

**NCFE**

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# Qualification specification

**NCFE CACHE Level 3 Technical Specialist in  
Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators in  
Early Years Settings (Award)  
QN: 610/4001/0**

## Qualification summary

<b>Qualification title</b>	NCFE CACHE Level 3 Technical Specialist in Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators in Early Years Settings (Award)		
<b>Ofqual qualification number (QN)</b>	610/4001/0	<b>Aim reference</b>	610/4001/0
<b>Guided learning hours (GLH)</b>	24	<b>Total qualification time (TQT)</b>	44
<b>Minimum age</b>	16		
<b>Qualification purpose</b>	<p>This qualification is designed to meet the needs of both 16 to 19 and adult learners who are interested in developing additional specialist competence in an educational occupation and clearly aligns to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education's (IfATE's) hierarchy of purpose. The qualification offers an engaging course of study and provides learners with the opportunity to specialise within an occupational area.</p> <p>The qualification builds on the outcomes within the Early Years Educator occupational standard (ST0135) and will enable learners to acquire the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to develop additional specialist competence within education and early years. Furthermore, employers will be able to access reliable evidence of a learner's achievement against the criteria, which are the minimum requirements for practice in a specialised role within the occupational area, as a special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo).</p>		
<b>Real work environment (RWE) requirement/ recommendation</b>	Experience in a real work environment is required.		
<b>Rules of combination</b>	All content is mandatory.		
<b>Grading</b>	Achieved/not yet achieved.		
<b>Assessment method</b>	Internally assessed and externally quality assured portfolio of evidence.		
<b>Work/industry placement experience</b>	Work/industry placement is preferred but not required.		
<b>Occupational standards</b>	<p>This qualification builds on the outcomes within the Early Years Educator occupational standard (ST0135).</p> <p>The specialist duties have been written to build upon the knowledge, skills and behaviours in the Early Years Educator standard.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrate a clear understanding of diversity and equality for effective inclusive practice, which values and respects children's social and cultural context, to include high ability children as well as those with SEND and English as an Additional Language (EAL)</li> <li>2. Ensure all practitioners in the setting understand their responsibility to children with SEND and the setting's approach to identifying and meeting SEND needs. Support the development of the team;</li> </ol>		

	<p>mentoring, role modelling values and behaviours, and managing change effectively through purposeful supervision</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Apply knowledge of child development proactively, working in partnership with key stakeholders in children's lives to improve outcomes for babies and children. Ensure parents/carers are closely involved throughout and that their insights inform action taken by the setting</li> <li>4. Liaising with professionals or agencies beyond the setting</li> <li>5. Continually develop own practice</li> <li>6. Facilitate child-centred, self-directed high quality learning environments conducive to rich play opportunities</li> </ol>
<b>UCAS points</b>	Please refer to the UCAS website for further details of points allocation and the most up-to-date information.
<b>Regulation information</b>	This is a regulated qualification. The regulated number for this qualification is 610/4001/0.
<b>Funding</b>	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

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.

If you are using this qualification specification for planning purposes, please make sure that you are using the most recent version.

### Aims and objectives

This qualification aims to:

- focus on the study of special educational needs in the early years sector
- incorporate a key core of knowledge

The objectives of this qualification are to:

- explore the roles and responsibilities of the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) in an early years setting
- understand the strategies and techniques for supporting children and their families
- increase knowledge of SEND codes of practice

### 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 who envisage or currently have careers in such areas as healthcare, social work, nursing, counselling, early years and teaching. This qualification builds on the outcomes within the Early Years Educator occupational standard (ST0135).

Registration is at the discretion of the centre, in accordance with equality legislation and should be made on the Portal. However, learners must be aged 16 or above to undertake this qualification and have experience of working with babies and young children before registering. It would also be advantageous for learners to hold a relevant level 2 or level 3 qualification.

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, or with the same/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 **both 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.

## Progression

Learners who achieve this qualification could progress to the following:

- employment:
  - early years SENCo
- further education:
  - special educational needs
  - early years education
  - teaching and learning
- higher education

### **Progression to higher level studies**

Level 3 qualifications can support progression to higher level study, which requires knowledge and skills different from those gained at levels 1 and 2. Level 3 qualifications enable learners to:

- apply factual, procedural and theoretical subject knowledge
- use relevant knowledge and methods to address complex, non-routine problems
- interpret and evaluate relevant information and ideas
- understand the nature of the area of study or work
- demonstrate an awareness of different perspectives and approaches
- identify, select and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills
- use appropriate research to inform actions
- review and evaluate the effectiveness of their own methods

### **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.

### **Real work environment (RWE) requirement/recommendation**

Experience in a real work environment is required.

