

Work practice and placement guide for Children's Care, Learning and Development

**A guide for providers, employers and
learners**



NCFE

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Introduction

City & Guilds and NCFE CACHE have worked collaboratively to develop this work practice and placement guide, which has been endorsed by:

- The Northern Ireland Social Care Council
- The Regional Early Years Workforce Committee
- The Northern Ireland Early Years Employer Forum.

The guide is intended to be a complimentary resource for approved centres and early years and childcare providers who are working together towards the delivery and assessment of the Level 2 and/or the Level 3 Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development (Northern Ireland).

The guide should be read alongside any policies, procedures and guidance for work practice or placement provided by individual learning providers and/or employers, or by regulators and inspection agencies.

There are templates for checklists, work practice or placement agreements and reflective logs in section 8.

Within this guide we refer to practice or placement hours. Practice hours refer to learners who are currently employed in an early years setting. Placement hours refer to learners who are not employed and require work placement.

This guide aims to support:

- employers by providing information about what you should have in place to meet the needs of learners, regulatory or legislative requirements and to maximise benefits for your service provision
- learning providers (Further Education colleges, work based learning providers, schools), careers advisors, employment agencies and volunteering agencies, by providing information about how to establish what would make a good work practice or placement, and what would need to be in place to ensure a safe learning opportunity which presents experiences that meet the learner's practice or placement objectives
- learners (students, job seekers, returners to work, school pupils and their parents/carers) by providing information about what you should expect from work practice or placements, how to make sure the practice or placement is suitable and know what will be expected of you.

Aspects of this guide provide tailored information so that the same topics can be explored from a three different perspectives:

- employers
- learning providers
- learners .

In the context of this guide, the term '**employers**' relates to all of those who may offer work practice or placement opportunities including childminders. The term '**learning provider**' relates to any agency seeking to place a learner in work practice or placement and the term 'learner' relates to any person undertaking a work practice or placement opportunity.

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Experience of work in early years and childcare services provides a crucial bridge between education or training and the world of work. At its best, it can introduce learners to jobs they had never thought of, inform their career decisions and provide invaluable experience for job applications and entry to higher education.

Covid 19 statement

At the time of developing this resource the continued impact of Covid 19 was considerable. It is critical that learning providers, employers and learners work together in compliance with current advice and guidance in order to stay safe and help to stop the transmission of the virus.

The impact of Covid-19 will influence the ongoing availability of work practice or placements as individual early years and childcare providers may be providing services in different ways.

We have been working with our stakeholders and with employers to better understand the challenges they are trying to navigate and the implications of these for the delivery and assessment of this qualification. In light of these challenges it will be necessary to consider different approaches to work practice or placement for students, for example through collaborative working settings may be able to best accommodate students in block practice or placement. In all case communication with settings needs to happen to maximise opportunity for students and to maintain a skilled workforce for the future.

Please see Awarding Organisation adaption statements, available at www.cityandguilds.org.uk or www.ncfe.org.uk , for further information.

Section 1

What is work practice and placement?

A work placement is typically organised by a provider for learners who are not yet in employment but for whom gaining experience of the world of work is an important component of their qualification journey.

Learners already in employment may wish to formalise their knowledge or gain a higher level qualification. Learners will be able to use their work practice hours towards the required hours for their chosen qualification.

In order to complete the qualifications, learners will need to complete the following number of work practice or placement hours:

Qualification Level	Qualification Title	Number of work practice or placement hours
Level 2	Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development (Northern Ireland)	350-400hrs
Level 3	Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development (Northern Ireland)	600-700hrs

Both employed and work placement learners must receive a robust induction. They should also be supported so that both the learner and the setting can benefit from the experience. Find out more about induction in Section 3.

All learners must undergo initial assessment against the requirements of the qualification, and this must be documented. An individual learning plan can then be produced detailing how evidence generated within the work practice or placement is intended to demonstrate learner competence in line with the expectations of the qualification. The initial assessment must be available to Internal and External Quality Assurers.

Level 2

The practice or placement hours for the Level 2 qualification have been set at **350-400 hours**.

These must be completed in a work setting that will facilitate development of the learners skills and knowledge at Level 2. Centres must be able to demonstrate how the primary evidence for the qualification has been achieved during the required practice or placement hours.

The learner must complete these hours in regulated settings working with children in their early years, i.e. with babies and young children from 0 – 5 years 11 months.

Level 3

The practice or placement hours for the Level 3 qualification has been set at **600-700 hours**. These must be completed in a work setting that will facilitate development of their skills and knowledge at Level 3.

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The number of practice or placement hours may be reduced to a minimum of 570 hours only in the following circumstances:

- a learner has already completed the Level 2 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development (Northern Ireland)
- a learner can evidence recent (within the previous 2 years), authenticated and relevant work experience which reflects some of the requirements of the Level 3 Diploma in Children's Care Learning and Development (Northern Ireland).

