



NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh

NEVER STOP
LEARNING

FAMILY CHILD
EARLY
YEARS
PRACTICE
CHILDCARE
STUDIES

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES
AND PRACTICE

COURSE OVERVIEW

The Diploma/Bachelor of Arts (Early Childhood Studies and Practice) has been developed to meet the identified needs of practitioners in the early years sector who wish to pursue further education and training in a flexible manner, complimenting and supporting continued employment. This 4 year part time course of study, with options for interim exit awards, builds on practical experience, enhancing the learner's skills through exposure to theory, social policy, research practice and workbased experiential learning opportunities.

The course aims to provide practitioners currently working in the field of early childhood care and education an opportunity to upgrade their qualifications and further develop their skills and enhance their existing knowledge in a flexible and accessible format. This course was developed in response to substantial evidence of the needs of childcare practitioners who may already possess a recognised qualification at NFQ levels 5 or 6 and who wish to upgrade their qualification in a manner that will support their continued employment and their workplace. Alternatively, potential students without a recognised qualification, but with extensive experience in the childcare care and education sector are also encouraged to apply.

The course will be particularly suitable for:

- Early year practitioners in crèches, pre-schools, school age childcare services, special education services and childminding settings
- Managers of crèches, pre-schools, school age services, special education services
- Early childhood practitioners in the Health Services Executive and Tusla: the new Child & Family Support Agency
- City/County Childcare Committee members and staff of National Voluntary Childcare Organisations

- Practitioners in the child and family support sector
- Special Needs Assistants with infant classes
- Early years specialists working in advisory or mentoring roles, or those aspiring to such positions

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

1. **Academic** While formal academic qualifications are not necessary, those possessing a NFQ Level 5 or 6 qualification in the childcare or related disciplines will be encouraged to apply.
2. **Experiential** Applicants should be employed in an early childhood setting with a minimum of 2 years experience working in the sector or other relevant experience.
3. **Technological** Candidates must have computer proficiency and access to the internet.
3. **Age Requirement** Applicants must be over the age of 21. Applicants who have reached the age of 21 on the year of application will be admitted to the course on the grounds of mature years.

Places may be limited and applicants may be required to attend for interview prior to being offered a place on the course.

DELIVERY

This part-time distance learning course is delivered on a modular basis over 4 years using a blended learning approach. Blended learning combines traditional learning approaches with distance learning and utilises a variety of teaching methods and assessment techniques, suited to the adult learner returning to education. These methods include the following:

PROGRAMME FACTS

ECTS: 180

Level: 8

Mode of study: Blended Learning

Fees:

EU: €2,900 per annum

Non-EU: €3,400 per annum

Start date: Late August



- Self-study learning materials
- Required textbooks which students are expected to purchase
- Additional readings which may be available in the library or online
- Regional workshop sessions
- On-line learning (discussion boards, online collaboration, e-mail etc.)

ASSESSMENT

Assessment techniques may include a range of the following: written assignments, reflective learning journals, portfolios, presentations, group projects and written examinations (which take place in NUI Galway).

ACCREDITATION

Participants will have opportunities to achieve accreditation throughout the cycle of the course, recognising their efforts and achievements at different stages:

- Certificate in Arts (Early Childhood Studies and Practice) (NFQ: Level 7 Certificate) will be awarded on the successful completion of Year 1. (45 ECTS)
- Diploma in Arts (Early Childhood Studies and Practice) (NFQ: Level 7 Diploma) will be awarded at the end of Year 2. (90 ECTS)
- Bachelor of Arts (Early Childhood Studies and Practice) (NFQ: Level 8 Degree) will be awarded on the successful completion of full course, at the end of year 4. (180 ECTS)



WORKSHOPS

Students will be expected to attend a number of full day workshops throughout each academic year (September to May). In the main, these workshops will be held on Saturdays, with higher weighted modules requiring an additional two or three Friday workshops each year. Dates for all workshops will be provided to students at the commencement of each academic year. Workshops will be organised to be geographically accessible to the majority of learners. To date, a number of outreach centres have been established throughout the country. Previous venues have included Galway, Limerick, Cork, Donegal, Dundalk, Maynooth and Cavan. The number and location of venues held each year of the course is contingent on student uptake, the geographical spread of applicants and the availability of resources to support the course.

