

Brief Synopsis of the Programme - Further Information

In the table below the content flows from the modules in the column on the left at level 5 to the columns on the right at level 6.

6 Modules at Stage 1 - Level 5	6 Modules at Stage 2 - Level 6
5C21526 - Early Childhood Growth and Development (25 Credits)	6C21519 - The Developing Child (25 Credits)
5C21524 - Legislation, Regulations and Children's Rights (15 Credits)	6C21518 - Sociology and Social Policy in Early Learning and Care (15 Credits)
5C21523 - Professional Practice Placements in Early Learning and Care (25 Credits)	6C21517 - Advanced Professional Practice Placements in Early Learning and Care (25 Credits)
5C21527 - Curriculum, Play and Creative Studies (25 Credits)	6C21520 - Curriculum and Pedagogy (25 Credits)
5C21525 - Holistic Care of Children (Birth to Six Years) (15 Credits)	6C21522 - Supervision and Administration Skills in Early Learning and Care (20 Credits)
5C21528 - Understanding and Assisting Children with Additional Needs (15 Credits)	6C21521 - Inclusive Early Learning and Care (10 Credits)

The programme was developed involving a broad range of expertise and experience, including, early learning and care professionals, curriculum development experts, programme providers, regulators, employers, higher education representatives.

The programme will run on a part-time basis - offering the learner the flexibility, continuity, financial advantages, skill development, networking opportunities, and a more manageable learning experience, making it a favourable option for individuals seeking to balance education with other aspects of their lives.

Learners will have a mixture of classroom-based subjects, skills demonstrations, work placement and independent study. Learners will also be expected to complete assignments throughout the duration of the programme.

Principal Programme - Advanced Certificate in Early Learning and Care (Level 6)

On completion of Stage 2 - level 6 Learners will be able to:

1. Analyse a range of psychological, sociological and learning theories and perspectives in child development.
2. Utilise child development observations and assessments to promote the holistic development of Child/Children in the ELC setting
3. Examine how social policy and social systems both nationally and internationally impact on the collective rights of children and their families
4. Contribute to development and implementation of a range of policies, procedures and practises consistent with legislative and regulatory requirements to ensure continuity of experiences for children across a variety of childcare settings.
5. Lead curriculum planning, implementation and review to include a range of inclusive activities and experiences both child-led and adult-initiated in line with national frameworks and best practice guidelines
6. Utilise inclusive play opportunities in both indoor and outdoor environments to promote children's holistic development
7. Lead various types of inclusive creative arts experiences for children through different mediums to promote children's holistic development
8. Implement principles and practices of holistic health, care, well-being and safety of all children, informed by national and international guidelines and best practice, in the ELC environment
9. Facilitate and promote effective communication and teamwork in partnership with stakeholders in the ELC environment
10. Promote collaborative, ethical, inclusive work practices with all stakeholders.
11. Explore the significance of the supervisory and leadership role to promote best practice and professionalism in Early Learning and Care settings

12. Engage in reflective practice to inform personal and professional development and practice of self and others

Learners will engage in 6 mandatory modules.

Mandatory Modules:

6C21519 - The Developing Child (25 credits)

6C21518 - Sociology and Social Policy in Early Learning and Care (15 credits)

6C21517 - Advanced Professional Practice Placements in Early Learning and Care - this module will comprise of classroom hours and 150 hours of professional practice placement (25 credits)

6C21520 - Curriculum and Pedagogy (25 credits)

6C21522 - Supervision and Administration Skills in Early Learning and Care (20 credits)

6C21521 - Inclusive Early Learning and Care (10 credits)

Target Learners for the programme are individuals seeking to work in an Early Years and Care (ELC) leadership context, including Pre-school, Nursery and Creche supervisory roles, Playgroup Leaders and Special Needs Assisting supervisory roles. The DCEDIY current strategy promotes leadership capabilities as part of its overall ELC workforce development plans so Learners will be motivated to develop their skills through this professional ELC qualification. The current qualification requirement for room leaders is NFQ Level 6 (per DCEDIY, register of recognised Early Years qualifications.)

