

ACE – Award in Assisting the Childcare Educator

MQF Level: 3

ECTS Value: 30 ECTS

Duration: 9-months

Contact Hours: 110
Self -Study Hours: 274

Supervised Placement and Practice Hours: 200
Assessment Hours: 166

Programme Description

This programme is intended to prepare applicants for the role of *Assistant to the Childcare Educator*. This is aimed to be achieved by giving course participants an education in child development (0-3 years), including best practices in providing physical care to babies and toddlers. The programme also includes aspects of Health and Safety in early years settings. Course participants will be taught how to create learning experiences that sustain children's progress, and how to maintain inclusive learning environments. Additionally, the course will educate participants about Children's Rights, Positive Behaviour, Parental Involvement and issues of Sustainability.

Entry Requirements

Applicants interested in following this programme are to satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

- a) Be at least 23 years of age;
- b) Currently employed within in a licensed child care setting.

Overall Objectives and Outcomes

Though this programme, participants will be able to:

- a. Use child development theories to understand children's needs
- b. Care for children's physical needs
- c. Implement learning experiences that sustain children's' progress
- d. Actively sustain inclusive learning environments
- e. Follow all pertinent Health and Safety regulations
- f. Employ positive behaviour management systems
- g. Encourage parental involvement in children's learning and assessment
- h. Foster collaboration and healthy working relationships with all stakeholders
- i. Reflect on one's daily practices
- j. Implement sustainability concerns in children's learning experiences

Programme Structure and Delivery

This programme adopts an online approach to teaching and learning and is composed of the following modules.

Code	Module Title	ECTS
ACE01	Understanding Child Development and Caring for Children's Physical Needs	4
ACE02	Creating Learning Experiences that Sustain Progression	4
ACE03	Sustaining Inclusive Learning Environments in the Early Years	4
ACE04	Health and Safety in the Early Years Settings	4
ACE05	Core Themes in Early Years Education	4
ACE06	Practice Placement in the Early Years	10

For further details regarding delivery and assessment, kindly refer to the IfE Portal.

Certification

Upon successful completion of this module, course participants will be conferred an accredited certification.

Further Learning Opportunities and Career Progression

Upon successful completion of this programme, course participants may go on to further their studies in the area of early years education, learning and care. This programme satisfies part of the requirements for the role of Assistant to the Childcare Educator (ACE) outlined in the Maltese National Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care Services (0-3 years). Applicants are advised to consult with their respective employer the minimum requirements to apply for this position.

ACE01 Understanding Child Development and Caring for Children's Physical Needs

ECTS Value: 4 ECTS
Self-Study Hours: 48

Contact Hours: 20
Assessment Hours: 36

Overall Objectives and Outcomes

In this module, participants are taught the basic principles of the main child development theories while they are exposed to basic knowledge on how children grow and develop in the first three years of their life. Participants will be taught how to observe, understand, and respond to children's preferences and needs when providing direct physical care. They will also consider issues of how to maintain a secure environment aimed at sustaining children's physical needs which would benefit for their social, emotional, cognitive, and linguistic development.

By the end of this module, the learner will be able to:

Competences

- a. identify developmental changes in children (including physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and linguistic);
- b. determine and respond to children's needs depending on the stage of their development.

Knowledge

- a. understand basic principles of child development theories that outline the developmental stages of children (0 to 3 years of age) and identify the typical ages at which these milestones occur;
- b. describe how to respond to the developmental changes taking place in children in the first three years of their life;
- c. explain why young children's development may occur in different sequences and at different rates;
- d. understand the elements of responsive caregiving and how these are implemented in everyday practice;
- e. describe how to create a positive environment which will support the development of young children.

Skills

- a. provide for a child's physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and linguistic needs
- ~~b.~~ maintain a safe and secure environment when providing for children's physical needs
- c. provide for children's nutritional needs
- d. ensure proper procedures and processes for nappy changing, toileting, washing and dressing that protect both the carer and the child
- e. implement safe sleeping practices
- f. liaise with parents to ensure consistency in meeting the children's physical needs

Mode of Delivery

This module adopts an online approach to teaching and learning. Information related to the structure and delivery of the module may be accessed through the IfE Portal. For further details, kindly refer to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures found on the Institute for Education's website.

Assessment Methods

This module will be assessed through: Forum Discussions & Assignment

Suggested Readings

1. Neaum, S. (2019). Child development for early years students and practitioners. Learning Matters.
2. Smith, L. L., & Elliott, C. H. (2011). Child psychology and development. John Wiley & Sons.
3. Meggitt, C. (2006). Child development: An illustrated guide. Heinemann.

