

Professional Award-type Descriptors at NFQ Levels 5 to 8: Annotated for QQI Early Learning and Care (ELC) Awards

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Foreword

The Awards Standards herein set out, in broad terms, the standards of knowledge, skill and competence that must be achieved before a major award can be made in Early Learning and Care (ELC) at National Framework of Qualification (NFQ) Levels 5, 6, 7 or 8. The awards standards are presented in the form of annotations to the NFQ Professional Award-type Descriptors (PATDs). The annotations explain how to interpret the PATD indicators when designing programmes leading to ELC awards. The annotations at NFQ Levels 7-8 were produced under the leadership of the Department of Education and Skills using the Professional Award Criteria and Guidelines for Initial Education (Level 7 and 8) Degree Programmes for the Early Learning and Care sector in Ireland.

The Awards Standards are cumulative. To earn a major award in ELC at NFQ Level 6, a person must achieve the learning outcomes for a major award in ELC at both NFQ Levels 5 and 6.

The Awards Standards should not be interpreted as detailed programme specifications. They are designed to be a reference for programme development and a framework for the elaboration of Minimum Intended Programme/Module Learning Outcomes (MIPOs/MIMLOs) which would be expected to be consistent with them. A diverse range of potential programmes and intended programme learning outcomes is compatible with these Awards Standards. Alternatively, a common or shared curriculum could be developed by providers working together.

The Awards Standards comprise a generic part (in the white panels) and an ELC annotation (in the coloured panels). The annotation explains how the standards (in the white panels) should be interpreted for ELC.

Whenever an award standard changes, programmes must be updated and validated against the new standards. The validation procedures are set out in Policies and Procedures of Validation of Programmes of Education and Training 2017¹.

¹ Policies and Procedures of Validation of Programmes of Education and Training 2017 https://www.qqi.ie/Publications/Publications/Initial_Validation_policy_7_10_13.pdf

Early Learning and Care Professional Awards Levels 5 and 6 Special Validation Conditions

1.0 PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT:

- 1.1 The programme will show evidence of the involvement of a broad range of expertise and experience in its development, including, Early Learning and Care professionals, curriculum development experts, programme providers, regulators, employers, higher education representatives.
- 1.2 Programmes leading to a major award at NFQ Level 5 are expected to be at least one (fulltime equivalent) academic year. Add on programmes leading to an ELC major award at NFQ Level 6 for those with an ELC major at Level 5 (or an equivalent award) are also expected to be at least one (fulltime equivalent) academic year.

2.0 TEACHING STAFF:

- 2.1 Teaching staff for programmes leading to ELC awards will hold a relevant Major Award at NFQ Level 7 or higher and either a teaching qualification or five or more years of teaching experience on programmes designed to prepare learners for practice in the ELC sector.
- 2.2 The teaching team will include some with ELC qualifications, or equivalent, and previous experience working in the ELC sector.
- 2.3 New staff members will be provided with an induction programme and all staff will have access to ongoing professional learning opportunities.

3.0 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE PLACEMENTS:

- 3.1 Professional Practice placements will be integral to the programme. Programme providers will maintain an appropriate code of practice for providers of professional ELC practice placement and associated procedures and criteria. Code of practice will apply to all aspects of the professional placements.
- 3.2 Providers must specify (in writing as part of the application for validation) the intended learning outcomes for the practice placement and the strategy for the assessment of the achievement of those outcomes by learners.
- 3.3 The programme will ensure that each (fulltime) learner completes 150 hours of professional practice placement (per annum) in a minimum of two ELC settings: (1) working directly with children aged between 0 and 2 yrs. 8 mts. and (2) working with children 2 yrs. 8 mts. - 6 years; with an appropriate balance between settings.
- 3.4 All professional practice placement settings must be with entities currently registered as service providers with TUSLA and must meet the programme provider's criteria for placements selection.
- 3.5 During professional practice placements learners will have the opportunity to:
 - a) Observe experienced practitioners and reflect on these observations
 - b) Integrate theory and practice
 - c) Apply knowledge and practice
 - d) Acquire and demonstrate the required competence, values and work practices with babies, toddlers and young children in the context of their setting, family and community under the supervision of more experienced practitioners
 - e) Engage in self-reflection and self-evaluation of their own practice and engage in conversations with more experienced practitioners around their practice.
- 3.6 Learners must be Garda Vetted before going on professional practice placement and have completed the current Children First E-learning programme.
- 3.7 Providers will have policies and procedures covering elements such as: selection of placements to ensure a quality learning experience; an effective system to ensure the ongoing quality of the practice placements; procedures for effective communication with the practice placements; assessment of learners while on practice placement.
- 3.8 There will be a formal written agreement between the provider and the practice placement setting out respective roles and responsibilities and a code of practice for supervision of learners.
- 3.9 Professional Practice placement supervisors will be suitably qualified at NFQ level above that of the learner being supervised or will have appropriate experience/alternative qualifications.
- 3.10 Professional practice placement monitors will be suitably qualified and experienced in ELC, be Garda Vetted and have experience in the assessment of learners.
- 3.11 Learners, professional practice placement supervisors and professional practice placement monitors will be informed about practice placement assessments, their link to programme learning outcomes and the marking criteria used.
- 3.12 While on professional practice placement, appropriate support, guidance and supervision arrangements will be maintained for the learner by the education programme team and supports will be in place for learners who are experiencing difficulties during the professional practice placement.
- 3.13 Learners must pass the professional practice placement element of the programme before an award can be made.

