



Qualification Specification



Qualification summary

Qualification title	NCFE CACHE Level 2 Technical Specialist in Adverse Childhood Experiences in Early Years (Certificate)
Ofqual qualification number (QN)	610/4567/6
Guided learning hours (GLH)	120
Total qualification time (TQT)	145
Minimum age	19
Qualification purpose	This qualification will provide learners with an opportunity to develop an understanding of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) relevant to their current or future roles and will equip them with basic understanding of techniques for preventing and addressing ACEs in practice.
Grading	Achieved/not yet achieved
Assessment method	Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence
Work/industry placement experience	The learner must be working within an appropriate setting to be able to meet the assessment requirements of this qualification.
Occupational standards	This qualification builds on the outcomes within the Early Years Practitioner occupational standard (ST0888). The specialist duties have been written to build upon the knowledge, skills and behaviours in the Early Years Practitioner standard. 1. Explain the impact of adverse childhood conditions to colleagues 2. Signpost to professional support for effective intervention 3. Develop strategies for effective support when supporting trauma experienced children for improved outcomes 4. Support, coach and mentor colleagues for best practice
Regulation information	This is a regulated qualification. The regulated number for this qualification is 610/4567/6.
Funding	This qualification may be eligible for funding. For further guidance on funding, please contact your local funding provider.



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Section 1: introduction

Centres must ensure they are using the most recent version of the Qualification Specification on the NCFE website.

Aims and objectives

This qualification aims to:

- focus on the study of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)
- offer breadth and depth of study, incorporating a key core of knowledge

The objectives of this qualification are to enable the learner to:

- explore childhood and family structures
- explore ACEs and understand potential outcomes for children enduring ACEs
- understand the role of the practitioner supporting children impacted by ACEs
- develop strategies to improve outcomes for children affected by ACEs

Support Handbook

This Qualification Specification must be used alongside the mandatory Support Handbook, which can be found on the NCFE website. This contains additional supporting information to help with planning, delivery and assessment.

This Qualification Specification contains all the qualification-specific information you will need that is not covered in the Support Handbook.

Guidance for entry and registration

This qualification is designed for learners wishing to increase their knowledge and understanding of ACEs.

It may also be useful to learners studying qualifications in the following areas:

- teaching and learning
- early years

Registration is at the discretion of the centre, in accordance with equality legislation, and should be made on the Portal. However, learners should be aged 19 or above to undertake this qualification, and must be employed within an appropriate setting that allows learners to meet the assessment requirements of the qualification. It would also be advantageous for the learner to hold a relevant qualification at level 2 or level 3.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that all learners, are capable of achieving the learning outcomes (LOs) and complying with the relevant literacy, numeracy and health and safety requirements. Learners registered on this qualification should not undertake another qualification at the same level with the same or a similar title, as duplication of learning may affect funding eligibility.



Achieving this qualification

To be awarded this qualification, learners are required to successfully achieve **three units** from the mandatory units.

Please refer to the list of units in appendix A or the unit summaries in section 2 for further information.

To achieve this qualification, learners must successfully demonstrate their achievement of all LOs of the units as detailed in this Qualification Specification. A partial certificate may be requested for learners who do not achieve the full qualification but have achieved at least one whole unit; partial achievement certificate fees can be found in the Fees and Pricing document on the NCFE website.

Age ranges covered by the qualification

This qualification relates to working with children in early years settings, from birth to five years of age, for early years practitioners. Learners should cover the full range of ages but focus on their own experience/age group as appropriate to their work and job roles.

Progression

Learners who achieve this qualification could progress to the following:

- employment:
 - early years educator
 - teaching and learning practitioner
- higher education:
 - early years education
 - teaching and learning

Resource requirements

There are no mandatory resource requirements for this qualification, but centres must ensure learners have access to suitable resources to enable them to cover all the appropriate LOs.

Realistic work environment (RWE) requirement/recommendation

The assessment of competence-based criteria should ideally be conducted within the workplace. However, in instances where this is not feasible, learners can be assessed in a Realistic work environment (RWE) designed to replicate real work settings.

It is essential for organisations utilising a RWE to ensure it accurately reflects current and authentic work environments. By doing so, employers can be confident that competence demonstrated by a learner in a RWE will be translated into successful performance in employment.

In establishing a RWE, the following factors should be considered.

