



Chief Examiner Report

Qualification title: NCFE CACHE Level 3 Extended Diploma for Children's Care Learning and Development (Northern Ireland) (603/7477/9)

Assessment code: CCLDNI EDEA

Paper number: P003173, P003174, P003175

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Introduction

This report contains information in relation to the external assessment from the chief examiner, with an emphasis on the standard of learner work within this assessment window.

The aim is to highlight where learners generally performed well as well as any areas where further development may be required.

Key points:

- grade achievements
- administering the external assessment
- standard of learner work
- assessment structure
- use of word allocation
- criteria requirements and command verbs
- referencing of external assessment tasks
- assessment criteria (AC)
- regulations for the conduct of external assessment.

It is important to note that learners should not sit the external assessment until they have taken part in the relevant teaching of the full qualification content.

Grade achievements

CCLDNI EDEA

Children's development.

Grade	NYA	D	C	B	A	A*	Learners	37
% of learners	5.41%	37.84%	32.43%	16.22%	5.41%	2.70%	Pass rate	94.59%

Children's play and learning.

Grade	NYA	D	C	B	A	A*	Learners	93
% of learners	7.53%	25.81%	36.56%	20.43%	8.60%	1.08%	Pass rate	92.47%

Safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of children.

Grade	NYA	D	C	B	A	A*	Learners	24
% of learners	0%	8.33%	62.50%	20.83%	8.33%	0%	Pass rate	100%

Administering the external assessment

The external assessment is invigilated and must be conducted in line with our [Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment](#) document. Learners may require additional pre-release material in order to complete the tasks within the paper. These must be provided to learners in line with our regulations.

Learners must be given the resources to carry out the tasks and these are highlighted within the [Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery \(QSID\)](#) document.

Standard of learner work

In general, the lower grades were of a good standard and mostly achieved, with the key themes relevant throughout. It was clear that learners had been encouraged to attempt the A* grades, however this should not be to the detriment of achieving B grades, which at times was brief. When attempting the higher grades, specifically A and above, the relevance to the theme occasionally became obscured.

Assessment structure

Centres should remind learners to clearly identify which assessment criteria they are providing a response to, and learners should be encouraged not to combine criteria. Criteria should flow in a logical order, and the text must be relevant to the assessment criteria and theme. The format should follow the 'Extended assessment - information for tutors and learners' to ensure the assessment criteria is specifically contained within the learner's response.

Use of word allocation

Most learners made good use of the word count available. Centres should continue to encourage learners to utilise the full word allocation to ensure criteria is covered in detail and good depth.

Criteria requirements and command verbs

Centres should remind learners to continue to refer to the assessment theme throughout, ensuring responses link clearly to the chosen theme. It's also key to encourage learners to attempt the higher criteria where appropriate. A reminder to centres to ask learners to fully comply with command verbs such as "analyse" and "evaluate" within the higher grades and fully encompass the relevant theme within this.

Referencing of external assessment tasks

Most learners used references appropriately to support their own ideas and opinions, this and had carried out further reading and research. Learners should continue to add quotation within inverted commas and ensure the citation supports the discussion points. At times some learners relied too much on other sources of information, which were used in place of their own knowledge and understanding, without appropriately referencing. Large sections of citation were included which did not enhance the text and subsequently limited achievement of a grade.

Assessment criteria (AC)

CCLDNI EDEA – Theme 1

D Criteria

There was mostly clear identification of key issues in the 'D' grade. Evidence is provided to show how the issues identified link to the chosen theme. Some learners identified aspects and stages of child development rather than key issues. Additionally, some learners veered more into play and learning rather than physical growth and development. Learners should be reminded that this is not necessarily about skills unless directly linked to growth etc. Some learners still only included one traceable reference leading to a Not Yet Achieved (NYA) grade and these were recorded separately as D3 was therefore not in text.

C Criteria

Learners mostly made links to their own experiences within practice to show understanding of an enabling environment and key values and principles. However, some learners described the reasons why we create an enabling environment and missed information on what this is and how it is created. Additionally, the environment must link directly to promoting the theme and contain consideration of the specific bullet points, such as the regulatory frameworks included in the 'Extended assessment - information for tutors and learners' resource. In respect of C2, 'Explain the relevant values and principles which underpin the chosen theme', although these were identified, they were often generic and did not always link to the chosen theme.

B Criteria

In B1, learners were often describing a recognised theory or philosophical approach rather than developing a discussion. Additionally, learners were including several theories and approaches without developing the response fully, this is needed to meet the grade level requirements. Learners must only select **one** theory or philosophical approach which must be discussed and fully developed; however, other theories or approaches can be used to support the main points of discussion and provide a range of views for the original theory. Many learners were able to identify specific ways to ensure the provision of equality and diversity, but these must include a range that is fully analysed and linked to the theme. Centres are reminded that learners should not submit generic content for B2. Analysis of own practice for B3 must be written in the first person and be clear as to how own practice will be informed, based on the previous reflections. The theme must be made clear within the response.

A Criteria

A1 was awarded when the discussion in the D grade was effectively developed to consider aspects of the theme or key issues from multiple perspectives. Centres are advised to encourage learners to acknowledge the full criteria requirements and command words for A2, as underdeveloped discussion has prevented a number of learners from achieving an overall A grade. A reminder to centres that this should not be a description of 'good practice' but a reflection and explanation of own skills to support development in respect of the theme.

