

# Programme specification

## BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies

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YORK  
ST JOHN  
UNIVERSITY

<i>School:</i>	School of Education
<i>Entry in:</i>	September 2019
<i>Awarding Institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching Institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery Location:</i>	York St John University
<i>Programme/s Accredited by:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Exit Awards:</i>	Certificate of Higher Education Early Childhood Studies Diploma of Higher Education Early Childhood Studies BA (Ord) Early Childhood Studies
<i>UCAS Code:</i>	X310
<i>Joint Honours Combinations:</i>	Not applicable
<i>QAA Benchmark Group(s):</i>	Early Childhood Studies
<i>Mode/s of Study:</i>	Full-time for 3 years Part-time for 6 years
<i>Language of Study:</i>	English

### Introduction and Special Features

#### Introduction

Experiences in early childhood can affect children throughout their entire lives. We are still learning about the influences that can have an effect on children's life chances. However, research findings do suggest that they are more likely to reach their full potential if:

- They experience positive relationships within their family and have a home environment which encourages their development and learning;
- They attend high quality early childhood provision;
- Professionals are well qualified and committed to their own personal development;
- Early childhood settings employ staff who are qualified to Foundation Degree level and above (DfE, 2012a).

In this respect, the BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies degree offers you an exciting and innovative programme designed to offer a strong theoretical approach to this area of study based on a wide variety of disciplinary and ideological perspectives, presented in such a way as to be relevant to practice. The degree is designed to be challenging and intellectually stimulating through utilising a mix of theoretical and practical approaches within the modules as well as prompting you into critical reflection on your own understandings of early childhood. Encouraging you to reflect on your own and others' values, beliefs and perceptions will enable you to have a much better understanding of wider societal issues that affect young children, thus contributing to your personal transformation not only as a learner, but as a future forward-thinking professional who 'thinks' rather than just 'does'.

#### Learning Opportunities

The key features of the programme are to enable you to develop:

- An understanding of the principles of children's rights;
- An awareness of how political and cultural values, including your own, have an impact on policy and practice;
- An understanding of the dimensions of social divisions and social diversity in relation to outcomes of early childhood provision;

- Values commensurate with those of responsible global citizens;
- The ability to apply a range of relevant theoretical perspectives around issues of gender, ethnicity and difference;
- A greater capacity to appreciate issues of difference and diversity through the exploration of an anti-oppressive stance to young children's provision and practice;
- The ability to reflect critically about issues of categorisation and stereotyping;
- A reflective approach and a critical awareness of the values of local cultures and local politics, and of your own values, biography, and social identity, and how to bring these skills to bear in an informed response to practice.

It is recognised that the above features are imperative in order for you to develop as a professional within the field of early childhood. Throughout the degree you will learn about different theories as well as gaining an understanding of relevant research findings that can be used to help you think about how to deliver and/or improve quality services for young children. Consequently, as an Early Childhood Studies student, alongside the distinct focus on the theoretical knowledge that is essential for professional entry into the early childhood sector, you will also engage in work-related learning activities that run through all levels of study. The module 'Early Childhood Provision and Practice' at Level 5 will be putting this learning into practice within a placement setting for a minimum of 15 days (DBS clearance will be managed in accordance with the University's current procedures). This will include an element of reflective practice, which involves learning through and from experience so as to be able to challenge assumptions about your own values as well as enabling you to become more self-aware. Furthermore, the ability to analyse the observational material gained on placement using research findings, theory and your own experiences is integral to your development as a future reflective practitioner as well as being important to the promotion of excellent practice for young children and their families.

We aim to produce 'thinking professionals' who have the confidence and knowledge to adapt to new learning situations and a variety of roles within the early childhood workforce and beyond. We already enjoy strong links with a number of Local Authorities including York and Doncaster as well as a wide range of voluntary agencies within the community. For example, a number of students within Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) work/volunteer for organisations such as the Children's Society, York Traveller's Trust and the Education for Looked After Children (ELAC) Virtual School, which is responsible for raising the attainment, monitoring progress and removing the barriers to learning of all looked after children cared for by North Yorkshire County Council.

There will also be a key commitment to paying continued attention to employability strategies and opportunities for our students both inside and outside the classroom environment as the programme develops.

At Level 1, there is the opportunity for you to study a Modern Foreign Language (MFL) module including British Sign Language, Spanish, French and German, which can be undertaken instead of 1EC004: Children's Play and Active Exploration. MFL modules can also be followed as an extra-curricular subject (please note that this would incur an additional fee per module).

There is an underlying focus throughout the programme on the rapidly changing and developing policy and practice in the UK and we will encourage students to be critical of the assumptions that underpin these developments. There is also a strong international thread running through the modules, especially at Level 6, as it is essential in an increasingly globalised, multi-racial, multi-cultural world that issues of childhood are seen in the widest of contexts. Comparisons will be drawn between policy, practice, theory and trends in other countries across the globe and attention will be drawn to situations where different cultures bring different perspectives to fundamental issues associated with the development, welfare and education of young children. It is also envisaged that there will be opportunities for study abroad provision.