The programme modules will run as follows (Stage 2 Level 6):

Summary	Classroom / Face to Face	Online Directed / Face to Face (Virtual in-person Zoom)	Directed E-Learning Hours	Self-Directed	Workplace	Total Hours
6C21519 The Developing Child (25 credits)	41	35	35	115	0	225
	18%	15%	15%	51%	0%	100%
6C21518 Sociology and Social Policy in Early Learning and Care (15 credits)	23.5	22	18	85	0	148.5
	16%	15%	12%	57%	0%	100%
6C21520 Curriculum and Pedagogy (25 credits)	41	35	34	115		225
	18%	15%	15%	51%	0%	100%
6C21522 Supervision and Administration Skills in Early Learning and Care (20 credits)	31	30	30	93	0	185
	17%	16%	16%	51%	0%	1
6C21517 Advanced Professional Practice Placements in Early Learning and Care (25 credits)	30	25	34	72	150	311
	10%	8%	11%	23%	48%	1
6C21521 Inclusive Early Learning and Care (10 credits)	16.00000000	16	25	50	0	106.666666
	15%	15%	23%	47%	0%	100%
Total (Hours)	183	162	176	530	150	1200
Relative Percentage	15%	14%	14%	45%	13%	100%

Programme timetable (sample for 1 module) - timetables vary depending on the credit value reflecting total learner effort.

6C21518 Sociology and Social Policy in Early Learning and Care (15 credits)										
Sessions	Date	Session Type	Start	Finish	Inperson Classroom	Virtual In Person	Directed E-Learning Hours	Self Directed	Total Hours	
Session 1	Saturday 6 January 2024	Induction and Classroom, In Person, Face to Face Workshop 1	09:30am	17:30:pm	8					
Session 2	Tuesday 9 January 2024	Zoom In person Tutorial 1 of 14	20:00pm	21:30pm		1.5	1.5	2		
Session 3	Thursday 11 January 2024	Zoom In person Tutorial 2 of 14	20:00pm	21:30pm		1.5	1.5	2		
Session 4	Tuesday 16 January 2024	Zoom In person Tutorial 3 of 14	20:00pm	21:30pm		1.5	1.5	2		
Session 5	Thursday 18 January 2024	Zoom In person Tutorial 4 of 14	20:00pm	21:30pm		1.5	1.5	2		
Session 6	Tuesday 23 January 2024	Zoom In person Tutorial 5 of 14	20:00pm	21:30pm		1.5	1.5	2		
Session 7	Thursday 25 January 2024	Zoom In person Tutorial 6 of 14	20:00pm	21:30pm		1.5	1.5	2		
Session 8	Saturday 27 January 2024	Classroom, In Person, Face to Face Workshop 2	09:30am	13:30pm	4					
Session 9	Tuesday 30 January 2024	Zoom In person Tutorial 7 of 14	20:00pm	21:30pm		1.5	1.5	2		
Session 10	Thursday 1 February 2024	Zoom In person Tutorial 8 of 14	20:00pm	21:30pm		1.5	1.5	2		
Session 11	Tuesday 6 February 2024	Zoom In person Tutorial 9 of 14	20:00pm	21:30pm		1.5	1.5	2		
Session 12	Thursday 8 February 2024	Zoom In person Tutorial 10 of 14	20:00pm	21:30pm		1.5	1.5	2		
Session 13	Saturday 10 February 2024	Classroom, In Person, Face to Face Workshop 3	09:30am	13:30pm	4					
Session 14	Tuesday 13 February 2024	Zoom In person Tutorial 11 of 14	20:00pm	21:30pm		1.5	1.5	2		
Session 15	Thursday 15 February 2024	Zoom In person Tutorial 12 of 14	20:00pm	21:30pm		1.5	1.5	2		
Session 16	Tuesday 20 February 2024	Zoom In person Tutorial 13 of 14	20:00pm	21:30pm		1.5	1.5	4		
Session 17	Thursday 22 February 2024	Zoom In person Tutorial 14 of 14	20:00pm	21:30pm		1.5	1.5	4		
Session 18	Saturday 24 February 2024	Classroom, In Person, Face to Face Workshop 4	09:30am	13:30pm	4			4		
	Study weeks x 2							40		
	Assessment Due:		Saturday 9 March 2024			20	21	21	76	138