4.0 LEARNER LANGUAGE COMPETENCE:

4.1 Minimum English language and literacy competence at entry to the programme for speakers of English as a second language would be B2 in writing, reading, listening and speaking.

	Thread	Level 5 Professional Award <i>(Determined in 2014)</i>	Level 6 Professional Award <i>(Determined in 2014)</i>	Level 7 Professional Award <i>(Determined in 2011)</i>	Level 8 Professional Award
		<p>Existing award-type descriptors (and therefore award titles) can be used in conjunction with these occupational award-type descriptors provided both are satisfied.</p> <p>Award-titles are not otherwise regulated by this descriptor.</p> <p>Professional in this context means there is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stable occupational group requiring special training for membership; • A community of practice²; and • Ethical and technical standards for practice. 	<p>Existing award-type descriptors (and therefore award titles) can be used in conjunction with these occupational award-type descriptors provided both are satisfied.</p> <p>Award-titles are not otherwise regulated by this descriptor.</p>		
Volume	Volume of corresponding programme	Variable	Variable	<i>Variable. Normally the volume of newly certified learning will be at least 30 (HET) credits or equivalent however, in exceptional conditions this may be waived.</i>	<i>Variable. Normally the volume of newly certified learning will be at least 30 (HET) credits or equivalent however, in exceptional conditions this may be waived.</i>
		See the special validation conditions below.	See the special validation conditions below.		
Purpose	The uses to which the knowledge, skill and competence will be put	The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are proper to working independently and as part of a team, subject to practice supervision, as a member of the Early Learning and Care (ELC) community of practice, to provide the physical and mental health, learning, development and care ¹ needs of children (birth to 6) across the range of ELC settings. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society, and study including access to additional formal education and training	The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are proper to autonomous professional practice subject to practice supervision, as a member of the Early learning (ELC) community of practice to promote and support the physical and mental health, learning, development and care needs of children (birth to 6) across the range of ELC settings. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society, and study including access to additional formal education and training.	<i>The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are proper to autonomous professional practice typically in a structured setting or in an organisation, as well as relevant to personal development, participation in society, employment and study including access to additional formal education and training</i>	<i>The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are proper to independent professional practice as well as relevant to personal development, participation in society, employment and study including access to additional formal education and training</i>

²The concept of a 'community of practice' is explained in the context of QQI's work in a QQI background paper entitled "Qualifications Systems and Related Concepts".
<http://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Consultation/Qualifications%20Systems%20and%20related%20concepts.pdf>

¹ Care in this context includes but is not limited to meeting the child's basic needs.

	ANNOTATION	The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are proper to working independently, subject to supervision/direction, across the range of early learning and care settings (birth to 6 years) to provide positive outcomes for children and their families.	The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are proper to identifying and meeting the care, play and learning needs of children across the range of early learning and care settings (birth to 6 years) and to be responsible for one of the rooms or areas within the setting.	<i>The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are proper to independent professional practice developing, co-ordinating and evaluating the care, play and learning needs of children across the range of early learning and care settings (birth to 6 years) and taking responsibility for the work of others.</i>	<i>The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are proper to independent professional practice leading development and evaluation of the care play and learning needs across a range of early learning and care settings (birth to 6) with responsibility for leadership and management of practice and of others.</i>
Knowledge: breadth and kind	Knowledge scope and coherence	Broad current general knowledge and an integrated body of specialised knowledge required to support a craft or occupational discipline and knowledge of its connections with related activities; Specialised knowledge here involves some theoretical concepts and abstract thinking with significant depth in some areas	Broad current general knowledge and an integrated body of specialised knowledge required to support a craft or an occupational discipline and knowledge of the connections with related disciplines; Specialised knowledge here involves significant underpinning theory and an awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge	<i>Broad and up-to-date general knowledge and specialised knowledge of a variety of areas comprising a professional discipline and of the connections between these areas and with related disciplines</i>	<i>Broad and up-to-date general knowledge and specialised knowledge of a variety of areas comprising a professional discipline and of the connections between these areas and with related disciplines to include knowledge about recent developments and trends in the professional discipline and its practice</i>
	Knowledge Structure	Practical understanding of facts, concepts, rules, regulations, methods, materials, tools, devices, techniques; their development and limitations; and how they are applied in current occupational activity	Practical understanding of facts, concepts, rules, regulations, abstract models, methods, materials, tools, devices, technologies; their development and limitations; and how they are applied in current occupational activity	<i>Understanding of facts, concepts, rules, models, schools of thought, methods, technology; their development and limitations; and how they arise and are applied in current professional practice</i>	<i>Critical understanding of facts, concepts, rules, models, schools of thought, methods, technology; their development and limitations; and how they arise and are applied in current professional practice</i>
	Knowledge of issues	Knowledge of the context for professional activity (familiarity with the community of practice and with safety, employment, technological and regulatory perspectives) and awareness of disciplines likely to be encountered as a member of the community of practice	Knowledge of the context for professional activity (familiarity with the community of practice and with safety, employment, technological and regulatory perspectives and with relevant economic, social and environmental issues) and awareness of other disciplines likely to be encountered as a member of the community of practice	<i>Knowledge of the context for professional practice (including regulatory, economic, scientific, technological, social and cultural aspects) and awareness of other disciplines likely to be encountered as a practitioner and member of the profession</i>	<i>Knowledge of the context for professional practice (including regulatory, economic, scientific, technological, social and cultural aspects) and awareness of other disciplines likely to be encountered as a practitioner and member of the profession and of significant issues at the interfaces with related disciplines and professional</i>
	ANNOTATION	“Specialised knowledge” for ECCE in the ELC sector (Early Learning and Care) includes knowledge of:	“Specialised knowledge” for ECCE in the ELC sector (Early Learning and Care) includes knowledge of: all topics listed in the Level 5 column and	<i>“Specialised knowledge” for ECCE in the ELC sector (Early Learning and Care) includes detailed knowledge of</i>	<i>“Specialised knowledge” for ECCE in the ELC sector (Early Learning and Care) includes a critical knowledge of</i>
		The ELC sector in Ireland and its international context and the roles and responsibilities of those who work in it	Sociology of and social policy of early childhood nationally and internationally.	Sociology and social policy of early childhood. Knowledge of the historical, social, cultural and political constructs of childhood.	Sociology and social policy of early childhood. Knowledge of the historical, social, cultural and political constructs of childhood. The philosophical context.

