

NCFE

CACHE

Qualification specification

DRAFT Specification – August 2024

**NCFE CACHE Level 2 Technical Specialist in
Mental Health in the Early Years (Certificate)
QN: 610/4509/3**



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Section 1

About this qualification

Introduction

Please note this is a draft version of the Qualification Specification and is likely to be subject to change before the final version is produced for the launch of the qualification.

This Qualification Specification contains details of all the units and assessments required to complete this qualification.

To ensure that you are using the most up-to-date version of this Qualification Specification, please check the version number and date in the page footer against that of the Qualification Specification on the NCFE website.

If you advertise this qualification using a different or shortened name, you must ensure that learners are aware that their final certificate will state the full regulated qualification title.

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- 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.

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.

Qualification summary	
Qualification title	NCFE CACHE Level 2 Technical Specialist in Mental Health in the Early Years (Certificate)
Qualification number (QN)	610/4509/3
Aim reference	61045093
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	130
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	105
Minimum age	16
Qualification purpose	This qualification is designed for learners who wish to understand mental health in young children in the early years (from birth to 5 years old) and the role of the Early Years Practitioner to support children’s mental health and wellbeing. This is a knowledge and skills-based qualification. Through achieving this qualification, learners will develop knowledge which would support progression to further qualifications and into relevant employment in the health and social care or education sectors.
Aims and objectives	<p>This qualification aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on the study of mental health within the context of young children in the early years • offer breadth and depth of study, incorporating a key core of knowledge <p>The objectives of this qualification are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand key issues surrounding mental health for young children in the early years • understand the significance of attachment and adverse childhood experiences for young children in the early years • understand the role of the Early Years Practitioner supporting mental health and wellbeing for young children in the early years
Work/industry placement experience	This qualification has skills-based outcomes requiring work/industry experience.
Occupational standards	<p>This qualification builds on the outcomes within the Early Years Practitioner occupational standard (ST0888).</p> <p>The specialist duties have been written to build upon the knowledge, skills</p>

	<p>and behaviours in the Early Years Practitioner standard.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognise mental health concern in children 2. Liaise with child's family, colleagues and other professionals to support children with mental health concern 3. Champion positive mental health in an early years setting for holistic health and wellbeing 4. Model co-regulation for children
Rules of combination	To achieve this qualification, learners are required to successfully complete all 3 mandatory units.
Grading	Achieved/Not Yet Achieved.
Assessment method	Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.
Progression	<p>Learners who achieve this qualification could progress to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 Certificate in Understanding Mental Health • Level 3 Certificate in Working in the Health Sector • Level 3 Diploma for the Early Years Workforce (Early Years Educator) • Technical Level 3 Diploma in Early Years Education and Care (Early Years Educator) • apprenticeships in Health and Social Care
Regulation information	This is a regulated qualification. The regulated number for this qualification is 610/4509/3.
Funding	This qualification may be eligible for funding. For further guidance on funding, please contact your local funding provider.

Entry guidance

This qualification is designed for learners who would like to learn about mental health in children in the 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 16 or above to undertake this qualification.

Learners will already have the core knowledge, skills and behaviours for the sector. This qualification will help build additional specialist competence.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that this qualification is appropriate for the age and ability of learners. They need to make sure that learners can fulfil the requirements of the learning outcomes and comply with the relevant literacy, numeracy and health and safety aspects of this qualification.

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 all 3 mandatory units.

Please refer to the list of units below or the unit summaries in Section 2 for further information.

To achieve this qualification, learners must successfully demonstrate their achievement of all learning outcomes of the units as detailed in this Qualification Specification. A partial certificate may be requested for learners who do not achieve their full qualification but have achieved at least one whole unit.

Units

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

The regulated unit number is indicated in brackets for each unit (eg K/618/1222) within Section 2.



