



Qualification Guidance for the Early Years, School Age Childcare Childminding Sectors and Home Childcarers in Northern Ireland



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Aim and Purpose

The aim of this document is to provide guidance on the scope of qualifications to enable someone to work within the early years and childcare sector in Northern Ireland. It can be utilised by employers, practitioners, training providers, parents and early years social workers within Health and Social Care Trusts.

The guidance in this document pertains to practitioners working with children below the age of twelve years in registered childcare settings and should be used in conjunction with:

- the Minimum Standards for Childminding and Daycare for Children under age 12 (DHSSPS, July 2012 amended October, 2018) [Microsoft Word - early-years-standards-full-version \(hscni.net\)](https://www.hscni.net/early-years-standards); and the
- associated Implementation Guidance (Version 3) <http://childcarepartnerships.hscni.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Implementaion-Guidance-Version-3-Sessional-Full-Daycare-October-2017FINAL.pdf>
- associated Implementation Guidance Childminding (Version 4) <http://childcarepartnerships.hscni.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Implementation-Guidance-Version-4-Childminding-Sep-2020.pdf>

It has been developed in association with the Childcare Partnership members and the Regional Training and Workforce Development Group.

Qualification requirements for the early year's sector are subject to review. Future revisions to the list of qualification within this document, agreed by DOH, and NISCC will be published on the Childcare Partnership website: <http://childcarepartnerships.hscni.net>

Minimum Standards for Childminding and Daycare

Minimum Standards for Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 (July, 2012 amended October 2018) are used by the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) Early Years Social Services Team to register new facilities and carry out inspections. National Minimum Standards describe the minimum requirements for regulated early years and childcare settings.

The standards define the three categories of childcare setting that are required to register with Health and Social Care Trusts – childminders, full day care and sessional day care as follows:

1. **Childminders** are self-employed day care providers who work in their own homes to provide care and play for other people's children in a family setting. They may offer this service all year round for the full working day. Childminders are required to register when they look after one or more children aged under 12 for reward on domestic premises.
2. **Full day care** is care for children aged 0-12 years for a continuous period of four hours or more in any day in premises which are not domestic. The children do not necessarily have to attend for more than four hours, and the setting may provide provision for part day care for children aged 0-12 years, but if the facility is open for longer than this, it is defined as a full day care setting.
3. **Sessional day care** is defined as day care for children which covers less than a continuous period of four hours in any day and covers crèches, pre-school sessional care (playgroups), out of school clubs (school aged child care including breakfast clubs also referred to as wrap around care).

Out of school clubs are generally covered under the category "Sessional Care". However, as children in these clubs are, by definition, older, there may be some standards that apply to them but not, for example, to crèches or pre-schools.

Sure Start is a Government initiative targeting children aged under 4 and their families in areas of social disadvantage to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of children to ensure they have the best start in life. There are currently 39 Sure Start projects across Northern Ireland which covers a wide geographic spread. This guidance also applies to early years and childcare staff within Sure Start projects providing the 2-3 year programme and crèche provision to support programme delivery. This service is also defined as sessional day-care.

A **'Home Childcarer'** is a form of approved childcare introduced by the Government to allow parents to have approved childcare in their own home and to access childcare benefits and support that is made available by the Government against the cost. Equally families who have children with disabilities may benefit from childcare in their own home.

Health and Social Care Trusts are responsible for registering and inspecting and approving these services against the requirements laid down in the

Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. The standards have been developed in this context, and aim to clarify the requirements contained in the legislation. This will ensure a regional approach to registration and inspection and approval which will in turn mean those children and their parents who use these services, along with service providers, can have confidence that all services will be measured against the same benchmark.

Minimum standards are exactly that – the **minimum** level of service that has to be provided in order to pass an inspection and be registered with a Health and Social Care Trust. There are 17 minimum standards that registered providers must adhere to and they are grouped under 4 headings:

- Quality of Care
- Quality of Staffing, Management and Leadership
- Quality of the Physical Environment
- Quality of Monitoring and Evaluation
- A fifth section outlines the required policies and procedures registered providers must hold.

Standard 11, within the Minimum Standards for Childminding and Day Care for Children under Age 12, and the associated Implementation Guidance Sessional and Full Daycare Version 3, sets out the minimum qualification requirements for staff working within the early years and childcare sector.

- Level 5 qualifications are now established as the minimum attainment levels for leaders i.e. the person in charge/manager and deputy leaders in full day care, crèche and sessional care (Children's Care Learning and Development (CCLD) and Playwork at level 5).
- Room Supervisors/Team Leaders and staff who could deputise for the leader working under the supervision of the Manager are required to hold at, the very least, a Qualification at level 3 in Early Years or Playwork ;
- 50% of all other childcare staff should have as a minimum a qualification at level 2 in Early Years or Playwork as appropriate to the setting ;
- Playwork is identified as the most appropriate qualification for staff working in School Aged Childcare services (SACC);
- Childminders for the first time must complete Health and Safety, Paediatric First Aid, Safeguarding and Child Protection training every 3 years and are also encouraged to work towards level 2 or level 3

qualifications in Children's Care Learning and Development or Playwork according to previous learning and experience. For both levels it is important that the Level 3 unit 079 "*Understand how to set up a home based childcare service*" is the required optional unit.

It should be noted these are minimum qualification requirements and that staff holding higher Level qualifications as listed within this document are also deemed qualified and will meet regulatory requirements.

Those currently employed in a deputy manager or other child care role are required to agree with the employer to complete a Level 5 qualification within an agreed period of time if applying for the post of manager.

Post 2012, in the event of a person acting in a manager or deputy manager role on a temporary basis, the planned arrangements for post holders to achieve the required Level 5 qualification must be agreed with the Early Years Team in the local Registering Health and Social Care Trust Early Years team.

All managers must have a current Safeguarding Certificate. If this is not the case, this must be achieved as part of the induction process and within one month of appointment. If the Manager is the Designated Child Protection Officer, evidence of certificated training must be in place prior to commencing duties.

Staff Qualified Prior to 2012

It is recognised that staff holding qualifications achieved prior to 2012 (i.e. those working in early years childminding, playwork or studying a programme of training or education in childcare) will continue to have their qualifications recognised. An example of this would be that those holding a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2 or 3 in Children's Care Learning and Development (CCLD) or Playwork will not be required to complete a RCF CCLD or Playwork qualification at the same level. Previously recognised appropriate qualifications linked to specific job roles are listed from page 10 onward.

