



Carolyn Meggitt

CACHE Level 2 Award/Certificate/Diploma in

# Child Care and Education

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EDUCATION

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**Carolyn Meggitt**

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## Foreword

This is the third edition of the popular text *An Introduction to Child Care and Education*. The book has developed and changed its form in each edition, but the important messages are still there, and it is relevant and up to date.

In the first edition, I wrote the chapter on play, and it is good to see that this has been incorporated into the second and third editions. The book continues to value the principles which ensure that practitioners working with young children and their families strive to offer quality experiences. This is important in group care situations and also home learning environments.

This book gives an easy-to-read introduction to the more advanced studies found in the Level 3 text book which Carolyn and I have written together (now in its 5th edition). It gives those new to working with young children and their families a firm foundation on which to build their knowledge and understanding.

Observation is key to working with young children, and knowing how babies, toddlers and young children develop and learn is part of that. The physical development is of great importance, and so is play. The intellectual life of the child, or what we might call mindful learning, is given a balanced emphasis. The feelings, thoughts and ideas of children are valued, and the emotional and social aspects of development are at the centre. Children need to spend time with adults who love them, and who respect their feelings and ideas.

Many children nowadays are spending time in the care of people other than their families. The updated edition of this book will help practitioners to give their best when working with other people's children, so that the children may flourish.

*Professor Tina Bruce*  
*Roehampton University*

# Introduction

The **CACHE Level 2 Award/Certificate/Diploma in Child Care and Education** is an excellent foundation, or starter, course for anyone wanting to work with young children. The course usually runs for one-year full-time in schools or colleges of further education. Institutions – schools and colleges – that offer the course are called **study centres** and the way training is provided can vary. Some may organise training programmes on a part-time basis to meet local needs. This qualification is split into three levels: Award, Certificate and Diploma, with the Award and Certificate building towards the Diploma. It is expected that most people will progress through the Award and Certificate to complete the Diploma in order to be able to practise as an early years practitioner.

You must be at least 16 years old to begin the course. In practice, the course often attracts some older students, who find it an ideal programme for them to ease back into an education environment and to provide a recognised qualification.

CACHE does not state any prescribed entry qualifications, but individual study centres are likely to have their own guidelines. Although the course is vocational rather than academic, the amount of written work involved usually leads centres to ask for some evidence of your ability to communicate well both orally and in writing. When discussing your suitability for this course (and its suitability for you!) they will also be looking for personal qualities that are essential for a career in this field (more about these later!). They may expect you to have completed a period of ‘work experience’ involving children, or to have helped with children’s holiday activities or clubs. This would show that you have some idea of what to expect and that you already know that you enjoy being with children. You may also have had experience through babysitting. Remember: working with children as a professional involves much more than looking after them.

## HOW THE COURSE IS STRUCTURED

There are different elements in the course; each one is important and supports the others. The ‘theory’ part – what you are taught in the classroom – is often referred to as ‘underpinning knowledge’. The ‘practical’ part – what you actually do in your training placements – is detailed in **practice evidence records (PERs)** and is discussed in the overview of Unit 6.

The ‘content’ – what you have to know, understand and be able to do – is divided into units. You must complete Units 1 and 2 to achieve the Award, Units 1–5 for the Certificate and, for the Diploma, Units 1–6 plus one optional unit chosen by your study centre from Units 7–11.

As a vocational course it is multi-disciplinary (i.e. it covers a wide range of subject areas) and includes health-related units, education-related units and some dealing with social studies. As part of these units you should get the opportunity to carry out practical activities in the classroom as well as in your training placements. You are likely to be taught two, or even three, modules at the same time, so personal organisation – of your time and your paperwork – is important.

Patterns of study vary and while some students will have alternate weeks in placement and school/college, others will have set days (usually two or three) each week, so there is a weekly mix of school/college and placement. The recommended number of training placement days for

the course is 65: 30 with children aged 1 to 3 years 11 months; 20 with children aged 4 to 7 years 11 months; and 15 to cover whichever option module is taken.