The course is designed to enhance the career prospects of all students. As an Early Childhood Studies graduate you will be in a strong position from which to explore employment options within local authorities, health authorities, charities, housing and welfare associations, and education. Jobs might include project managers, family support workers, nursery officers, play co-ordinators, residential care workers, classroom assistants, learning mentors and disability co-ordinators. It will also prepare you to undertake postgraduate study through which professional qualifications, such as primary teaching or social work, might be attained or, for those of you who are interested in working in research and/or lecturing, it provides an initial step towards a diverse range of related MA/PhD academic pathways.

Inherent within the vision of the BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies degree is the notion that everybody can learn and that everyone should be encouraged to learn to the best of their ability. The diversity of the assessment strategies, together with the provision for student support, help to ensure that all learners, whatever their interests, backgrounds and aptitudes, have the best possible chance to achieve their potential within the programme and beyond.

### **Admissions Criteria**

See the University's general entry criteria for [undergraduate](#) study.

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.yorks.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 [Accredited Prior \(Experiential\) Learning \(APL/APEL\)](#). We also consider applications for entry with advanced standing. In addition applications from students who have completed a Foundation Degree in a relevant subject may be considered on an individual basis for entry onto Level 6 of the programme.

Entrance to the programme does not require specific subject knowledge or additional criteria to the University's standard entrance requirements. All applicants will be treated as set out in the York St John University Admissions Policy in line with the University's standard entrance requirements.

### **Programme Aims**

The Programme aims have been adapted from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Subject benchmarks for Early Childhood Studies (2007) which were produced by a group of subject specialists drawn from the subject community.

In designing the programme, we have utilised the following subject benchmarks as they are an important external source of reference. In addition, however, we have also taken the opportunity to underpin these aims further to offer you a degree that is unique and contemporary as well as being highly pertinent to the needs of the early childhood sector. In order to achieve this aim, we have placed a primary focus on the theoretical nature of the field, which mirrors the success of our well-established BA (Hons) Children, Young People & Families and BA (Hons) Education Studies programmes in terms of not only producing conscientious and employable graduates, but also professionals who will take a key role in raising the status and academic standing of this area of expertise. Early Childhood Studies is a distinct, vibrant, challenging and exciting field, which is recognised throughout the aims of the programme as a whole.

The aims of the BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies Degree are to:

1. reflect upon a range of theoretical, philosophical, historical, psychological, sociological and health perspectives and consider how these underpin different understandings of early childhood;
2. apply multiple perspectives to childhood issues, recognising that Early Childhood Studies involves a range of research methods, theories, evidence and applications;
3. demonstrate the ability to evaluate competing theoretical positions in relation to the construction of early childhood by different subject disciplines, societal agents, time, place and culture;
4. demonstrate the ability to constructively critique theories and research in the area of early childhood by making links between theory and practice;
5. demonstrate the knowledge and awareness of the skills needed for different pedagogical and theoretical approaches, including:
  - a. the formation and promotion of mutually respectful relationships with families, colleagues and other professionals;
  - b. the necessary depth and strength of relationships with individual children (0-7), and the facilitation of the building of relationships with and between young children (0-7) in groups;
6. demonstrate the ability to critically explore, examine and evaluate the significance of the cultural and historical features of various agencies and institutions in regard to early childhood;
7. demonstrate a critical understanding of curriculum, assessment, observation, evaluation and the improvement of creative learning opportunities, taking account of young children's (0-7) health and emotional well-being;
8. demonstrate an understanding of working effectively in teams with parents, carers and other professionals;
9. demonstrate an understanding of how to promote young children's (0-7) health, welfare and safety needs and the conditions that enable them to flourish on a global scale;
10. demonstrate the ability to engage in critical arguments regarding multi-professional practices for young children (0-7);
11. reflect upon the ethics of studying young children (0-7) and their families;
12. present and evaluate research findings in the area of early childhood;
13. carry out empirical study ethically involving a variety of methods of data collection;
14. analyse data relating to early childhood;
15. demonstrate a critical understanding of the links between theory, ethics, politics, culture and ideology in the lives of young children (0-7) from both a UK and international perspective.

### **Programme Learning Outcomes**

These Learning Outcomes are described in relation to the Quality Assurance Agency's 'Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland', August 2008.

#### **Level 4 / FHEQ L4**

**For the award of Certificate of Higher Education you will have demonstrated the following learning outcomes:**

1. Articulate an understanding of the underlying values and principles relevant to the field of early childhood.
2. Analyse basic concepts, theories and issues of policy that impact upon the lives of young children in a systematic way.
3. Apply, at a basic level, your developing value system to your work.
4. Explore a range of underlying concepts, content and theoretical perspectives associated with studying early childhood.
5. Appropriately apply perspectives, skills and knowledge towards an understanding of early childhood.