				The current ELC sector in the broader, local, national and international context.	The current ELC sector in the broader, local, national and international context.
		<p>Current legislation, regulatory requirements and relevant frameworks.</p> <p>Policies and procedures relevant to an ELC Setting.</p>	<p>The implication of current legislation, regulatory requirements, policies and procedures relevant to an ELC Setting and own role.</p> <p>Appropriate recording and reporting requirements.</p> <p>Leadership concepts, principles and practices.</p>	<p>Regulatory requirements, policies and procedures for own role and the role of others.</p> <p>Legal and organisational recording and reporting requirements.</p> <p>A wide range of legislation, policies and guidelines pertinent to the ELC Sector.</p> <p>Theories of leadership, concepts, principles and practices.</p>	<p>Regulatory requirements, policies and procedures for own role and the role of others.</p> <p>Legal and organisational recording and reporting requirements.</p> <p>Critique a wide range of legislation, policies and guidelines and their implications for the ELC sector.</p> <p>Critique theories of leadership relevant to practice and pedagogy.</p>
		<p>Child development and learning theories, to include contemporary theories of development and learning, theories on attachment, cognitive and language acquisition, multilingualism, socio-cultural theories, self-regulation emotional regulation and motivation.</p> <p>Children's holistic learning and development.</p> <p>Principles and practices of physical and mental health, care, wellbeing and safety of babies, toddlers and young children in ELC environments informed by national regulations and guidelines.</p> <p>Supporting the identity and belonging of children.</p> <p>Child Safeguarding legislation and guidelines.</p> <p>Children's strategies of learning (play based and social learning) to support emergent languages, literacy, digital literacy and learning, numeracy, arts, creativity and problem-solving skills, STEAM.</p> <p>Theories of play in childhood.</p>	<p>Integration of contemporary child development and learning theories in ELC practice.</p> <p>Significance to practice of the principles of physical and mental health, care, wellbeing and safety of young children in ELC environments.</p> <p>Enhancing the sense of identity and belonging of children.</p> <p>Lead on child protection.</p> <p>Developing of strategies to support emergent language, literacy, digital literacy and learning, numeracy, arts, creativity and problem-solving skills, STEAM.</p> <p>Specific knowledge of pedagogy and curricula which is emergent, enquiry based, inclusive, age and stage appropriate, aligned to children's interests, needs, strengths and dispositions.</p> <p>Detailed knowledge of the pedagogy of indoor and outdoor environments.</p>	<p>Applying theory to practice - theories of children's development, of learning and play, socio cultural theories.</p> <p>Health, care, safety, wellbeing and identity of young children informed by national regulations and guidelines.</p> <p>Developing of tailored strategies underpinned by theory to support emergent language, literacy, digital literacy, numeracy, creativity and problem-solving skills, STEAM and digital learning.</p> <p>Detailed knowledge of early years' curricular approaches and curricular development.</p> <p>Knowledge of general teaching techniques in ELC settings e.g. (modelling, recalling, positioning, listening, facilitating, grouping).</p> <p>Pedagogical environments for children.</p> <p>Assessment of and for learning in early years.</p> <p>Modelling leadership in innovative practice. Democratic learning theories, practices, ethics and a rights based approach.</p>	<p>Critically applying theory to practice, theories of children's development and learning, socio, cultural theories, critical theories, strategies of learning and play.</p> <p>Health, safety, care and wellbeing of young children informed by national regulations and guidelines.</p> <p>Critiquing of strategies underpinned by theory to support emergent language, literacy, digital literacy, numeracy, creativity and problem-solving skills, STEAM and digital learning.</p> <p>Critiquing a range of early years' curricular approaches and curricular development.</p> <p>Knowledge of specialist teaching techniques in ELC Settings e.g. (co-constructing, deconstructing, empowering, democratising, philosophising, community building).</p> <p>Detailed knowledge of high quality planning and assessment in early years.</p> <p>Detailed knowledge of high quality pedagogical environments for children.</p>