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	H/651/2484	Understand mental health for young children in the early years	2	35
Unit 02	J/651/2485	Understand the significance of attachment and adverse childhood experiences for young children in the early years	2	35
Unit 03	K/651/2486	Understand the role of the Early Years Practitioner supporting mental health and wellbeing for young children in the early years	2	35

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

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

Learners must be successful in **this** component to gain the Level 2 Certificate in Technical Specialist in Mental Health in the Early Years

Unless stated otherwise in this qualification 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

Each learner must create a portfolio of evidence generated from appropriate assessment tasks, which demonstrates achievement of all the learning outcomes 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.

Internally assessed work should be completed by the learner in accordance with the Qualification Specification. The Tutor must be satisfied that the work produced is the learner's own.

A centre may choose to create their own internal assessment tasks. The tasks should:

- be accessible and lead to objective assessment judgements
- permit and encourage authentic activities where the learner's own work can be clearly judged
- refer to Course File Documents on the NCFE website

Supervision of learners and your role as an Assessor

Guidance on how to administer the internal assessment and the support you provide to learners can be found on the NCFE website.

Feedback to learners

Guidance on providing feedback during teaching and learning and each stage of the assessment can be found on the NCFE website.



Section 2

Unit content and assessment guidance



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 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 our Quality Assurance team.

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

For further information or guidance about this qualification, please contact our Customer Support team.

Unit 01 Understand mental health for young children in the early years (H/651/2484)



Unit summary	The aim of this unit is to raise an awareness of the significance of mental health for holistic health and wellbeing in children in the early years.
Guided learning hours	35
Level	2
Mandatory/optional	Mandatory

Learner name:	
Centre no:	

Learning outcomes The learner will:	Assessment criteria The learner can:
1. Understand holistic health and wellbeing for children in the early years	1.1 Define the following terms in the context of early years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical health • mental health • wellbeing
	1.2 Explain the relationship between physical and mental health for a child's holistic development and wellbeing
	1.3 Identify risk and protective factors that impact physical and mental health in the early years
2. Understand how children's mental health and wellbeing should be supported in early years provision	2.1 Explain how the statutory requirements in place support the welfare of children in the early years
	2.2 Use examples to describe how an enabling environment could be significant for physical and mental health and wellbeing
	2.3 Outline ways statutory guidance promotes mental health and wellbeing through an Early Years Framework
	2.4 Describe the benefits of partnership working with the child's family to improve mental health and wellbeing in children
3. Understand the role of the key person in relation to physical and mental health and wellbeing	3.1 Describe the role of the key person in early years practice with reference to statutory guidance
	3.2 Explain ways the key person supports children during transition
	3.3 Outline strategies and appropriate responses for intervention to support children's mental health

4. Understand mental health issues affecting children in early years	4.1 Describe indicators and signs of mental health concerns in children during the early years
	4.2 Describe the significance of mental wellness on later life chances and outcomes
	4.3 Identify steps to take as a practitioner in response to any mental health concerns in children in their early years

Assessment guidance

Range
<p>1.3 Factors should include protective and risk factors such as:</p> <p>Risk factors</p> <p>Unrealistic expectations of the child by parents/others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effects of living in fear/anxiety • post-partum depression • parental stress • financial pressure • other health issues (for example, physical health, developmental delay, special educational needs and disability) <p>Protective factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • healthy parenting and family relationships • expectations and aspirations that are realistic <p>Network of support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students will find the Bronfenbrenner ecological systems model offers useful insight to the impact of wider societal experience to support with this criterion <p>2.1 Refer to statutory guidance in own country as appropriate.</p> <p>Useful supporting documentation will include the RSHE curriculum within schools and criteria within the OFSTED framework.</p> <p>3. Key person: knowledge and understanding of the role to include working with key children, colleagues, parents/carers and other professionals, and the significance of the key person for children’s holistic development, health and wellbeing.</p> <p>3.3 Mental health strategies to include but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preventative approaches • reducing stigma, judgement • bias and discrimination • sign posting

Early years practitioners must work in ways that boost esteem and confidence in babies and young children through child-centred experiences.