6. Present, evaluate and interpret different forms of information, evidence, data, artefacts and performances appropriate to the study of early childhood.
7. Communicate effectively using a range of skills appropriate for the audience and purpose.
8. Employ a range of key transferable skills (including those for lifelong learning) appropriate for further study and future employment in the area of early childhood.

### **Level 5 / FHEQ L5**

**For the award of Diploma of Higher Education you will have demonstrated the following learning outcomes:**

1. Analyse underlying values and principles relevant to the study of early childhood and a developing personal stance towards the subject which draws on a range of academic perspectives.
2. Critically analyse concepts, theories and issues of policy that impact upon the lives of young children in a systematic way.
3. Critically reflect on your own application of values to your work and reflect on your own value system.
4. Apply theoretical perspectives and concepts to a range of situations and issues relevant to the field of early childhood, including those associated with work-based settings.
5. Critically apply research strategies particular to the area of early childhood.
6. Critically analyse data and information relevant to the study of early childhood.
7. Communicate subject-relevant information, ideas and arguments effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.
8. Apply knowledge and skills effectively in decision-making in the context of your growing maturity as an independent learner.

### **Level 6 / FHEQ L6**

**For the award of Ordinary Degree you will have demonstrated the following learning outcomes:**

1. Critically analyse the underlying values and principles relevant to the field of Early Childhood Studies and a developing personal stance which draws on a wide range of perspectives.
2. Critically analyse complex concepts, theories and issues of policy that impact upon the lives of young children.
3. Analyse the range of values in the sector and justify and apply your own values.
4. Critically apply theories and principles regarding early childhood in the analysis and solution of complex problems.
5. Critically evaluate the appropriateness of research strategies associated with early childhood.
6. Critically apply and communicate approaches to the evaluation of qualitative and quantitative data relevant to the study of early childhood.
7. Acquire, organise and communicate information, ideas and arguments, showing an understanding of the significance and limitations of knowledge in the field of early childhood.
8. Apply theoretical principles and practical solutions to develop a sustained argument in an aspect of early childhood.

**In addition to the learning outcomes for an Ordinary Degree you will have demonstrated the following learning outcomes for the award of Honours Degree:**

9. Critically apply skills, concepts, theoretical and empirical knowledge, and methods appropriate to the study of early childhood to initiate, design, plan and execute a research project.

10. Critically apply reasoned judgements about arguments and evidence based upon sound critical analysis and an understanding of different value positions within your own research.
11. Exercise both ethical and personal responsibility in a range of decision-making contexts related to your research project.

## Programme Structure

### Modules for the Programme

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Status of Module*
1EC001	4	1	Child Development and Early Learning 1	20	C
1EC002	4	1	Representations of Early Childhood	20	C
1EC006	4	1	Social Policy and the Early Years	20	C
1EC003	4	2	The Psychology of Early Childhood	20	C
1EC004	4	2	Child Development and Early Learning 2	20	C
1EC005	4	2	Children's Play and Active Exploration	20	O
	4	2	Modern Foreign Language (MFL)	20	O
2EC001 <sup>2</sup>	5	1	Early Childhood Provision and Practice <sup>2</sup>	20	C <sup>2</sup>
2EC002	5	1	Inclusion and Special Needs	20	C
2EC003	5	1	Child Protection	20	C
2EC004	5	2	Researching Early Childhood	20	C
2EC005	5	2	Inequalities and Young Children's Lives	20	C
2EC006	5	2	Family Diversity and Early Childhood	20	C
3EC001	6	1	Global Perspectives on Early Childhood	20	C
3EC002	6	1	Early Years' Innovations	20	C
3EC003	6	2	Gender and Identity Construction	20	O
3EC004	6	2	Risk, Modernity and Young Children	20	O
3EC005	6	2	Storybook Childhoods	20	O
3EC006 <sup>1</sup>	6	1&2	Special Study <sup>1</sup>	20	CA <sup>1</sup>
3EC007 <sup>1</sup>	6	1&2	Special Study <sup>1</sup>	40	CA <sup>1</sup>

\***C**: Compulsory, **CP**: Compulsory for progression to the next level, **CA**: Compulsory for award, **O**: option or **E**: elective.

<sup>1</sup> Students must study either 3EC006 or 3EC007.

<sup>2</sup> 2EC001 requires you to undertake a work placement (15 days minimum) in an early childhood setting.

