to work in the child care and early years sector. This will include learning about child development, play, physical care needs and health and safety. The course also includes work experience and you will be supported every step of the way by experienced teachers. The BTEC Firsts/ Tech Awards & Nationals in Children's Play, Learning and Development are also mapped to the Children's Workforce Development Council Induction Standards, the Northern Ireland Social Care Council Induction Standards and the themes of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Successful completion of the BTEC National Certificate or BTEC National Diploma in Children's Play, Learning and Development confers Qualified Practitioner Status (for the 0-8 age group) to learners. Learners will benefit from gaining a number of core units as well as a wide range of specialist units, according to their needs and interests. They will also benefit from gaining assessed work experience in the children's care, learning and development sector. These opportunities will aid career choices and potentially attract learners into the sector. The specification lends itself to creative delivery, using learners' work experience as the focal point and enabling learning to be as active, practical and work-related as possible. Alongside this, it provides robust opportunities for learners to gain knowledge and understanding of a wide range of subject areas relating to children's care, learning and development.

The BTEC Nationals in Children's Play, Learning and Development encourage a holistic approach with strong links identified between the delivery and assessment of appropriate units. A key feature throughout the duration of the programme is the requirement for learners to complete a professional development portfolio, in order to achieve their Qualified Practitioner Status.

Curriculum Implementation Statement

Our curriculum is organised to give our learners a core of underpinning knowledge, skills and understanding, and a range of options to reflect the breadth of pathways in a sector. This gives learners the opportunity to gain a broad understanding and knowledge of the Childcare sector as well as being able to investigate areas of specific interest. The curriculum is designed to develop essential skills and attributes prized by employers, further education colleges and higher education institutions.

Students studying Childcare Studies at Cowley will start their learning by studying towards and externally assessed unit which underpins their knowledge of the Childcare sector. Following that they study portfolio-based units which culminate in a synoptic/coursework internal assessment which will require them to utilise all of the skills and knowledge they have acquired in previous units of work.

Curriculum Beyond the Classroom

Experience of Childcare setting is vital to understanding and developing skills in this sector. As a result, we ensure that our students undertake the mandatory aspects of the course by completing the required placement hours in a variety of setting including: Private Day Nurseries, Pre-schools, Primary schools and early years learning disability settings.

Subject Expertise

All staff delivering Childcare studies have delivered the curriculum at Level 2 and Level 3 for over five years. Staff are drawn from a variety of backgrounds including Nursing & Health Care, Children's Charitable organisations and some staff have studied Sociological and Psychological Degrees.

Destinations

There are mandatory units and optional units. Mandatory units, developed in consultation with employers and educators, give learners the opportunity to gain a broad understanding and knowledge of a vocational sector. Optional specialist units focus more closely on a vocational area, supporting progression to a more specialised Level 3 vocational or academic course or to an Apprenticeship.

Staff delivering Childcare studies will have an ongoing dialogue with students about career choices and opportunities. Very often staff receive latest information about new courses, work experience and employment opportunities. This is relayed to students and staff facilitate students in their application process.

The sector-specific skills and knowledge will provide a sound basis for progression to further study of this sector at level 3 through a vocational qualification such as a BTEC National in Children's Play Learning and development, an apprenticeship in Childcare or a Degree programme such as Early Years Studies or Primary Education courses with QTS.