## HOW YOUR WORK WILL BE ASSESSED

- \* **Attendance record:** this is the form that is perhaps most easily overlooked. CACHE recommends that you achieve 80 per cent attendance at your study centre for each and every taught module. A lower level of attendance suggests that you are unlikely to have gained sufficient understanding and knowledge across the whole course. (Attendance at your training placement is also recorded to ensure that you fulfil the practical requirements of the course.)
- \* **Assessment of your learning:** unit assessments (see Table 1).

Award	Certificate	Diploma	Unit 1	An Introduction to Working with Children	Introductory assignment
			Unit 2	The Developing Child	MCQ paper
			Unit 3	Safe, Healthy and Nurturing Environments for Children	Assessment task
			Unit 4	Children and Play	Assessment task
			Unit 5	Communication and Professional Skills within Child Care and Education	Portfolio of work
			External assessment: short answer test based on a seen case study		
			Unit 6	The Child Care Practitioner in the Work place (Practical Unit)	Practice evidence records Professional development profiles
			Units 7–11	Optional Units	Assessment task
			External assessment: short answer test		

Table 1: Unit assessments

## HOW THIS BOOK WILL HELP YOU GAIN YOUR QUALIFICATION: YOUR PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

This book is a comprehensive textbook which contains all the underpinning knowledge required to gain the Level 2 Award/Certificate/Diploma in Child Care and Education. It covers all six Mandatory Units and all five Optional Units, and aims to set the standard for progression to Level 3 qualifications in child care and education.

Throughout the book there are suggested activities, shown in boxes, many of which can be carried out during your practical placements. They can also be used as evidence in your portfolio of work.

Unit 2 is assessed by a multiple-choice question paper. Your teacher or tutor will ensure that you have MCQ papers with which to practise before the final paper. Twenty multiple-choice

questions (**MCQs**) relating to Unit 2 – and their answers – can be found in the Appendix on pages 296–299.

There is also a useful **Glossary** of terms and a **Bibliography** (which also includes a list of useful websites) to help you complete your written assignments.

I hope you enjoy using this book and wish you well in your work with children!

*Carolyn Meggitt*

# Unit 1

## An Introduction to Working with Children



### Contents

**Unit 1** is divided into four sections:

**Section 1:** The types of setting providing care for children

**Section 2:** Preparing for your placement: roles and responsibilities

**Section 3:** Children's individual needs

**Section 4:** Study skills

## Section 1

### The types of setting providing care for children

A wide range of organisations exists to provide services for young children and their families. These include statutory services, voluntary services and private services.

Many of the settings provide both care and education for children. Parents can choose child care from the following settings:

- \* **crèches** – provide occasional care for children under 8
- \* **toddler groups** – informal groups of parents and carers that meet locally with their children on a regular basis, usually including children who are under 5
- \* **pre-schools and playgroups** – provide play time and, often, early education to under 5s
- \* **day nurseries** – provide care for children from birth to 4 or 5 and beyond, often integrated with early education and other services

## THE TYPES OF SETTING PROVIDING CARE FOR CHILDREN

### STATUTORY SERVICES

Statutory services are those that are funded by government and that have to be provided by law (or statute).

Some services are provided by *central* government departments – for example:

- the National Health Service (NHS)
- the new Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)
- the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

These large departments are funded directly from **taxation** – income tax, VAT and National Insurance.

Other **statutory services** are provided by *local* government – for example:

- Housing Department
- Local Education Authority
- Social Services Department.

These are largely funded through **local taxation** (Council Tax) and from grants made by central government.

### VOLUNTARY SERVICES

These are health, education and social care services that are set up by **charities** to provide services that local authorities can

buy in and so benefit from their expertise. Voluntary organisations are:

- non-profit making
- non-statutory
- dependent on donations, fundraising and government grants.