It is crucial to establish and maintain positive relationships with key stakeholders (parents/carers, family members, care givers) in the child’s life and communicate effectively.

Practitioners must be able to signpost to other professionals to support children and families and always model best practice for child-centred education and care.

4.1 Signs and indicators to include but not be limited to anxiety, stress, depression, low self-esteem, poor self-regulation, or poor self-worth.

4.2 Mental health concerns to include but not limited to recognising, responding, understanding and taking action, early intervention, supporting and nurturing family relationships, supportive environments and networks, therapeutic interventions.

AC	Delivery and assessment guidance	Suggested assessment method
1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.4, 4.2	Learners could produce a peer group display to raise awareness about physical and mental health in the early years. Learners could reflect on their group work and consider how physical and mental health in early years links with child development, wellbeing, future life chances and outcomes. They should consider a range of factors contributing to mental health and outline strategies for intervention in their reflection.	Display and written reflection
2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1 4.3	Learners could research statutory requirements and guidance relating to supporting mental health and wellbeing in an early years setting. They could present their findings as guidance for Early Years Practitioners to include how statutory guidance promotes children’s welfare, mental health and wellbeing. Learners should also consider the role of the key person and the teaching and learning environment.	Guidance
3.2, 3.3, 4.1	Tutors could design a series of case studies or scenarios demonstrating how the key person can support children’s physical and mental health and wellbeing in different situations, including transition. Learners should also consider signs and indicators that may raise concerns about a child’s mental health. Tutors to supply scenarios examples to support understanding.	Case studies

Learner declaration of authenticity:

I declare that the work presented for this unit is entirely my own work.

Learner signature:

Date:

Assessor sign off of completed unit: Unit 01

I confirm that the learner has met the requirements for all assessment criteria demonstrating knowledge and skills for this unit.

Assessor name:

Signature:

Date:

For e-portfolio a signature is not required, providing the learner has a personalised and secure login.

Unit 02 Understand the significance of attachment and adverse childhood experiences for young children in the early years (J/651/2485)

Unit summary	The aim of this unit is to raise an awareness of the significance of attachment for mental health and wellbeing in children in the early years. This unit will also introduce relevant learning from neuroscience as well as appreciating the impact of adverse childhood experiences. LO4 must be met through reflection of experience in an early years setting
Guided learning hours	35
Level	2
Mandatory/optional	Mandatory

Learner name:	
Centre no:	

Learning outcomes The learner will:	Assessment criteria The learner can:
1. Understand theory and approaches relevant to attachment in early years practice	1.1 Define the term 'attachment'
	1.2 Outline 'theory of attachment' in the context of early years practice
	1.3 Explain the impact of attachment theory for early years practice
	1.4 Describe how educational approaches support attachment in children in the early years
2. Understand the significance of attachment for mental health and wellbeing for children in the early years	2.1 Explain how attachment develops in the early years
	2.2 Describe factors impacting attachment in the early years
	2.3 Explain the significance of the primary carer for attachment in children in the early years
	2.4 Describe strategies to champion positive mental health in an early years setting
	2.5 Describe how children's mental health and wellbeing may be impacted by the absence of healthy attachments
3. Understand brain development and functioning in the context of mental health in children in the early years	3.1 Identify expected milestones for brain development from conception to birth
	3.2 Explain the impact of toxic stress for adverse childhood experiences
	3.3 Describe the significance of adverse childhood experiences for children's future mental health
4. Be able to recognise mental health concerns in children and respond appropriately	4.1 Use examples to describe the terms 'co-regulation' and 'self-regulation'
	4.2 Facilitate experiences and opportunities to promote self-regulation in daily practice

