

## Course Information Sheet

# BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies

**Mode and course length** – Full-Time (4 years)

**Location** – ARU Cambridge Campus

**Awarding Body** – Anglia Ruskin University. As a registered Higher Education provider Anglia Ruskin University is regulated by the Office for Students.

## Overview

Location of study:

Level 3 – ARU Cambridge Campus

Level 4-6 – ARU Chelmsford Campus

Working with young children is hugely rewarding and enormous fun. It can also be very challenging, and it's a fast-paced sector. We will help you develop the skills, knowledge and qualities needed to deliver a high standard of professional practice in the workplace.

Our modules have been designed to develop your understanding of professional and inclusive practice, supporting both the child and the family. Using theory and practical experiences you will explore current research around key topics including contemporary theories and pedagogical approaches, while building your leadership skills and considering possible careers across the early childhood sector.

On this course you will learn through practice, in our Early Childhood Resource and Research Room and through our optional placement or theoretical modules. Placements are optional and individually tailored to enable you to gain experience in a variety of different types of settings.

Whether you decide to go on placement or not, you will have access to additional volunteering and work experience as well as the choice to take part in further professional development training opportunities, enrichment trips, research groups and various early childhood and education events.

Throughout your studies you will be taught by experts in the field of early childhood, using a variety of teaching methods and interactive technology to promote learning, including group activities, class debates and discussion, lectures and seminar sessions, as well as independent learning and study expectations. You will receive regular feedback and personal tutorial support throughout the course to develop both your academic and professional skills. You will also benefit from the research our lecturers are involved in through our Early Childhood Research Group.

## Course Delivery

Our courses are delivered through teaching and learning methods which provide students with the widest possible exposure to a modern and innovative higher education experience.

These methods vary and could include attendance at lectures and seminars, undertaking laboratory exercises or work-based activities, practical work, performances, presentations, field trips, other relevant visits and e-learning through Canvas, our online learning management system.

Each course is divided into a number of 'modules' which focus on particular areas, each of which has a specific approach to its delivery. This information is published to students for each module they take via the Module Definition Form (MDF) and Canvas.

## Assessment

You will be assessed in a range of ways which are designed to support the professional skills you need within the workforce. These include observations, patchwork texts, presentations, case studies, portfolios, posters, investigations, reports and essays.

## Fees

Information about your course fee including any annual fee increases or deposits (if required) can be found in your offer letter.

## Modules

### Core Modules

#### **Year 1: Foundation in Humanities, English, Media, Social Sciences and Education**

This module will provide students with the necessary skills to begin studying at level 4 in courses related to the Humanities, Social Sciences, English, Media and Education.

Students will be introduced to the core skills necessary to succeed in higher education, including thinking critically, researching, and referencing appropriately, demonstrating appropriate numeracy and ICT skills, and communicating effectively verbally and in writing.

In addition to these fundamental study skills, Students will be given an introduction to a broad range of disciplines whose skills and theories are widely applicable.

Students will study a variety of writing styles in order to recognise, deconstruct and replicate various forms of persuasive, analytical, and informative writing. Students will learn the basics of intercultural studies and how these theories can be applied to real-world problems. Students will consider social perceptions held across western cultures, and the difference between social and self-perception, participating in structured discussion and argument. Students will be introduced to the core principles of psychology and will explore various current applications of psychological theory. Students will also be introduced to ethics and will learn about some of the key theories and thinkers in the development of current ethical considerations in a range of scenarios.

The module is made up of the following 8 constituent elements:

- Interactive Learning Skills and Communication (ILSC)
- Information Communication Technology (ICT)
- Critical Thinking
- Intercultural Studies
- Psychology
- Composition and Style
- Ethics
- Social Perceptions

#### **Year 2: Learning and Development**

This module has three major strands. Firstly, it considers how humans learn and develop throughout the life-course with a particular focus on children and young people. Thus, it considers both innate development, 'nature', and the influence of other humans, 'nurture', and our changing understanding of how these interrelate. Secondly, it introduces theories of learning and relates these to both children's and the students' own acquisition of new knowledge and understanding. Thirdly, it provides students with the opportunity to develop personal study skills, teaching and reinforcing aspects of good academic practice through practical tasks that relate to the overall module content. Students will be encouraged to understand and critique stage theories, based upon normative models of human development, from a social constructivist perspective. They will consider how different theories of learning align with different philosophical perspectives and see the long-term consequences of shifts in paradigm.