ACE02 Creating Learning Experiences that Sustain Progress

ECTS Value: 4 ECTS
Self-Study Hours: 48

Contact Hours: 20
Assessment Hours: 36

Overall Objectives and Outcomes

Course Participants will be taught how to liaise with Childcare Educators to plan, develop and facilitate learning experiences that support and promote each child's physical, language, emotional, cognitive, social and creative development as determined by the stage of development of children. Participants are taught how to evaluate, assess, and respond to children's interests, participation, and engagement during the different learning experiences.

By the end of this module, the learner will be able to:

Competences

- a. sustain a positive learning environment for children, where play becomes the central medium through which all learning experiences are facilitated;
- b. help in the processes of observing, planning, developing, and facilitating learning experiences that respond to the children's interests, strengths and abilities while developing children's physical, language, emotional, cognitive, social, and creative development.

Knowledge

- a. name different types of play which support children's active participation in different learning experiences;
- b. use the physical environment and resources to sustain child development;
- c. describe a range of authentic assessment practices that capture and respond children's progress
- d. communicate effectively with the center's management and parents regarding their child's development;
- e. Use the *Malta Learning Outcomes Framework (2015)* as a basis for curricular planning.

Skills

- a. develop learning experiences in line with the learning outcomes as outlined in the *Malta Learning Outcomes Framework (2015)*
- b. liaise with the Childcare Educator to plan, develop, and facilitate play-based pedagogy which stimulates children's creativity, encourages communication, and allows children to be active participants in their learning process
- c. use children's everyday physical routines (e.g. feeding) as a learning opportunity to practice key executive functions
- d. use every opportunity during play and care routines to model proper language usage of both Maltese and English
- e. use of indoor and outdoor resources to stimulate and extend children's learning
- f. assist the Childcare Educator to observe, record and evaluate children's development
- g. provide regular feedback to parents on the progress and development of their child

Mode of Delivery

This module adopts an online approach to teaching and learning. Information related to the structure and delivery of the module may be accessed through the IfE Portal. For further details, kindly refer to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures found on the Institute for Education's website.

Assessment Methods

This module will be assessed through: Portfolio and Practical Task/s

Suggested Readings

1. Ministry for Education and Employment [MEDE] (2015). A Language Policy for the Early Years in Malta and Gozo.
2. McKay, A. (2020). The ultimate toddler activity guide: Fun and educational toddler activities to do at home or preschool.
3. D. Driskill B.A. J.D (2015) Lesson Plans for Little Ones: Activities for Children Ages Six Months to Three Years.
4. Backer, B. (2003). The weekly curriculum: 52 complete preschool themes. Gryphon House.
5. Schiller, P. B., Schiller, P., & Hastings, K. (1998). The complete resource book: An early childhood curriculum: Over 2000 activities and ideas! Gryphon House.
6. Ministry for Education and Employment [MEDE] (2012). A national curriculum framework for all [NCF]. Gzira, Malta: Salesian Press.
7. Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education [DQSE]. (2015). Educators' Guide for Pedagogy and Assessment using a learning outcomes approach. Malta, Ministry for Education and Employment.

ACE03 Sustaining Inclusive Learning Environments in the Early Years

ECTS Value: 4 ECTS
Self-Study Hours: 48

Contact Hours: 20
Assessment Hours: 36

Overall Objectives and Outcomes

In this unit, course participants are taught to respect inclusion principles and how to ensure that at all times they remain committed to welcome, include and respond to the individual needs of every child. Participants are also taught how to provide every learner with equal access to the learning opportunities offered and how to eliminate barriers that might restrict accessibility to the learning experiences offered. Furthermore, participants are also taught how to celebrate and promote cultural diversity. This unit also covers matters of exposure to the Maltese and English Languages and the right balance of both languages.

By the end of this module, the learner will be able to:

Competences

- a. ensure that no one is discriminated against in any way (including disability, culture, language, religion, gender identity);
- b. ensure children are supported equitably;
- c. ensure children are treated with dignity and respect as individuals in their own right;
- d. promote the moral commitment to remove any barriers to participation;
- e. make all children (and their families) feel welcome;
- f. promote a judgement-free culture;
- g. promote a bilingual culture (made up of Maltese and English).