The work situation being represented is relevant to the competence requirements being assessed:

- the work situation should closely resemble the relevant setting



- equipment and resources that replicate the work situation must be current and available for use to ensure that assessment requirements can be met
- time constraints, resource access and information availability should mirror real conditions

The learner's work activities reflect those found in the work environment being represented, for example:

- interaction with colleagues and others should reflect expected communication approaches
- tasks performed must be completed to an acceptable timescale
- learners must be able to achieve a realistic volume of work as would be expected in the work situation being represented
- learners operate professionally with clear understanding of their work activities and responsibilities
- feedback from colleagues and others (for example customers, service users) is maintained and acted upon
- account must be taken of any legislation, regulations or standard procedures that would be followed in the workplace

Work/industry placement experience

The learner must be working within an appropriate setting to be able to meet the assessment requirements of this qualification.

How the qualification is assessed

Assessment is the process of measuring a learner's skill, knowledge and understanding against the standards set in a qualification.

This qualification is internally assessed and externally quality assured.

The assessment consists of **one** component

- an internally assessed portfolio of evidence, which is assessed by centre staff and externally quality assured by NCFE (internal quality assurance must still be completed by the centre as usual)

Learners must be successful in this component to gain the NCFE CACHE Level 2 Technical Specialist in Adverse Childhood Experiences in Early Years (Certificate) (610/4567/6).

Learners who are not successful can resubmit work within the registration period; however, a charge may apply in cases where additional external quality assurance visits are required.

Unless otherwise stated in this specification, all learners taking this qualification must be assessed in English and all assessment evidence presented for external quality assurance must be in English.



Internal assessment

We have created some sample tasks for the three internally assessed units, which can be found within a separate document in the member's area of the NCFE website. These tasks are not mandatory. You can contextualise these tasks to suit the needs of your learners to help them build up their portfolio of evidence. The tasks have been designed to cover all knowledge LOs for three units and provide opportunities for stretch and challenge. For further information about contextualising the tasks, please contact the Provider Development team.

Each learner must create a portfolio of evidence generated from appropriate assessment tasks to demonstrate achievement of all the LOs associated with each unit. On completion of each unit, learners must declare that the work produced is their own and the assessor must countersign this. Examples of suitable evidence for the portfolio for each unit are provided in section 2.

If a centre needs to create their own internal assessment tasks, there are four essential elements in the production of successful centre-based assessment tasks; these are:

- ensuring the assessment tasks are meaningful with clear, assessable outcomes
- appropriate coverage of the content, LOs or assessment criteria (AC)
- having a valid and engaging context or scenario
- including sufficient opportunities for stretch and challenge for higher attainers



Section 2: unit content and assessment guidance

This section provides details of the structure and content of this qualification.

The types of evidence listed are for guidance purposes only. Within learners' portfolios, other types of evidence are acceptable if all learning outcomes (LOs) are covered, and if the evidence generated can be internally and externally quality assured. For approval of methods of internal assessment other than portfolio building, please contact your external quality assurer (EQA).

The explanation of terms explains how the terms used in the unit content are applied to this qualification. This can be found in section 3.

For convenience, NCFE uses the abbreviation ACE for Adverse Childhood Experiences. However, NHS England recommends using the full term Adverse Childhood Experiences in practice and teaching.



Unit 01 Exploring childhood and family structures (A/651/2643)



Unit summary			
In this unit learners will begin to explore the development of babies and children, and different perspectives on childhood. The unit will also cover the role of the family and different family structures.			
Assessment			
This unit is internally assessed via a portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	Achieved/not yet achieved	Level 2	40 GLH

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
1. Understand holistic development of babies and children from birth to five years of age	1.1 Outline key milestones in the holistic development of children from birth to five years of age
	1.2 Outline a range of biological and external factors that may impact children's holistic development from birth to five years of age
	1.3 Explain how children's holistic development may be affected by their individual needs and circumstances
2. Know about childhood from different perspectives	2.1 Outline indicators of positive childhood experiences
	2.2 Outline indicators of negative childhood experiences
	2.3 Describe the potential impact of each of the following situations on the life of a child: - war or conflict - natural disaster social disadvantage
	2.4 Describe the contrasting perspectives introduced through nature and nurture in the context of development
3. Understand the role of family	3.1 Identify societal expectations of the role of the family in relation to childhood
	3.2 Describe a range of different family structures
	3.3 Describe the potential impact of pressure faced by families on a child's wellbeing and development

Range
1. Understand holistic development of babies and children from birth to five years of age
1.1 Holistic areas of development to include: - physical - cognitive - neurological - speech, language and communication - social - emotional
2. Know about childhood from different perspectives
2.3 Social disadvantage to include deprivation and opportunity, social class, socio-economic and health.
3. Understand the role of family



Range

3.1 Societal expectations emphasise the significant role families have in shaping the future of babies and children, and consequently, society as a whole. These expectations are varied and deeply embedded in cultural, social, and economic contexts.