COURSE MODULES

YEAR ONE: CERTIFICATE CYCLE

Module	ECTS
Introduction to Learning	5
Psychology: The Developing Child 1	10
Child Protection and Safety in Childcare Services	10
Creative Development in Early Years	5
Health, Hygiene and Nutrition in Early Childhood	5
Work-based Project – Year 1	10

YEAR TWO: DIPLOMA CYCLE

Module	ECTS
Psychology: The Developing Child 2	10
Implementing the Early Years Curriculum	10
The Child and Family in Irish Law	5
Quality Awareness in Early Learning	10
Work-based Project – Year 2	10

YEAR THREE: DEGREE CYCLE

Module	ECTS
Children and Families in Society	10
Management Skills for Childcare Environments	10
Working in Varied Care and Education Settings	5
Effective Leadership for the Childcare Sector	5
Social Research Methodologies	5
Work-based Project – Year 3	10

YEAR FOUR: DEGREE CYCLE

Module	ECTS
Promoting Inclusion in Early Years Care and Education	10
Irish Social, Family and Childcare Policies: Critical Analysis	10
Critical Reflection on Learning and Practice	5
Research Dissertation	20

10 ECTS Modules will require attendance at a two day workshop and 5 ECTS modules will require attendance at a one day workshop.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

Students with previous relevant qualifications at NFQ Level 7 or 8 may be eligible to apply for exemptions from modules on this course of study or for advanced academic entry. Applicants for RPL will be required to prepare a detailed learning portfolio which must be submitted for assessment by the second Friday in June of the year of entry. Further information on the RPL process may be obtained from the course RPL co-ordinator. Suzanne Golden, e-mail: suzanne.golden@nuigalway.ie



A black and white photograph of two women. The woman on the left is older, with shoulder-length dark hair, looking towards the right. The woman on the right is younger, with long dark hair, smiling and looking down at a document she is holding. The document is a spiral-bound notebook with text that is partially legible, including words like 'educator', 'information', 'education', 'which', and 'teaching'.

**‘ACHIEVING THE DEGREE
HAS ALSO OPENED MANY
DOORS AND PROVIDED A
RANGE OF PROFESSIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES FOR ME.’**

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE AND CAREER RELEVANCE

The Early Years Sector is a rapidly changing field with increased demands for the provision of high quality care and education opportunities for young children. Practitioners in this sector must be able to respond to these needs and will require an expert knowledge and skills base to be able to do so effectively. The BA in Early Childhood Studies and Practice will provide you with the opportunity to gain an in depth understanding of the core early years knowledge areas and the confidence to apply this knowledge in support of young children's needs.

You will learn about:

- Child development including key theorists and the influence of environmental, biological, social and cultural factors on growth and development.
- Approaches to curriculum for early childhood and processes involved in curriculum development.
- The role and importance of play.
- Socialisation and the significance it has for the development of social competencies in children.
- The importance of parental involvement in early years care and education.
- Leadership and management skills and their significance for quality provision in the early years sector.

Using experiential learning to underpin and reinforce understanding is a key component of this course. You will learn the skills of reflective practice and how to use them in your daily work practices so that you can apply the core knowledge and skills acquired throughout this course. You will see your competencies expand and grow improving your ability as a professional practitioner with an in-depth understanding of the holistic needs of children and families, the importance of evidenced-informed practice and the role of early years services in the broader community and policy context.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Your career opportunities will grow as you will be able to hold a wider variety of occupational roles. Upon completion of this degree course students will be qualified to be employed in a variety of early years settings, including preschool settings, full daycares/crèches, playgroups, after school settings, drop in centres as well as a range of specialised locations such as family intervention settings. Due to the extensive range of course topics covered, the graduate will be skilled in a wide range of issues and areas that might also see them employed in early years support organisations, such as county/city childcare committees, in community outreach and development settings, family and community resource centres, or at a national level contributing to policy or course development arena.

PROGRESSION OPPORTUNITIES

Graduates of the Bachelor of Arts course may wish to pursue their education and would be qualified to do so in a range of areas including higher diplomas or master degrees in early childhood care and education, community development, education and training, family studies and family support, to name a few.



HOW CAN I APPLY?

Apply online at: www.nuigalway.ie/apply

WEBSITE

www.nuigalway.ie/adultlearning

WHO CAN I CONTACT?

Name: Course Administrator

Phone: +353 (0)91 492080

Email: earlychildhood@nuigalway.ie