#### **Year 2: Play, Health and Wellbeing**

As the link between lifestyle factors such as activity levels, diet and health becomes increasingly clear, and greater importance is being placed on the need for children to access outdoor environments, the need for effective life-long health promotion strategies grows. It is crucial to get children and young people making choices and enjoying a healthy balanced diet and active lifestyle from as young an age as possible. The earlier healthy habits are introduced, the more likely children and young people will be to continue to adopt them in the short term and this is an investment in their health for the future. Play is recognised as being crucial to physical, mental, social and emotional health and well-being, and therefore to children, young people, families and to communities as a whole. Yet despite the wide spread belief that play is beneficial, opportunities and encouragement for free play are becoming increasingly limited. You will examine the link between play activities/diet/lifestyle and children's and young people's health and well-being. Current health related promotion campaigns and initiatives will be examined and the latest research within the topic area will also be explored. This module is designed to assist with your future employability skills as the content throughout the module is relevant to an employment environment.

## **Year 2: Researching Childhood**

This introductory module aims to support students in their exploration of the child's world. Students will gain an understanding of the research process, including aspects of research design. The ethics of working with and undertaking research with or about children are explored. The importance of the link between research and practice is emphasised and students are expected to take opportunities within their own workplace and/or through the resources provided to understand and develop these links with practice. You will be introduced to a range of methods for data collection and will be expected to consider the purposes, strengths and weaknesses of particular types of data collection methods and how data might be analysed. Students will specifically be expected to develop an understanding of the use and importance of observation of young children, and the role of observation in informing and developing professional practice. This module is interactive, there is an expectation that students will be able to work productively and effectively in small groups and that students will be able to share their experiences and ideas within the wider group.

## **Year 2: Practitioner 1**

This module will explore the growth and development of the whole child in interaction with his/her environment and consider the implications for practice. Students will use insights from Learning and Development module where they study a range of theoretical perspectives on child development and learning. The module will extend that understanding by considering observations as a method of enquiry to understand child development. They will explore different types and uses of observation methods, with emphasis on the recognition of features that support child development within a given environment. Students will observe a child over a period of one trimester to consolidate their understanding of the principles of child development. They will use these insights to analyse how the characteristics of the individual and features of his / her environment interact to influence growth and development in early years; the value of early years and the role of early years practitioner in promoting the learning and development of children.

## **Year 3: Safeguarding Children**

This module will enable students to develop an informed understanding of the complexities inherent, both past and present, in the notions of risk, child abuse, protection and safeguarding. Through engagement with relevant and diverse literature students will develop their awareness of the challenges posed by these issues for children's lives. The literature will be examined in the wider context of children's welfare. The different theories which explain why child abuse occurs and how they influence provision for safeguarding children will be examined in the context of current legislation, and procedural frameworks. Students will be expected to show understanding of the range of provision available to support children's needs.

## **Year 3: Supporting Children's Learning**

This module is about the ways in which children play and learn and the means by which adults can mediate and support their experience. The emphasis is upon bringing together theory, practice and research in order to: understand the active ways in which children play and learn; reflect upon experiences offered to children in different types of settings; and think through optimal ways of enriching childhood and facilitating holistic development. A main focus of the module will be different approaches to the curriculum. For example, curricula such as: Steiner Waldorf; Montessori method; Experiential Education; High Scope; Reggio Emilia; and Te Whāriki.will be compared and contrasted with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum framework and the National Curriculum in England. Curricula in the other countries of the UK will also be explored. These curricula will be explored thematically and in an interactive way through seminar delivery, considering how the underpinning principles and philosophies

translate into practice. Students who are already working with young children will be encouraged to reflect upon their understanding of young children's play and learning and of strategies to facilitate it. Students who intend to work with children in the future should gain insights into approaches and techniques to promote children's development in different ways.

### **Year 3: Embracing Diversity**

This module introduces a key ethical approach of equality and equity which is central to the childhood studies, and an area which learners need to incorporate into their thinking if they are to be successful contributors to any services offered to children and young people. Disability, differences and special educational needs will be explored in relation to debates on inclusion and exclusion, needs and rights, and the importance of seeing every child as an individual. Different theoretical perspectives are drawn from sociology and psychology as well as education, to examine concepts of diversity in children's lifestyles and experiences. Students will consider social constructs of childhood and explore how differences between children based primarily on gender, race and ethnicity impact on their lives, community and well-being. It is an opportunity to develop ideas on inclusion and to consider how provisions of services to children and young people have addressed issues of equality of opportunity. The knowledge gained by successful completion of this module will be relevant to any future employment in early childhood.