Unqualified Staff Prior to 2012

Staff employed prior to 2012 that do not hold an appropriate qualification, as set out within the Minimum Standards, do not have to attain a new or additional qualification while remaining employed at their current grade. They are however encouraged to undertake appropriate professional development and training.

New Staff without Qualifications

The recruitment of unqualified staff is permissible as long as the minimum level of 50% of staff with a qualification is maintained. New staff without a qualification (including relief staff) must receive appropriate induction training before they are allowed to work with children.

Induction training must cover the following:

- the settings policies and procedures;
- Safeguarding & Child Protection /whistleblowing;
- management of children's behaviour;
- recording;
- working with parents;
- health and safety; and
- equal opportunities

New staff without qualifications must agree to sign up for vocational training leading to a relevant qualification within the first year of their employment. (This will include relief staff used on a regular basis). It's important to note that the Minimum Standards highlight that **it is the responsibility of the Registered Person** to ensure that staff are appropriately qualified to practice.

Volunteers It remains the responsibility of the Registered Provider to ensure that all requirements for volunteers, as for paid staff, are met. Full consideration needs to be given to the issue of continuity of care for children when using volunteers.

Table 1: Qualification Guidance in Early Years, Childcare and Playwork

Full Daycare Day Nursery	<u>Minimum</u> Qualification Requirements as Listed Within the Minimum Standards for Childminding and Daycare (July, 2012 Amended October 2018) i.e. these minimum requirements apply to staff moving to a new post (e.g. career progression (deputy to leader/manager or assistant to leader/room supervisor) and for newly appointed posts at all levels	Higher Level Qualifications Progression Routes NB - staff qualified to this level will meet regulatory requirements	<u>Qualifications</u> for Existing Employees/ and Students who have registered for their award prior to 2012 and the publication-of the Minimum Standards for Childminding and Daycare (July, 2012 Amended October 2018) i.e. If a child care worker moves to a new post at the same level, their existing qualification will remain acceptable for the purposes of registration. It is important to note however that employers are at liberty to set their own qualification requirements in line with the requirements of the job role and the guidance as set out within the Minimum Standards.
Manager Person in Charge Deputy Manager Full Day Care Early Years' Service/SACC service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Children's Care Learning and Development – Management Pathway • Level 5 Diploma in Playwork • Professional Qualification in any of the following; Social Work, Nursing, Midwifery , Health Visiting, Teaching and at least two years' paid experience in employment working with children of the age group relevant to the setting they will be working in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA Hons. Degree in Early Childhood Studies • Playwork Degree • Graduate Diploma in Playwork (University of Gloucester • Table 3 outlines additional progression routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA Hons Degree Early Childhood Studies • QCF Level 5 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development – Management Pathway • Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies • HND in Advanced Practice in Working with Children and Families • Advance practice in Early Years Education (2016) QCF • NVQ Level 4 Children's Care Learning and Development. • CACHE Advanced Diploma in Childcare and Education • NVQ level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those currently employed in a deputy manager role are required to agree with the employer, to complete a Level 5 qualification within an agreed period of time. In the event of a person acting in a manager or deputy manager role on a temporary basis, the planned arrangements for post holders to achieve the required Level 5 qualification must be agreed with the Early Years Team in the local Registering Health and Social Care Trust Early Years team. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NVQ Level 3 Early Years Care and Education NVQ Level 3 Childcare and Education CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education (refer to guidance page 8) HNC/HND Early Childhood Studies National Diploma/ Certificate in Children's Care Learning and Development National Diploma in Early years National Diploma in Childhood Studies City & Guilds Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development Extended Diploma QCF level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development Playwork Level 3 Level 3 Transitional Award in Playwork from Early Years Playwork level 4 Playwork level 5 Playwork Degree Graduate Diploma in Playwork Professional Qualification in any of the following; Social Work, Nursing, Midwifery , Health Visiting, Teaching and at least two years' experience in employment working with children of the age group relevant to the setting they will be working in.
Full Day Care Room Supervisor Early Years' Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development level 3 Diploma in Playwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for CCLD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 5 Children's Care Learning and Development – Advance Practice

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CACHE Extended Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development • BTEC National Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development. NISCC have advised that this qualification maps to the QCF Level 3 Diploma Children's Care Learning and Development (CCLD) providing specified optional units are completed. <p>The required optional units are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unit 9 Promoting Healthy Development and Living for Children and their Families ○ Unit 10 Promoting Wellbeing and Resilience in Children ○ Unit 11 Diet and Nutrition for Children ○ Unit 14 Psychological perspectives on children's behaviour ○ Unit 18 Support children's literacy ○ Unit 27 Meeting additional Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CACHE Level 3 Diploma Child Care and Education NISCC have advised that this qualification is robust but there is a shortfall in 	<p>Management Pathway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 5 Children's Care Learning and Development – Advance Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies • CACHE Advanced Diploma in Childcare and Education • HND in Advanced Practice in Working with Children and Families • Advance practice in Early Years Education (2016) QCF • HNC/HND Early Childhood Studies • National Diploma/ Certificate in Children's Care Learning and Development • National Diploma in Early years • National Diploma in Childhood Studies • QCF level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development • NVQ Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development. • NVQ Level 3 Early Years Care and Education • NVQ Level 3 Childcare and Education • National Nursery Examination Board Certificate • Edexcel National Diploma/Certificate in Children's Care Learning and Development • Edexcel National Diploma in Early Years • Edexcel National Diploma in Childhood Studies • NNEB Certificate /Diploma in Nursery Nursing • CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education(refer to guidance page 8)
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	<p>content related to safeguarding. Learners who have completed/are completing this qualification will also need to top up their learning by completing the unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYP 3.3 Understand how to safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City & Guilds Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development Extended Diploma • Level 3 Transitional Award Early Years from Playwork • QCF Level 3 Diploma in Playwork • Level 3 Transitional Award in Playwork from Early Years • Playwork level 4
Full Day Care Room Supervisor School Age Childcare room/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • /Level 3 Diploma in Playwork or • Level 3 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development • CACHE Extended Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development • BTEC National Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development. NISCC have advised that this qualification maps to the QCF Level 3 Diploma Childcare and Development (CCLD) providing specified optional units are completed. <p>The required optional units are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unit 9 Promoting Healthy Development and Living for Children and their Families ○ Unit 10 Promoting Wellbeing and Resilience in Children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 Transitional Award in Playwork from Early Years • Level 5 Diploma in Playwork • Playwork Degree • Graduate Diploma in Playwork (University of Gloucester) • Or any of the early years qualifications listed above for the early years' service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QCF level 3 Playwork • NVQ 3 Playwork • Level 3 Transition Award in Playwork from Early Years • Playwork level 4 • Or any of the early years qualifications listed above for the early years' service