*Example:* The **National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations (NCVCCO)** is an organisation whose members are all registered charities that work with children, young people and their families. They range from very large national organisations (such as Barnardo's) to small, locally based charities.

### PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector consists of organisations set up to provide health, education and social care services 'at a price'. They are income-generating and profit-making services, which include:

- 'public' and independent or private schools
- private care homes and hostels
- complementary and alternative medicine and therapies, some hospitals and private health screening services
- child care providers (e.g. private nurseries and crèches; workplace nurseries).

- \* **Sure Start Children's Centres** – offer early learning, child care, health advice and family support for families with children up to age 5
- \* **out-of-school or kids' clubs** – open before and after school and all day long during school holidays, giving 3 to 14 year olds (and up to 16 for children with special needs) a safe and enjoyable place to play, meet and sometimes catch up on homework
- \* **holiday play schemes** are often run by voluntary organisations, local authorities or charities, in local parks, community centres, leisure centres or schools; they offer a wide range of activities to keep children busy – such as sports or drama, arts and crafts or music; they also offer opportunities for children to meet and make friends
- \* **childminders** – usually look after children under 12 in the childminder's own home, and often collect school-aged children from a nearby school
- \* **nannies** – provide child care in the child's own home and can look after children of any age.

## SOCIAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

Social Services departments are a statutory service, organised at a local level; they provide a range of care and support for children and families, including:

- \* families where children are assessed as being **in need** (including disabled children)
- \* children who may be suffering '**significant harm**'
- \* children who require looking after by the local authority (through **fostering** or **residential care**), and
- \* children who are placed for **adoption**.

## Looked-after children

Children who are in the care of local authorities are described as 'looked-after children'. They are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect.

There are two main reasons for children being in local authority care.

1. Children who are subject to a **care order** made by the courts under Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 (about 65 per cent of all looked-after children) – for the courts to grant a care order they have to be satisfied that a child is suffering or would suffer 'significant harm' without one.
2. Children who are accommodated by the local authority on a voluntary basis under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 (about a third of all looked-after children).

At any one time, around 60,000 children are looked after in England, although some 90,000 pass through the care system in any year. A total of 42 per cent of looked-after children return home within six months. The system aims to support rehabilitation back into families where possible.

## Foster care

Children are generally looked after in foster care. A minority will be cared for in **children's homes** and some by prospective adoptive parents. Irrespective of the setting in which children are accommodated, all looked-after children will have a social worker and carers (e.g. foster carers, residential care staff) responsible for their day-to-day care, who should be involved in making plans or decisions about the child.

## EDUCATION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

Since 1972, schooling has been compulsory for all children between the ages of 5 and 16. A very small number of children are home-schooled. There are strict regulations to ensure that they receive appropriate education. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is headed by the Secretary of State for Education, and is responsible for deciding the policies of and the funding granted to the local education authorities.

All 3 and 4 year olds are now entitled to free early education for 12.5 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year. Many children under 5 attend:

- \* **maintained (or state) nursery schools**
- \* **nursery classes** attached to primary schools
- \* **playgroups or pre-schools** in the voluntary sector
- \* **privately run nurseries**
- \* **children's centres**
- \* **Home Learning Environment (HLE)** – many young children are cared for by childminders (in the childminder's home) or by nannies or grandparents.

From the age of 5, children attend:

- \* **infant schools** (for children aged 5–7 years)

- \* **primary schools** (for children aged 5–11 years)
- \* **preparatory and independent schools** (private sector)
- \* **after-school clubs.**

## INTEGRATED PROVISION FOR CHILDREN

**Children's centres** serve children and their families from the antenatal period through until children start in reception or Year 1 at primary school. Each centre offers to families with babies and/or pre-school children the services listed in Table 1.1.

Children's centres act as a 'service hub' within the community, offering not only a base for childminder networks, but also a link to other day care provision, out-of-school clubs and extended schools, for example. Centres may also offer other services, such as training for parents (e.g. parenting classes, basic skills, English as an additional language), benefits advice, child care services for older children, and toy libraries.