Assessment guidance

AC	Delivery and assessment guidance	Suggested assessment method
1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4	Tutors could devise a series of assessment tasks and/or questions to meet the assessment criteria. Learners could then research attachment theory and educational approaches within the context of early years practice, using relevant sources, and use their findings to complete the assignment tasks.	Assignment
2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5 4.2	Learners could research the significance of attachment for mental health and wellbeing in the early years. This should include how attachment develops, factors impacting attachment and the importance of healthy attachments with primary carers. Learners may give suggestions on how to respond to mental health concerns in children, demonstrating how they could facilitate experiences and opportunities to promote self - regulation in daily practice.	Presentation
3.1, 3.2, 3.3 2.4	Learners could complete Tutor-devised questions to address early development of the brain and the impact of toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences in relation to mental health. Learners may discuss strategies to champion positive mental health in an early years setting.	Question and answer

Learner declaration of authenticity:

I declare that the work presented for this unit is entirely my own work.

Learner signature:

Date:

Assessor sign off of completed unit: Unit 02

I confirm that the learner has met the requirements for all assessment criteria demonstrating knowledge and skills for this unit.

Assessor name:

Signature:

Date:

For e-portfolio a signature is not required, providing the learner has a personalised and secure login.

Unit 03 Understand the role of the Early Years Practitioner supporting mental health and wellbeing for young children in the early years (K/651/2486)

Unit summary	The aim of this unit is to increase confidence amongst Early Years Practitioners to support early intervention for mental health and wellbeing in children in the early years. LO4 must be met through reflection of experience in an early years setting
Guided learning hours	35
Level	2
Mandatory/optional	Mandatory

Learner name:	
Centre no:	

Learning outcomes The learner will:	Assessment criteria The learner can:
1. Understand the role of communication for children’s mental health and wellbeing	1.1 Identify different communication methods for speech, language and communication with children in early years
	1.2 Explain how effective communication contributes to positive mental health and wellbeing of children
2. Understand the role of the practitioner to promote mental health and wellbeing in an early years setting	2.1 Explain how mental health and wellbeing can be supported through activities and experiences with young children
	2.2 Describe policies and procedures in place to support mental health in children in an early years setting
	2.3 Explain resilience building strategies for early intervention to support mental health and wellbeing in an early year setting
	2.4 Describe the role of co-regulation for self-regulation
	2.5 Describe the need for the practitioner to understand the relationship between behaviour and mental health
3. Understand sources of support for children, families and practitioners	3.1 Outline sources of support for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child • parent/primary carer and family • setting • self
	3.2 Outline the role of professionals, agencies and services that can support children’s mental health

<p>4. Be able to work in partnership with professionals to support positive mental health and wellbeing in children</p>	<p>4.1 Work effectively with others involved in the education and care of children with mental health concerns</p>
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Assessment guidance

Range
<p>1.2 The student must be confident to be able to communicate in ways that support children with mental health concerns including other professionals</p> <p>3.1 Sources of support to include support for parents/carers/families living with mental health issues, including but not limited to lifestyle choice.</p> <p>3.2 The student must have the knowledge and understanding to confidently liaise with other professionals and be able to facilitate collaboration with other professionals as appropriate</p>

AC	Delivery and assessment guidance	Suggested assessment method
<p>1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.3</p>	<p>Learners could plan or design a series of activities, strategies and resources to be used to support mental health and wellbeing in the early years. Learners should consider a range of different strategies, activities and experiences that would support communication, resilience building and self-regulation in early years practice. Examples of resources could include games, stories, props etc. Learners will also need to provide information about how each activity, strategy or resource would develop relationships and support communication, resilience building and mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Resource pack</p>
<p>1.2, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2</p>	<p>Learners could produce a factsheet relating to supporting mental health in an early years setting. This factsheet could be used to inform key people and Early Years Practitioners about the setting's policies and procedures, sources of support and the roles of different professionals, agencies and services for children's mental health.</p>	<p>Factsheet</p>
<p>2.4, 2.5 4.1</p>	<p>Learners could research the role of co-regulation in supporting children with self-regulation, and the need for the practitioner to understand the relationship between behaviour and mental health. They could use their research to complete a Tutor-devised assignment designed to address the assessment criteria.</p> <p>Learners discuss the effective collaboration with others involved in the education and care of children with mental health concerns.</p>	<p>Assignment</p>

Learner declaration of authenticity:

I declare that the work presented for this unit is entirely my own work.