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unit 11 Diet and Nutrition for Children ○ Unit 14 Psychological perspectives on children's behaviour ○ Unit 18 Support children's literacy ○ Unit 27 Meeting additional Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CACHE Level 3 Diploma Child Care and Education. NISCC have advised that this qualification is robust but there is a shortfall in content related to safeguarding. Learners who have completed/are completing this qualification will also need to top up their learning by completing the unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYP 3.3 Understand how to safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people 		
Full Day Care Child Care Assistant Early Years' Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 2/3 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development • level 2/3 Playwork • CACHE Extended Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development • BTEC National Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development (CCLD). This qualification maps to the QCF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development • Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Children's Care Learning and Development – Management or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QCF Level 2/3 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development • NVQ Level 2/3 Children's Care Learning and Development • NVQ Level 2/3 Early Years Care and Education • NVQ Level 2/3 Childcare and Education CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education(refer to guidance page 8)

	<p>Level 3 Diploma Childcare and Development (CCLD) providing specified optional units are completed.</p> <p>The required optional units are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unit 9 Promoting Healthy Development and Living for Children and their Families ○ Unit 10 Promoting Wellbeing and Resilience in Children ○ Unit 11 Diet and Nutrition for Children ○ Unit 14 Psychological perspectives on children's behaviour ○ Unit 18 Support children's literacy ○ Unit 27 Meeting additional Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CACHE Level 3 Diploma Child Care and Education. NISCC have advised that this qualification is robust but there is a shortfall in content related to safeguarding. Learners who have completed/are completing this qualification will also need to top up their learning by completing the unit • CYP 3.3 Understand how to safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people 	Advanced Practice Pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City & Guilds Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development Extended Diploma • Level 3 Transitional Award Early Years from Playwork • Level 3 Transitional Award Early Years from Playwork • Playwork Level 2/3 • Level 3 Transition Award in Playwork from Early Years
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Full Day Care Child Care Assistant School Age Childcare Room/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 2/3 in Playwork or • Level 2/3 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development • Or any of the Early Years qualifications listed above for the early years' service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3/5 Diploma in Playwork • Level 3 Transitional Award Playwork from Early Years • Or any of the Early Years qualifications listed above for the early years' service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NVQ level 2/3 Playwork • QCF level 2/3 Playwork • Or any of the Early Years qualifications listed above for the early years' service
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Sessional Care – Early Years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playgroup • Creche • Sure Start Developmental Programme for Two to Three Year Olds 	Minimum Qualification Requirements as Listed Within the Minimum Standards for Childminding and Daycare (July, 2012 Amended October 2018) i.e. these minimum requirements apply to staff moving to a new post (e.g. career progression (deputy to leader/manager or assistant to leader/room supervisor) and for newly appointed posts at all levels	Higher Level Qualifications Progression Routes NB - staff qualified to this level will meet regulatory requirements	Acceptable Qualifications for Existing Employees/ and Students who have registered for the award prior to the publication of this document i.e. If a child care worker moves to a new post at the same level, their existing qualification will remain acceptable for the purposes of registration. It is important to note however that employers are at liberty to set their own qualification requirements in line with the requirements of the job role and the guidance as set out within the Minimum Standards.
Sessional Care Leader /Person in Charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for CCLD Management Pathway • Level 5 Diploma in Playwork • Professional Qualification in any of the following; Social Work, Nursing, Midwifery, Health Visiting, Teaching and at least two years’ paid experience in employment working with children of the age group relevant to the setting they will be working in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA Hons Degree Early Childhood Studies • Table 3 outlines additional progression routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA Hons Degree Early Childhood Studies • Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies • QCF Level 5 Children’s Care Learning and Development – Management • NVQ Level 4 Children’s Care Learning and Development. • CACHE Advanced Diploma in Childcare and Education • Edexcel HND/C Advanced Practice in Work with Children and Families • Edexcel HNC/HND Early Childhood Studies • NVQ level 3 Children’s Care Learning and Development • NVQ Level 3 Early Years Care and Education • NVQ Level 3 Childcare and Education • HND in Advanced Practice in Working with Children and Families

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance practice in Early Years Education (2016) QCF • HNC/HND Early Childhood Studies • National Diploma/ Certificate in Children's Care Learning and Development • National Diploma in Early years • National Diploma in Childhood Studies • CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education(refer to guidance page 8) • QCF level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development • City & Guilds Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development Extended Diploma • Professional Qualification in any of the following; Social Work, Nursing, Midwifery , Health Visiting, Teaching and at least two years' experience in employment working with children of the age group relevant to the setting they will be working in.
Sessional Care Deputy Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for CCLD Management Pathway • Level 5 Diploma in Playwork • Professional Qualification in any of the following; Social Work, Nursing, Midwifery, Health Visiting, Teaching and at least two years' paid experience in employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for CCLD Management Pathway • BA Hons Degree Early Childhood Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA Hons Degree Early Childhood Studies • Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies • QCF Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Children's Care Learning and Development – Management Pathway • NVQ Level 4 Children's Care Learning and Development.