3.1 Family to include the significance of working with the child's family to support the child.

Delivery and assessment guidance

LO1 (AC1.1) Learners could research the key milestones in the development of children from birth to five years old. This could also be encouraged through scenario and role play. For example, the tutor could consider the stages of expected and of atypical development and consider the needs of babies and children through these stages and in specific circumstances. Learners must have an awareness of the role and responsibilities of the practitioner in supporting holistic needs. For assessment: this should include holistic aspects including physical, cognitive, neurological, social, emotional, speech, language and communication. This could be presented as a timeline to include text boxes with an outline of key milestones.

Assessment methods could be:

- timeline role play/case study
- scenario with reflective narrative

LO1 (AC1.2, 1.3), LO2 (AC2.4) Tutors could lead a group discussion during which learners are encouraged to contrast nature and nurture perspectives. There should be opportunity for learners to research and to reflect on the impact of nature/nurture of children's experiences/outcomes. For assessment, learners could complete a series of tutor-devised assessment tasks to investigate a range of potential biological and external factors impacting children's development from birth to five years old. Learners could then provide an explanation of how individual needs and circumstances may affect holistic development. This can be further developed to include a description of the contrasting perspectives between nature and nurture within the context of children's holistic development.

Assessment methods could be:

- assignment
- group discussion

LO2 (AC2.1, 2.2, 2.3) Tutors could design a series of case studies to illustrate the potential impact of a range of childhood experiences. Situations should include social disadvantage, natural disaster and war or conflict. For assessment: learners could answer questions relating to the potential impact of each of these situations and indicators of both positive and negative childhood experiences.

Assessment method could be:

- tutor-devised case studies

LO3 (AC3.1, 3.2, 3.3) For assessment: learners could produce a guide for practitioners working with babies, children and families. This should include a range of different family structures, society's expectations and the impact on children's wellbeing and development.

Assessment method could be:

- leaflet or guide



Unit 02 Introduction to adverse childhood experiences (F/651/2645)

Unit summary			
This unit introduces learners to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and potential outcomes for babies and children impacted by ACEs. The unit also covers the role of the practitioner in supporting children.			
Assessment			
This unit is internally assessed via a portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	Achieved/not yet achieved	Level 2	40 GLH

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
1. Know about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)	1.1 Describe a range of direct and indirect ACEs
	1.2 Describe how the human brain typically reacts in stressful situations
	1.3 Explain how ACEs may impact brain functioning and response systems
2. Understand potential outcomes for babies and children enduring ACEs	2.1 Analyse the impact of ACEs on a child's future holistic health, development, education and wellbeing
	2.2 Explain the potential connection between ACEs and an individual's mental health
	2.3 Identify sources of support for babies and children impacted by ACEs
	2.4 Describe actions to take to safeguard babies and children who are impacted by ACEs
3. Understand the role of the practitioner supporting babies and children impacted by ACEs	3.1 Describe the role of the practitioner when supporting the holistic needs of babies and children impacted by ACEs
	3.2 Explain the significance of attachment, relationships and connections for babies and children's holistic health, development and wellbeing
	3.3 Describe the role of the Resilience Framework as a tool for intervention
4. Be able to share best practice to promote self-esteem in babies and children	4.1 Interact with babies and children in ways that promote self-esteem
	4.2 Support, coach and mentor colleagues in an early years setting to ensure best practice
	4.3 Work with others to share an understanding of ACEs with colleagues, signposting to professional support for effective intervention

Range
3. Understand the role of the practitioner supporting babies and children impacted by ACEs
3.1 Holistic needs to include the importance of recognising that the impact of ACEs will be different for each individual child.
3.3 Resilience Framework , an intervention tool (based on the work of Hart and Blincow).

Delivery and assessment guidance
LO1 (AC1.1) The original ACE study (1998, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Kaiser Permanente) looked at the following adverse experiences:



Delivery and assessment guidance

- parents divorcing or separating
- living with a parent who is depressed or suffers mental illness
- living with a parent who is an addict (alcohol, drugs, or otherwise)
- witnessing a member of the household being abused or mistreated
- verbal abuse/emotional abuse and humiliation
- emotional neglect
- physical neglect
- physical abuse
- living with criminal behaviour in the household
- sexual abuse

LO1 (AC1.1,1.2, 1.3), LO2 (AC2.2) Following a group discussion and exploration of research, learners can begin to develop an appreciation of the underlying causes, significance of the impact of ACEs. They can use notes from research and encourage learner led research. Case studies may support learners to appreciate how an ACE can impact on a child's response system. Firstly, learners should explore how stress typically impacts the brain and how this may be altered for children who have ACEs. Learners may find videos, charts and tables useful resources to consolidate understanding.