Within any local authority in the UK there are child care and education settings that come into the category of **voluntary provision**. Two examples are described below.

1. **Community nurseries:** community nurseries exist to provide a service to

Good-quality early learning integrated with full day care provision (a minimum of ten hours a day, five days a week, 48 weeks a year)	Good-quality teacher input to lead the development of learning within the centre
Parental outreach	Family support services
A base for a childminder network	Child and family health services, including antenatal services
Support for children and parents with special needs	Effective links with Jobcentre Plus, local training providers, and further and higher education institutions

Table 1.1: Services offered by children's centres

local children and their families. They are run by local community organisations – often with financial assistance from the local authority – or by charities such as Barnardo’s and Save the Children. Most of these nurseries are open long enough to suit working parents or those at college. Many centres also provide, or act as a venue for, other services, including parent and toddler groups, drop-in crèches, toy libraries and after-school clubs.

## 2. Pre-School Learning Alliance

**Community Pre-Schools:** Pre-School Learning Alliance Community Pre-Schools (playgroups) offer children aged between 3 and 5 years an opportunity to learn through play.

- \* They usually operate on a part-time sessional basis. Sessions are normally two and a half hours each morning or afternoon.
- \* Staff plan a varied curriculum that takes into account children’s previous experiences and developing needs.
- \* The nationally set Foundation Stage curriculum framework, approved by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), is adapted by each group to meet the needs of their own children and to allow them to make the most of a variety of learning opportunities that arise spontaneously through play.
- \* At many pre-school playgroups, parents and carers are encouraged to be involved, and there are often parent and toddler groups meeting at the same sites.

## LEISURE ACTIVITIES AND RECREATION SERVICES

These services provide children and their families with activities and opportunities for

recreation and sport. Some of these are provided by the local authority and are either provided free or at a subsidised cost; others are privately owned and run. They include:

- \* sports centres, children’s gyms
- \* music groups
- \* parks
- \* adventure playgrounds and soft play areas
- \* holiday schemes and activities
- \* lessons, e.g. dance and drama
- \* clubs, e.g. Beavers, Cubs and Scouts; Rainbows, Brownies and Guides, Woodcraft Folk
- \* libraries.

## LOCAL PROVISION FOR CHILDREN

Most local authorities have a special department to coordinate all the services to children within their locality. These departments are often called Early Years Services, and deal exclusively with the needs of young children and their families. The range of services provided varies greatly from one local authority to another, but typically will include the following services (those marked \* must be provided by law).

- \* **Housing:** children and their families in need, e.g. homeless families and those seeking refuge are a priority. Services include providing bed and breakfast accommodation or council housing.\*
- \* **After-school clubs:** these offer supervised play opportunities in a safe, supportive and friendly environment. They usually cater for children from 5 to 11 years, but some centres have facilities for under 5s.\*
- \* **Nursery education:** most authorities are not able to offer full nursery education to all children within the borough. Nursery classes are usually

attached to maintained primary schools. Nursery schools are separate.

- \* **Community places for families with low incomes:** most local authorities keep a number of full day nursery places at Children's Centres, specifically for children in families with low incomes.
- \* **Regulation and registration of services:** such as childminders, private fostering and private or voluntarily run day care and family centres.\*
- \* **Social workers:** work with families where children are assessed as being 'in need'; they give practical support and advice on a wide range of issues including adoption and foster care.\*
- \* **Infant or primary education:** children must attend full-time school from the age of 5, and must follow the National Curriculum.\*
- \* **Residential holidays:** provide opportunities for children to develop self-reliance, as well as providing a break for many children who otherwise would not have the chance of a holiday.
- \* **Holiday play schemes:** full-day programmes of activities during the school holidays.