A* Criteria

Although a limited number of learners attempted the A* criteria, learners should recap on command verbs and ensure they have critically evaluated, being confident that the evaluation goes into depth and is embedded in the context of the text, with a clear flow of discussion points written around the theme.

CCLDNI EDEA – Theme 2

D Criteria

In the main, there was a clear identification of key issues in the D grade, however, some responses were particularly brief, and the key issues not considered. These were subsequently underdeveloped for a full explanation within D2, and the key issues were not linked to the theme. This resulted in links between key issues and chosen theme not always being clear. There must be two traceable references that are within the text, both of which are identifiable and relevant to the key issues and theme.

C Criteria

Many learners were able to describe an enabling environment linked to play and learning. Examples from practice were clear, with some links to holistic development included. Again, an understanding of the regulatory frameworks was missing and, if attempted, was quite limited. Theory relating to practice was also not fully explored in many responses. Some values and principles were identified but were often generic and did not always link to the chosen theme. The relevance of these to the theme must be highlighted in the explanation.

B Criteria

Comments previously identified under Theme 1 also pertain to Theme 2. Learners described a recognised theory or philosophical approach rather than developing a discussion. Additionally, learners were including several theories and approaches without developing the response fully to meet the grade level requirements. Learners must only select **one** theory or philosophical approach, which must be discussed and fully developed; however, other theories or approaches can be used to support the main points of discussion and provide a range of views for the original theory. Many learners were able to identify specific **ways** to ensure the provision of equality and diversity, but these must include a range that is fully analysed and linked to the theme. Centres are reminded that learners should not submit generic content for B2. Analysis of **own** practice for B3 must be written in the first person and be clear as to how own practice will be informed based on the previous reflections. The theme must be made clear within the response.

A Criteria

As with Theme 1, A1 was awarded when the discussion in the D grade was effectively developed to consider aspects of the theme or key issues from multiple perspectives. Evaluation of these was developed and evaluative for those achieving the grade. Centres are advised to encourage learners to acknowledge the full criteria requirements and command words for A2, as underdeveloped discussion has prevented several learners from achieving an overall A grade.

A* Criteria

Although a limited number of learners attempted the A* criteria, learners should recap on command verbs and ensure they have critically evaluated, being confident that the evaluation goes into depth and is embedded in the context of the text, with a clear flow of discussion points written around the theme.

CCLDNI EDEA – Theme 3

D Criteria

There was mostly clear identification of key issues in the D grade. Evidence is provided to show how the issues identified link to the chosen theme. Some learners still only included one traceable reference leading to a NYA grade and these were recorded separately as D3, therefore not in text.

C Criteria

Learners mostly made links to their own experiences within practice to show understanding of an enabling environment and key values and principles. However, some learners described the reasons why we create an enabling environment and missed information on what this is and how it is created. Additionally, the environment must link directly to promoting the theme and contain consideration of specific bullet points, such as the regulatory frameworks included in the 'Extended assessment - information for tutors and learners' resource document. In respect of C2, values and principles although these were identified they were often generic and do not always link to the chosen theme.

B Criteria

In B1, learners were often describing a recognised theory or philosophical approach rather than developing a discussion. Additionally, learners were including several theories and approaches without developing the response fully, this is needed to meet the grade level requirements. Learners must only select **one** theory or philosophical approach which must be discussed and fully developed; however, other theories or approaches can be used to support the main points of discussion and provide a range of views for the original theory. Many learners were able to identify specific ways to ensure the provision of equality and diversity, but these must include a range that is fully analysed and linked to the theme. Centres are reminded that learners should

not submit generic content for B2. Analysis of own practice for B3 must be written in the first person and be clear as to how own practice will be informed, based on the previous reflections. The theme must be made clear within the response.

A Criteria

A1 was awarded when the discussion in the D grade was effectively developed to consider aspects of the theme or key issues from multiple perspectives. Centres are advised to encourage learners to acknowledge the full criteria requirements and command words for A2, as underdeveloped discussion has prevented several learners from achieving an overall A grade. A reminder to centres that this should not be a description of 'good practice' but a reflection and explanation of own skills to support development in respect of the theme.

A* Criteria

Although a limited number of learners attempted the A* criteria, learners should recap on command verbs and ensure they have critically evaluated, being confident that the evaluation goes into depth and is embedded in the context of the text, with a clear flow of discussion points written around the theme. It was noticed that the learners who had attempted the A* grades, included a text for A*2 which is not necessary as a separate entity. Thoughtful ideas should be reflected within the A* submission and consolidate the key issues.

Regulations for the conduct of external assessment

Malpractice

There were zero instances of malpractice in this assessment window. The chief examiner would like to take this opportunity to advise learners that instances of malpractice (for example, copying of work from another learner) will affect the outcome on the assessment.

Maladministration

There were zero instances of maladministration in this assessment window. The chief examiner would like to highlight the importance of adhering to the regulations for the conduct of external assessment document in this respect.

Chief examiner: Julie Green

Date: 10 March 2026