For assessment: working in small groups learners could compile a factsheet presenting a series of frequently asked questions (FAQs) with answers addressing the AC. This could be used to lead a discussion or as part of a presentation to demonstrate understanding of the stress response process and the role/function of associated parts of the brain, significantly the amygdala. Learners must produce evidence for AC independently.

Assessment method could be:

- FAQs factsheet

LO2 (AC2.1,2.2), LO3 (AC3.2) Before learners attempt the assessment, they should explore case studies and begin to examine ACEs. This knowledge will help learners understand the practitioner's role and consider how it might affect a baby or child's future. For assessment: learners could complete a series of assessment tasks exploring the potential outcomes for babies and children who are affected by ACEs. This should include their impact on a baby or child's future health, development, education and wellbeing as well as the significance of attachment, relationships and connection. Learners should also explain potential links between ACEs and mental health.

Assessment method could be:

- assignment

LO2 (AC2.3,2.4), LO3 (AC3.1) Reflect on the potential outcome for babies and children and introduce the role of the practitioner through case studies, reflection and research studies. For assessment: learners could produce a guide for those working with babies and children to include the role of the practitioner, sources of support and actions to be taken to safeguard babies and children within the context of ACEs. Tutors could produce a list of headings for learners to follow for guidance to make sure the AC are addressed.

Assessment method could be:

- assignment



Delivery and assessment guidance

LO3 (AC3.3) Learners should research the Resilience Framework as an intervention tool (based on the work of Hart and Blincow). They could prepare a presentation of their findings, for example as a series of slides. This could be supported by further research and discussion, considering how this framework may be applied.

Assessment method could be:

- research and presentation

LO4 (AC4.1) This must be shown through quality interactions with the babies and children the learners are working with. Demonstrating responsive care and inclusive rapport, as well as positive communication that builds self-efficacy and achievement, also counts as evidence.

Assessment method must be:

- practical demonstration
- observation

LO4 (AC4.2, 4.3) Learners **must** implement these strategies within their daily practice in an early years setting. This could refer to the approach they used to promote the understanding of their peers through coaching and mentoring. Coaching and mentoring could include modelling, leading by example, supporting, sharing and guiding. The reflection may also include reference to the interpersonal skills that are important when coaching, guiding, supporting for effective intervention and mentoring others in the workplace.

Assessment method could be:

- presentation and reflection
- shared summaries from a reflective journal used to move a discussion forward
- observation



Unit 03 Understand strategies to improve outcomes for children affected by adverse childhood experiences (H/651/2646)

Unit summary			
In this unit learners will consider the role of the practitioner in supporting children impacted by adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) using strategies to develop resilience and improve outcomes.			
Assessment			
This unit is internally assessed via a portfolio of evidence.			
Mandatory	Achieved/not yet achieved	Level 2	40 GLH

Learning outcomes (LOs) The learner will:	Assessment criteria (AC) The learner can:
1. Understand the importance of reflection for professional development	1.1 Explain the term 'reflective practitioner' 1.2 Describe different theoretical models of reflection
2. Know how to reflect on own practice when supporting babies and children impacted by adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)	2.1 Describe how to reflect on own practice to identify development needs in relation to caring for babies and children's holistic health, development and wellbeing 2.2 Set clear and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) actions for own practice
3. Understand policy for resilience building in babies and children	3.1 Explain policy content for effective resilience building when working with babies and children 3.2 Summarise the benefits of a policy for resilience building when working with babies and children 3.3 Outline activities/experiences which value, respect and empower babies and children
4. Be able to support babies and children that experience trauma through effective strategies in an early years setting	4.1 Describe principles of trauma-informed practice 4.2 Implement trauma-informed strategies to support babies and children 4.3 List professional services for effective intervention

Range
4. Be able to support babies and children that experience trauma through effective strategies in an early years setting
4.2 Strategies can be applied in all early years settings to create a calm and enabling, inclusive environment for all babies and children.

Delivery and assessment guidance
LO1 (AC1.1,1.2) Following research and discussion around reflective cycles and theoretical models used in context, learners could produce an infographic to inform others about different theoretical models of reflective practice as part of the assessment.
Assessment method could be:



Delivery and assessment guidance

- infographic

LO2 (AC2.1,2.2) Tutors could design a template for learners to identify their skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour and plan their development in relation to supporting babies' and children's health, development and wellbeing.

