

Early Years Educator

☆ Level 3 £ £7,000 🗓 18 months

1. What the role entails

The broad purpose of the occupation is to provide high-quality early education and care to children. Through an evidence-based approach, early years educators provide opportunities and learning experiences for all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

An early years educator will be responsible for ensuring a safe and secure environment for children's learning. They ensure that the learning environment and provision is inclusive and supports all children, demonstrating a clear understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusion. Early years educators teach and facilitate children's learning play.

A black and white photograph showing an early years educator smiling and interacting with two young children. The educator is on the right, and the children are on the left. They appear to be engaged in a learning activity.

**As the market-leader
in the sector, our early
years and childcare
qualifications are the
hallmark of quality**

2. On-programme assessments

Apprentices will typically spend 18 months on-programme and undertake the minimum required off-the-job training as per the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding rules. Apprentice must spend at least 12 months on-programme. Before entering Gateway, the apprentice must complete the following on-programme requirements:

- Level 2 English and maths or equivalent qualifications
- compile contextualised information to support the Observation with Questioning
- compile a Portfolio of Evidence to underpin the Professional Discussion
- successful completion of a Paediatric First Aid qualification or an Emergency Paediatric First Aid qualification.

3. Gateway requirements

The decision to take an apprentice through Gateway is made between the employer, Independent Training Provider (ITP) and the apprentice. The apprentice should only enter Gateway once the employer is content that the apprentice is working at or above the level of the occupational standard.

4. End-point assessment

The end-point assessment (EPA) for Early Years Educator contains two methods of assessment as outlined below:

Observation with Questioning

In the Observation with Questioning, an Independent End-Point Assessor (IEPA) observes the apprentice in their workplace and asks questions. The apprentice completes their day-to-day duties under normal working conditions. It gives the apprentice the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) mapped to this assessment method.

This method results in reliable, valid and authentic data, and assesses KSBs holistically.

Grading: grading will be measured as fail, pass or distinction.

Professional Discussion underpinned by a Portfolio

An IEPA and apprentice have a formal two-way conversation. This assessment method tests KSBs holistically and objectively, as well as allows for the assessment of KSBs that do not occur on a predictable or regular basis. The apprentice may also refer to and illustrate their answers with evidence from their Portfolio of Evidence.

Grading: grading will be measured as fail, pass or distinction.

5. Grade aggregation table

Observation with Questioning	Professional Discussion	Overall grading
Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	Distinction	Pass
Distinction	Pass	Merit
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction

A fail in any assessment will result in a fail overall.

6. Completion and certification

Once the IEPA verifies the apprentice has successfully completed all EPA methods, NCFE will activate certification. Working with the apprenticeship certificate issuing authority, we will ensure the apprentice receives their certificate.

7. What next?

Following on from the apprenticeship, apprentices may wish to continue their studies and complete the Level 3 Learning and Skills Assessor, Level 4 Learning and Skills Mentor or Level 5 Early Years Lead Practitioner. Typical job titles can include early years educator, nursery nurse or childminder assistant.

Why NCFE?

We are an approved End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) specialising in EPA delivery across health, education, social care, business, active leisure and digital apprenticeship standards. NCFE offer flexible and reliable EPA solutions supported by sector expertise, guidance documents and proactive service and support.