	<p>working with children of the age group relevant to the setting they will be working in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those currently employed in a deputy manager role are required to agree with the employer, to complete a Level 5 qualification within an agreed period of time. In the event of a person acting in a manager or deputy manager role on at temporary basis, the planned arrangements for post holders to achieve the required Level 5 qualification must be agreed with the Early Years Team in the local Registering Health and Social Care Trust Early Years team. Level 3 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development Level 3 Diploma in Playwork BTEC National Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development (CCLD). NISCC have advised that the BTEC CCLD qualification maps to the QCF Level 3 Diploma Childcare Learning and Development (CCLD) providing specified optional units are completed. <p>The required optional units are</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table 3 outlines additional progression routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CACHE Advanced Diploma in Childcare and Education Edexcel HND/C Advanced Practice in Work with Children and Families Edexcel HNC/HND Early Childhood Studies NVQ level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development NVQ Level 3 Early Years Care and Education NVQ Level 3 Childcare and Education HND in Advanced Practice in Working with Children and Families Advance practice in Early Years Education (2016) QCF HNC/HND Early Childhood Studies National Diploma/ Certificate in Children's Care Learning and Development National Diploma in Early years National Diploma in Childhood Studies CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education(refer to guidance page 8) QCF level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development City & Guilds Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development Extended Diploma Professional Qualification in any of the following; Social Work, Nursing, Midwifery , Health Visiting, Teaching and at least two years' experience in employment working with children of the
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unit 9 Promoting Healthy Development and Living for Children and their Families ○ Unit 10 Promoting Wellbeing and Resilience in Children ○ Unit 11 Diet and Nutrition for Children ○ Unit 14 Psychological perspectives on children's behaviour ○ Unit 18 Support children's literacy ○ Unit 27 Meeting additional Requirements • CACHE Level 3 Diploma Child Care and Education. NISCC have advised that this qualification is robust but there is a shortfall in content related to safeguarding. Learners who have completed/are completing this qualification will also need to top up their learning by completing the unit • CYP 3.3 Understand how to safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people. 		age group relevant to the setting they will be working in.
Sessional Care Early years Child Care Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons acting up into a Manager or Deputy manager role on a fixed term basis for more than 12 months will be required to register to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies • QCF Level 5 Children's Care Learning and Development Advanced Practice • QCF Level 3 Diploma Children's Care Learning and Development

	<p>complete a level 5 qualification as listed above</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development • Level 2 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development • QCF/ Level 2 Diploma in Playwork • Level 3 Diploma in Playwork • BTEC National Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development (CCLD). NISCC have advised that the BTEC CCLD qualification maps to the QCF Level 3 Diploma Childcare Learning and Development (CCLD) providing specified optional units are completed. <p>The required optional units are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unit 9 Promoting Healthy Development and Living for Children and their Families ○ Unit 10 Promoting Wellbeing and Resilience in Children ○ Unit 11 Diet and Nutrition for Children ○ Unit 14 Psychological perspectives on children's behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for CCLD Management or Advanced Practice Pathway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NVQ Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development • NVQ Level 3 Early Years Care and Education • NVQ Level 3 Childcare and Education • QCF level 2 Children's Care Learning and Development • HND in Advanced Practice in Working with Children and Families • Advance practice in Early Years Education (2016) QCF • HNC/HND Early Childhood Studies • National Diploma/ Certificate in Children's Care Learning and Development • National Diploma in Early years • National Diploma in Childhood Studies • NVQ Level 2 Children's Care Learning and Development • NVQ Level 2 Early Years Care and Education • NVQ Level 2 Childcare and Education CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education (refer to guidance page 8) • City & Guilds Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development Extended Diploma
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unit 18 Support children's literacy ○ Unit 27 Meeting additional Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CACHE Level 3 Diploma Child Care and Education. NISCC have advised that this qualification is robust but there is a shortfall in content related to safeguarding. Learners who have completed/are completing this qualification will also need to top up their learning by completing the unit • CYP 3.3 Understand how to safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people. <p>At least 50% of Child Care staff should have a minimum qualification at QCF level 2 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development.</p>		
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Sessional Care School Aged Childcare (SACC) (Stand-alone SACC provision i.e. not linked to Full Daycare)	Minimum Qualification Requirements as Listed Within the Minimum Standards for Childminding and Daycare (July, 2012 Amended October 2018) i.e. these minimum requirements apply to staff moving to a new post (e.g. career progression (deputy to leader/manager or assistant to leader/room supervisor) and for newly appointed posts at all levels	Higher Level Qualifications Progression Routes NB - staff qualified to this level will meet regulatory requirements	Acceptable Qualifications for Existing Employees/ and Students who have registered for the award prior to the publication of this document i.e. If a child care worker moves to a new post at the same level, their existing qualification will remain acceptable for the purposes of registration. It is important to note however that employers are at liberty to set their own qualification requirements in line with the requirements of the Job role and the guidance as set out within the Minimum Standards.
Leader Stand Alone SACC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 5 Diploma in Playwork. Or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for CCLD - Management Pathway • Professional Qualification in any of the following; Social Work, Nursing, Midwifery , Health Visiting, Teaching and at least two years' paid experience in employment working with children of the age group relevant to the setting they will be working in. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playwork Degree • Graduate Diploma in Playwork (University of Gloucester • Table 3 outlines additional progression routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QCF level 3 Playwork • NVQ 3 Playwork • Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork • NVQ Playwork level 4 • Playwork Degree • BA Hons Degree Early Childhood Studies • Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies • NVQ Level 4 Children's Care Learning and Development. • QCF Level 5 Children's Care Learning and Development – Management • CACHE Advanced Diploma in Childcare and Education