If practice or placement hours have been reduced to 570 hours, the initial assessment documentation **MUST** include clear evidence to support this.

There is a connection between the assessment of competence and the practice or placement hours required for this qualification. Assessor observations should continue until the full complement of hours has been achieved. The evidence from these activities must be mapped to the qualification assessment criteria and used to inform a robust decision of competence. **Learners are not permitted to 'build up' their hours after the final internal quality assurance has occurred.**

Work setting guidance

The work setting **MUST** be either a regulated (via Social Services) or an inspected (via Social Services or the Education and Training Inspectorate) early years setting. This means that the learner **MUST** have access to working with children aged from 0–5 years and 11 months for all of their practice or placement hours. Appropriate settings, including Irish Medium provision, would be:

- Registered childminding settings – working with children up to 5 years 11 months
- Playgroups
- Day Care Nurseries
- Statutory Nursery Settings
- Foundation Phase provision up to the age of 5 years 11 months
- Sure Start provision.

Approved learning providers must ensure that learners have access to an appropriate setting that supports the generation of evidence 'on-the-job'; **simulation is not permitted.**

Learning providers who are seeking to organise practice or placements in schools **must** ensure that learners work only with children up to 5 yrs 11mths. Evidence generated by the learner when working with older children will **not** be accepted.

The practice or placement requirement cannot be met via time spent with children within a learner's family/extended family or through babysitting or other such informal arrangements.

The benefits of work practice or placement

The benefit of a meaningful occupational practice or placement has been agreed in collaboration with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council, the Northern Ireland Childcare Partnerships, representatives from the key voluntary agencies, the Early Years Organisation, the Northern Ireland Childminding Association and Playboard NI, representatives from approved centres and other Awarding Organisations involved in the qualification development process.

The placement will allow learners to observe and be mentored by experienced practitioners which will aid them in understanding how to apply knowledge into practice. This mentoring approach allows learners to practice their new skills to build confidence and autonomy. This will ensure the learners can thrive in the work environment when qualified.

Benefits for employers

Offering work practice or placement opportunities can bring you a wealth of benefits such as:

- tapping into a potential pool of new workers who can bring fresh ideas into the setting
- upskill and develop existing staff to address skills gaps
- investing in the development of the next generation of a highly skilled workforce
- learning from feedback and reflection of learners to improve your service
- routinely reviewing standards and practices to ensure they are up to date and of good quality
- promoting the value of the sector, the range of roles available and motivating people to work in early years and/or childcare as a career of choice
- promoting your own service and what it has to offer
- fulfilling corporate social responsibility.

It must be noted, preparing for and providing support for high quality work practice or placement opportunities can take time, and needs to be well thought out to ensure the experience is positive and valuable to all involved.

Benefits for learning providers

Using work practice or placements can provide learners with opportunities to:

- experience a variety of work settings and find out about a range of roles which will help them make informed choices about future careers
- have experiential learning and assessment of their practice to achieve the practical competency element of work based qualifications, particularly those considered to be a licence to practice
- build confidence and develop knowledge, understanding and skills which may lead to employment
- put their subject knowledge into practice to help develop a deeper understanding

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Provision of high quality work practice or placement requires good partnership working with employers. Together you can help prepare learners for employment so that they can have the experiences and qualifications needed for the next step of their journey. As well as the benefits listed above, work practice or placements can provide opportunities for:

- using a wider range of assessment methods to gain more robust and reliable evidence of competence
- engaging learners who benefit from more practical ways of learning

Benefits for learners

Accessing work practice or placement can provide you with opportunities to:

- try out a variety of work settings and find out about a range of roles which will help you make informed choices about your future career
- have experiential learning and assessment of your practice to achieve the practical part of work based qualifications
- demonstrate skills which may not be able to be assessed in other ways
- build confidence and develop knowledge, understanding and skills which may lead to employment
- develop the ability to reflect on your practice
- provide feedback to employers which helps them improve practice in the work setting

Section 2

Preparing for work practice or placement

The importance of preparing carefully for work practice or placement cannot be over emphasised, it is important to allow enough time to plan properly.

There are a number of things you will need to consider carefully before offering practice or placement opportunities –for example, if you do not already have one, you may want to develop a policy for accepting work practice or placements. We have provided a list of questions below which will be helpful to think about and there is a more comprehensive **employer checklist** in the resources section.

The nature of work in early years and childcare means that learners will be in contact with children who may be considered at risk of harm or abuse as a result of their age or personal circumstances.

Disclosure and Barring Service checks (or DBS check) are required for individuals who will be working regularly with ‘children or vulnerable adults’ undertaking ‘regulated activities’. You can find more information on DBS checks on <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/disclosure-and-barring-protecting-children-and-vulnerable-adults>

Employers are responsible for making sure all learners on practice or placement are adequately supervised in the work setting.