		<p>The significant role of play in babies, toddlers and young children’s learning and development.</p> <p>Broad knowledge of curricular approaches which are emergent, enquiry based, inclusive, age and stage appropriate, aligned to children’s interests, needs, strengths and learning dispositions.</p> <p>Curriculum development informed by the National Curriculum and Quality Frameworks and childcare pre-school regulations.</p> <p>Assessment and planning for learning informed by the National Curriculum and Quality Frameworks and childcare pre-school regulations.</p> <p>The importance of transitions.</p> <p>The pedagogy of indoor and outdoor environments in promoting inclusive play and learning opportunities that support children’s holistic development.</p> <p>The role of the adult in play and early learning</p> <p>Babies, toddlers and young children’s rights, voice and agency in ELC.</p>	<p>Leading planning, monitoring and review in the ELC context independently or as a member of a team.</p> <p>Evaluation of assessment for learning in an ELC context.</p> <p>Leading curriculum implementation in line with quality practice independently or as a member of a team.</p> <p>Significance to practice of a rights-based approach to ELC promoting children’s agency.</p>	<p>Transitions; concept, theory and practice.</p> <p>Theoretical perspectives on the role of adult in play.</p>	<p>Modelling leadership in innovative practice and contributing to the development of policy.</p> <p>Democratic learning theories, practices and a rights based approach.</p> <p>Philosophising with children.</p> <p>Transitions: concept, theory and practice. The critical role of the practitioner.</p> <p>Critique of theoretical perspectives on the role of adult in play.</p>
		<p>Principles and practices of ethical, rights-based, inclusive and participatory practice in the context of national guidelines and models.</p> <p>Characteristics associated with children with additional needs.</p>	<p>Strategies for inclusive and democratic practice in the context of national guidelines and models.</p> <p>Strategies for supporting children with additional needs.</p>	<p>Leading inclusive and democratic practice in the context of national guidelines and models.</p>	<p>Leading and advocating for inclusive and democratic practice in the context of national guidelines and models.</p> <p>Socio-behaviourist theories. The role of experiences in shaping children’s behaviour.</p>
		<p>The influence of family, social, cultural and environmental factors on children’s development, well-being and identity.</p>	<p>Significance to practice, of family, social, cultural and environmental factors on child development, well-being, identity and learning.</p>	<p>Significance to practice, of family, social, cultural and environmental factors on child development, well-being, identity and learning.</p>	<p>Significance to practice, of family, social, cultural and environmental factors on child development, well-being, identity and learning. Contributing to policy.</p>

		<p>Reflective practice tools.</p> <p>Effective communication tools to build relationships with children, with colleagues, families and other stakeholders.</p>	<p>Significance to practice of effective reflective practice both in and on practice.</p> <p>Parental partnership and stakeholder involvement strategies.</p>	<p>Applying reflective practice theories.</p> <p>Parental voice in ELC. National and international models of effective partnership.</p>	<p>Applying reflective practice theories and modelling for others.</p> <p>Parental voice in ELC. National and international models of effective partnership.</p>
Know-how and skill: range and selectivity	Use cognitive and practical skills (analytical and synthetic) to solve problems	Select from a broad range of specialised skills and tools and apply them to problems arising in professional activity; problems here are usually predictable but are subject to change	Select from a comprehensive range of specialised skills and tools and apply them to the generation of creative solutions to problems arising in professional activity	<i>Select and apply advanced skills to analyse and respond to unpredictable and complex problems arising in the profession and its reflective practice.</i>	<i>Select, modify and apply advanced skills to critically analyse, research (under close guidance) and formulate responses to unpredictable, complex and ill-defined problems arising in the profession and its reflective practice.</i>
	Draw insightful conclusions	Evaluate and use information to draw conclusions and determine solutions to predictable problems arising in professional activity that take due account of social, field-specific and ethical insights	Plan and develop investigative strategies and evaluate information to determine creative, evidence-informed solutions to predictable and unpredictable problems and respond to unpredictable change arising in professional activity that take due account of social, field-specific and ethical insights	<i>Prepare evidence-based conclusions that take due account of social, disciplinary and ethical insights</i>	<i>Prepare and analyse evidence-based conclusions that take due account of social, disciplinary and ethical insights</i>
	Communicate and influence	Communicate oral and written information effectively in familiar contexts; engage in the transfer of knowledge and skills within the professional community of practice; convey information and decisions, to specialists and non-specialists, including clients	Communicate complex oral and written information effectively in familiar and unfamiliar contexts; facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills within the professional community of practice; justify decisions, to specialists and non-specialists, including clients	<i>Communicate information effectively, transfer one's knowledge and skills, and justify decisions, to specialists and non-specialists, including clients</i>	<i>Communicate advanced information effectively, transfer one's knowledge and skills, and justify decisions, to specialists and non-specialists, including clients</i>
	ANNOTATION	<p>"Specialised skills and tools" include:</p> <p>Engage in routines and procedures consistently promoting children's physical, social and emotional security, together with their learning and development.</p> <p>Implement practices and procedures in relation to the safety, health and wellbeing of babies, toddlers and young children.</p> <p>Implement strategies that support the development of children's sense of identity and belonging.</p>	<p>"Specialised skills and tools" include:</p> <p>(all topics listed in the Level 5 column +)</p> <p>Develop, implement and evaluate routines and procedures consistently promoting children's physical, social and emotional security, together with their learning, wellbeing and development.</p> <p>Lead on the delivery of quality practice and development of procedures in relation to the safety, health and wellbeing of babies, toddlers and young children.</p>	<p>Develop, implement and regularly evaluate routines and procedures consistently promoting children's physical, social and emotional security, together with their learning, wellbeing and development to ensure high quality systems are in place.</p> <p>Lead the delivery of quality practice and development of procedures in relation to the safety, health and wellbeing of babies, toddlers and young children.</p> <p>Develop and implement purposeful strategies that foster children's sense of identity and belonging.</p>	<p>Lead the development, implementation and regular evaluation of routines and procedures consistently promoting children's physical, social and emotional security, together with their learning, wellbeing and development, benchmarking for quality against standards.</p> <p>Lead and empower others on the delivery of high quality practice and development of procedures in relation to the safety, health and wellbeing of babies, toddlers and young children.</p> <p>Lead on the development, implementation and review of strategies that foster children's sense of identity and belonging.</p>