## Teaching, Learning and Assessment

To maximise the full potential of all students studying on BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies, the programme will focus on:

- The process of transition to ensure that you are able to benefit from a full and rewarding undergraduate experience.
- The development of lifelong learning skills, particularly in relation to developing your ability to be able to reflect upon your own learning.
- The development of skills that will help to effectively involve you in critical reflection and analysis of research, policy and practice.
- Prioritising teaching that will support learning experiences that are stimulating, appropriate and effective.

- Fostering partnerships which will help to ensure inclusive and appropriate assessment, learning & teaching practices.

Our intention is to provide a secure foundation upon which you can build, explore and conceptualise the broader implications of the discipline, thus challenging you to develop your critical thinking skills and engagement in analytical discussion. We aim to foster a strong and supportive relationship with our students in remaining aware of each individual's learning needs across the programme. Beyond the classroom environment, we will provide you with individual academic support both via email and in face-to-face tutorials.

Teaching and learning strategies will be tailored towards the context of each module. Learning and teaching methods are designed to enable you to attain and demonstrate achievement of the specified outcomes contained in the module specifications. The BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies programme will use a diverse range of teaching and learning strategies which will focus on equipping you with the skills and knowledge required to be effective and successful students. Early Childhood Studies is designed so that there is a progressive shift in the overall balance of time you spend in independent compared to tutor-supported learning. Level 4 has increased contact time to ensure that you have a sound grounding in the subject area, which is then gradually reduced through Levels 5 and 6 in order to develop student autonomy, whilst still providing a supportive environment.

The teaching and learning strategy includes lectures, seminars, case studies, group work, report writing and aims to be accessible to a mixture of learning styles and interactive activities. A series of key lectures for each module will provide you with an introduction to the main themes, theoretical concepts and debates. Seminars aim to provide you with the opportunity to debate and discuss the themes raised by lectures and self-directed study. This will provide you with opportunities to have a deeper understanding of the issues covered in the modules and encourages an environment in which you can communicate and discuss the subject matter with other students.

You will also be encouraged to take the initiative and work towards a self-directed approach under the negotiation, facilitation and observation of the module leader. Guest speakers from appropriate organisations also enhance the lecture sessions.

The following learning, teaching and assessment strategies will provide opportunities for engagement, development and critical enquiry:

- Web-based study materials
- Virtual Learning Environment tasks
- Individual/group tutorials
- Web-based mediated discussion groups
- Learning journals
- Simulation exercises
- Project work (tutor-set and student-initiated)
- Field trips and course visits

Assessment opportunities:

- Essays and written debates
- Group and individual presentations
- Evaluative and critical incident reports
- Case studies
- Portfolios and reflective writing
- Research proposal and empirical study

There is an appropriate blend of formative and summative assessments across the individual modules. This is emphasised at Level 4 whereby the word count of 4,000 per module is split between both a formative and summative assessment in order to ease the transition into academic study within Higher Education. In this respect, formative feedback will be provided prior to submission of the final summative assessment, which potentially maximises the

potential for you to engage in productive dialogue throughout the module. Formal and informal feedback including reviews and discussion will also be used to inform you of your progress and facilitate learning and personal development planning. Assessment criteria are directly related to the specified learning outcomes for the programme of study.

We believe that self-motivation has a crucial role to play in learning. What motivates us and how other people can influence our self-motivation is a very complex area, but one in which our understanding is growing. We now know that success itself does not necessarily motivate. It depends to a great extent on why we think we have been successful in our learning. Even the performance of very able students can plateau or even diminish if they believe that they have reached what they consider to be the limits of their intelligence i.e. that their level of intelligence is fixed and they are powerless to increase their capacity to learn.

Ultimately, being wrong, making mistakes and struggling to understand or to do something is a necessary and formative part of learning. Formative tasks are also an integral part of the Level 5 and 6 modules so that you can receive informal feedback on both your academic work and the development of critical thinking around the subjects under discussion. Here, feedback is seen as a key tool that can support you in refining your understandings and/or knowledge as well as enabling you to build more powerful ideas and capabilities.

We believe that good feedback practice:

1. Facilitates the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning.
2. Encourages dialogue around learning.
3. Helps clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, expected standards).
4. Provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance.
5. Delivers high quality information to students about their learning.
6. Encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem.
7. Provides information to the teaching team that can be used to help shape the delivery and content of the 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.

### **Internal and External Reference Points**

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University Mission Statement](#) [see page two]
- [Strategic Plan 2015-20](#) [see page four]
- [QAA subject benchmark statement](#)
- [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

### **Further Information**

Further information on the programme of study may be obtained from:

- Admissions entry profile (Admissions)
- Programme validation document (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Regulations (Registry – Academic Quality Support)
- Student programme handbook (school)
- Module handbooks (school)

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*Date written / revised:* 02/04/2014, July 2017.

First entry to the programme was 2014

AQS Note – QSC PASP 21.11.14 approved level 6 can be delivered one year earlier than planned (i.e. in 2015/16) for applicants for direct entry to level 6.