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edexcel HND/C Advanced Practice in Work with Children and Families • Edexcel HNC/HND Early Childhood Studies • NVQ level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development • NVQ Level 3 Early Years Care and Education • NVQ Level 3 Childcare and Education • HND in Advanced Practice in Working with Children and Families • Advance practice in Early Years Education (2016) QCF • HNC/HND Early Childhood Studies • National Diploma/ Certificate in Children's Care Learning and Development • National Diploma in Early years • National Diploma in Childhood Studies • CACHE level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education(refer to guidance page 8) • QCF level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development • City & Guilds Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development Extended Diploma • Professional Qualification in any of the following; Social Work,
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			Nursing, Midwifery , Health Visiting, Teaching and at least two years' experience in employment working with children of the age group relevant to the setting they will be working in.
Deputy Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 5 Diploma in Playwork • Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for CCLD Management Pathway • Professional Qualification in any of the following; Social Work, Nursing, Midwifery, Health Visiting, Teaching and at least two years' paid experience in employment working with children of the age group relevant to the setting they will be working in. • Those currently employed in a deputy manager role are required to agree with the employer, to complete a Level 5 qualification within an agreed period of time. In the event of a person acting in a manager or deputy manager role on at temporary basis, the planned arrangements for post holders to achieve the required Level 5 qualification must be agreed with the Early Years Team in the local Registering Health and Social Care Trust Early Years team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 5 Diploma in Playwork. • Graduate Diploma in Playwork (University of Gloucester • Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Children's Care Learning and Development – Management Pathway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QCF level 3 Playwork • NVQ 3 Playwork • Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork • NVQ Playwork level 4 • Playwork Degree • BA Hons Degree Early Childhood Studies • Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies • NVQ Level 4 Children's Care Learning and Development. • CACHE Advanced Diploma in Childcare and Education • HND in Advanced Practice in Working with Children and Families • Advance practice in Early Years Education (2016) QCF • HNC/HND Early Childhood Studies • National Diploma/ Certificate in Children's Care Learning and Development • National Diploma in Early years • National Diploma in Childhood Studies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 in Playwork. • Level 3 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development • BTEC National Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development (CCLD). NISCC have advised that the BTEC CCLD qualification maps to the QCF Level 3 Diploma Childcare Learning and Development (CCLD) providing specified optional units are completed. <p>The required optional units are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unit 9 Promoting Healthy Development and Living for Children and their Families ○ Unit 10 Promoting Wellbeing and Resilience in Children ○ Unit 11 Diet and Nutrition for Children ○ Unit 14 Psychological perspectives on children's behaviour ○ Unit 18 Support children's literacy ○ Unit 27 Meeting additional Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CACHE Level 3 Diploma Child Care and Education. NISCC have advised that this qualification is robust but there is a shortfall in content related to safeguarding. Learners who have completed/are completing this qualification will also 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NVQ level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development • NVQ Level 3 Early Years Care and Education • NVQ Level 3 Childcare and Education • Edexcel National Diploma/Certificate in Children's Care Learning and Development • Edexcel National Diploma in Early Years • Edexcel National Diploma in Childhood Studies • CACHE level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education(refer to guidance page 8) • QCF level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development • City & Guilds Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development Extended Diploma • Professional Qualification in any of the following; Social Work, Nursing, Midwifery , Health Visiting, Teaching and at least two years' experience in employment working with children of the age group relevant to the setting they will be working in.
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	<p>need to top up their learning by completing the unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CYP 3.3 Understand how to safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people. 		
SACC Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 2 in Playwork. • Level 3 in Playwork. <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 2 or 3 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development • BTEC National Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development (CCLD). NISCC have advised that the BTEC CCLD qualification maps to the QCF Level 3 Diploma Childcare Learning and Development (CCLD) providing specified optional units are completed. <p>The required optional units are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unit 9 Promoting Healthy Development and Living for Children and their Families ○ Unit 10 Promoting Wellbeing and Resilience in Children ○ Unit 11 Diet and Nutrition for Children ○ Unit 14 Psychological perspectives on children's behaviour ○ Unit 18 Support children's literacy ○ Unit 27 Meeting additional Requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3/4/5 Playwork • Level 3 Diploma Children's Care Learning and Development • Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Children's Care Learning and Development – Management or Advanced Practice Pathway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QCF level 3 Playwork • NVQ 3 Playwork • NVQ Level 2 Playwork • Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork • QCF Level 3 Diploma Children's Care Learning and Development • QCF Level 5 Children's Care Learning and Development – Advanced Practice • NVQ Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development • NVQ Level 3 Early Years Care and Education • NVQ Level 3 Childcare and Education. • CACHE Advanced Diploma in Childcare and Education • Foundation Degree in Early Childhood Studies • HND in Advanced Practice in Working with Children and Families • Advance practice in Early Years Education (2016) QCF • HNC/HND Early Childhood Studies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CACHE Level 3 Diploma Child Care and Education. This qualification is robust but there is a shortfall in content related to safeguarding. Learners who have completed/are completing this qualification will also need to top up their learning by completing the unit • CYP 3.3 Understand how to safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people. <p>At least 50% of Child Care staff should have a minimum qualification at QCF level 2 in Playwork. Other staff should be in the process of gaining this qualification within a reasonable time.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Diploma/ Certificate in Children's Care Learning and Development • National Diploma in Early years • National Diploma in Childhood Studies • QCF Level 2 Children's Care Learning and Development • NVQ Level 2 Children's Care Learning and Development • NVQ Level 2 Early Years Care and Education • NVQ Level 2 Childcare and Education • CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education (refer to guidance page 8) • City & Guilds Level 3 Children's Care Learning and Development Extended Diploma
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Registered Home-based Childcare	<u>Existing Employees</u>	Progression Pathways
Childminder	<p>Childminders are not required to have a minimum qualification, however, they are required as part of the Minimum Standards for Childminding and Day Care for Children Under Age 12 to obtain and maintain training in core areas including Safeguarding, Paediatric First Aid, and Health and Safety as required by the Health and Social Care Trusts.</p> <p>Childminders are encouraged to attain Level 2 or 3 Diploma in Children’s Care Learning and Development (CCLD); Level 3 Playwork; or equivalent</p> <p>Childminders should ensure that there is someone with a Paediatric First Aid Certificate on the premises at all times</p>	<p>Level 2 or level 3 Diploma in Children’s Care Learning and Development. Please note: At both levels it is important the Level 3 Unit 079 “Understanding how to set up a home based childcare service” is the required operational unit</p> <p>Higher level qualifications as listed for Managers within an early years or playwork setting</p> <p>The Childcare Partnership provides access to a range of short courses to support ongoing continuous professional development To find out what’s available in your area use the following link</p> <p>Training and resources for childcare providers - FamilySupportNI</p> <p>Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) has developed a digital learning resource designed for Registered Childminders to enable them to meet Minimum Standards requirements and core training in health and safety. You need to register to undertake this course.</p> <p>https://learningzone.niscc.info/learningresources?tag=33#resources</p>
Childminding Assistant	Assistants employed by a Childminder will be required to have undertaken training in the	QCF Level 2 or level 3 Diploma in Children’s Care Learning and development At both levels it is important the Level 3 Unit 079

	<p>core areas including Safeguarding, Paediatric First Aid, and Health and Safety</p>	<p>“Understanding how to set up a home based childcare service” is the required operational unit.</p> <p>The Childcare Partnership provides access to a range of short courses to support ongoing continuous professional development To find out what’s available in your area use the following link</p> <p>Training and resources for childcare providers - FamilySupportNI</p> <p>Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) has developed a digital learning resource designed for Registered Childminders to enable them to meet Minimum Standards requirements and core training in health and safety. You need to register to undertake this course.</p> <p>https://learningzone.niscc.info/learningresources?tag=33#resources</p>
Approved Home Childcarer	<p><u>Acceptable Qualifications</u></p>	<p>Progression Pathways</p>
	<p>All of the early years qualifications listed in this document are acceptable.</p> <p>Home Childcarers will be required to have undertaken training in Paediatric First Aid or commit to undertake First Aid Training within 6 weeks of becoming an Approved Home Childcarer.</p> <p>See link for further guidance on becoming an Approved Home Childcarer: being-an-approved-</p>	<p>Progression Pathways linked to the achievement of qualifications at all levels are listed within this document</p> <p>The Childcare Partnership provides access to a range of short courses to support ongoing continuous professional development To find out what’s available in your area use the following link</p> <p>Training and resources for childcare providers - FamilySupportNI</p> <p>Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) Mobile App designed for social workers, social work students and early years professionals working with/supporting children aged 0-6 years. It can</p>

	home-childcarer-a-guide-for-home-childcarers.pdf (nidirect.gov.uk)	also be used by parents and other health and social care professionals. (Updated Oct. 2018). Winner of huslTa Best Human Services App Award 2017. https://learningzone.niscc.info/
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Local Delivery of Early Years Qualifications across Northern Ireland