Knowledge

- a. Recall the basic principles as enshrined in Maltese national policies on inclusion, equal opportunities, language, and other themes related to possible barriers to learning;
- b. Outline the basic strategies aimed at supporting the inclusion of all children in all activities throughout the day;
- c. Articulate the reasons why all children are to be exposed to both English and Maltese Languages;
- d. Explain techniques of observation that help in the early identification of children who are experiencing difficulties;
- e. Understand the various individual educational needs and their impact on each child's access to learning.

Skills

- a. assist in the development and implementation of learning experiences which address the needs of all children;
- b. enable children with individual educational needs to take part in a full range of learning experiences that nurture their learning and development;
- c. identify and provide resources that will allow children with individual educational needs to be fully included in all learning experiences offered;

- d. liaise regularly with parents of all children (including those of children with individual educational needs) to ensure that the needs of the children are met;
- e. actively contribute to the promotion of an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture aimed at removing possible barriers to participation;
- f. respect and build upon the views and preferences of children to sustain active participation;
- g. support all children (including those with individual educational needs/learning disabilities/disadvantaged) to actively participate in the full range of learning experiences offered at the centre.

Mode of Delivery

This module adopts an online approach to teaching and learning. Information related to the structure and delivery of the module may be accessed through the IfE Portal. For further details, kindly refer to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures found on the Institute for Education's website.

Assessment Methods

This module will be assessed through: Reflection and Practical Assignment Task

Suggested Readings

1. Nutbrown, C., Clough, P., & Atherton, F. (2013). Inclusion in the early years. SAGE Publications.
2. Derman-Sparks, L., & Edwards, J. O. (2020). Anti-bias education for young children and ourselves.
3. Collett, C. (2017). Disability and inclusion in early years education. Routledge.
4. Borkett, P. (2018). Cultural diversity and inclusion in early years education. Routledge.

ACE04 Health and Safety in the Early Years

ECTS Value: 4 ECTS
Self-Study Hours: 48

Contact Hours: 20
Assessment Hours: 36

Overall Objectives and Outcomes

Course participants are made aware of basic regulations, policies and procedures aimed at ensuring the health, safety, and security of children. Participants are also taught how to follow such regulations and minimise any risks to the children's health, safety, and security.

By the end of this module, the learner will be able to:

Competences

- a. maintain a healthy, safe, and secure environment;
- b. identify possible threats that may harm children or adults;
- c. understand and follow pertinent health and safety requirements as listed in policy documents;
- d. recognize the basic signs and symptoms of childhood health problems, such as illnesses and allergies.

Knowledge

- a. explain the sterilisation and sanitization processes of specific equipment;
- b. indicate practices that help to prevent and control infection;
- c. describe set procedures in response to situations involving accidents and injuries;
- d. identify the symptoms of common childhood illnesses and allergies;
- e. name the contents of the First Aid Box;
- f. state health requirements and dietary needs of each child;
- g. follow good hygiene practices and standard emergency procedures in their centre;
- h. implement appropriate manual handling of children (e.g. lifting and carrying) and safe sleep practices.

Skills

- a. Implement the requirements set by national regulations with regards to Health and Safety;
- b. Manually handle children in the correct manner;
- c. Regularly check indoor and outdoor areas and report hazards;
- d. Record accidents and incidents;
- e. Follow established emergency procedures for accidents, injuries, illnesses, and other emergencies;
- f. Maintain up-to-date information about the health and dietary needs of children.

Mode of Delivery

This module adopts an online approach to teaching and learning. Information related to the structure and delivery of the module may be accessed through the IfE Portal. For further details, kindly refer to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures found on the Institute for Education's website.

Assessment Methods

This module will be assessed through: Practical Assignment

Suggested Readings

1. Parker, L. (2013). How to keep young children safe. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203824498>
2. Parker, L. (2013). How to avoid illness and infection. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203824528>
3. Parker, L., & Parker, L. (2017). The early years health and safety handbook. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203809662>
4. Laverty, B., & Reay, C. (2014). Health and safety in early years and childcare. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

ACE05 Core Themes in the Early Years Education

ECTS Value: 4 ECTS
Self-Study Hours: 48

Contact Hours: 20
Assessment Hours: 36

Overall Objectives and Outcomes

This module provides course participants with an introduction to specific core themes fundamental to contemporary education in early years settings. Main issues that will be introduced include behaviour management, matters related to the importance of maintaining parental involvement, ways to develop collaborations with stakeholders and sustain positive working relationships, issues of sustainability and how this can permeate everything we do with children at the centre. This module also educates course participants to equip them with the skills required to become reflective practitioners.