Assessment method could be:

- self-analysis and development plan

LO3 (AC3.1, 3.2, 3.3) Learners should be able to summarise the benefits of following a policy for resilience building and explain content that would be used in such a policy.

Building from this knowledge learners must outline at least three activities/experiences which value, respect and empower babies and children.

Assessment method could be:

- assignment

LO4 (AC4.1, 4.2, 4.3) Learners should be able to describe the principles underpinning trauma-informed practice and its impact on holistic development. Learners will also implement these strategies within their daily practice in an early years setting. Learners should be able to list services that provide effective intervention for babies, children and families that experience trauma and explain how they can provide support. Learners should also consider how they would effectively share this information.

Assessment methods could be:

- practical demonstration
- assignment



NCFE assessment strategy

The key requirements of the assessment strategies or principles that relate to units in this qualification are summarised below.

The centre must ensure that individuals undertaking assessor or quality assurer roles within the centre conform to the assessment requirements for the unit they are assessing or quality assuring.

Knowledge LOs

- assessors will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make assessment decisions
- internal quality assurers (IQAs) will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make quality assurance decisions

Competence/skills LOs

- assessors will need to be both occupationally competent and qualified to make assessment decisions
- IQAs will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make quality assurance decisions

The centre with whom the learners are registered will be responsible for making all assessment decisions. Assessors must be **contracted** to work directly with the centre, contributing to all aspects of standardisation. The centre must ensure a process of training is followed, including during induction and quality assurance activities. Occupationally competent and qualified assessors from the centre must use direct observation to assess practical skills-based outcomes.

For this qualification, the centre must use the further information relating to early years practitioner assessment principles, which can be found within the mandatory Support Handbook.



Section 3: explanation of terms

This table explains how the terms used at **level 2** in the unit content are applied to this qualification (not all verbs are used in this qualification).

Apply	Link existing knowledge to new or different situations.
Assess	Consider information in order to make decisions.
Classify	Organise according to specific criteria.
Compare	Examine the subjects in detail looking at similarities and differences.
Define	State the meaning of a word or phrase.
Demonstrate	Show an understanding of the subject or how to apply skills in a practical situation.
Describe	Write about the subject giving detailed information.
Differentiate	Give the differences between two or more things.
Discuss	Write an account giving more than one view or opinion.
Distinguish	Show or recognise the difference between items/ideas/information.
Estimate	Give an approximate decision or opinion using previous knowledge.
Explain	Provide details about the subject with reasons showing how or why. Some responses could include examples.
Give (positive and negative points)	Provide information showing the advantages and disadvantages of the subject.
Identify	List or name the main points. (Some description may also be necessary to gain higher marks when using compensatory marking).
Illustrate	Give clear information using written examples, pictures or diagrams.
List	Make a list of key words, sentences or comments that focus on the subject.
Perform	Do something (take an action/follow an instruction) that the question or task asks or requires.
Plan	Think about and organise information in a logical way. This could be presented as written information, a diagram, an illustration or other suitable format.
Provide	Give relevant information about a subject.
Reflect	Learners should look back on their actions, experiences or learning and think about how this could inform their future practice.



Select	Choose for a specific purpose.
Show	Supply sufficient evidence to demonstrate knowledge and understanding.
State	Give the main points clearly in sentences.
Use	Take or apply an item, resource or piece of information as asked in the question or task.



Section 4: support

Support materials

The following support materials are available to assist with the delivery of this qualification and are available on the NCFE website:

- Qualification Factsheet
- Sample Assessment Tasks

Other support materials

The resources and materials used in the delivery of this qualification must be age-appropriate and due consideration should be given to the wellbeing and safeguarding of learners in line with your institute's safeguarding policy when developing or selecting delivery materials.

Products to support the delivery of this qualification may be available. For more information about these resources and how to access them, please visit the NCFE website.

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Appendix A: units

To simplify cross-referencing assessments and quality assurance, we have used a sequential numbering system in this document for each unit.

 Knowledge-only units are indicated by a star. If a unit is not marked with a star, it is a skills unit or contains a mix of knowledge and skills.

Mandatory units

	Unit number	Regulated unit number	Unit title	Level	GLH
	Unit 01	A/651/2643	Exploring childhood and family structures	2	40
	Unit 02	F/651/2645	Introduction to adverse childhood experiences	2	40
	Unit 03	H/651/2646	Understand strategies to improve outcomes for children affected by adverse childhood experiences	2	40

The units above may be available as stand-alone unit programmes. Please visit the NCFE website for further information.



Change history record

Version	Publication date	Description of change
v1.0	August 2025	First publication