

Caring Professions

HNC/HND in Early Years Professional Leadership for England

Campus: North Notts College - Worksop Campus

Code: W09HE01

Type: Full Time

The Higher Nationals in Early Years Professional Leadership (England) are new qualifications designed to reflect the evolving early childhood education sector. These courses place greater emphasis on employer engagement and work readiness, recognizing that substantial work experience is now expected in early years roles

The curriculum provides high-quality professional and technical education at Levels 4 and 5, giving a clear line of sight to employment in early childhood settings or progression to a related degree (e.g. in Early Childhood Studies or Education)

Because this qualification is tagged “for England,” it is aligned to specific occupational standards for early years (and is intended to meet the requirements for Higher Technical Qualification status)

In practice, this means the content covers the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed for leadership roles in early years settings, such as nursery room leaders, supervisors, or child care managers. A key feature is the mandatory work placement (with assessed practice), ensuring students gain meaningful hands-on experience with children across various age ranges

Modules Covered

- **Core Units Level 4 (HNC):** Personal and Professional Development through Reflective Practice; Protecting Children in Early Education and Care Environments (safeguarding-focused); Play and Learning in Early Childhood; Supporting and Promoting Children’s Development (Infants and Toddlers); Supporting and Promoting Children’s Development (Young Children); Promoting Healthy Living; Preparing for Research (Pearson-set unit introducing research skills); and Promoting Inclusive Early Education and Care Environments
- These cover a broad base—from child development and play theory to health, safety, and reflective practice—ensuring learners have a well-rounded foundation. Notably, unit 7 (Preparing for Research) is set by Pearson to develop students’ investigative skills in early years contexts.
- **Work Placement:** As part of the Level 4 requirement, students must complete 375 hours of work placement in early years settings during the HNC year. This placement must span multiple age

groups (covering infants, toddlers, and young children up to 7 years) to ensure breadth of experience. Learners typically split their time across at least two different early years settings (for example, a baby room and a preschool room) to meet minimum hours with each age range.

- **Level 5 (HND):** The HND comprises the Level 4 units **plus** additional Level 5 units which are a mix of core and optional units. Investigating Childhood: Action Research for Early Childhood Practitioners (Pearson-set project, 30 credits). Improving Quality in Early Education and Care Environments (strategies for quality and curriculum improvement). Managing and Leading People in Children's Early Education and Care Environments (leadership and team management skills). Managing Children's Early Education and Care Environments (operational management of settings). Mentoring and Supervision in Early Education and Care Practice (supporting and developing staff in early years).
- **Level 5 (HND) Optional Units:** students choose optional units (to make up the required credits). The Optional Units available at Level 5 cover a wide array of specialized topics in early childhood, allowing learners to focus on areas of interest or career relevance. Examples include: Current and Emerging Pedagogies in Early Childhood Education and Care (examining new teaching approaches), Child-Centred Practice with Families and Communities, Supporting Social Work in Child and Family contexts, Impact of Curriculum on Early Childhood Education, Trauma in Childhood (understanding adverse childhood experiences), Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Practice, Outdoor Play and Learning, Comparative Education Systems, among others – up to unit 30 in the specification
- Across all pathways, the HND curriculum totals 240 credits (120 at Level 4 + 120 at Level 5) and comprises of 15 units (8 from Level 4 HNC and 7 at Level HND)

Entry Requirements

- GCSE English and Maths at C/4 or above
- Level 3 qualification (such as BTEC Nationals in Early Years or Childcare or A-Levels in related subjects) or possess equivalent industry experience to ensure they can successfully engage with the coursework.
- International or non-native English speakers should have an appropriate English proficiency since the qualification is taught and assessed in English
- Suitable work-placement in the relevant setting
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check (or equivalent background checks)

How To Apply

You can apply using our online application form and clicking the **Apply Now** button at the top of the page.

Career Opportunities

Upon successful completion of your course you could progress your studies toward the social care sector as a Family Support Worker or counsellor, the care sector as a Child Psychotherapist, or be a Manager in the private, voluntary, health, maintained sector and more.

PLEASE NOTE

We make every effort to ensure information within our online course directory is accurate and a true representation of the courses we are offering in 2025-26. However, we do reserve the right to make changes if necessary.

Last updated: 12th February 2026