

Your Degree in Early Years...What Next?

What skills have I gained from my Early Years degree?

A degree in Early Years Education will produce a competent, professional practitioner committed to providing high quality services to children aged 0-6 years. The Early Years professional understands the many facets of the young child's development and how best to plan, and implement programmes that address the child's needs in a holistic way.

Core skills gained from a degree in Early Years Education include:

Excellent leadership and communication skills. Ability to relate well with children to foster their development educationally and socially.
Organisational and planning skills. Experience of delivery of suitable curriculum in early education settings for children from 0 to 6 years of age.
Ability to assess children's progress and keep records as appropriate. Capable of working under pressure and managing time well to ensure the needs of the children are met.
Adept at delivering a differentiated curriculum to meet the individual needs of the children. Adaptive in making the classroom suitable for each child's needs. Taking into account the child's cultural and family background.
Innovative in using different methods of working with the children to give them a holistic education. Creative use of Music Art and Drama in the classroom setting.
Practical skills to deliver child health, exercise and nutrition and excellent at looking after the physical care of the children.
Managing other workers in a childcare setting and delegating tasks where appropriate. Excellent at working on own initiative.

Other key characteristics required for employment in Early Years Education roles:

- IT skills.
- Professionalism to ensure calm in all situations.
- Motivation skills to encourage children to succeed in their learning.
- Time management skills to structure the day so that the needs of the children and the curriculum targets are met.
- Ability to work well as a team player to enhance the learning and working environment.

What can I do with my Early Years Education degree?

Graduating from your Early Years Education degree leaves you with a diverse range of opportunities to consider. Ideally you will spend a lot of your final year carefully researching your options for **graduate employment** or **further study**.

Graduate Employment

Demand for pre-school education has been affected by changes in family structures, a commitment to equal opportunities and the demands of the labour market. Consequently there are increasing demands for qualified

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graduates in early childhood education in both the private and public sectors and at various levels such as child-care workers/leaders, centre leader/manager, curriculum developer, also community outreach, early intervention specialist and special education.

Additional employment opportunities include; Early Years Education; Early Years Childcare; Children with Specific Learning Needs; Children's Residential Care Centres; Family and Community Support Centres; After School Services; Youth Services, Disability Support, Family Support Worker, Childcare Worker in Refuge, ...

Popular career choices for Early Years Education graduates are as follows:

Room Leader

The Room Leader is responsible for the organisation and day to day running of the room providing a stimulating and varied programme of play, and ensuring the well-being of the children. They are involved in the planning, implementing and reviewing all developmental programmes so as to provide for the children's physical, emotional, social, linguistic and cognitive development ensuring other staff member's participation in this. The leader should formulate a daily routine for the children which offers a wide variety of play activities, but allows for flexibility as the situation / occasion / child demands. The following should be provided at each session (depending on age group): sand, water, paint, dough / clay, books and stories, music and nature and opportunities for adventure play, manipulative play, home-corner, and outdoor play.

Room Assistant

The Room Assistant's role is that of supporting all developmental programmes so as to provide for the children's physical, emotional, social, linguistic and cognitive development. They create a friendly relaxed atmosphere, which establishes in the children a feeling of security, confidence, and trust. They welcome the children when they arrive. They undertake certain domestic duties within the service e.g. preparation of snacks/meals, cleansing of equipment etc.

Childcare Manager

The role of the Childcare Manager is that of ensuring the welfare of all children attending the service is of paramount importance and that their development and well-being on every level is catered for. It involves managing a Childcare Staff team in providing a high quality early childhood service that provides a safe and nurturing environment and promotes the holistic needs of each child attending the service. The Manager has the overall responsibility in the daily management of the service, its staff team and the children attending the service and will report directly to the Board of Directors. They are responsible for drafting and implementing all childcare policies and procedures for the service, and to ensure that they are adhered to on a daily basis. The supervision and support the team of Room Leaders and Room Assistants is an important part of the role.

Childcare /Pre School Worker

The Childcare/Preschool Worker is responsible for providing a safe and developmentally appropriate environment and to implement preschool and afterschool programmes in accordance with all relevant legislation, policies and procedures. The Childcare/Preschool worker will be responsible for assisting in the planning and implementing the Aistear Preschool Curriculum Framework. They must ensure the development and safety of all children in accordance with relevant legislation and policies in both preschool and afterschool settings. The Childcare/Preschool Worker will be respectful of children and parents, and ensure that equipment and facilities are clean, safe and well maintained. The Childcare Worker is responsible for the planning and implementation of activities, as a member of the childcare team, that meet the physical, emotional, intellectual

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and social needs of the children attending the centre, particularly in line with the Aistear Pre-school Curriculum Framework.

