

Programme Specification

BA (Hons) Early Years Education and Care (with Graduate Practitioner Competencies)

<i>School:</i>	Education, Language and Psychology
<i>Subject area:</i>	Children, Young People and Education
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2026-27
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	N/A
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education Early Years Education and Care Diploma of Higher Education Early Years Education and Care BA (Ord) Early Years Education and Care
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	N/A
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Early Childhood Studies (2019)
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Undergraduate periods of study ¹ for full time
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>	Yes
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	Yes – optional one semester abroad at Level 5
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	Yes

Introduction and special features

BA (Hons) Early Years Education and Care (with Graduate Practitioner Competencies) is designed for people who want to work with young children in Early Years organisations including nurseries and schools. There is particular focus on delivering outstanding professional status. Successful graduates will meet the Graduate Practitioner Competencies as specified by the Early Childhood Studies Degree Network.

At York St John University we offer three programmes related to children and young people in education or social care settings. On the BA (Hons) Early Years Education and Care programme you will benefit from studying alongside students on the BA (Hons) Children, Young People and Society and BA (Hons) Education, SEN and Mental Health programmes on some modules. This prepares you for the professional world where people who work with children and young people frequently work together through multi-agency collaboration.

Through the shared modules at level 4 you will learn about the development of children and young people, focussing particularly on transitions as key moments in children and young people's lives. You will study child protection and safeguarding requirements. And you will explore how specific groups of learners may be labelled and stereotyped, leading to marginalisation and exclusion. At level 5, you will consider the potential causes of poor mental health and the impact of issues such as disability, socio-economic status

¹ The standard period of study will apply unless otherwise stated

and abuse on development and education. You will consider different philosophical perspectives, value positions and educational ideologies that have been used to explain approaches to education and the viewpoints of childhood. And you will investigate factors which influence children and young peoples' outcomes and cause social division, critiquing concepts of inclusion and diversity. Finally, at level 6 you will learn about the impact of trauma on children and young people and discuss strategies for offering trauma-informed practice.

In addition, you will have the opportunity to study specialist modules that are only offered on our BA (Hons) Early Years Education and Care programme. At level 5 you will learn about historical and global approaches to Early Years education and care, evaluating their influence on today's professional practices. And at level 6 you will consider key challenges in leadership and management within the Early Years sector, evaluating different styles and approaches to leading and managing.

Our modules draw on our research expertise. Current members of the academic staff team are researching a range of topics including: the development and promotion of positive technology practices among children and young people; the application of personalised technologies in promoting inclusion in educational settings; young people's voice in youth work; parental engagement in primary school; education under lockdown; the development of young children's reflective skills, metacognitive knowledge and self-regulation; transitions from higher education to employment for adults on the autism spectrum; autism knowledge in schools; mental health of parents and pre-school age children in deprived areas; and communities of practice in families of children with disabilities.

Our modules also draw on our professional experience. Current members of the academic staff team have experience in a wide range of education and social care roles including: manager of a pre-school; manager of a children's centre; Lead Practitioner for the Local Authority; Inclusion manager/SENDCo; Primary School headteacher; Primary School safeguarding lead; Secondary School teacher; Specialist School teacher; and Youth and Community worker. Our professional expertise allows students to observe how we draw on our values and philosophical approach, not just through the content of the modules, but in how they are delivered. In this way, our academic staff team act as role models of effective, caring professionals.

The programme includes an assessed professional placement of 25 days at level 4, 30 days at level 5 and 25 days at level 6. This qualifies you to be counted as 'full and relevant' in Early Years settings post-graduation. In addition, the programme has been designed to equip graduates with the Graduate Practitioner Competencies developed by the Early Childhood Studies Degree Network. Graduate Practitioners are able to "critically apply high-level academic knowledge of pedagogy and research evidence, to the holistic development of infants and young children (0-8), in a practice context that is respectful of the child, their family and community" (Early Childhood Studies Degree Network, 2019, p. 14). The theoretical and practical modules on the programme equip you with the knowledge, skills and experience required to meet these Competencies.

As a student on this programme, you will benefit from volunteering or professional placement opportunities at York St John University's Clarence Street Communities Centre. The Clarence Street Communities Centre is a multidisciplinary centre providing services led by academics across counselling, psychology, and children, young people and education. It is a safe and inclusive space open to staff, students, and members of the public of all ages. It offers a portal through which an adult mental health centre, a family centre and a sensory garden can be accessed. Volunteering or placement opportunities in the Clarence Street Centre may include supporting parents or families in group settings, providing age-appropriate childcare to parents when they are participating in therapy, running community events, and involvement in administrative support to the Centre. More information about the Clarence Street Communities Centre will soon be available on the University website (www.yorksj.ac.uk).