Learner signature:

Date:

Assessor sign off of completed unit: Unit 03

I confirm that the learner has met the requirements for all assessment criteria demonstrating knowledge and skills for this unit.

Assessor name:

Signature:

Date:

For e-portfolio a signature is not required, providing the learner has a personalised and secure login.

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Recommended assessment methods

A recommended range of assessment methods has been identified, which may be used for the units in this qualification. This gives the opportunity for different learning styles and individual needs of learners to be taken into account.

If you are proposing to use an assessment method that is not included within the recommended list, you should contact your External Quality Assurer with full details of your proposed method. It will need formal approval from us before it can be used.

Each learner must generate evidence from appropriate assessment tasks which demonstrate achievement of all the learning outcomes associated with each unit. [Grades are not awarded.]

Please refer to the notes relating to expert witness testimony and simulation which follow this table.

Ref	Assessment Method	Assessing Competence/ Skills	Assessing Knowledge/ Understanding
A	Direct observation of learner by Assessor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> by an Assessor who meets the relevant Sector Skills Council's or other assessment strategy/principles and includes inference of knowledge from this direct observation of practice 	Yes	Yes
B	Professional discussion	Yes	Yes
C	Expert witness testimony* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when directed by the Sector Skills Council or other assessment strategy/principles 	Yes	Yes
D	Learner's own work products	Yes	Yes
E	Learner log or reflective diary	Yes	Yes
F	Activity plan or planned activity	Yes	Yes
G	Observation of children, young people or adults by the learner	Yes	Yes
H	Portfolio of evidence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> may include simulation** 	N/A	Yes
I	Recognition of prior learning	N/A	Yes

J	Reflection on own practice in real work environment	Yes	Yes
K	Written and pictorial information	No	Yes
L	Scenario or case study	No	Yes
M	Task set by CACHE (for knowledge learning outcomes)	No	Yes
N	Oral questions and answers	No	Yes
<p>* Expert witness testimony should be used in line with the relevant assessment strategy/principles. This method must be used with professional discretion, and only selected when observation would not be appropriate. Those providing an expert witness testimony must be lead practitioners with experience of making judgements around competence. The circumstances that may allow for an expert witness testimony include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when assessment may cause distress to an individual, such as supporting a child with a specific need • a rarely occurring situation, such as dealing with an accident or illness • confidential situations – such as safeguarding strategy meetings – where it would be inappropriate for an Assessor to observe the learner’s performance. <p>** Simulation. A learner’s portfolio of evidence may only include simulation of skills where simulation is permitted by the relevant assessment strategy/principles.</p>			

Assessment strategy

Knowledge learning outcomes

- Assessors will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make assessment decisions.
- Internal Quality Assurers will need to be both occupationally knowledgeable and qualified to make quality assurance decisions.



Section 3

Explanation of terms



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.
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.
Perform	Do something (take an action/follow an instruction) which the question or task asks or requires.
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.
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Section 4

Additional information



Additional information

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 learning outcomes.

Support for centres

There are a number of documents on the NCFE website that centres might find useful.

Key Facts

This document outlines the key information of this qualification for the centre, learner and employer.

Useful websites

Centres may find the following website helpful for information, materials and resources to assist with the delivery of this qualification:

- Oxford Brain Story: www.oxfordbrainstory.org
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Learning resources

We offer a wide range of learning resources and materials to support the delivery of our qualifications. Please check the qualifications page on the NCFE website for more information and to see what is available for this qualification.

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.

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