Barnardo's

Barnardo's seeks to attract the best people to their workforce by offering competitive terms and conditions of employment, a dynamic, flexible and challenging work experience, work life balance structures as well as opportunities for advancement and development. They offer a range of employment opportunities from working in children's services, advocacy, fundraising, their shops, administration and management. For further information check the website www.barnardos.ie

Youth and Community Work

Graduates of Early Years Education have secured employment as Managers of early childhood centres and other management positions in the Health Service Executive, County Childcare Committees, and National Voluntary Organisations.

More employment due to the new ECCE Scheme

The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme provides a free year of early childhood care and education for children of pre-school age. In general, children are eligible for the ECCE scheme if they are aged over 3 years 2 months and less than 4 years 7 months on 1 September of the year that they will be starting. The upper age limit can be extended in some cases – see 'Rules' below. The State pays a capitation fee to participating playschools and day-care services. In return, they provide a pre-school service free of charge to all children within the qualifying age range for a set number of hours over a set period of weeks (see 'How the ECCE scheme is provided' below). In general, children only qualify for ECCE in one school year. However, a child who has been assessed as having a disability may be able to spread their free pre-school year over 2 years.

Tip: A higher capitation rate is payable where settings are led by staff with a relevant bachelor degree (minimum of Level 7 on the NFQ) and have three years post qualification experience.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Tutor:

Most ABA tutor posts exist in specialised ABA schools/pre-schools and in ABA home programmes. These posts usually involve working with children with autism, although some posts will involve working with children and adults with a range of difficulties.

Typically, the criteria that employers set down is for applicants to have a minimum qualification of degree in psychology or a related area. An Early Years Education qualification would satisfy the criteria for many potential employers. In the case of home programmes, many parents require tutors to have qualifications that meet the [Department of Education and Science's Home Tuition scheme's](#) requirements which may be subject to change in the future.

If a student would like to work in home programmes, it is advised to go to www.bacb.com to find the name of a local Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA). BCBA's are responsible for supervising ABA programmes, although decisions about employing ABA tutors will be made jointly with the parents of the child.

ABA tutor positions may also be available in schools run by organisations such as **Saplings, Autism Ireland, Jonix and the Irish Centre for Behavioural Support and Research**, however this list is not exhaustive. Many employers would look favourably on evidence of previous training or experience in ABA and/or special needs education.

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Introductory courses to ABA are offered by the Institute of Child Education and Psychology, the Red Door organisation and the Developing Ability Partnership. St. Catherine's Association (based in Wicklow) currently operates an ABA tutor intern scheme, which provides education and experience in ABA.

What are the class of 2015 doing?

Company	Role
Prospero Teaching	Primary School Teacher
Woodhaven Childcare and Montessori Academy	Childcare provider
Wee Wisdom Preschool	Classroom leader
Cope Foundation	Care Assistant
Giggles Childcare, CrossBarry	Early Years Practitioner
Park Academy	Montessori Teacher
High Care Child Care	Early Years Practitioner
Private	Child Minder
Kindercare Child Care	Pre-school Teacher
Realtai Childcare	Childcare Assistant
St.Annes Day Nursery	Afterschool Leader
From Home 2 Home	Early years room leader
Realtai Childcare	Childcare practitioner
Works in a home, personal childminder	Childminder
Private employment	Childminder
St. Patrick's Preschool	Preschool Assistant
Midleton Educate Together N.S.	Special Needs Assistant
Brightsparks Childcare Centre	Early Years Practitioners

If you would like to know more about the First Destinations Survey please contact the Careers Office.

Further Resources

The following websites may be helpful to you:

www.activelink.ie (*this is a great resource for all of the non-profit sector jobs in Ireland each week, sign up for the weekly email)

www.gradireland.com

www.earlychildhoodireland.ie

www.educationposts.ie

www.prospects.ac.uk

www.mycit.ie/careers

www.acpireland.com

Tip: If you are unsure about what direction to take after your degree, the Gradireland Careers Report is a useful tool for matching your personal information and preferences to potential careers. Log on and register at www.gradireland.com to use the report.

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Tip: If you want to find out more information about what is involved in any of the job titles listed in this document, check out the *A to Z Occupation List* on www.careersportal.ie

Postgraduate Study here in CIT

Gaining a postgraduate qualification brings with it many benefits. It enables you to gain further, more specialised knowledge in your field of study. It can give you a specific technical, vocational or professional qualification and facilitate you in developing a range of key skills including; research, analysis, evaluation and written communication.

For further information, go to the “Further/ Postgraduate Study” link on the Students page of our website; <http://www.mycit.ie/careers>.
www.postgradireland.com

Suitably qualified graduates are eligible to apply for entry to the one year add-on;

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Early Years Education (level 8)

The BA (Hons) in Early Years Education contains both theoretical and practical modules with a strong research and management focus and it is envisaged that the majority of graduates will find employment either working in a managerial capacity directly with children; setting up and managing their own childcare centres or working within the HSE & Childcare Committees as regional coordinators or project managers etc. Additionally, it is anticipated that graduates will be in a position to contribute nationally to the development of policy and provision within the sector.