This programme is ideal if you are considering working with young children in Early Years settings. The programme qualifies you to be counted as 'full and relevant' in a nursery post-graduation. Alternatively, you

can progress to a Primary PGCE, which is offered at York St John University. With its emphasis on social justice and welfare, the programme also gives you the skills you need for a graduate career in family support work, youth and community work, housing, local government, the police, government social research, educational roles such as tutoring, careers advice and pastoral or support work, and roles in the charity sector such as a practitioner, administrator, researcher or manager.

Special features:

- Take specialist modules such as: ; Early Years theory – introducing pedagogies; and Early Years theory – leading and managing.
- Benefit from shared modules with the related programmes BA (Hons) Children, Young People and Society and BA (Hons) Education, SEN and Mental Health . This prepares you for the professional world where people who work with children and young people in education and social care settings frequently together through multi-agency collaboration.
- Carry out an assessed professional placement of at least 25 days at every level, designed so that you meet all the Graduate Practitioner Competencies and be counted as 'full and relevant' in Early Years settings.
- Develop your academic and professional literacies, such as communication and teamwork, critical reading and writing, and data collection and analysis, through a combination of embedded skills modules and one-to-one support.
- Explore prioritised reading lists online which extend beyond textbooks and journal articles to include voices which are marginalised in the traditional academic literature: novels, memoirs, documentaries, open access books, theses from the Global South, professional documentation and legislation.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are published on the programme specific webpage.

If your first language is not English, you need to take an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see <https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

If you do not have traditional qualifications, you may be eligible for entry on the basis of [Recognition of prior learning \(RPL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing.

Programme aims

By the end of the programme, you will have skills, knowledge and experience relevant to working with children aged 0-5 in Early Years settings, demonstrating all the Graduate Practitioner Competencies. You will have broad understanding of the needs of children and young people in a wide range of education and social care settings which you will be able to make use of in multi-agency collaboration. You will have transferable skills such as communication, teamwork, critical reading and writing, and data collection and analysis.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 4

- 4.1 Demonstrate emerging skills and practices in an Early Years setting
- 4.2 Reflect on your practice, communication and children's development in an Early Years setting
- 4.3 Source, interpret and summarise academic literature and professional documentation
- 4.4 Outline and discuss significant theories, practices and policies relevant to Early Years education and care

- 4.5 Express and discuss core values and philosophies relevant to Early Years education and care
- 4.6 Construct a coherent argument and communicate your ideas clearly, in writing or orally, adopting appropriate referencing conventions
- 4.7 Work independently and/or collaboratively
- 4.8 Evaluate digital information and use technology appropriately

Level 5

- 5.1 Demonstrate a range of skills and practices in an Early Years setting
- 5.2 Draw on theory to reflect on your practice, communication and children's development in an Early Years setting
- 5.3 Demonstrate an understanding of the research life cycle, evaluating and selecting appropriate research strategies
- 5.4 Analyse a range of theories, practices and policies with particular relevance to children's development and Early Years pedagogies
- 5.5 Apply core values and philosophies to Early Years education and care practices
- 5.6 Communicate professionally, in writing or orally, evidencing arguments through correctly referenced, appropriate sources
- 5.7 Work independently and/or collaboratively in a professional manner
- 5.8 Research and evaluate digital information and use technology confidently in your learning and practice

Level 6

- 6.1 Demonstrate professional skills and practices in an Early Years setting, meeting the Graduate Practitioner Competencies
- 6.2 Draw on theory and research to critically reflect on your practice, communication and children's development in an Early Years setting, meeting the Graduate Practitioner Competencies
- 6.3 Design and carry out an independent research study, presenting and critically analysing data
- 6.4 Critically analyse and synthesize a wide range of theories, practice and policies relevant to leadership and management in Early Years education and care
- 6.5 Critically analyse a range of values, ethics and philosophies relevant to leadership and management in Early Years education and care
- 6.6 Construct convincing evidence-based arguments, communicated with clarity and confidence in writing or orally
- 6.7 Work independently and/or collaboratively, demonstrating a sensitivity to context
- 6.8 Research and critically evaluate digital information and engage professionally with technology