Table 1 Level 2 -5 Childcare Learning and Development Qualifications

Training Provider	Area Covered	Specific Location of Delivery	Specific CCLD Qualifications on Offer	Website Link
Belfast Metropolitan College	Belfast	Millfield Campus	Level 2 Diploma CCLD	Course Search - Belfast Met
			Level 2 Traineeship in Childcare	

028 90265003 Joanne Neill			Level 3 Diploma CCLD	
			Level 3 CCLD All Age Apprenticeship	
			Foundation Degree Early Childhood Studies	
			Level 5 Diploma in Leadership CCLD	
			Level 5 CCLD Higher Level Apprenticeship	
Blackie River Community Group 028 90319634 Penny Ambrose	Belfast	Belfast	Level 3 Diploma CCLD	www.blackieriver.ie
			Level 5 Diploma in Leadership CCLD	
Bryson Future Skills 028 90438211 Lynnette Brady	Belfast	Belfast	Level 2 Diploma CCLD	Bryson FutureSkills Employment & Training Initiatives
			Level 3 CCLD Apprenticeship	
Coalisland Training Services 028 87748512 Eileen Magill	Southern	Coalisland	Level 3 Diploma CCLD	child care (coalislandtrainingservices.co.uk)
Northern Regional College 028 2563 6221 Ballymena 028 7035 4717 Coleraine 028 9085 5000 Newtownabbey 028 7939 5238 Magherafelt 028 2766 0401 Ballymoney Joanne Pethick Assistant Head – Childcare & Counselling	Northern	Coleraine, Magherafelt, Ballymena & Newtownabbey	Level 2 Traineeship in Childcare	Search Results NRC Northern Regional College
		Magherafelt	Level 2 CCLD Apprenticeship	
		Coleraine, Magherafelt & Newtownabbey	Level 3 Diploma CCLD	
		Coleraine, Ballymena, Magherafelt & Newtownabbey	Level 3 Extended Diploma CCLD	
		Magherafelt & Newtownabbey	Level 3 CCLD Apprenticeship	

North West Regional College 02871276000	Western	Strand Road Campus, Limavady & Strabane	Level 2 Traineeship in Childcare	Course Search North West Regional College (nwrc.ac.uk)
		Strand Road Campus, Limavady & Strabane	Level 3 Diploma CCLD	
		Strand Road Campus	Early Childhood Education & Care Level 4 Higher National Certificate	
		Strand Road Campus, Limavady & Strabane	Early Childhood Education & Care Level 5 Higher National Diploma	
		Strand Road Campus	Early Childhood Studies Foundation Degree	
		Strand Road Campus	Level 5 Diploma in Leadership CCLD	
		Strand Road Campus	CCLD Level 4 Higher Level Apprenticeship	
		Strand Road Campus	Level 5 CCLD Higher Level Apprenticeship	
People First 028 90875875 Brenda Kernaghan	All CCP Areas	NI Wide	Level 2 Diploma CCLD	Home (people-1st.co.uk)
			Level 3 Diploma CCLD	
			Level 5 Diploma in Leadership CCLD	
Right Choice Training	Western	Tyrone, Fermanagh Derry	Level 2 Diploma CCLD	What we do Right Choice Training
			Level 3 Diploma CCLD	
		Tyrone, Fermanagh, Derry Armagh	Level 5 Diploma in Leadership CCLD	
Rutledge	All CCP Areas	All Rutledge Branches	Level 2 Diploma CCLD	Children's Care Learning & Development Courses
			Level 3 Diploma CCLD	

028 90329536 Belfast		Antrim, Armagh & Lurgan, Ballymena, Bangor, Belfast, Carrickfergus, Coleraine, Downpatrick, Derry, Enniskillen, Magherafelt, Omagh & Strabane	Level 5 Diploma in Leadership CCLD	Northern Ireland (rutledgegroup.co.uk)
South Eastern Regional College 028 92677225 Lisburn 03456007555 Newtownards 028 44615815 Downpatrick 028 91276600 Bangor	South Eastern	Lisburn, Newtownards & Downpatrick	Level 2 Diploma CCLD Level 3 Diploma CCLD	Search Courses - SERC
		Bangor, Lisburn & Downpatrick	Level 5 Diploma in Leadership CCLD (Management)	
		Downpatrick, Lisburn & Newtownards	Level 2 Traineeship in Childcare	
		Off site	Level 2 CCLD Work Based Apprenticeship	
			Level 3 CCLD Work Based Apprenticeship	
		Bangor, Downpatrick & Lisburn	Level 5 CCLD Higher Level Apprenticeship (Management)	
Southern Regional College 028-3839-7777 Armagh 028 38397800 Lurgan 03001231223 Newry	Southern	Armagh, Newry & Lurgan	Level 2 Diploma CCLD	Course Search (src.ac.uk)
		Armagh, Newry & Lurgan	Level 3 Diploma CCLD	
		Newry	Level 5 Diploma in Leadership CCLD (Management)	
		Armagh, Newry & Lurgan	Level 2 CCLD Traineeship	
		Lurgan	Level 3 CCLD Apprenticeship	
		Newry	Level 5 Early Childhood Studies Foundation Degree	
		Newry	BA(Hons) Early Childhood Studies	
South West College	Western	Omagh, Dungannon & Enniskillen	Level 2 Diploma CCLD	South West College - Courses (swc.ac.uk)

08456031881 Dungannon 028 82255237 Omagh		Omagh Dungannon & Enniskillen	Level 3 Diploma CCLD	
		Dungannon	Level 5 Diploma in Leadership CCLD	
		Omagh	Level 5 Early Childhood Studies Foundation Degree	
		Omagh	BA(Hons) Early Childhood Studies	
21 Training 028 71382438 Strabane enquiries@21.training	Western	Strabane & Derry/Londonderry	Level 2 CCLD Apprenticeship	Home - 21 Training
			Level 3 CCLD Apprenticeship	
Workforce Training Services 028 90247016 Belfast Bernie Breige 90747676	Belfast	Belfast	Level 2 Diploma CCLD	Workforce Training Services Belfast Northern Ireland (workforceonline.org)
			Level 3 Diploma CCLD	

