

NCFE

CACHE

Chief Examiner Report

**NCFE CACHE Level 3 Applied General
Certificate for Early Years, Childcare and
Education
QN: 603/2988/9**

Assessment code: AGCEYCE

Paper number: P002644

**Submission window: 28 April 2025 to 14 May
2025**

Introduction

This report contains information in relation to the external assessment from the chief examiner, with an emphasis on the standard of learner work within this assessment window.

The aim is to highlight where learners generally performed well as well as any areas where further development may be required.

Key points:

- grade achievements
- administering the external assessment
- standard of learner work
- assessment structure
- use of word allocation
- criteria requirements and command verbs
- referencing of external assessment tasks
- assessment criteria (AC)
- regulations for the conduct of external assessment.

It is important to note that learners should not sit the external assessment until they have taken part in the relevant teaching of the full qualification content.

Grade achievements

Grade	NYA	P	M	D	Learners	80
% of learners	30.00	27.50	16.25	26.25	Pass rate	70.00%

Administering the external assessment

The external assessment is invigilated and must be conducted in line with our [Regulations for the Conduct of External Assessment](#) document. Learners may require additional pre-release material to complete the tasks within the paper. These must be provided to learners in line with our regulations.

Learners must be given the resources to carry out the tasks and these are highlighted within the [Qualification Specific Instructions for Delivery \(QSID\)](#) document.

Standard of learner work

There were excellent examples where learners fully met the criteria and clearly and concisely linked their responses back to the title. Overall, some responses in this paper lacked the knowledge and understanding required to meet the higher-level criteria. To achieve these, learners must keep their responses clearly focused on the assessment title: 'Childcare practitioners support wellbeing in early years settings'. Several NYA outcomes were due to insufficient or unclear links to the title, or a lack of appropriate application of the command verbs in each criteria.

Assessment structure

The assessment structure was clear to read, the explanation provided additional guidance to the student.

Use of word allocation

In some instances, students distributed their word count evenly across pass / merit / distinction criteria, which limited the depth of detail needed to meet higher-grade requirements. Students are encouraged to use the full word allowance to thoroughly develop their responses in alignment with the criteria and assessment title. References do not count towards the final word total. Providers are reminded to allocate the full 8-hour duration for the assessment. This allotted time should not be reduced, ensuring students have adequate opportunity to complete the assessment fully. Providers should consider this when scheduling assessment sessions.

Criteria requirements and command verbs

Providers may wish to support students by revisiting the meanings of command verbs used in this assessment, to help clarify expectations. For instance, the verb 'describe' requires learners to extend their writing with detail and development. It is essential that students read each criteria carefully to fully understand what is being asked – especially when more than one reason or aspect is required. Encouraging learners to structure their responses clearly and maintain focus on the title would be helpful. For example, using sentence starters such as: 'One reason this is important is...' followed by 'A second reason is...' can support clarity of the response.

Referencing of external assessment tasks

Referencing of external assessment tasks (P3, M3 and D2 criteria). Overall, many learners have a reasonable grasp of referencing requirements, using appropriate quotations to support their knowledge. However, this remains an area for development. Learners should be reminded that quotations must be clearly used within the main body of the work, and that these should be indicated with the use of quotation marks and the source stated. At times, these were not present or approached as a separate section. Remember that the quotations "must support the description and/or explanation". Sources should be used in a way that supports assertions and comments made within the narrative. There were some instances where references and use of quotes were submitted as their own criteria. The assessment information given to students clearly states that references must support responses given in each grade and should not be submitted as a separate criteria.

Providers could support students with effective referencing skills.

- Quotations must not be used to provide information in place of the learner's own words.

- Quotations must be used within the text to support the learner's own discussion.
- Quotes must be identifiable and traceable.

Some students did not achieve a pass due to a lack of referencing skills and should refer to the guidance provided. For example, where quotations are used, the examiner must be able to clearly trace where the information was sourced.

Assessment criteria (AC)

P1 criteria

Most learners were able to explain the importance of meeting children's needs in relation to the title. For example, when practitioners form secure and trusting relationships with children, it supports emotional wellbeing, and the key person who offers consistent comfort and praise helps children feel safe and valued, which supports their overall wellbeing in the setting. As a concept, wellbeing was generally well understood, however some learners became a little distracted and moved off to focus on growth which typically ended up with vague responses. Some learners described activities 'painting to express feelings' or 'reading stories at circle time' without explaining why these are important. They failed to link the activities to the importance of meeting children's needs or how this supports their wellbeing, as required by the title.