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Master of Arts in Play Therapy

This programme is a postgraduate clinical training in Play Therapy. It aims to equip practitioners with the advanced knowledge and clinical capability that would match international standards of best practice within the Play Therapy profession. Students will be eligible for membership of the Irish Play Therapy Association (www.ipta.ie) on successful completion of the training. Until the development of this training in CIT, IPTA had only accepted membership from Play Therapists who had undertaken a training accredited by the British Association of Play Therapists (BAPT). [The Irish Play Therapy Association was set up to establish and maintain standards for play therapists and to inform and protect members of the public seeking and availing of their service] (www.ipta.ie). All full members of IPTA are expected to adhere to the code of practice which aims to provide a framework for addressing ethical issues and to encourage the highest standard of practice.

Postgraduate Study - Courses available elsewhere

(These are just some examples, there are many more, use www.qualifax.ie)

Postgraduate Diploma in Practice based Play Therapy NUIG

Play therapy is a method of alleviating a child’s emotional, conduct, social and mental health problems using play and creative arts therapies. It enables children to help themselves and enable their potential. This programme offers an opportunity to obtain an internationally recognised play therapy qualification and to become a Certified Play Therapist. The course content has been developed to meet the Play Therapy International (PTI) standards of practice and training and in conjunction with Play Therapy (Ireland). Must have 2yrs work experience plus undergrad qualification.

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Masters in Child Family and Community Studies DIT

This programme would be of interest to graduates of Early Years education. Its overall aim is to examine how human capacity can be enhanced across the lifespan in the socio-educational sector. It will provide participants with a critical understanding of concepts and approaches to enabling individuals and groups to realise their potential. The programme aims to educate students to high levels of contemporary theoretical awareness and to create an atmosphere of rigorous academic enquiry and writing.

Potential employers include:

Community based organisations and projects both at a voluntary and statutory capacity

- National rights focused organisations and advisory groups
- Family support services
- Services catering for the care, education and advocacy of children and families in society.

Graduates may also adopt research and advisory roles in relation to development and planning for such services. Graduates will be in a position to critically evaluate existing services and programmes and to visualize future possibilities for better service provision. The programme will meet the needs of professionals who are already working in the area of social care/work, early education, youth and family work and related areas. It will also serve to provide new graduates with a unique opportunity to gain a competitive edge prior to embarking on a career in these fields or in the field of academia.

Social Work

With your level 8 Degree qualification you can apply to do a Social Work qualification. The following courses are available in UCC at present: **(however graduates, must first successfully completed an approved conversion programme, i.e. the Higher Diploma in Social Policy @UCC in order to be eligible for entry)**

The Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Studies (PGDSWS)

This is a two-year full-time course that combines academic study with fieldwork placements. The PGDSWS course is accredited by the Health and Social Care Professionals Council (CORU). The course leads to an academic qualification and will make you eligible to register as a social worker with regulatory bodies in Ireland (CORU) and internationally.

The Master of Social Work (MSW)

This is a two-year full-time course that combines academic study with fieldwork placements. The MSW course is accredited by the Health and Social Care Professionals Council (CORU). When you finish this course you will have an academic qualification that will enable you to register as a social worker with regulatory bodies in Ireland (CORU) and internationally.

Psychology

Higher Diploma Psychology Conversion Course UCC

This allow entry into a Master's programme thereafter.

The Higher Diploma in Psychology is an entry level qualification (equivalent to a degree). Completion of the programme entitles graduates to membership of the PSI or BPS a prerequisite for most postgraduate training or research programmes. Clear and comprehensive information on postgraduate opportunities and career development may be found on these national society websites at www.psihq.ie or www.bps.org.uk.

Teaching

Professional Masters of Education

Honours graduates from the Bachelor of Arts (Honours in Early Years Education(Level 8) can apply for the course subject to meeting other requirements(Irish to a certain level etc) The Professional Master of Education (Primary Teaching) is a two-year, full-time Level 9 postgraduate professional teacher education programme designed to qualify graduates as Primary teachers. To be eligible for this course, candidates must have obtained a suitable Primary Degree. There are 2 places that offer a full-time postgraduate course in Primary School Teaching.

- St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin
- Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

There is a centre offering an online course with some classroom teaching in vacation/weekend time. [Hibernia College](#) is HETAC accredited.

Further information

Links

- [The Teaching Council of Ireland](#)
Home page: <http://www.teachingcouncil.ie>.
- [Hibernia College - online course in Primary Education](#)
Home page: <http://www.hiberniacollege.net>.
- [The Department of Education](#)
Home page: <http://www.education.ie>.
- [Information on applying to NUI colleges for PGDE](#)
Home page: <http://www.pac.ie>.
- [Details on Qualifications available in the UK](#)
Home page: <http://www.prospects.ac.uk>