		<p>Apply knowledge of child development to support babies, toddlers and young children to form secure and positive relationships</p> <p>Engage in practices that consistently promote a democratic, inclusive and anti-bias approach to education and care of children.</p> <p>Support transitions into, from and within early years' settings.</p>	<p>Develop and implement strategies that foster children's sense of identity and belonging.</p> <p>Critically apply knowledge of child development to support babies, toddlers and young children to form secure and positive relationships</p> <p>Co-construct knowledge with children that embraces a democratic partnership approach.</p> <p>Develop purposeful strategies to support transitions into, out of and within the setting.</p>	<p>Critically apply knowledge of varied child development perspectives to support babies, toddlers and young children to form secure and positive relationships.</p> <p>Co-construct the learning process with children across a wide range of activities engaging in sustained shared thinking.</p> <p>Using theory to guide practice, plan for and support transitions into, from and within early years' settings building relationships with a range of stakeholders.</p>	<p>Critically apply and support others to apply detailed knowledge of varied child development theories to support babies, toddlers and young children to form secure and positive relationships.</p> <p>Co-construct and deconstruct the learning process with children across a wide range of activities engaging in sustained shared thinking.</p> <p>Using theory to guide practice, plan for and support transitions into, from and within early years' settings building relationships with a range of stakeholders. Contribute to policy.</p>
		<p>Contribute to the development of an ELC enquiry-based curriculum with others providing learning experiences for children that are tailored to them individually and as a group, to their age, stage of development, their strengths, needs, dispositions.</p> <p>Apply knowledge of play into activities and experiences for babies, toddlers and young children.</p> <p>Use assessment and planning methods informed by the National Curriculum and Quality Frameworks and childcare pre-school regulations to identify children's developmental needs.</p>	<p>Lead the development of an enquiry-based curriculum with others providing learning experiences for children that are tailored to them individually and as a group, to their age, stage of development, their strengths, needs, dispositions.</p> <p>Adopt and use a range of assessment methods to plan for and lead on children's learning and development informed by the National Curriculum and Quality Frameworks and childcare pre-school regulations to identify children's developmental needs.</p>	<p>Applying theoretical principles to curriculum development, planning and assessment providing for the continuity of learning and development for children.</p> <p>Apply knowledge of general teaching techniques in practice.</p> <p>Apply critical knowledge of play into all experiences and activities for babies, toddlers and young children.</p>	<p>Applying and advocating theoretical principles to curricular development, planning and assessment providing for the continuity of learning and development for children.</p> <p>Apply and model for others knowledge of specialist teaching techniques in practice.</p> <p>Apply and model for others critical knowledge of play into all experiences and activities for babies, toddlers and young children. Advocate the importance of playful experiences for children.</p>
		<p>Demonstrate interpersonal, intrapersonal and self-awareness skills in interactions with others.</p> <p>Build reciprocal, responsive and respectful relationships with babies, toddlers and young children and support the development of peer relationships.</p> <p>Communicate in an empathetic and democratic manner with babies, toddlers and young children. recognising them as capable competent learners.</p>	<p>Demonstrate strong interpersonal, intrapersonal and self-awareness skills in interactions with others.</p> <p>Demonstrate supervisory and mentoring skills that support the work of others.</p> <p>Build, maintain and promote reciprocal, responsive and respectful relationships with babies, toddlers and young children and support the development of peer relationships.</p>	<p>Demonstrate high level interpersonal, intrapersonal and self-awareness skills in all interactions with a wide variety of stakeholders.</p> <p>Demonstrate supervisory and mentoring skills that empower and motivate others.</p> <p>Build, maintain and advocate for highly reciprocal, responsive and highly respectful relationships with babies, toddlers and young children and foster the development of peer relationships.</p>	<p>Model high level interpersonal, intrapersonal and self-awareness skills in all interactions with a variety of stakeholders.</p> <p>Demonstrate high level supervisory and mentoring skills that empower and motivate others.</p> <p>Lead the advocating of highly reciprocal, responsive and respectful relationships with babies, toddlers and young children.</p> <p>Lead, develop, implement and evaluate specific strategies to support children with a</p>