Things to consider when arranging a practice or placement opportunity	Employer	Learning Provider	Learner
Access for assessors where practice or placement is linked to qualification attainment	✓	✓	
Account taken of specific regulations, standards or legislation	✓	✓	✓
All checks completed (including DBS if required)	✓	✓	✓
All necessary paperwork completed	✓	✓	✓
Are there any specific qualification requirements the learners needs to meet?		✓	
Arrangements for induction, supervision and support	✓	✓	✓
Arrangements for learner mentor made	✓	✓	
Arrangements for providing feedback	✓	✓	✓
Arrangements made for day 1 including list of what needs to be covered	✓	✓	✓
Arrangements made for the learner visit the work setting before the practice or placement starts	✓	✓	✓
Arrangements to meet any specific requirements of the learner made	✓	✓	✓
Can the learner visit the setting before the practice or placement starts?	✓	✓	✓
Checked the activities will meet the learner’s practice or placement objectives	✓	✓	✓
Clarity about activities, risk assessment, equipment and training needed	✓	✓	
Consent of individuals/families/ carers/children accessing the service considered and how they may be involved	✓	✓	
Consent of parent/carer where learners are school pupils	✓	✓	
Does the learner have any specific requirements the employer needs to be aware of		✓	✓

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Things to consider when arranging a practice or placement opportunity	Employer	Learning Provider	Learner
Employer and public liability insurance arranged if needed to include learners on practice or placement	✓		
Equipment and training (including the use of PPE) needed by the learner to undertake their role whilst on practice or placement identified and arranged	✓	✓	✓
How will the learner be supported by the employer and by your learning provider?	✓	✓	
Information about the work setting provided – what it does, who uses it, who works there, where it is, if it is registered and regulated etc.	✓	✓	✓
Is there any training needed before starting the practice or placement? If yes, how/when will this be completed?	✓	✓	✓
Key policies and procedures identified for the learner	✓	✓	
Looking at inspection reports, where available, to ensure there are no areas of concern which would jeopardise the practice or placement objectives		✓	
Making sure the employer meets all requirements for health and safety (including PPE), safeguarding and employer and public liability		✓	
Making sure the employer understands any course requirements including timelines for assessment		✓	
Matching the needs of the learner against practice or placement opportunities and the expectations of the employer		✓	
Number of learners on practice or placement considered to ensure safe practice	✓		
Paperwork which needs to be completed e.g. practice or placement agreement	✓	✓	✓
Pre-practice or placement information prepared for the learner e.g. practical aspects such as start and finish times, breaks, dress code, use of mobile phones, travel and subsistence arrangements.	✓	✓	✓
Procedures in place for reporting any concerns about learners, if they don't turn up or if there is an accident or incident	✓	✓	
Process to follow if the learner is unwell or have difficulties getting to the work setting on time?	✓	✓	✓
The types of activities learners must not undertake identified and clearly communicated	✓	✓	✓
The types of activities learners will be able to undertake in the setting identified and risk assessed	✓	✓	✓
What are the needs of the learner / what do they want to achieve from their practice or placement?		✓	✓
What practice or placement opportunities are available?	✓	✓	
What procedures are in place for reporting any concerns about the practice or placement?		✓	✓

Section 3

Getting the most out of work practice or placement opportunities

Employers

It is important to invest properly in work practice or placement opportunities because:

- you are growing the workforce of the future, and
- starting learners off with a sound grounding in the values and principles of early years and childcare

These, as well as a good understanding of safe practice, will contribute to high quality service provision.

The experience learners have on practice or placement will stay with them for life, this is your opportunity to create a good impression and encourage them to start a career working in the early years and childcare sector.

Learning Providers

Having access to high quality practice or placement opportunities is essential to the progression of learners who are not in employment.

It is not possible for the qualifications to be completed unless practice or placement opportunities are available to these learners and so it is important to work in partnership with employers.

It is important that your learners are able to demonstrate that they are open to the benefits the practice or placement offers and the investment and contribution that the employer is making towards their development.

Learners

It is important to take your opportunity for work practice or placement seriously and do everything you can to get the most out of it.

The information below outlines some areas which it would be helpful to consider, in addition, there are a number of checklists in the resources section that will be helpful.

Having an opportunity to visit the work setting before the practice or placement starts will give the learner a chance to ask questions about the work setting and their practice or placement.

Also in some instances an employer may want to interview learners to make sure they are suitable and will be able to fit into the team and culture of the setting, if not already employed. In all circumstances it will be important to discuss what is possible and practicable and how this relates to the expectations of the qualification or learning programme and the related goals for the practice or placement opportunity.

It is important for everyone to know what to expect on day 1, but this is particularly important for work placement learners as this is likely to be their first experience of working in the early years and childcare sector. A warm welcome and a well structured start will help to create a positive experience.

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The 'Day 1 checklist' is a helpful prompt for what should be covered. There is substantial benefit to allocating a workplace mentor to each learner who will support them throughout the duration of their practice or placement, including welcoming them on their first day.