Where the assessment guidance for a unit/qualification allows, it is essential that organisations wishing to operate a real work environment (RWE) do so in an environment that reflects a real work setting and replicates the key characteristics of the workplace in which the skill to be assessed is normally employed. This is often used to support simulation.

### **Work/industry placement experience**

Work/industry placement is preferred but not required.

### **Age ranges covered by the qualification**

This qualification relates to working with children in early years settings, between the ages of 0 to 5 for early years educators.

## 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 (IQA) must still be completed by the centre as usual)

Learners must be successful in this component to gain the NCFE CACHE Level 3 Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators in Early Years Settings (610/4001/0).

All the evidence generated by the learner will be assessed against the standards expected of a level 3 learner for each LO.

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 internally assessed units, which can be found within a separate document in the member's area of our 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 the knowledge learning outcomes (LOs) for both 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. The assessment tasks should allow the learner to respond to a real-life situation that they may face when in employment. 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 4 essential elements in the production of successful centre-based assessment tasks; these are:

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

Please see the guidance document for creation of internal assessment tasks on our website.

Assessment guidance is provided for each unit. Assessors can use other methods of assessment as long as they are valid and reliable and maintain the integrity of the assessment and of the standards required of this qualification.

## **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.

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.

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**Unit 01: Roles and responsibilities of the special educational needs co-ordinator in the early years (R/651/1074)**



Unit summary			
The aim of this unit is to explore the role of statutory guidance and how this informs the role and responsibilities of the special educational needs co-ordinator in an early years setting.			
Assessment			
This unit is internally assessed via a portfolio of evidence.			
<b>Mandatory</b>	<b>Achieved/not yet achieved</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>12 GLH</b>

<b>Learning outcomes (LOs)</b> The learner will:	<b>Assessment criteria (AC)</b> The learner can:	<b>Evidence record</b> (For example, page number and method)	<b>Assessor</b> Initial and date
1. Understand the principles, statutory guidance and <b>legislation</b> underpinning practice for children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) in an early years setting	1.1 Explain the term special educational needs and disability in relation to statutory guidance		
	1.2 Outline the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice for an early years setting in line with statutory requirements		
2. Understand the role of the early years special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo)	2.1 Evaluate the <b>role</b> of the SENCo in private, voluntary and independent early years settings		
	2.2 Explain the responsibilities of the early years SENCo to <b>share best practice and raise confidence of colleagues</b> in their work with children with SEND		
3. Understand partnership working for the early years SENCo	3.1 Explore services available for children and their families through the <b>Local Offer</b>		
	3.2 Describe the support available from <b>other professionals, agencies and services</b> to support the early years SENCo		
	3.3 Explain the role of the early years SENCo during transition		
	3.4 Explain how <b>information sharing</b> with others within and beyond the setting contributes to effective transition and supports achievement of agreed outcomes		

<b>Learning outcomes (LOs)</b> The learner will:	<b>Assessment criteria (AC)</b> The learner can:	<b>Evidence record</b> (For example, page number and method)	<b>Assessor</b> Initial and date
4. Understand early identification and action for children with SEND	4.1 <b>Use examples to describe</b> each of the areas of need identified below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communication and interaction</li> <li>• cognition and learning</li> <li>• social, emotional and mental health difficulties</li> <li>• sensory and/or physical needs</li> </ul>		
	4.2 Explain how high and low incidence of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are identified		
	4.3 Describe characteristics of different types of special educational needs and disabilities in an early years setting to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high incidence</li> <li>• low incidence</li> </ul>		
	4.4 Summarise processes for identification and early action for children with SEND in an early years setting in accordance with the early years foundation stage		
	4.5 Give examples of adjustment strategies and interventions for supporting the learning of children with different types of SEND to ensure positive learning outcomes		

### **Delivery and assessment guidance**

**LO1** During the teaching of this learning outcome students must be able to explain legal obligations that early years providers share towards disabled children.

**AC2.1** The role of the SENCo in private, voluntary and independent early years settings to include:

- ensuring all early years practitioners in the setting understand their responsibilities to children with SEND
- ensuring all early years practitioners are familiar with the setting's approach to identifying and meeting children's SEND needs
- ensuring parents/carers are closely involved throughout and that their insights inform action taken by the setting
- liaising with professionals and/or agencies beyond the setting
- engaging with the child to gain their view

**AC2.2** Supporting best practice with colleagues to include:

- induction of new staff
- staff responsibilities to children with SEND
- setting approach to identification and meeting of SEND needs
- partnership working towards agreed outcomes with parents/carers and in consultation with the child
- identifying training needs and how these can be met
- accessing sources of support to promote SENCo role
- role modelling, mentoring, supervising and managing change

**AC3.1** Local offer including the provision of the local authority, of all services available to support children who are disabled or who have SEND and their families.