		Empathetically support babies, toddlers and children with a range of communication needs through the use of appropriate verbal, non-verbal and visual interaction strategies.	Develop, implement and evaluate specific strategies to support children with a range of communication needs.	Develop, implement and evaluate specific strategies to support children with a range of communication needs.	range of communication needs. Contribute to policy.
		Build reciprocal, responsive and respectful relationships with colleagues, families and other relevant professionals and support services in the best interest of the child.	Foster effective communications, interactions and relationship building with stakeholders and advocate on behalf of children and their families. Promote and lead on a participatory inclusive and anti-bias approach in engagement with families.	Adopt proactive approaches to ensure meaningful and participatory relationships with children, colleagues, families and other relevant stakeholders. Applying family partnership theories to practice.	Engage and advocate for meaningful participatory and proactive relationships with children, colleagues, families and other relevant stakeholders applying purposeful partnership strategies and linking theory with practice.
		Use reflective practice tools in practice to reflect on your own role and engage in self-evaluation. Engage in internal and external evaluation and monitoring processes for ELC for the purpose of accountability and professional practice. Separate and practice within personal and professional boundaries being aware of own personal well-being. Contribute to reports and documentation/resources in line with regulatory requirements. Exercise judgement in routine situations and deal effectively with predictable situations. The kind of challenges that could arise include self-regulation, social conflicts, team interactions and stakeholder relationships.	Engage in regular self-reflection and group reflection which is grounded in reflective practice theory. Support others in reflection of individual and group practice. Maintain accountability of practice with children, families and other relevant professionals and professional organisations. Prepare reports and manage documentation/resources in line with regulatory requirements. Promote and lead on a participatory inclusive and anti-bias approach to education and care of children and families. Ability to effectively deal with unpredictability, and uncertainty. Exercising judgement in unfamiliar situations. Effectively manage challenges that arise including self-care, self-regulation, social conflicts, team interactions and stakeholder relationships.	Apply knowledge of reflective practice theories to engage in regular self-reflection and group reflection. Support others in individual and group reflection in and on practice. Maintain a culture of accountability of practice with children, families and other relevant professionals and professional organisations. Prepare a wide range of reports and manage documentation/resources in line with regulatory requirements and best practice. Lead a democratic, inclusive and anti-bias approach to education and care of children and families. Ability to effectively deal with unpredictability, and uncertainty. Exercising judgement in unfamiliar situations.	Apply knowledge of a range of reflective practice theories to engage in regular self-reflection and group reflection. Model for others the use of reflective practice theories in individual and group reflection practices. Uphold a strong culture of responsibility for practice with children, families and other relevant professionals and professional organisations. Manage a wide range of reports and documentation/resources in line with regulatory requirements and best practice. Model organisation skills for others. Lead and advocate for a democratic, inclusive and anti-bias approach to education and care of children and families. Ability to highly effectively deal with unpredictability, and uncertainty exercising strong judgement in unfamiliar situations.
Competence— Context, Role, learning-to-learn	Exercising autonomy and judgement	Exercise autonomy and judgement in applying knowledge and skills in varied and specific contexts including professional practice and learning	Exercise autonomy and judgement in applying knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts including professional practice and learning	<i>Exercise autonomy and judgement in applying knowledge and skills in a wide variety of contexts including professional practice and study</i>	<i>Exercise autonomy and judgement in applying knowledge and skills in a wide variety of complex contexts including professional practice and study</i>
	ANNOTATION	Work independently and as part of a team, subject to practice supervision, to provide the	Work autonomously and/or be part of a team subject to practice supervision, to promote	Work highly independently or as part of a team to lead and promote the physical and	Work fully autonomously and lead a team to advocate and promote the physical and

