

Level 4 and 5 Professional Development Qualifications and Courses for Early Years Practitioners

The following qualifications and courses are suitable for early years practitioners who wish to study 'higher education' whilst continuing to work in early years practice.

Following completion of a Level 5 qualification/course you may be able to 'Top Up' to a Degree. Before enrolling on a Level 4/5 qualification or course it's important to consider if in the future you may wish to achieve a Degree and or [Early Years Teacher Status](#). Many qualifications are listed at a particular level, this does not mean they carry the relevant UCAS points to enable direct access onto the next level of qualification.

Certificate is usually a Level 4, but not all carry 120 UCAS points.

Diploma and Foundation Degree are usually Level 5, but not all carry 250 UCAS points.

Qualifications and Courses

Many Training Providers offer the [Level 5 Early Years Lead Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard](#)

Loughborough College in conjunction with the University of Derby are offering the [Foundation Degree in Children and Young People](#)

SMB Group at the Brooksby Campus are offering the [Foundation Degree Childhood, Education and SEND](#)

Pen Green Centre in conjunction with University of Hertfordshire are offering a [Foundation Degree \(Arts\) Early Childhood & Education \(Integrated Working with Families and Children\)](#)

Doncaster College and University Centre offer **DISTANCE LEARNING** programme [Foundation Degree Children's Learning and Development](#)

The Open University offers distance learning options to gain 240 credits (equivalent to Fda):

[Diploma of Higher Education in Early Childhood](#) (course code W50)

[Early Years Courses at Level 4, 5 and 6 can be found here](#)

[Access modules](#) are a great bridge between L2/L3 vocational study and L4+ academic study, and there is a funded pathway for those who are using Access to prepare themselves for higher education and who meet the eligibility criteria

[The Early Childhood Studies Degree Network](#) have developed a [guide to Early Childhood Degrees](#) which you may find useful.

Please contact each training establishment directly to discuss exact training delivery schedule. However, generally:

- Colleges typically deliver during evenings and weekends
- Pen Green deliver in solid week blocks, so you attend every day for one week each term.
- Open University is distance learning, so you undertake the work in your time
- HND programmes are usually delivered during evenings

Further Progression Opportunities

University of Northampton have developed a [BA Hons Top Up](#) delivered via distance learning to support those who have achieved their Level 5 via a 'vocational' route such as the [Level 5 Early Years Lead Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard](#). It is expected that other universities will develop similar options.

To achieve [Early Years Teacher Status](#) you must first hold a Degree, or you could undertake the Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) [Degree Apprenticeship](#)

Cost and Finance

Apprenticeships are funded via the [Apprenticeship Levy](#) which means the learner does not pay anything.

It is important to find the programme and training provider that suits you best, if you are using student finance don't get hung up on the cost because there is a very good chance you will never pay it back.

How Does Student Finance Actually Work?

You don't pay back a penny until you earn over £25,000/year. If you earn over £25,00 you pay back at a rate of 9% for your earnings ABOVE £25,000.

You pack back 9 pence for every £1 over £25,000.

So if you earn £28,800 you pack back 9 pence for every £1 over £28,000 = £28.50/month.

On [our Level 4 and 5 Qualifications web page](#) you will find lots of information, documents and links to student finance information.

Example repayment amounts for courses started after August 2023 (Plan 5)

Income each year before tax	Monthly salary	Approximate monthly repayment
£25,000	£2,083	£0
£30,000	£2,500	£37.50
£35,000	£2,917	£75.00
£40,000	£3,333	£112.50