- \* **Advice, information and counselling:** local authorities have a duty to provide information and counselling to families where there is a child in need.\*
- \* **Children's centres:** these include early learning, parent information services, and support for children and parents with special needs.\*
- \* **Respite care:** families where a child has special needs may be offered a residential holiday for their child so that they can have a break – or respite – from caring for them full-time.\*

These services are usually listed and coordinated by a local **Council for Voluntary Service**. Voluntary organisations sometimes also provide some of the statutory services and will receive payment from the local authority or government for these services – for example, after-school clubs.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

Some useful sources of information about early years services are listed opposite.

### ACTIVITY: FINDING OUT ABOUT YOUR AREA

1. Design a booklet that you could give to a family who are new to your area to inform them about the following sources of information.

Where to find information on:

- support groups for parents
- mother and toddler groups
- pre-school groups (playgroups)
- nursery schools and infant schools.

How to access information on:

- health care for their family – hospitals and accident & emergency departments
- location of health clinics, GP centres
- Community Health Councils – these are

independent bodies that represent the views of patients and users of the Health Service.

Where to find out what benefits and allowances they may be entitled to receive – for example:

- child benefit
- lone-parent benefit
- housing benefit.

2. List some useful general voluntary organisations that exist to support families with young children, with addresses, telephone numbers and, where possible, their website addresses.

- \* *Charities Digest*: available in the reference section of public libraries and most college libraries.
- \* [www.charitynet.org.uk](http://www.charitynet.org.uk).
- \* Citizens Advice Bureau: trained staff provide free, impartial advice and help on legal, social and financial matters to anyone who contacts them.
- \* Public library: for information on all local voluntary groups, often on computer link.
- \* *Yellow Pages*/phone book: usually listed under 'Charitable & Voluntary Organisations'.
- \* Local Authority (Council) Information Service: useful addresses of voluntary organisations.
- \* Post Offices and Benefit Agency Offices (DSS): for leaflets explaining the benefits and allowances available for families with young children.

## Section 2

### Preparing for your placement: roles and responsibilities

During the course, you will be allocated a range of placements, which may include nurseries, schools and families. These are arranged by your study centre and should enable you to carry out all the requirements set out in your Course Handbook. The variety of placements available will depend on where you are studying and the local structure of early years care and education provision.

Every work setting will be different depending on staff, premises, function, attitude, outlook and, of course, the children! There is plenty to learn from those who

have experience and are willing to share their expertise with you and offer advice. You will have the opportunity to decide if you have a preferred age range, which may be useful when you seek employment. Similarly, you may feel more comfortable and confident in some staff teams than others. This may be because of organisational factors or attitudes – try to analyse what makes the difference.

If you are following the career path that is right for you, then it is probable (and preferable) that you enjoy your training placement time more than your study centre time! If this is not the case, think carefully about your choices for now and the future. Child care and education is one field in which you cannot achieve through written work alone. Students who show little initiative, have poor communication and display little interest in placement are unlikely to receive satisfactory PDPs (personal development profiles) and so will not succeed, whereas those who are very good in their placements can usually be given the necessary support to complete written tasks successfully to achieve the award.

### BEFORE STARTING YOUR PLACEMENT

Many students are nervous when starting in a new placement, and staff will be aware of their concerns. The information that follows will help you to feel more confident and to feel settled more quickly.

#### Before you start: making contact

Find out exactly where the placement is – practise the route beforehand so that you allow enough time; make sure you have the

telephone number and that you know who to report to. (Many placements will be happy to show you around prior to starting work.) At this first visit you could ask the following questions.

- \* What hours will I be working?
- \* What should I wear?
- \* What sort of things will I have to do?
- \* What shall I do if I am ill or cannot attend?
- \* What shall I do at lunchtime?
- \* What happens at the end of a placement period?

### What are the placement responsibilities?

Many training placements have a wealth of experience in helping students on a number of courses and may have a designated person (e.g. a placement supervisor) to liaise with the study centre.