Validation Criteria and where the information relevant to the programme is detailed

<p>1.0 Programme Development:</p>	<p>1.1 The programme will show evidence of the involvement of a broad range of expertise and experience in its development, including, Early Learning and Care professionals, curriculum development experts, programme providers, regulators, employers, higher education representatives</p>	<p>6.1 Programme concept - Who was consulted</p>
	<p>1.2 Programmes leading to a major award at NFQ Level 5 are expected to be at least one (full time equivalent) academic year. Add-on programmes leading to an ELC major award at NFQ Level 6 for those with an ELC major at Level 5 are also expected to be at least one (full time equivalent) academic year.</p>	<p>3.1.18 Attendance options available to Learners 3.2.7 Brief synopsis of the programme</p>
<p>2.0 Teaching Staff:</p>	<p>2.1 Teaching staff for programmes leading to ELC awards will hold a relevant Major Award at NFQ Level 7 or higher and either a teaching qualification or five or more years of teaching experience on programmes designed to prepare Learners for practice in the ELC sector.</p>	<p>3.1.22 Staff Profiles: Qualifications and Experience</p>
	<p>2.2 The teaching team will include some with ELC qualifications, or equivalent, and previous experience working in the ELC sector.</p>	<p>3.1.22 Staff Profiles: Qualifications and Experience</p>
	<p>2.3 New staff members will be provided with an induction programme and all staff will have access to ongoing professional learning opportunities.</p>	<p>3.1.22 Staff Training Needs Analysis / Staff Development</p>
<p>3.0 Professional Practice Placements:</p>	<p>3.1 Professional Practice placements will be integral to the programme.</p>	<p>Professional Practice Placement Handbook ELC - Academic Teams and Host Organisations</p>
	<p>3.2 The programme will ensure that each (fulltime) Learner completes 150 hours of professional practice placement (per annum) in a minimum of two ELC settings: 50 hours working directly with children aged between 0 and 2 yrs. 8 mts. and 50 hours working with children 2 yrs. 8 mts. - 6 years. The final 50 hours can be with either of these two groups</p>	<p>Professional Practice Placement Handbook ELC - Learners Page 3</p>
	<p>3.3 All professional practice placement settings must be with entities currently registered as service providers with TUSLA and must meet the programme provider's criteria for placements selection.</p>	<p>Professional Practice Placement Handbook ELC - Academic Teams and Host Organisations</p>