P2 criteria

Two or more policies or procedures that underpin practice and relate to the title must be described to achieve this criterion. This was typically a strength of the responses observed, with many learners clearly indicating specific policies or procedures. There were relevant examples given that clearly underpinned practice and linked to the title, for example, learners described how the safeguarding policy ensures children are protected from harm and how practitioners follow specific procedures when concerns arise. This supports children's emotional wellbeing by creating a safe and secure environment.

Although not a requirement, some learners had participated in work placement and used setting specific examples, which were both relevant and positive responses.

Some learners only listed policies (For example 'safeguarding' or 'health and safety') without describing what the policies involve or how they are followed in practice. Other responses gave examples of activities or routines but did not explain how these were underpinned by a specific policy or procedure. Some examples were not clearly linked to supporting wellbeing, so the connection to the title was missing.

P3 criteria

Two or more characteristics of an enabling environment that supports children and relates to the title must be described. For example, some learners described how warm, welcoming, and predictable environments help children feel safe and secure, including quiet areas with cushions and blankets, and familiar routines to help reduce anxiety and support emotional wellbeing. These responses clearly described what the environment looks like, how it functions in practice, and how it supports children's wellbeing, linking back to the title. This was a challenging criterion for some learners as they struggled to articulate two characteristics of an enabling

environment. Again, there was often a lack of focus on the title, for example safety and physical resources were described but did not relate to children's wellbeing. Some learners focused only on physical safety, ('no sharp objects,' or 'clean floors') or listed resources ('books, blocks, sandpit') without describing how they support wellbeing.

M1 criteria

The impact of one theoretical approach on children's learning or development must be discussed in relation to the title. Excellent and relevant examples included discussions of Bowlby and Maslow. Some learners discussed how secure attachments with key practitioners support emotional wellbeing; they explained that when children form strong bonds with caregivers, they feel safe to explore and learn, which promotes confidence and resilience. This showed a clear understanding of how theory influences practice and how this, in turn, supports children's wellbeing, making a strong link to the title.

Other learners successfully linked Maslow's theory by explaining how meeting children's basic needs (safety, belonging, love) allows them to thrive emotionally and socially, and how practitioners play a key role in meeting these needs through the environment and care provided. Some responses named a theorist but did not explain the theory or how it applies in practice. Others described the theory but did not link it to wellbeing or to the role of practitioners in supporting children. A few examples focused only on learning or development in general, without considering how the theory helps promote wellbeing in early years settings, as required by the title.

M2 criteria

The explanation must focus on planning to demonstrate how child centred planning meets the individual needs of children in relation to the title. There were strong examples where learners clearly understood the features of child centred planning and how this linked back to the title, for example describing how planning starts with observing the child's interests, needs, and stage of development, and how practitioners adapt activities based on children's changing interests and emotional states. These responses linked the planning process, the practitioner's role, and the child's individual needs clearly to wellbeing, showing a full understanding of the criterion and the title. However, a few learners focused on child-led play rather than explaining child centred planning. Some described general play activities without explaining how they were planned or how they were tailored to meet individual needs. Many responses did not make the connection between planning and how it supports children's wellbeing.

D1 criteria

Two strategies must be evaluated from more than one perspective to demonstrate the strengths and limitations in supporting children in relation to the title. For example, when evaluating the role of key person as a strategy: The strengths: From the child's perspective, having a consistent key person fosters a sense of security and trust, which supports emotional wellbeing. From the practitioner's perspective, it allows for better understanding of individual needs and more personalised care. Limitations: However, from the parent's perspective, relying on one key person can cause anxiety if that person is absent. Practitioners may also face challenges managing time effectively across multiple children.

Some learners described the strategies rather than evaluating them. Others only listed positive points, without considering any limitations or alternative viewpoints (For example, the child, practitioner, or parent perspective). Many learners did not attempt this criteria.

D2 criteria

Wider background reading must be demonstrated through various sources used appropriately. Wider reading was typically not evident. It was difficult to see which sources learners were drawing on to inform their work and, based on some of the content provided, it often did not appear to be evidence or research driven.

Regulations for the conduct of external assessment

Malpractice

There were zero instances of malpractice in this assessment window. The chief examiner would like to take this opportunity to advise learners that instances of malpractice (for example, copying of work from another learner or improper use of AI) will affect the outcome on the assessment.

Maladministration

There were zero instances of maladministration in this assessment window. The chief examiner would like to highlight the importance of adhering to the regulations for the conduct of external assessment document in this respect.

Chief examiner: Emma McCormick

Date: 21 July 2025