Programme structure

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensable (NC) or compensable (X)
CYE4011M	4	1	Academic and Professional Literacies 1	20	C	X
CYE4002M	4	1	Child development	20	C	X
CYE4004M	4	2	Protection and safeguarding in context	20	C	X
CYE4006M	4	1	Effective communication and teamwork	20	C	X
CYE4008M	4	2	Special educational needs and inclusion	20	C	X

CYE4010M	4	2	Academic and Professional Literacies 2	20	C	X
CYE5001M	5	1	Early Years theory: introducing pedagogies	20	C	X
CYE5002M	5	1	Mental health and wellbeing	20	C	X
CYE5004M	5	1	Social divisions, inequities and inclusion	20	C	X
CYE5006M	5	2	Early Years practice: developing pedagogies	20	C	X
CYE5007M	5	2	Learning as a researcher	20	C	X
CYE5009M	5	2	Questioning the purpose: Philosophies of childhood, family and education	20	C	X
CYE6003M	6	1	Early Years theory: leading and managing	20	C	X
CYE6001M	6	1	Contemporary issues: local, national, global	20	O	X
CYE6004M	6	1	Inclusive practice: local, national, global	20	O	X
CYE6007M	6	2	Early Years practice: leading and managing	20	C	NC
CYE6009M	6	2	Trauma-informed practice	20	C	X
CYE6010M	6	1&2	Dissertation	40	C	NC

Please note that not all options may be available every year as they depend on student demand and staff availability.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensable. A non-compensable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 40) in order to progress.

Learning, teaching and assessment

You will take three 20-credit modules each semester. Each 20-credit module normally has up to three hours a week of contact time. This is made up of a combination of larger-group lectures and smaller-group seminars or workshops, depending on the module. In addition, you are offered up to 30 minutes of tutorial time per module per semester to provide you with one-to-one feedback and advice. Some modules follow a different delivery pattern, for example the Early Years practice modules, where you will carry out a professional placement, supported by a smaller number of taught hours, and the level 6 Dissertation, where you will have six-hours of one-to-one or group supervision.

Each 20-credit module requires around 200-hours of study. In addition to the contact time, you therefore also study independently. This includes reading, communicated via prioritised reading lists on Moodle, our virtual learning platform. Readings are usually available as ebooks or online chapters. We have resources which extend beyond textbooks and journal articles to include voices which are marginalised in the traditional academic literature: novels, memoirs, documentaries, open access books and theses from the Global South. Your independent study also includes preparation for taught sessions, either individually or in groups, following materials and activities that are provided on Moodle. Lastly, you will prepare for assessments. Assessment types vary across modules and include essays, presentations, blog posts, case studies, creative/digital artefacts, posters, portfolios and vivas. There are no exams on this programme.

Academic and professional literacies are embedded in the programme design. The level 4 Academic and Professional Literacies modules cover critical reading, writing and thinking skills which underpin all university study, as well as introducing you to the range of roles and settings where professionals work with children and young people. Also at level 4 you take a module on Effective Communication and Teamwork which equips you with vital skills not only for your studies but also for the workplace. It focuses particularly on communication with children, young people and families. The level 5 Learning as a Researcher module

provides you with fundamental skills for conducting rigorous academic research – skills such as collecting and analysing data and writing formal research reports which both equip you for your level 6 Dissertation and are valued by employers.

The Early Years Practice modules are designed so that you can be counted as 'full and relevant' in an Early Years setting post graduation. Your professional placement will be 25 days at level 4, 30 days at level 5, and 25 days at level 6. You will gain experience of working with children over the 0-8 age range over the three professional placements. We have links with local nurseries and local authorities who will offer and sign off professional placements.

The Graduate Practitioner Competencies, as defined by the Early Childhood Studies Degree Network, are integrated into the programme. We use a spiral curriculum model which builds your skills and knowledge through levels 4, 5 and 6. At each level, we revisit pedagogical theories, applied practice, philosophy, sociological perspectives, and psychological models. Level 4 explores the foundations of Early Years, including observation and assessment, child development, and safeguarding, in order to demonstrate the breadth of the learning and knowledge required as an Early Years practitioner, focusing on the relationships between the adult and the child. Level 5 builds an understanding of the wider implications when working in organisations and adds significant knowledge around the political and societal perspectives, while considering the local and national contexts of the Early Years. Level 6 ensures the implementation of all learning, skills, and professional competencies with confidence, allowing you to demonstrate a strong understanding of global influences and ideologies and building the ability to take up leadership roles. You will study financial, developmental and safeguarding practice and understand the importance of collaborative and inclusive workplaces. At each level, the Graduate Practitioner Competencies are assessed in the Early Years practice module via a reflective portfolio and viva voce. A detailed mapping of the Graduate Practitioner Competencies through our spiral curriculum is included in the appendix.