Explanation of roles

Assessor

Assessors can be peripatetic or workbased.

- a peripatetic assessor is usually employed by or contacted to the learning provider and will visit the practice or placement at agreed intervals to support and assess the learner
- a workbased assessor can be employed by the early years setting as a practitioner and as an assessor OR contracted to the learning provider on a part-time basis. The workbased assessor may work closely with the learner on a day to day basis within the setting or may only work with them in relation to the assessment of the qualification.

The Assessor is qualified to make judgements about learner's skills competency in the workplace.

The role of the Assessor is to:

- guide and support the learner through their learning journey with delivery, planning and feedback which is discussed with the learner and recorded.
- work with the learner to identify individual learning styles and the most appropriate methods of assessment to support their learning and assessment.
- plan assessments with the learner, recording on the learner handbook when assessment criteria have been fully met sufficiently. The assessment plans should be clear as to what the learner is required to do and identify clear time frames.
- observe the learner in practice on their practice or placement, or use alternative methods of assessment where necessary, in order to make an informed judgement as to whether the evidence meets the assessment criteria. If the learner is not yet competent, the Assessor will support the learner with constructive feedback, providing the learner with steps for improvement or guidance to inform their subsequent action plans.

Supervisor / mentor within the setting

A practice or placement supervisor or mentor is the main contact for both the learner and the Assessor. The practice or placement experience is usually one of mutual benefit and the mentor's role is significant.

If appointed the mentor will:

- take the learner through an induction process to prepare them for their practice or placement. Time will be spent with the learner to help them settle into their practice or placement and explain expectations. Having an overview of the qualification the learner is studying enables the practice or placement supervisor or mentor to support the learner whilst in practice or placement.
- work closely with the assessor in order to ensure that the learner experiences a successful practice or placement.
- include completing records with the learner to help him/her identify their strengths, weaknesses, support and encourage individuals to manage their own learning and to prepare for assessment of skills. It may also include sharing information about the learner's progress.

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A mentor is someone who can provide advice and guidance, they can:

- help the learner understand the work setting and what is expected of them
- be a role model demonstrating professional values and behaviours
- answer questions and provide support when the learner is unsure
- provide reassurance and encouragement
- monitor and provide feedback to the learner on their practice and progress
- provide a bridge between the learner, the practice or placement and the learning provider.

Mentors should be experienced workers who are motivated and enthusiastic, they should be available to the learner for the duration of the practice or placement period.

Induction

The provision of a well structured induction programme for work placement learners is considered best practice and should be proportionate for the objectives of the practice or placement and appropriate for its duration.

The Minimum Standards for Childminding And Daycare for Children Under Age 12 describes 'induction' as "*Initial training or guidance given at the start of employment*"¹. With the exception of areas like child protection that should be completed immediately, the requirement to provide '*a structured induction programme for each new staff member*'² within one month of employment is a referenced requirement for all settings.

An induction programme should include information and guidance on at least the following areas:

- the setting's policies and procedures
- Child protection, including whistle blowing
- Management of children's behaviour
- Recording
- Working with parents
- Health and safety
- Equal opportunities.

A well thought through induction programme is one of the best ways to introduce the learner to the 'must do's' within the setting and will help to ensure that all concerned are clear about boundaries, expectations and goals associated with the practice or placement opportunity.

Learning Opportunities

Each person's learning needs will be different depending on the work setting itself and the reason for undertaking the practice or placement. It is important to be clear about the practice or placement objectives at the outset so that these can be matched to the activities the learner is involved in and with their learning needs so that the experience is a valuable learning opportunity.

Planning a practice or placement like this is the best way to ensure that there will be suitable opportunities to support the learner's development. In some instances the practice or placement is the only way for a learner to finding out what 'real life' practice is like within the sector and the diverse roles

¹ Department of Health, *Minimum Standards for CHILDMINDING AND DAYCARE for Children Under Age 12*, as amended October, 2018 (p.58) <http://childcarepartnerships.hscni.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/early-years-standards-full-version-Updated-October-2018.pdf>

² Ibid (p.29)

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of those who work within it. It can also realise opportunities such as job shadowing, and for the chance to translate and apply knowledge to practice and to develop skills for work.

It may also be possible to extend the practice or placement opportunity to include access to other learning opportunities such as attending training with other workers, e-learning or guided reading.

Reflective log

All learners should be encouraged to keep a reflective log to capture their learning; for some, the format and structure of this may be dictated by the learning programme they are undertaking as it may form part of their formal assessment; for others, it will be kept simply as a helpful tool for their own development rather than qualification attainment.

We have provided a template which can be used for reflection; mentors will have an important role here in supporting learners to reflect, as well as providing feedback on their practice and progress.

Reflection on how the learner relates the values and principles of the sectors to what they are doing is particularly important.