		Step 1 - Policy and Procedure for Placement Selection with Host Organisations (Page 22)
	<p>3.4 During professional practice placements Learners will have the opportunity to:</p> <p>a) Observe experienced practitioners and reflect on these observations</p> <p>b) Integrate theory and practice</p> <p>c) Apply knowledge and practice</p> <p>d) Acquire and demonstrate the required competence, values and work practices with babies, toddlers and young children in the context of their setting, family and community under the supervision of more experienced practitioners</p> <p>e) Engage in self-reflection and self-evaluation of their own practice and engage in conversations with more experienced practitioners around their practice.</p>	<p>Professional Practice Placement Handbook ELC - Academic Teams and Host Organisations</p> <p>ELC Form 1 - Professional Practice Placement Arrangements Form (Page 42)</p>
	<p>3.5 Learners must be Garda Vetted before going on professional practice placement and have completed the current Children First E-learning programme.</p>	<p>Professional Practice Placement Handbook ELC - Learners Page 7</p> <p>Professional Practice Placement Handbook ELC - Academic Teams and Host Organisations</p> <p>Letter to Host Organisations (Page 37)</p>
	<p>3.6 Providers will have policies and procedures covering elements such as: selection of placements to ensure a quality learning experience; an effective system to ensure the ongoing quality of the practice placements; procedures for effective communication with the practice placements; assessment of Learners while on practice placement.</p>	<p>Professional Practice Placement Handbook ELC - Academic Teams and Host Organisations</p> <p>Step 1 - Policy and Procedure for Placement Selection with Host Organisations (Page 22)</p> <p>Step 5: Feedback and Debrief Post-Placement - Placement Review (Page 29)</p>
	<p>3.7 There will be a formal written agreement between the provider and the practice placement setting out respective roles and responsibilities and a code of practice for supervision of Learners.</p>	<p>Professional Practice Placement Handbook ELC - Academic Teams and Host Organisations, ELC Form 1 - Professional Practice Placement Arrangements Form (Page 42)</p>
	<p>3.8 Professional Practice placement supervisors will be suitably qualified at NFQ level above that of the Learner being supervised or will have appropriate experience/alternative qualifications.</p>	<p>3.1.21 Staff Profiles: qualifications and Experience</p>
	<p>3.9 Professional practice placement monitors will be suitably qualified and experienced in ELC, be Garda Vetted and have experience in</p>	<p>3.1.21 Staff Profiles: qualifications and Experience</p>

	the assessment of Learners.	
	3.10 Learners, professional practice placement supervisors and professional practice placement monitors will be informed about practice placement assessments, their link to programme learning outcomes and the marking criteria used.	3.1.22 Staff Training Needs Analysis / Staff Development Professional Practice Placement Handbook ELC - Academic Teams and Host Organisations
	3.11 While on professional practice placement appropriate support, guidance and supervision arrangements will be maintained for the Learner by the education programme team and supports will be in place for Learners who are experiencing difficulties during the professional practice placement.	7.7 Organisation and oversight of work-based learning
	3.12 Learners must pass the professional practice placement element of the programme before an award can be made.	7.7 Organisation and oversight of work-based learning
4.0 Learner Language Competence:	4.1 Minimum English language and literacy competence at entry to the programme for speakers of English as a second language would be B2 in writing, reading, listening and speaking.	8.2 Entry Procedures Entry Criteria - 40 - 49 (Upper-Intermediate - B2)

Employment Prospects of Successful Learners:

This Early Learning & Care award is the milestone for the new professional standard award in the Early Years sector. Learners who complete this course will meet the minimum professional qualification required under legislation for a room leader/lead educator role in the ELC sector. This Level 6 certificate will be the equivalent of one full-time academic year. Each Learner must complete 150 hours of professional practice placements per annum (full-time equivalent), in a minimum of two settings: (1) one working directly with children from birth to 2 years 8 months, and (2) one working with children aged from 2 years 8 months to 6 years with an appropriate balance between these two settings."

The Employment Regulation Orders commenced on 15 September 2022, providing new minimum hourly rates of pay for various roles - relevant to graduates of this programme as follows:

€13.00 for Early Years Educators/School-Age Childcare practitioners.

The Orders are being supported by Government's €221 million Core Funding Scheme, announced by Roderic O'Gorman TD, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth as part of Budget 2022, which will see increases in funding to early learning and childcare services to support improvements in staff wages, alongside a commitment to freeze parental fees. The commencement date for the Orders – 15 September – coincides with the official launch of Core Funding

For the first time, the Early Learning and Care sector workforce will have access to a suite of professional awards from entry level qualifications at Level 5 to Honours degree level, that recognise the value of professionals at all these levels working in ELC settings across the country.