By the end of this module, the learner will be able to:

Competences

- a. employ positive behaviour management systems;
- b. integrate parental involvement in the support provided to each child;
- c. promote positive relationships between and with children, as well as with all other stakeholders;
- d. regularly reflect on one's practices;
- e. safeguard children's rights;
- f. infuse sustainability concerns in the children's learning experiences.

Knowledge

- a. Describe strategies that encourage and reinforce positive behaviour;
- b. Define the benefits of parental involvement for children's development;
- c. Outline the benefits that result from maintaining positive relationships;
- d. State the elements of reflective practice;
- e. Indicate the importance of safeguarding children's rights and promoting children's dignity and preferences;
- f. Explore the many facets of sustainability and how this can permeate daily practices.

Skills

- a. Implement a positive approach to behaviour management;
- b. Actively involve parents in the child's progress;
- c. Encourage children to listen to one another and play together;
- d. Communicate with other adults courteously;
- e. Fairly self-evaluate one's practices and identify ways forward;
- f. Recognize signs, situations and behaviour that may potentially violate children's rights and ensure that these rights are safeguarded;
- g. Implement sustainability concerns in children's learning experiences.

Mode of Delivery

This module adopts an online approach to teaching and learning. Information related to the structure and delivery of the module may be accessed through the IfE Portal. For further details, kindly refer to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures found on the Institute for Education's website.

Assessment Methods

This module will be assessed through: Practical Assignment

Suggested Readings

1. Drifte, C. (2008). Encouraging positive behaviour in the early years: A practical guide. SAGE.
2. Williams, L. (2016). Positive behaviour management in early years settings: An essential guide. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
3. Mortimer, H. (2017). Understanding behaviour in early years settings: Supporting personal, social and emotional development from 0–5. Taylor & Francis.
4. Ward, U., & Perry, B. (2020). Working with parents and families in early childhood education. Routledge.
5. Mainstone-Cotton, S. (2017). Promoting emotional wellbeing in early years staff: A practical guide for looking after yourself and your colleagues. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
6. Reed, M. & Canning, N. (2009). Reflective practice in the early years. SAGE.
7. Huggins, V. & Evans, D. (2017). Early childhood education and care for sustainability: International perspectives. Routledge.

ACE06 Practice Placement in the Early Years

ECTS Value: 10 ECTS

Contact Hours: 10

Self-Study Hours: 34

Supervised Practice Hours: 200

Assessment Hours: 6

Overall Objectives and Outcomes

This module is specifically designed so that course participants reap the full benefits out of their practice placement. This is especially important since most participants will be employed on a full-time basis. During the weeks when students are on their work placement, they will also be provided with small group tutorial sessions where they will be supported in their ongoing process of reflective practice. Tutorial sessions are meant to provide students with the opportunity to explore and analyze their hands-on experiences and how these may reflect or defer from theory.

By the end of this module, the learner will be able to:

Competences

- a. Implement the knowledge, skills and attitudes learned during the course;
- b. Practice reflective-practice and self-evaluation;
- c. Maintain a file entitled: *Learning Experiences, Observations, Learning Stories and Self-Evaluations*
- d. Build confidence in their ability to prepare and implement successful learning experiences

Knowledge

- a. Identify experiences which constitute opportunities to implement the knowledge learned during the course;
- b. Complete Self-Evaluation Forms to sustain one's professional development;
- c. Linking different aspects of life in a childcare centre;
- d. Understand more deeply the daily routine of childcare centres;
- e. Implement inclusive learning experiences that benefit all learners;
- f. Foster professional relationships with different stakeholders.

Skills

- a. analyze once practices in a reflective manner;
- b. implement outcomes of self-reflections to maintain continual improvement;
- c. practice collaboration with the management, colleagues, children, and parents;
- d. integrating new information in one's practice for ongoing improvement;
- e. practice Effective Communication Skills;
- f. actively keep an eye open for possible hazards;
- g. constantly apply known best-practices in fulfilling different duties;
- h. observe children in diverse activities;
- i. act as a linguistic and behavioral model for children;
- j. investigate children's interests to use as a source for developing play-based activities.

Mode of Delivery

This module includes a practice placement through weekly online tutorials and face-to-face onsite visits. Information related to the structure and delivery of the module may be accessed through the IfE Portal. For further details, kindly refer to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedures found on the Institute for Education's website.

Assessment Methods

This module will be assessed through: Portfolio and Observed Visits

Suggested Readings

1. Perry, R. (2013). Teaching practice for early childhood: A guide for students. Routledge.
2. Beigi, R. (2020). Early years pedagogy in practice: A guide for students and practitioners. Routledge.