Helpful hints for keeping a reflective log

Describing an activity which you have been involved in

Describe what happened and the part you played

Your feeling and thoughts

Think about the whole experience, did you feel different at the start and end of the activity?
Did other people affect the way you felt during the activity?

Behaviours of yourself and others

How did your behaviours and those of others reflect the principles and values of the sector?
What helped communication or what made it more difficult?

Evaluation

What went well and what did not go so well during the activity?

Conclusions

What did you learn from the activity? Have you identified any additional training or learning needs for yourself?

Action plan

What would you do differently if you were to do the activity again?
How will you meet any additional training or learning needs e.g. guided reading, formal training, shadowing another worker etc?

Below are a series of good practice case studies that consider how to achieve a balance across different expectations and the boundaries required within practice

Good practice case study 1

Lynsey, manager at Rossett House Nursery, had a long standing relationship with the learning provider involved in Farah's level 3 programme of learning and was familiar with the standards Farah was expected to reach.

Farah attended a meeting to discuss practice or placement and discussed with Lynsey her expectations about the opportunities the practice or placement could provide. Initially, as she was on a level 3 course, Farah expected to be able to access confidential records and to work with a limited level of supervision, Lynsey explained why this was not possible and explained the regulations they needed to meet in the setting.

Farah was disappointed to find that there were limitations she had not expected put in place by the work setting, but she did reflect later that having the opportunity to understand the reasons for these was helpful. Farah felt the experience helped deepen her knowledge of sector regulations in practice. The process of agreeing a plan for learning at this stage meant Farah was able to adjust her expectations in the build up to the practice or placement and prepare positively for a good start.

Farah's practice or placement progressed well from her induction, with regular mentor meetings and internal practice or placement support from staff. She had regular contact with her learning provider and was able to show a growing maturity in her understanding of: what it means to be employed in an area of responsibility, the importance of leadership skills, development of knowledge and skills in a specialist area, the value of contributing to team knowledge and understanding of best practice in pre-school education.

Over time, Farah achieved the expected outcomes from her practice or placement and felt confident in her ability to work in and with a team to bring about improvement. She was able to reflect on this learning and recognise her progress. When she reflected on her initial meeting and the need to revise her plans she could see the importance of the first step and said she now had an informed respect for the manager's decisions. She also reported she felt learning from the experience would make her a better manager some day.

Good practice case study 2

Megan was undertaking her level 2 CCPLD practice qualification through her local FE college. To achieve the qualification, her practice needed to be assessed against the standards and criteria set in the qualification.

Rebecca, the manager of Little Scholars Nursery, had met with the practice or placement officer from the college to agree what was needed to support a positive practice or placement. They talked about the qualification tasks, Megan's learning needs, a little about when she would be coming to practice or placement, the benefits of a mentor and who might take this role within the setting

Megan was then invited to look around the setting and to meet her mentor before the practice or placement started. At this visit she was told about expected dress code, behaviours and confidentiality and given some information about the setting to read. She was advised she could ask questions at any time and then spent time working through her qualification tasks with Rebecca to outline the learning and experiences she hoped to gain. This initial visit was important for Megan as it began her induction to the setting and allowed her to work with the manager to make sure the practice or placement could provide the opportunities she needed to achieve her qualification. The visit also allowed staff to plan for her practice or placement in more details and start preparing the learning plan for Megan.

Megan arrived on her start date ready to begin a full induction with her mentor and to go through, check and agree the practice or placement plan and learning plan. Megan progressed through her practice or placement knowing what standards were expected and who to turn to for advice, she

enjoyed ongoing support from her mentor and the staff team with weekly meetings to discuss her progress and next steps. Over the time of her practice or placement she achieved all targets set and gained skills, knowledge and experience alongside growth in confidence and a better understanding of what it takes to be part of a workplace team in a childcare setting.

Section 4

Meeting requirements for regulations, standards and legislation

Employers

It is essential when offering or experiencing practice or placement opportunities, that everyone ensures compliance with the requirements for relevant regulations, standards and legislation. Some of the key requirements have been listed below.

Policies and procedures related to these key requirements should be shared with learners who should be supported to understand how they influence day to day practice and their time in practice or placement.

Safeguarding

All learners must be informed about arrangements for safeguarding at the work setting, at a minimum this should include:

- reporting concerns and whistleblowing
- confidentiality
- how to keep themselves and individuals / children in the work setting safe

Health and Safety

All learners must understand the work setting's health and safety policies and procedures. It is important for employers to showcase best practice in health and safety so that the learner is enabled to identify and respond to a hazard or anything that may be a danger to themselves or others. Learners must be made aware of the fire safety arrangements in the event of a fire emergency.

Data Protection and Confidentiality

Learners must be supported by learning providers and employers so that they can develop their awareness in this area particularly the responsibility to make sure information about individuals or children and their families/carers is handled in a confidential and secure way. It must be stressed to learners that they never discuss anything they hear or see about individuals or children and their families/carers outside of the childcare setting. They can discuss with relatives/friends what they've been doing in terms of activities and experiences but never discuss individuals or children, their families/carers or workers.