**LO3 3.2** Where appropriate learners should apply own skills to liaise with other professionals, agencies and services beyond the setting to include:

- sensory support services
- specialist teachers
- speech and language therapist
- occupational therapist
- physiotherapist
- Independent Advice and Support Services (IASS)
- local voluntary agencies who provide support to families
- social care services
- area SENCo inclusion officer or equivalent, where available

**AC3.4** Explain how **information sharing** with others within and beyond the setting contributes to effective transition and supports achievement of agreed outcomes: to include what information can and/or should be shared with others and how to share information with the receiving setting or school and how to involve children and their parents/carers in this.

**AC4.1** When describing each of the broad areas, examples of associated difficulties must be included.

**Unit 02 Strategies and techniques for supporting children and families (T/651/1075)**

<b>Unit summary</b>			
The aim of this unit is for the learner to consider strategies and techniques for supporting children and their families with special educational needs and disability in early years settings.			
<b>Assessment</b>			
This unit is internally assessed via a portfolio of evidence.			
<b>Mandatory</b>	<b>Achieved/not yet achieved</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>12 GLH</b>

<b>Learning outcomes (LOs)</b> The learner will:	<b>Assessment criteria (AC)</b> The learner can:	<b>Evidence record</b> (For example, page number and method)	<b>Assessor</b> Initial and date
1. Understand the graduated approach in an early years setting	1.1 Describe each stage in the graduated approach cycle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• assess</li> <li>• plan</li> <li>• do</li> <li>• review</li> </ul>		
	1.2 Outline how following a graduated approach provides SEND support in the early years		
	1.3 Discuss ways of engaging with parents/carers, colleagues and other professionals throughout the graduated approach		
	1.4 Discuss benefits to the child of parent/carer participation throughout the graduated approach to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• confidence and well-being</li> <li>• improved social skills</li> <li>• holistic condition improvement</li> </ul>		
	1.5 Analyse the reviewing processes for progress monitoring and action planning to inform practice within the graduated approach		
2. Understand English as an additional language (EAL)	2.1 Explain the needs of children with EAL in an early years setting		
	2.2 Explain the needs of children with EAL and SEND in the early years		
3. Understand Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans	3.1 Describe the principles underpinning EHC plans		
	3.2 Analyse clear goal setting for effective EHC plans		
	3.3 Explain record keeping for best practice in tracking progress for children in line with the <b>early years foundation stage</b> and local authority requirements		

<b>Learning outcomes (LOs)</b> The learner will:	<b>Assessment criteria (AC)</b> The learner can:	<b>Evidence record</b> (For example, page number and method)	<b>Assessor</b> Initial and date
4. Be able to practice as a reflective early years practitioner	4.1 Develop a skills gap analysis against the early years SENCo job description		
	4.2 Reflect on own practice to identify professional development opportunities, training and support needs for early years SENCo role		
	4.3 Explore funding implications in relation to SEND for the early years SENCo		

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### **Delivery and assessment guidance**

**AC1.1** Each stage within the graduated approach:

The learners must consider the purpose and value of observation and how these observations inform each stage. Consider methods and the appropriateness of observation.

**AC1.3** Colleagues:

Must include key worker, practitioner colleagues and explain their role within the cycle.

**LO2** The learners should be able to discriminate rate and pace with regard to EAL and SEND, as well as being able to identify when SEND is occurring, not related to EAL.

**LO3** Teaching around EHCPs must include any support plans generated to enhance the holistic health, development and learning of individual children.

**AC3.3** Early years foundation stage:

Facilitate child-centred, self-directed high-quality learning environments conducive to inclusive rich play opportunities linked to the early years foundation stage statutory framework.

## 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 the 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 NCFE before it can be used.

Each learner must generate evidence from appropriate assessment tasks that demonstrate achievement of all the learning outcomes (LOs) associated with each unit (grades are not awarded).