Please note: this information is subject to change at the discretion of the provider – last updated August 2024

Table 2: Training Providers Currently Delivering Playwork Qualifications

Training Provider	CCP Area Covered	Specific Location of Delivery	Specific Playwork Qualifications On Offer	Website Link
Belfast Metropolitan College	Belfast	Milfield Campus, Belfast	Level 5 Diploma in Playwork – Last enrolment September 2024	Course Search - Belfast Met
Right Choice Training	Southern	Armagh	Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	What we do Right Choice Training
			Level 3 Diploma in Playwork	
	Western		Level 2 Diploma in Playwork	
			Level 3 Diploma in Playwork	

		Derry, Fermanagh & Tyrone		
People First	Belfast Northern Southern	Belfast, Crumlin, Lisburn, Banbridge	Level 3 Diploma in Playwork	Home (people-1st.co.uk)
			Level 5 Diploma in Playwork	

Please Note: this information is subject to change at the discretion of the provider – last updated August 2024

Table 3: Training Providers Currently Delivering Higher Level Qualifications i.e. Level 6 and above in Northern Ireland

Qualification Title	Level	Training Provider	Website Link
BA (hons) Early Childhood Studies	6	Stranmillis University College	Undergraduate - Stranmillis University College A College of Queen's University Belfast
The Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Primary Degree Course	6		
Post Graduate Certificate in Early Years Education (PGCE) (3-8 years)	6-7		Postgraduate - Stranmillis University College A College of Queen's University Belfast
MA Early Childhood Studies	7		
Postgraduate Certificate in Early Years Leadership [2 modules, 60 CAT's Points]; PG students can exit with: Postgraduate Certificate in Early Childhood Studies [2 modules, 60 CAT's Points]; Postgraduate Diploma in Early Childhood Studies [4 modules, 120 CAT's points]. Others stay on the pathway to complete their MA Early Childhood Studies [6 modules, 180 CAT's points].	7		MASTER OF ARTS (MA) EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES - Stranmillis University College A College of Queen's University Belfast
Masters of Early Childhood Studies	7		
BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies NI	6	Southern Regional College, Newry	Course Search (src.ac.uk)
BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies NI	6	Southern West College, Omagh	South West College - Courses (swc.ac.uk)

Qualification Title	Level	Training Provider	Website Link
BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies NI	6	Doncaster University	https://www.don.ac.uk/course/ba-hons-early-childhood-studies-top-up-northern-ireland/
BA (Hons) Childhood Development and Playwork	6	Leeds Beckett University	BA (Hons) Childhood Development and Playwork Course Leeds Beckett University
BEd (Hons) Primary Degree BEd (Hons) Post-Primary Degree PGCE (Irish Medium Education)	6-7	St. Marys College Belfast	BEd (Primary and Post-Primary) (stmarys-belfast.ac.uk)
Education (MEd) Diploma in Advanced Studies in Education (DASE) Advanced Certificate in Education (AdvCertEd)	7	St. Marys College Belfast	BEd (Primary and Post-Primary) (stmarys-belfast.ac.uk)
Masters in Childhood Studies	7	Queens University Belfast	Childhood Studies - Queen's University Belfast Prospects.ac.uk

How can I compare qualifications in the UK and Ireland?

To compare qualifications in the UK and Ireland visit the [Office of Qualifications and Examinations regulation](#) website.

This document is a ready reckoner for employers, learners and other interested parties, to enable broad comparisons between qualifications and their levels in Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

[Qualifications can Cross Boundaries \(qqi.ie\)](#)

How can I compare overseas qualifications?

The organisation UK ENIC (www.enic.org.uk) offers a paid service giving information on how overseas qualifications compare to UK qualifications.

Funding Support for Training

To help support learners in accessing training we have included this list of potential funding opportunities. Each funder will have their own criteria for what and how they fund and learners will have to apply for funding and show how they meet the required criteria.

Student Finance, including loans, bursaries, grants, student finance and paying back loans Student finance –

[Student finance for undergraduates: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Skill Up - [SKILL UP – the flexible skills programme | nidirect](#)

Student Finance NI – [Student Finance Northern Ireland \(studentfinancenir.co.uk\)](http://studentfinancenir.co.uk)

City and Guilds Funding for Training - [Funding For Training | City & Guilds \(cityandguilds.com\)](http://cityandguilds.com)

Department for Economy employment and skills programmes and careers service - [Employment and skills programmes \(including apprenticeships\) | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](http://economy-ni.gov.uk)

Belfast City Council Employment Academy City for working and learning - [City for working and learning: Training and support programmes \(belfastcity.gov.uk\)](http://belfastcity.gov.uk)

Financial help for adult learners - [Financial help for adult learners | nidirect](#)

Apprenticeships - [Apprenticeships | nidirect](#)

Useful Contacts, Websites, Resources

Childcare Partnerships (CCP)			
CCP Contacts	Office Address	Email Address	Telephone Number
Regional Training Officer Ashleigh Brown	HSCB 12-22 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BS	ashleigh.brown@hscni.net	(028)95363022
Regional Training Officer Anita Mason	Gransha Park House 15 Gransha Park Clooney Road Londonderry BT47 6FN	anita.mason@hscni.net	(028)95361042

Sector Skills Councils

SkillsActive

Website (for Northern Ireland): [SkillsActive](https://www.skillsactive.com/)

SkillsActive is officially recognised as the Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure, Learning and Well-being. Active Leisure, Learning and Well-being and is made up of seven sectors: sport, fitness, outdoors, playwork, caravans, hair and beauty.

Skills for Care & Development

Website: www.skillsforcareanddevelopment.org.uk

Skills for Care & Development (SfC&D) is the sector skills council for people working in early years, children and young people's services, and those working in social work and social care for adults and children in the UK. This sector has a workforce of over 1.87 million people. The SfC&D strategy aims to empower employers to develop a workforce that is innovative, skilled and sustainable;

SfC&D want to ensure

- workers are flexible and equipped to drive employer investment in service innovation towards integrated, community solutions
- workers have the skills, knowledge and values to deliver safe, high quality and professional services that promote public trust and confidence
- there are enough workers with the right skills in the right places, able to meet the increasing demand for care and support.