### **Year 3: Practitioner 2**

This module aims to enable you to develop an understanding of children's learning and development in the context of organisational policies and practices. It will support you to understand the policy and practice context by using different methods of enquiry whilst in placement in an early years setting or through your independent research into a specific work context. If in placement you will be expected to participate in the day-to-day running of the setting whilst undertaking the tasks relating to this module, and your reflections on your successful participation will be a part of the assessment. If not in placement your reflections on your learning and developing professional practice will be a part of the assessment.

You will be asked to choose a policy and its related practice in your chosen setting and study its implications on the role of an early years practitioner using different methods of enquiry. An analysis of evidence will make you aware of the ethical issues, advantages and disadvantages of different methods of enquiry and also the implication of various external and internal influences in shaping the role of an early years practitioner. You will present the evidence of your study to your peers and tutor(s), as formative assessment, who will act as 'critical friends' to further hone and refine your research and analytical skills.

### **Year 4: Children's Rights**

This module is based upon a critical exploration of children's rights with the focus on rights to education, protection, human rights and participation. The legal position of children has been enhanced by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 to encompass principles of protection, provision of services and participation. However, not all children's lives are the same and it is important that students of early childhood adopt a comparative approach using evidence from international and national contexts. Successful completion of this module will be relevant to students' future employment in voluntary and statutory agencies working with young children.. Successful completion of this module will be relevant to students' future employment in voluntary and statutory agencies working with young children.

### **Year 4: Practitioner 3**

This module expects you to work closely with the mentor in your placement or your module tutor and peers, to identify the strengths and gaps in your professional skills and knowledge, particularly in relation to leadership and management in early years. The module builds on the principle that good quality in early years provision requires creative and effective leaders who are able to manage resources and foster effective team development. Students will examine the context in which education and care is provided to review issues of how we can work better to meet the needs of young children. The issues concerning provision in terms of quality and providing equality of opportunity for all children will be explored from philosophical and theoretical leadership perspectives in early childhood. The module will provide an opportunity to critically review the application of theory to practice to further your understanding of leadership and management in an early childhood context.

### **Year 4: Undergraduate Major Project**

The Undergraduate Major Project enables students to demonstrate the ability to raise and address significant question(s) in relation their topic/issue, which may involve reviewing, commenting, analysing or critiquing existing ideas or significant theoretical or conceptual developments at the local, national level or international level. Students will be expected to demonstrate

the ability to select and apply appropriate research strategies which are relevant to their chosen topic/issue and the question(s) they are looking to address. Students should be able to draw meaningful and justifiable conclusions from information which may be complex or contradictory and be capable of expanding or redefining their existing knowledge of a subject or area of practice. Students will be expected to communicate in an articulate and appropriately clear and academic fashion and will be able to demonstrate a critically reflective approach to their work. Students are expected to negotiate, through the proposal, the nature and form of the final assessed work, which will take the form of a written dissertation, or for people in practice, who may choose to link the written dissertation with everyday practice from their workplace. This may include anonymised curriculum planning, policy document or brief vignettes of practice, as negotiated with the supervisor and permitted by the gatekeeper, for example, nursery manager and head- teacher. This mode of assessment can be chosen if it provides the student with an opportunity of producing an assignment that links literature with the professional context in which they work. It is likely that the work undertaken for the major project will build on work undertaken/studied in previous modules. Students will be required to work autonomously with minimal guidance from a supervisor.

#### **Year 4: Interdisciplinary Perspectives**

This module will offer students an overview of childhood from a range of academic perspectives – geographical, historical, philosophical, psychological, sociological, educational and economic – to enable them to explore how childhood is constituted and what this means for children in contemporary society. It aims to do two things. Firstly, it aims to broaden students' knowledge base, setting their understanding of children within wider cultural contexts. Secondly, it aims to encourage a deeper and up-to-date understanding of some key concepts introduced earlier in the course so that students complete the degree with a true level 6 understanding of issues affecting children. The module content is organised around key academic disciplines to ensure a comprehensive coverage of new and more detailed material but teaching will be around key themes within this framework.