Please refer to the notes relating to expert witness testimony and simulation that 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"> <li>by an assessor who meets the relevant Sector Skills Council's (SSC) or other assessment strategy/principles and includes inference of knowledge from this direct observation of practice</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes
B	Professional discussion	Yes	Yes
C	Expert witness testimony* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when directed by the Sector Skills Council (SSC) or other assessment strategy/principles</li> </ul>	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"> <li>may include simulation**</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes
I	Recognition of prior learning	Yes	Yes
J	Reflection on own practice in real work environment (RWE)	Yes	Yes

Ref	Assessment method	Assessing competence/skills	Assessing knowledge/understanding
K	Written and pictorial information	No	Yes
L	Scenario or case study	No	Yes
M	Task set by NCFE (for knowledge LOs)	No	Yes
N	Oral questions and answers	Yes	Yes

\* **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:

- 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

\*\* **Simulation**. A learner's portfolio of evidence may only include simulation of skills where simulation is permitted by the relevant assessment strategy/principles.

### Assessment strategies and principles relevant to this qualification

The units we offer have been developed in line with the specific assessment strategies or principles of different sector skills councils (SSCs) or by us where there is no SSC lead.

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.

## **NCFE assessment strategy**

### **Knowledge LOs:**

- 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

### **Competence/skills LOs:**

- assessors will need to be both occupationally competent 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

This table explains how the terms used at **level 3** in the unit content are applied to this qualification (not all verbs are used in this qualification).

<b>Analyse</b>	Break down the subject into separate parts and examine each part. Show how the main ideas are related and why they are important. Reference to current research or theory may support the analysis.
<b>Apply</b>	Explain how existing knowledge can be linked to new or different situations in practice.
<b>Clarify</b>	Explain the information in a clear, concise way.
<b>Classify</b>	Organise according to specific criteria.
<b>Collate</b>	Collect and present information arranged in sequential or logical order.
<b>Compare</b>	Examine the subjects in detail and consider the similarities and differences.
<b>Consider</b>	Think carefully and write about a problem, action or decision.
<b>Create</b>	Make or produce an artefact as required.
<b>Critically compare</b>	This is a development of 'compare' where the learner considers the positive aspects and limitations of the subject.
<b>Demonstrate</b>	Show an understanding by describing, explaining or illustrating using examples.
<b>Describe</b>	Write about the subject giving detailed information in a logical way.
<b>Develop (a plan/idea)</b>	Expand a plan or idea by adding more detail and/or depth of information.
<b>Diagnose</b>	Identify the cause based on valid evidence.
<b>Differentiate</b>	Identify the differences between two or more things.
<b>Discuss</b>	Write a detailed account giving a range of views or opinions.
<b>Distinguish</b>	Explain the difference between two or more items, resources, pieces of information.
<b>Draw conclusions</b>	Make a final decision or judgement based on reasons.
<b>Estimate</b>	Form an approximate opinion or judgement using previous knowledge or considering other information.

<b>Evaluate</b>	Examine strengths and weaknesses, arguments for and against and/or similarities and differences. Judge the evidence from the different perspectives and make a valid conclusion or reasoned judgement. Reference to current research or theory may support the evaluation.
<b>Explain</b>	Provide detailed information about the subject with reasons showing how or why. Responses could include examples to support these reasons.
<b>Explore</b>	Consider an idea or topic broadly, searching out related and/or particularly relevant, interesting or debatable points.
<b>Extrapolate</b>	Use existing knowledge to predict possible outcomes that might be outside the norm.
<b>Identify</b>	Recognise and name the main points accurately. (Some description may also be necessary to gain higher marks when using compensatory marking).
<b>Implement</b>	Explain how to put an idea or plan into action.
<b>Interpret</b>	Explain the meaning of something.
<b>Judge</b>	Form an opinion or make a decision.
<b>Justify</b>	Give a satisfactory explanation for actions or decisions.
<b>Perform</b>	Carry out a task or process to meet the requirements of the question.
<b>Plan</b>	Think about and organise information in a logical way using an appropriate format.
<b>Provide</b>	Identify and give relevant and detailed information in relation to the subject.
<b>Reflect</b>	Learners should consider their actions, experiences or learning and the implications of this for their practice and/or professional development.
<b>Review and revise</b>	Look back over the subject and make corrections or changes.
<b>Select</b>	Make an informed choice for a specific purpose.
<b>Show</b>	Supply evidence to demonstrate accurate knowledge and understanding.
<b>State</b>	Give the main points clearly in sentences or paragraphs.
<b>Summarise</b>	Give the main ideas or facts in a concise way.
<b>Test</b>	Complete a series of checks utilising a set procedure.

## **Section 4: additional information**

### **Support materials**

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

- sample assessment tasks
- qualification factsheet

### **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.

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***\* To continue to improve our levels of customer service, telephone calls may be recorded for training and quality purposes.***

**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	R/651/1074	Roles and responsibilities of the special educational needs co-ordinator in the early years	3	12
Unit 02	T/651/1075	Strategies and techniques for supporting children and families	3	12