Regulations, standards and legislation

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), in particular:

- Article 2 (non-discrimination);
- Article 3 (best interests of the child);
- Article 4 (protection and implementation of children's rights);
- Article 12 (respect for and weight given to the views of the child);
- Article 18 (parental responsibilities; state assistance); and
- Article 31 (leisure, play and culture)

Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1995/755/contents>

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<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/children-ni.order-95-guidance.PDF>

Minimum Inspection Standards for Childminding and Day Care for children under 12 yrs

<http://childcarepartnerships.hscni.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/early-years-standards-full-version-Updated-October-2018.pdf>

Implementation Guidance Sessional & Full Day Care <http://childcarepartnerships.hscni.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Implemenation-Guidance-Version-3-Sessional-Full-Daycare-October-2017FINAL.pdf>

Equality and inclusion

<https://www.equalityni.org/Home>

Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2005/1117/contents>

Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/50/contents>

Autism Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2011/27/contents>

Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) Guidance

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/understanding-needs-children-northern-ireland-unocini-guidance>

CCTV Code of Practice issued by the Information Commissioner's Office.

<https://ico.org.uk/media/1542/cctv-code-of-practice.pdf>

Infection prevention and control. Best practice advice for nurseries and childcare settings

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/infection-prevention-and-control-best-practice-advice-nurseries-and-childcare-settings>

ROSPA <https://www.rospa.com/home-safety/resources/policy-statements/electricity/>

The UK Physical Activity Guidelines <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/physical-activity-guidelines>

Health and safety risk assessments

<https://www.hseni.gov.uk/articles/riskassessment>

Fire legislation and fire safety

<https://www.nifrs.org/>

COSHH

<https://www.hseni.gov.uk/topic/coshh>

Formula feeding

<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/birth-five>

Nutrition Matters for the Early Years

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/nutrition-matters-early-years-guidance-feeding-under-fives-childcare-setting>

Work practice or placement for Children's Care, Learning and Development: A guide for tutors, employers and learners

Public Health Agency - healthy eating <http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/getting-good-start-healthy-eating-onefive-english-and-translations>

<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/enjoy-healthy-eating-0>
<http://www.enjoyhealthyeating.info/>

Good Management Good Records

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/good-management-good-records>

BBSA Window blind safety advice for homes and public buildings

<https://www.makeitsafe.org.uk/>

Section 5

Specific course requirements for work practice or placements

Employers

Where learners are undertaking practice or placement as part of a course or qualification, there will be specific requirements they will need to meet in relation to the activities they undertake to develop their practice. This will include visits to the workplace by assessors who will come to formally assess the learner's practice and this is an essential component of the assessment process.

The learning provider will let you know of any specific arrangements before the practice or placement starts – these should be detailed in the practice or placement agreement.

Learning Providers

You must ensure employers are aware of any specific course requirements for learners they are taking on practice or placement and the activities and support which they can provide will meet their needs. This will include the arrangements for direct observation of practice, either by a qualified assessor or by an Expert Witness.

Learner

The qualification you are completing requires that your work practice is observed by a qualified person. There will be specific requirements you need to meet when you are on practice or placement. Your learning provider and the employer work collaboratively to help you develop the skills and knowledge you need to be judged as competent in these areas.

Section 6

Exploring assessment methods

Skills/competency learning outcomes and assessment criteria are about the learner being able to perform a variety of different tasks which relate to experience gained in a real work environment.

When assessing occupational competency criteria, i.e. 'be able to' criteria, Direct Observation is a mandatory assessment method which forms the basis of an Assessor's overall decision of whether the unit/criteria have been met.

Direct Observation

When assessing skills direct observations are a mandatory method and therefore must be used as a preferred choice for collating evidence. All learners attempting to meet skills based criteria must be observed within the real work environment (RWE). In exceptional circumstances and where assessment criteria cannot be met through direct observation, alternative methods may be used.

The direct observation must be planned for, allowing the learner time to prepare.

The learner is observed carrying out everyday tasks in the workplace and their performance is formally recorded by the Assessor in any one of a number of different ways, e.g. written account of what is being observed.

Professional Discussion

This is a pre-planned and in-depth discussion between learner and Assessor which evidences knowledge and understanding and/or competence in relation to agreed learning outcome(s) and assessment criteria. The professional discussion is formally recorded by the Assessor either in writing or digitally.

A professional discussion is a useful assessment method to support or supplement a direct observation and provides the opportunity to explore the learner's knowledge in relation to their skills.

Expert Witness evidence

Expert witnesses can be drawn from a wide range of people who can attest to learner's performance in the workplace.

The evidence must be provided by a credible witness (the Assessor should check this) such as a Line Manager or experienced colleague, so that they understand the person's job role.