While on the programme you will have access to multiple sources of support. As well as the tutorial time described above, support is offered by central services on study skills such as finding resources, referencing, critical thinking, critical writing, time management, planning assignments, proofreading and presentation skills. Central services also offer support in wellbeing, careers and digital training. In addition, you will be assigned a member of academic staff as your academic tutor to support you through your programme.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [general regulations](#) for undergraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensable.

As the degree has been developed and is consistent with the QAA subject benchmark stated for Early Childhood Studies, an assessment in practice level 3 practitioner YSJU certificate is available to those students who are successfully observed in practice and meet the requirements of assessed performance in an early years setting or equivalent.

With a mark in the compensable range in level 5 Early Years Practice modules a programme transfer to either Children, Young People and Society or Education, SEN and Mental Health may be possible up until the end of level 5.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University mission and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
- Early Childhood Graduate Practitioner Competencies (Early Childhood Studies Degrees Network, 2019)

Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved:

Appendix: Graduate Practitioner Competencies

The Graduate Practitioner Competencies, as defined by the Early Childhood Studies Degree Network, are embedded throughout the programme in a spiral curriculum as follows:

		L4 Placement	L4 Theory	L5 Placement	L5 Theory	L6 Placement	L6 Theory
GC1 Advocate for children's rights and participation							
1.1	Demonstrate how you listen to and work in collaboration with young children, individually and in groups	CYE4011M CYE4010M	CYE4002M CYE4006M		CYE5004M		CYE6004M CYE6009M
1.2	Observe, support, and extend young children's participation in their learning through following their needs and interests.	CYE4011M CYE4010M					
1.3	Support children to respect others by providing opportunities for their participation and decision making.		CYE4006M			CYE6007M	CYE6004M CYE6009M CYE6003M
GC2 Promote holistic development							
2.1	Explain, justify, and apply in practice, knowledge of how infants and young children develop from conception to the age of 8.	CYE4011M CYE4010M	CYE4002M CYE4008M		CYE5001M CYE5006M		CYE6004M
2.2	Demonstrate and apply knowledge to practice of the factors that promote and impede holistic development and long-term outcomes.	CYE4011M CYE4010M	CYE4002M CYE4004M CYE4008M		CYE5001M CYE5002M CYE5004M CYE5006M		CYE6004M
GC3 Work directly with children, young people, and colleagues to promote health wellbeing, safety, and nurturing care.							
3.1	Explain what factors influence health and wellbeing	CYE4011M CYE4010M			CYE5002M CYE5004M		CYE6001M
3.2	Demonstrate the application of knowledge about health, well-being, and safety to practice.	CYE4011M CYE4010M	CYE4004M		CYE5002M	CYE6007M	CYE6003M CYE6009M
3.3	Apply data protection legislation to practice.	CYE4011M CYE4010M		CYE5006M			
3.4	Know and demonstrate how to complete a risk assessment and apply in practice.	CYE4011M CYE4010M		CYE5006M		CYE6007M	
3.5	Understand factors which influence nutritional health and integrate knowledge about current dietary guidance into practice, including early feeding and weaning.	CYE4011M CYE4010M		CYE5006M		CYE6007M	
3.6	Demonstrate the application of knowledge and understanding about the importance of respectful nurturing care routines	CYE4011M CYE4010M	CYE4004M CYE4008M	CYE5006M		CYE6007M	