- \* They welcome well-motivated students and will afford time and advice for those willing and keen to accept it.
- \* They understand that there are course requirements that you need to be able to implement, but they will also expect you to carry out tasks they have planned and arranged, and to follow the policies and procedures laid down in their setting.

Take advantage of any extra opportunities you may have to attend special events or outings as these provide valuable experience in seeing children in a range of situations and environments.

### What are your responsibilities as a student in the placement?

Your responsibilities are as follows:

- \* attendance
- \* appearance

- \* paperwork
- \* cooperation and teamwork
- \* confidentiality.

### Attendance

#### Check attendance times

Make sure you have checked the following with your supervisor: your starting time, break and lunch times, and finishing time. There is sometimes some flexibility if you have limited transport choices or have unavoidable appointments.

#### Be flexible

Always offer to make up missed time, and be prepared to stay longer on some occasions, if possible, to help complete a job and prepare for the following day (for example, when displays are being changed – much easier to do without children around!).

#### Reliability and punctuality

These are very important and poor performance in these aspects can lead to tensions between you and staff. Their main concern must be the children in their care and they will be less likely to cooperate with you and to give responsibility for tasks if you cannot be relied upon to arrive on time and be prepared.

#### Absence from placement

If, for some good reason, you cannot attend then you must contact your placement and inform them as soon as possible (preferably before the children arrive) so alternative arrangements can be made, indicating whether you are likely to be able to attend on the next scheduled date. You should also inform your study centre to avoid a visiting tutor making an unnecessary journey. Whenever possible, missed days should be 'made up'.

## Appearance

Your study centre will give guidance for appearance, particularly if there is a dress code or uniform (often a sweatshirt over dark trousers).

- \* Choose clothing carefully, bearing in mind the types of activity you are likely to be involved in.
- \* Footwear should be comfortable and not too heavy.
- \* Hair should be tied back if long; young children in group settings often have **head lice** – you can help to avoid getting them yourself by ensuring you keep your hair well brushed and by tying it back.
- \* Avoid long fingernails and don't wear nail varnish – flakes chipping off into the snack you are preparing is neither appetising nor hygienic!
- \* Similarly, avoid all jewellery other than a watch – small children pull on chains and dangly earrings, and heavy rings and bracelets are inappropriate for dealing with play dough or paint, or for changing nappies.

## Paperwork

Although time is always precious, try to identify a time each week or fortnight when you can sit down with your supervisor and discuss your progress. You should talk about:

- \* what competencies you feel you have achieved
- \* how you might achieve those that do not occur during the normal daily routine
- \* what activities you have planned and need to carry out
- \* forthcoming plans and events that involve you.

## Keeping a log or diary

This will help you to recall things you have done and match them to the competencies

in the practice evidence record (PER) (see below). It is *your* responsibility to do this, not your supervisor's. Try to become familiar with the requirements and make a pencil mark next to each one you believe you have carried out competently – if you can show a date, or dates, and refer to your log, then your supervisor is more likely to remember it and may sign it off.

Remember that your **PER** is your record of achievement in placement and is vital evidence for you to earn the Certificate.

- \* **Do not lose it!** It is important to keep a record of signed competencies throughout the course and check it regularly with your tutor in case the worst should happen.
- \* **Keep your PER in a safe place:** try to avoid leaving your PER with your supervisor – this may seem sensible but often leads to disaster if you or he/she is absent, the book gets mislaid or damaged, or the placement comes to an end followed by a long holiday.
- \* **Attendance record:** your study centre may require you to keep an attendance sheet that logs the times and dates of placement attendance. This needs to be signed regularly by your supervisor and kept by you.
- \* **Getting signatures:** in addition to your attendance record and PER competencies you will also need to obtain your supervisor's signature to authenticate (i.e. show that they are genuine) displays, observations and portfolio activities.

## Cooperation and teamwork

No two training placements, nor supervisors, will be the same. It is important, therefore, to settle as quickly as possible into new and different routines and practices. Gathering the placement information, as suggested on pages 7–8, should speed up this process.