A qualified Assessor will make the final judgement about a candidate's competence based on testimony provided by the expert witness together with other corroborating evidence.

This is useful way to capture 'hard to obtain' evidence when the Assessor is not available or when it is not appropriate for the Assessor to be observing a situation. Eg: confidential or safeguarding situation.

Expert witness evidence can be recorded electronically or written/typed by the witness and it must meet the tests of validity, reliability and authenticity.

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Learner's own work products

A work product is a resource which is used within the real work environment and produced, or contributed to, by the learner and used in the learner's job role in their practice or placement. These can inform a professional discussion and support the learner to show competence. They may also be used to provide some evidence of competency if direct observation is not possible due to confidentiality.

This can include evidence such as copies of:

- daily charts such as attendance or site safety checklist
- completed records such as fire evacuation record or accident report
- plans such as lesson plans or activity plans
- non-confidential documents used in carrying out day to day activities
- individual care plan reports
- letters ,emails or information prepared and sent to others
- having contributed towards policies or procedures.

Activity plan

This is a document which identifies the requirements of an activity and the expected outcomes for children, young people or adults. It identifies the resources required and takes into account any health and safety requirements and reflection after the activity. It is useful record when a learner has contributed to or led an activity and can provide supporting evidence for a direct observation or professional discussion.

Observation of children by the learner

This evidence is a document that records information about children in a variety of situations or activities which will lead to an understanding of the development and needs of children. Observations must have a focus and be carried out in order to assess the child in a manner that supports their learning and developmental or needs. Observations must be analysed and used to inform the next steps to be taken i.e. planning activities to support development, informing reports, care plans.

Reflection on own practice in a real work environment

A piece of written work where learners should consider their actions, experiences or learning and the implications of these in order to suggest significant developments for future action, learning or practice.

This assessment method is useful to support a direct observation or provide evidence of skills when direct observation by the assessor is not an appropriate method of assessment due to confidentiality or safeguarding issues.

Section 7

Providing feedback

An important element of the success of practice or placements for both employers and learners is the provision of robust, constructive and clear feedback.

It is important that, where appointed, the allocated mentor is continuously monitoring the practice of learner(s) and providing feedback which supports their learning and development. At certain stages during the practice or placement, and at its end, a practice or placement evaluation provides the opportunity for the learner, the employer and the learning provider to discuss and reflect on the practice or placement experience and record what has been learnt. There is a template which may help you do this.

There may be occasions where employers may have to question a learner's suitability to work in the sector, particularly if their practice or the behaviour of causes concern. The process for reporting any concerns should be agreed with both all parties before the practice or placement starts, this should include the potential removal of the learner. Any concerns about safeguarding must be acted upon in accordance with the current guidance.

Learning providers should also have a process in place for learners to provide feedback including any concerns from them related to their practice or placement

Section 8

Resources and templates

- Employers 'preparing for practice or placement' checklist
- General work practice or placement information sheet for employers to advertise opportunities
- Specific work practice or placement information sheet for named learner
- Learning provider / employer agreement
- Day 1 checklist
- Reflective log
- End of practice or placement evaluation

Preparing for practice or placement – employer checklist.

Actions	Done
Information about the work setting provided – what it does, who uses it, who works there, where it is, if it is registered and regulated etc.	
Arrangements made for the learner visit the work setting before the practice or placement starts	
The types of activities learners will be able to undertake in the setting identified and risk assessed	
The types of activities learners must not undertake identified and clearly communicated	
Checked the activities will meet the learner’s practice or placement objectives	
Consent of individuals / families / carers / children accessing the service considered and how they may be involved	
Arrangements for learner induction and supervision made	
Arrangements for learner mentor made	
Arrangements for learner mentor made	
Arrangements to meet any specific requirements of the learner made	
Equipment and training (including the use of PPE) needed by the learner to undertake their role whilst on practice or placement identified and arranged, including any pre-practice or placement training	
Account taken of specific regulations, standards or legislation	
Employer and public liability insurance arranged if needed to include learners on practice or placement	
All checks completed (including DBS if required)	
Number of learners on practice or placement considered to ensure safe practice	
Key policies and procedures identified for the learner	
Procedures in place for reporting any concerns about learners, if they don’t turn up or if there is an accident or incident	
Pre-practice or placement information prepared for the learner e.g. practical aspects such as start and finish times, breaks, dress code, use of mobile phones, travel and subsistence arrangements?	
Arrangements made for day 1 including list of what needs to be covered	
All neccessary paperwork completed	

General work practice or placement information sheet for employers to advertise opportunities

Employer/organisation:	
Contact details:	
Address / location of work setting:	
Outline of services provided:	
Organisational structure / number of employees:	
Types of activities learners on practice or placement are able to participate in:	
Able to take learners on practice or placement for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taster sessions • Short work experience • Longer term practice or placement
Dress code:	
Travel and subsistence arrangements:	
Employer and public liability arranged if needed for learners on practice or placement	(if no state why not needed)
PPE equipment provided if needed	(if no, state why not needed)