and Insight		physical and mental health, learning, development and care needs of children (birth -6) across the range of ELC Settings.	and support the physical and mental health, learning, development and care needs of children (birth-6) across the range of ELC Settings.	mental health, learning, development and care needs of children (birth-6) across the range of ELC Settings.	mental health, learning, development and care needs of children (birth-6) across the range of ELC Settings.
		Enhance professional competence using observation methods, reflective practice and self-evaluation processes, informed by the National Curriculum Framework.	Apply appropriate assessment and observation methods to evaluate, form opinions and make decisions appropriate to children's holistic development, informed by the National Curriculum Framework.	Employ effective and systematic assessment and observation methods to evaluate, form opinions, and progress holistic learning and development for children informed by the National Curriculum Framework.	Employ highly effective systematic assessment and observation methods to evaluate, form opinions, and progress holistic learning and development for children informed by the National Curriculum Framework.
			Ensure practice is informed by evidence-based theory and knowledge of babies, toddlers and young children's care, learning and development.	Ensure practice is informed by evidence-based theory and knowledge of children's care, learning and development.	Ensure practice is continuously and robustly informed by evidence-based theory and knowledge of children's care, learning and development.
		Implement practices and procedures in relation to the safety, health and wellbeing of babies, toddlers and young children.	Be responsible for appropriate practice and procedures in relation to the safety, health and wellbeing of babies, toddlers and young children.	Be responsible for quality practice and procedures in relation to the safety, health and wellbeing of babies, toddlers and young children ensuring knowledge is relevant and current.	Be wholly and directly responsible for high quality practice and procedures in relation to the safety, health and wellbeing of babies, toddlers and young children ensuring knowledge is relevant, current and evolving.
	Exercising responsibility	Exercise initiative and independence in professional activity, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs and for decisions in work and learning contexts	Exercise initiative and independence in professional activity, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs and for decisions in work and learning contexts	<i>Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making and decisions in unpredictable work or study contexts</i>	<i>Manage complex and innovative technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making and decisions in unpredictable and unpredictable work or study contexts balancing responsibilities towards service users and employers</i>
	ANNOTATION	Observe, identify and respond to children's interests and individual learning and care needs.	Provide pedagogical leadership that is inclusive of children's interests, developmental and care needs.	Lead enquiry based pedagogical practice that is highly responsive to individual children's strengths, interests, dispositions and needs.	Lead enquiry based pedagogical practice that is fully and continuously responsive to individual children's strengths, interests, dispositions and needs.
		Provide high-quality play-based care and learning experiences for babies, toddlers and young children while promoting holistic development.	Plan and implement high-quality play-based care and learning experiences for babies, toddlers and young children while promoting holistic development.	Plan, implement, develop and evaluate high-quality holistic care, play and learning experiences for young children applying theory to practice.	Build a high-quality holistic care, play and learning experience programme for young children which is fully grounded in critical theory.
		Maintain quality, safe, stimulating indoor and outdoor environments, which are conducive to babies, toddlers and young children's	Plan, create and maintain indoor and outdoor stimulating environments that are, safe, nurturing, child centred and promote inclusive play, development and learning opportunities.	Plan, create, maintain and evaluate environments for children to ensure they are safe, stimulating, engaging, child centred learning environments for young children	Plan, create and maintain high quality stimulating environments for children to ensure they are safe, engaging, child centred learning environments for young children which stimulate their health, wellbeing,

	physical and mental health, wellbeing, learning and development.		which stimulate their health, wellbeing, learning and development.	learning and development. Engage in regular evaluations of children's environments.
	Support the development and implementation of policies and procedures in early years' settings with others.	Engage with and support the development and implementation of policies and procedures in early years' settings.	Lead the development of policies, procedures and organisational documentation in early years' settings.	Lead and evaluate the development of policies, procedures and organisational documentation in early years' settings.
	Comply with legislation, regulation, policies and procedures and frameworks in early years' settings.	Engage with and ensure compliance with current legislation, regulations and frameworks relevant to early childhood.	Engage with and ensure continuous compliance with current legislation, regulations and frameworks relevant to early childhood.	Collaborate and contribute to reports and documentation in line with relevant reporting and inspection regimes.
Working with others	<p>Act effectively in team roles within multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups</p> <p>Assist in the supervision of routine work or learning activities</p> <p>Take responsibility for leading on some occupational activities</p> <p>Contribute to the review and development of the performance of others</p>	<p>Act effectively in team roles within multiple, complex and heterogeneous groups</p> <p>Exercise supervision in contexts of work or learning activities</p> <p>Lead a variety of occupational activities</p> <p>Contribute to the review and development of the performance of others;</p> <p>Take some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or learning activities</p>	<i>Act effectively in team roles and take responsibility for managing individuals and groups</i>	<i>Act effectively in team roles and take responsibility for managing individuals and lead complex and heterogeneous groups</i>
ANNOTATION	Plan, as part of a team, the provision of holistic care, play and learning experiences for young children that respond to children's individual needs and holistic development.	<p>Lead curriculum approach, planning, practice, monitoring and review informed by the National Curriculum and Quality Framework and Best Practice Guidelines.</p> <p>Be responsible for the performance of others and supporting them in their role.</p>	<p>Lead and co-ordinate curriculum planning, approach, practice, monitoring, review.</p> <p>Be responsible for engaging in quality practice and procedures in relation to the safety, health and wellbeing of babies, toddlers and young children.</p> <p>Be responsible for the performance of others, (supporting, delegating, monitoring and evaluating).</p>	<p>Lead innovative pedagogical practice through co-constructing pedagogical knowledge.</p> <p>Be responsible for the implementation of quality practice and procedures in relation to the safety, health and wellbeing of babies, toddlers and young children.</p> <p>Be responsible for the performance of others (supporting, delegating, monitoring and evaluating).</p>
	Review practices individually and collectively to improve early learning and care provision.	Continuously engage in review practices individually and collectively to improve early learning care and provision.	Continuously review and evaluate practices individually and collectively to improve early learning care and provision.	Adopt a critically reflective approach to the continuous improvement of early learning and care provision.