SfC&D's ambition is for a world-class workforce; one that fosters economic growth and sustainable communities across the UK. This will be reached through progressive high impact social work, social care and services for children.

Northern Ireland Social Care Council

Website: <https://niscc.info/>

NISCC is a partner in the Skills for Care and Development' (SfC&D) UK Alliance – the Sector Skills Council for those working in social work, social care, early years, children and young people's services. NISCC work with key partners and professionals in Northern Ireland and across the UK to ensure workforce learning and development is a key element for organisations providing social care services. Together NISCC are developing a workforce that is innovative, skilled and sustainable; one that fosters economic growth and sustainable communities across the UK.

NISCC in partnership with others regularly review and improve qualifications and occupational standards for the social work, social care, early years, children and young people's workforce. NISCC also has a statutory responsibility to approve and regulate standards for social work training at Degree level and in the Professional in Practice Framework. <https://niscc.info/workforce-development>

The **NISCC Learning Zone** <https://learningzone.niscc.info/> provides Social Workers, Social Care Workers and Early Years Professionals with a range of learning tools and information guides to support learning and development throughout their professional career. In this section you will find a **digital learning resource designed for Registered Childminders** to enable them to meet Minimum Standards requirements and core training in health and safety. A range of **Child Development Apps** are also accessible on this site.

Playwork Education and Training Council (NI)

Website: <http://www.playboard.org>

This is the Playwork Sector group that brings together employers, trainers, Awarding Bodies and other relevant Agencies, such as PlayBoard to oversee and inform the development of Playwork qualifications in Northern Ireland. The group feeds directly into the 4Nations Playwork Training Forum.

Family Support NI

Website: <http://www.familysupportni.gov.uk/>

The Health and Social Care Board for Northern Ireland, has developed the Northern Ireland Family Support website. The purpose of this website is to create a comprehensive database of family support and REGISTERED childcare services across Northern Ireland.

The website aimed at:

1. Members of the public wishing to access a specific family support service, help or advice.
2. Parents looking to access information on registered childcare and related financial support.
3. Frontline staff to help them get up to date information on the location of family support services.
4. Organisations/Partnerships can use it as a planning tool that can be linked to outcomes for children and young people.

The Family Support Website aims to be a comprehensive database of all family support and childcare services in Northern Ireland. If your organisation is not listed, please contact the FSNi team using the telephone number or e-mail address below:

Telephone 0845 600 6483 or Email info@familysupportni.gov.uk.

Early Years Teams

Early Years Teams are specialist teams of social workers within Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts. They're responsible for the registration, inspection, monitoring and support of childminders and day care providers.

Registration and inspection system

Social services must operate a registration and inspection system for the following types of childcare services

- day nurseries
- playgroups
- out-of-school care
- childminders
- summer and holiday schemes
- crèches

Some types of childcare do not require registration and inspection; these include nannies/au pairs, services that cater for children over 12 years old, services which run for less than two hours a day or services which operate for less than six days per year.

For more information on the role of the Trust Early Years team click on the link below:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/early-years-teams>

Contact your Trust Early Years Team: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/health-and-social-care-trusts-early-years-teams>

Northern Ireland Childminding Association

Website: www.nicma.org

NICMA is a membership organisation and professional body working to support and develop quality home-based childcare and learning for the benefit of children, families & communities. NICMA's vision for the future is one where all children are cared for, and provided with the opportunity to learn and develop in a safe, enjoyable home environment and where childminders are recognised and valued as skilled, qualified professionals.

PlayBoard Northern Ireland

Website: <http://www.playboard.org>

PlayBoard is an independent charity and the lead organisation for the development and promotion of children and young people's play in Northern Ireland. Since its establishment in 1985, PlayBoard has been committed to supporting children and young people's play through a combination of:

- Service delivery and development
- Campaigning and lobbying
- Research, evaluation and awareness raising
- Working in partnership with others to put play on the agenda of policy makers and resource providers
- Promoting best practice in Play and Playwork

A membership organisation, PlayBoard works closely with and provides support to over 100 member groups, all of whom are committed to helping us to achieve our goal of developing quality play opportunities that improve children and young people's lives across Northern Ireland.

Early Years the organisation for Young Children

Website: www.early-years.org

Early Years is the largest organisation in Northern Ireland working with and for young children. They are a non-profit making organisation and have been working since 1965 to promote high quality childcare for children aged 0 - 12 and their families. Early Years is a membership-based organisation, a registered charity, a company limited by guarantee and is governed by a Board of Directors. Currently Early Years provides information and training for parents, childcare providers, employers and local authorities.

Employers for Childcare

Website: www.employersforchildcare.org

Employers for Childcare is a campaigning charity which developed from a community project set up in 1998, encouraging employers to implement family friendly policies in the workplace. Childcare Solutions is part of Employers For Childcare Charitable Group, which also incorporates Employers for Childcare Vouchers.

Both Childcare Solutions and Employers for Childcare Vouchers operate as a Social Enterprise. The charity service offers advice and information to parents, carries out research and provides employment opportunities for those interested in a career in childcare.

Employers for Childcare provide an Approved Home Childcare service to parents, a recruitment services to day nurseries and other childcare setting and a unique childcare service for parents of children with a disability.

Altram

Website: www.altram.org

Altram is the regional support group for Irish Medium early years groups. It was founded in 1990 by local preschools in Derry, Belfast, Armagh and Newry. Altram was set up to; support Irish Medium early years providers, improve the standards of provision in the sector and promote the importance of early years in Irish Medium Education.

Funding

To help support learners in accessing training we have included this list of potential funding opportunities. Each funder will have their own criteria for what and how they fund and learners will have to apply for funding and show how they meet the required criteria.

- Career Development Loans - <https://www.gov.uk/career-development-loans>
- Student Finance NI —
http://www.studentfinancenl.co.uk/portal/page?_pageid=54,1265897&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL
- City and Guilds Bursaries - [Bursaries: funding for training | City & Guilds Foundation](https://www.cityandguilds.org/uk/bursaries)
([cityandguildsfoundation.org](https://www.cityandguilds.org/uk))
- Apprenticeships and Youth Training Delivery
Department for the Economy
Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast, BT2 8FD
Tel: 028 9025 7603 (ext.: 57603)
Web: www.economy-ni.gov.uk
<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/topics/employment-and-skills-programmes-including-apprenticeships>