Specific work practice or placement information sheet for named learner

Employer/organisation:	
Contact details:	
Address / location of work setting:	
Outline of services provided:	
Organisational structure / number of employees:	
Learner name:	
Mentor name and contact details:	
Types of activities/tasks which you are able to participate in:	
Types of activities/tasks which learner (name) is not allowed to participate in:	
Purpose of practice or placement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taster sessions • Short work experience • Longer term practice or placement • Qualification requirement (provide details below)

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PPE provided:	
Any identified pre-practice or placement training completed:	
Duration of practice or placement:	Start date: _____ End date: _____ Start time: _____ End time: _____ Lunch arrangements: _____
Travel and subsistence arrangements:	
Dress code:	
Declaration:	<p>The learner agrees to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake the tasks and activities outlined above • Be punctual and adhere to the work settings policies and procedures • Report any concerns about the practice or placement, health and safety or safeguarding issues <p>The employer agrees to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide meaningful opportunities in tasks and activities which meet the purpose of the work practice or placement including support from a mentor and constructive feedback on progress <p>Signed:</p> <p>Learner:</p> <p>Employer:</p>

Learning provider / employer agreement

Employer/ organisation:		Learning provider:	
Contact names and details:	Employer:		
	Learning provider:		
Address / location of work setting:			
Outline of services provided:			
Organisational structure / number of employees:			
Mentor name and contact details:			
Types of activities/tasks which learner on practice or placement is able to participate in:			
Types of activities/tasks which learner is not allowed to participate in:			

PPE provided:							
Any identified pre-practice or placement training completed:							
Purpose of practice or placement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taster sessions • Short work experience • Longer term practice or placement • Qualification requirement (provide details below) 						
Duration of practice or placement:	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Start date:</td> <td style="width: 50%;">End date:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Start time:</td> <td>End time::</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Lunch arrangements:</td> </tr> </table>	Start date:	End date:	Start time:	End time::	Lunch arrangements:	
Start date:	End date:						
Start time:	End time::						
Lunch arrangements:							
Travel and subsistence arrangements:							
Dress code:							
Declarations:	<p>The employer confirms:</p> <p>Risk assessments have been carried out for all activities the learner will be involved in and there is an adequate level of safeguarding for the learner</p> <p>The learner will undertake an induction programme for their role and the duration of the practice or placement, this will include at a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The values and principles of the sector • Health and safety and fire safety • Safeguarding 						

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data protection and confidentiality <p>There will be a structured work programme which supports the learner to achieve their practice or placement objectives</p> <p>The learner will be adequately supervised whilst on practice or placement and will be allocated a mentor</p> <p>The learner will be supported to reflect on activities undertaken during the practice or placement, their practice and progress</p> <p>If undertaking a practice or placement for qualification attainment, the learner will be able to have their practice assessed by their qualification assessor</p> <p>The learning provider will be informed immediately if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the learner does not attend the practice or placement or if there are concerns about their attendance / punctuality• there are any accidents or incidents involving the learner• there are any concerns about the behaviour of the learner or their suitability for work in the sector <p>Information about the learner will be kept confidential in line with data protection legislation and GDPR</p> <p>Employers liability and public liability insurance have been arranged to cover the learner during practice or placement</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Employer: (person, position date):</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Learning provider (person, position, date):</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
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Day 1 checklist

To cover:	Complete?
Accessing the building, security, signing in and out	
Familiarisation with the work environment – toilets etc.	
Ethos and structure of organisation / work setting	
Principles and values of the sector	
Health and safety including first aider, fire evacuation procedures	
Infection prevention and control	
Use of PPE	
Data protection / confidentiality	
Safeguarding	
Role and responsibilities	
Any applicable Codes of Conduct and Professional Practice	
Range and roles of other workers and other agencies a learner may come into contact with	
Reporting concerns	
Break times	
Use of mobile phones	
Use of social media	
Smoking, alcohol and drugs policy	

Reflective log

Describe an activity you have been involved in
Outline your feeling and thoughts
Behaviours of yourself and others
Evaluation of the activity

Conclusions
Action plan
Feedback from mentor

End of practice or placement evaluation

Learner name:	
Employer/organisation:	
Mentor name:	
Practice or placement dates:	Start:End:
Practice or placement objectives:	
Learner evaluation	
How well do you feel your practice or placement objectives have been met?	
What support have you received from your mentor?	
What has worked well?	
What could have been better?	
What have you learnt about yourself?	
Next steps:	

Mentor Evaluation:	
Punctuality:	
Ability to follow instructions and complete tasks:	
Communication:	
Ability to follow policies and procedures including health and safety	
Ability to follow instructions and complete tasks	
Ability to reflect on practice	
Ability to reflect on principles and values of the sector	
Signatures:	<p>Learner:</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>Mentor:</p> <p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p>