	Learning and teaching	Maintain professional knowledge and skill taking responsibility for own learning within a managed environment; Provide learning support, and guidance to others in the professional contexts Seek guidance as appropriate when working independently	Evaluate and maintain professional knowledge and skill taking responsibility for own learning within a structured learning environment; Provide learning support and guidance to learners in the professional context; assist others in identifying learning needs; Seek guidance as appropriate when working independently	<i>Take initiative to identify and address learning needs; seek necessary guidance when working independently</i>	<i>Manage learning tasks independently, professionally and ethically. Seek necessary guidance when working independently and provide guidance to peers.</i>
	ANNOTATION	Use reflective practice and self-evaluation methods to develop professional practice.	Support self and others in continuing professional development using reflective practice and self-evaluation methods.	Engage in continuous professional development using reflective practice and self-evaluation methods to keep knowledge current and relevant. Promote engagement in professional development in others.	Critically engage in reflective practice and self-evaluation. Engage in continuous professional research activities to keep knowledge current and relevant. Promote and support engagement in professional development in others.
			Contribute to the development of the community of practice.	Lead the development of the community of practice.	Lead and advocate for the development of the community of practice.
			Support self and others through role modelling best practice.	Provide insightful role modelling of best practice for others.	Provide insightful role modelling of best practice while contributing to the development of policy.
	Attitudes	Assume full responsibility for consistency of self- understanding and behaviour at personal, occupational, societal, and environmental levels	Express an internalised, personal world view, reflecting engagement with others at the personal, occupational, societal, and environmental levels	<i>Express an internalised personal world-view (see Notes below) manifesting solidarity with others at all levels including the personal, professional, societal, and environmental</i>	<i>Express a comprehensive internalised personal world-view (see Notes below) manifesting solidarity with others at all levels including the personal, professional, societal, and environmental</i>
	ANNOTATION	Adopt a holistic, nurturing, child-centred approach to early learning and care.	Develop a holistic, nurturing, child-centred approach to early learning and care.	Promote a holistic, child-centred approach to early learning and care in partnership with children. Promote children’s full potential, agency and participation at their early learning and care environments.	Promote and advocate for a fully holistic, child-centred approach to early learning and care. Adopt a wide range of strategies to develop children’s full potential, agency and participation at their early learning and care environments.

		Engage in ethical, rights-based, inclusive and participatory practice.	Promote ethical, rights-based, inclusive and participatory practice, ensuring the voice of the child is heard. Promote the ethical dimension of pedagogical work.	Promote ethical, rights-based, inclusive and participatory practice, ensuring the voice of the child is heard, listened to and acted upon.	Commit to highly ethical, rights-based, inclusive and participatory practice, ensuring the voice of the child is heard, listened to and acted upon at all times.
		Engage in respectful collaborative practices promoting children’s agency and democratic engagement.	Engage in respectful collaborative practices promoting children’s agency and democratic engagement.	Commit to highly respectful collaborative practices promoting democratic engagement within a plurality of value systems.	Commit to highly respectful collaborative practices promoting democratic engagement within a plurality of value systems.
		Be open to new learning and development.	Be proactive in engaging in new learning and development.	Take responsibility for furthering knowledge and applying to practice.	Take responsibility for regularly furthering knowledge for practice, engaging in research and sharing it with others.
Articulation and Progression		Access arrangements must include mechanisms for recognising prior learning. Progression arrangements must be established.	Access arrangements must include mechanisms for recognising prior learning. Progression arrangements must be established.		
Assessment		The minimum expected knowledge, skill and competence associated with the award must be expressed and validly and reliably assessed. This will involve integrative assessment to ensure transversal learning outcomes have been achieved.	The minimum expected knowledge, skill and competence associated with the award must be expressed and validly and reliably assessed. This will involve integrative assessment to ensure transversal learning outcomes have been achieved.		

List of Resources for Early Learning and Care Award

A Guide to Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI) (2018) Dublin: Department of Education and Skills Available at:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/Evaluation-Reports-Guidelines/guide-to-early-years-education-inspections.pdf>

Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (2009) Available at: <https://www.ncca.ie/en/early-childhood/aistear>

Better Outcomes Brighter Futures – The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020 Available at: https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/cypp_framework/BetterOutcomesBetterFutureReport.pdf

Child Care Act 1991 Child Care (Pre-school Services) Regulations (1996, 1997 and 2006) Available at: <https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/20160510ChildCareActEarlyYrsRegs2016SI221of2016.pdf>

Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017) Available at: https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Children_First_National_Guidance_2017.pdf

Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care (2011) Available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED534599.pdf>

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education (2016) Available at:

<http://aim.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Diversity-Equality-and-Inclusion-Charter-and-Guidelines-for-Early-Childhood-Care-Education.pdf>

First 5: A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families 2019-2028 Available at: https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/earlyyears/19112018_4966_DCYA_EarlyYears_Booklet_A4_v22_WEB.pdf

Model Framework for Education Training and Professional Development in the Early Childhood Care and Education Sector (2002) Available at: <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Early-Years/Model-Framework-for-Education-Training-and-Professional-Development-in-the-Early-Childhood-Care-and-Education-Sector.pdf>

National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020 Available at:

<https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/playandrec/20150617NatStratonChildrenandYoungPeoplesParticipationinDecisionMaking2015-2020.pdf>

Quality and Regulatory Framework (2018) Available at: <https://www.tusla.ie/services/preschool-services/early-years-quality-and-regulatory-framework/>

Review of Occupational Role Profiles in Ireland in Early Childhood Education and Care (2017) Available at: <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Final-Review-of-Occupational-Role-Profiles-in-Early-Childhood-Education-and-Care.pdf>

Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education (2008) Available at: <http://www.siolta.ie/index.php>

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) Available at: https://www.childrensrights.ie/sites/default/files/submissions_reports/files/UNCRCEnglish_0.pdf

Registration of School Age Childcare Services <https://www.tusla.ie/services/family-community-support/school-age-services/>