3.7	Have relevant knowledge to support and manage children with on-going health conditions		CYE4002M CYE4004M CYE4006M CYE4008M	CYE5006M			CYE6004M CYE6009M
3.8	Demonstrate how to promote health and educate children and families about health-related matters.		CYE4002M CYE4004M CYE4006M CYE4008M		CYE5002M	CYE6007M	CYE6001M CYE6004M CYE6009M
GC4	Observe, listen, and plan for children and young children to support their wellbeing, early learning, progression and transitions.						
4.1	Know and understand the relevant Early Childhood curriculum frameworks and apply them in practice.	CYE4011M CYE4010M	CYE4002M CYE4004M	CYE5006M	CYE5001	CYE6007M	CYE6003M
4.2	Apply a range of observation and research skills to co - construct young children's development, play and learning, encouraging independence and next steps	CYE4011M CYE4010M	CYE4002M	CYE5006M	CYE5007		CYE6003M
4.3	Evidence the application of different theoretical perspectives when planning for young children's personal, social and emotional development.	CYE4011M CYE4010M	CYE4002M	CYE5006M	CYE5001M CYE5002M CYE5009M	CYE6007M	CYE6001M
4.4	Apply theoretical understanding to the range of transitions young children experience and how these can be effectively supported in practice.		CYE4002M	CYE5006M	CYE5001M	CYE6007M	CYE6001M
4.5	Evidence knowledge of the importance of parents and/or caregivers and the home learning environment in infants and young children's development and learning		CYE4002M	CYE5006M	CYE5004M	CYE6007M	CYE6009M
4.6	Demonstrate knowledge and skill in listening to and communicating verbally and non-verbally with children and how to encourage their communication skills		CYE4002M CYE4004M CYE4006M CYE4008M	CYE5006M			CYE6004M CYE6009M
4.7	Identify and apply pedagogical knowledge of how to develop enabling environments indoors and outdoors.		CYE4002M CYE4006M	CYE5006M	CYE5009M	CYE6007M	
4.8	Explain and demonstrate understanding of the balance between child-led and adult-led activities.	CYE4011M CYE4010M	CYE4002M CYE4006M CYE4008M	CYE5006M	CYE5002M CYE5009M	CYE6007M	CYE6001M CYE6003M
4.9	Using real world contexts apply to practice theoretical understanding of: Language development, Literacy development (including early reading and writing), Mathematical concepts.	CYE4011M CYE4010M	CYE4002M	CYE5006M	CYE5001M CYE5004M CYE5009M		CYE6001M CYE6004M
4.10	Evidence contemporary knowledge and skills in the use of technology and the role and appropriate use of digital literacies in young children's learning.		CYE4002M CYE4006M CYE4008M	CYE5006M	CYE5007M	CYE6007M	CYE6003M
4.11	Enable young children to understand the wider world.	CYE4011M CYE4010M	CYE4002M	CYE5006M	CYE5004M		CYE6001M CYE6004M
GC5	Safeguarding and child protection						
5.1	Know the wider legislative and statutory guidance for the safeguarding including child protection, whistle blowing, digital safety and how these are articulated into setting policy.	CYE4011M CYE4010M	CYE4004M CYE4006M	CYE5006M	CYE5002M	CYE6007M	CYE6001M CYE6003M CYE4009M

8.1	Evidence knowledge about the importance of creating successful, respectful professional relationships with colleagues and other professionals in and outside the setting.		CYE4011M CYE4004M CYE4006M			CYE6007M	CYE6003M
8.2	Apply collaborative skills in practice, including effective listening and working as a member of a team and in multi-professional contexts.	CYE4011M CYE4010M	CYE4011M CYE4006M		CYE5001M	CYE6007M	CYE6003M CYE6009M
8.3	Demonstrate an understanding of the barriers to working with others and how to address these in practice.		CYE4011M CYE4006M		CYE5001M	CYE6007M	CYE6003M CYE6009M
GC9	Professional development						
9.1	Demonstrate self-awareness and knowledge of anti-discriminatory practice, promoting social justice and the importance of valuing difference, including gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation and sexual orientation.		CYE4011M	CYE5006M	CYE5007M	CYE6007M	CYE6004M CYE6009M
9.2	Evidence skills in enabling the voice of young children to be heard.		CYE4004M			CYE6007M	CYE6004M CYE6009M
9.3	Evidence advanced skills in utilising reflective practice alongside research, to enhance your continual professional development in Early Childhood.	CYE4011M CYE4010M	CYE4011M	CYE5006M	CYE5007M	CYE6007M	CYE4001M CYE6004M CYE6009M
9.4	Draw on research to demonstrate knowledge of leadership and management and its importance and application in democratic and inclusive practice				CYE5007M	CYE6007M	CYE6004M CYE6003M
9.5	Recognise and evidence the importance of communicating effectively orally and in writing to others.		CYE4002M CYE4011M CYE4004M CYE4006M	CYE5006M	CYE5002M CYE5007M	CYE6007M	