



**education**

Department:  
Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# **NATIONAL CERTIFICATES (VOCATIONAL)**

## **SUBJECT GUIDELINES**

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

#### **NQF Level 4**

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# **EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT - LEVEL 4**

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## INTRODUCTION

### A. What is Early Childhood Development?

Early Childhood Development is a critical first step in building the foundation for a child's ongoing learning and development. The focus is on the holistic development of the child and how the processes of learning are facilitated by children, parents, caregivers and teachers. Knowledge of early childhood development is foundational to anyone who chooses to broaden their knowledge of educational practices with young children. It is key for those wanting to work with children in an early education setting.

The subject develops basic knowledge necessary to understand education in the early years. It begins by locating the approaches to Early Childhood Development. The focus on the broad context aims at providing understanding of early education as a societal responsibility. Since many children spend their time at child care centres, the subject develops knowledge related to effective practice, creating learning environments and curriculum experiences. The focus on career opportunities in early childhood has been included to attract new practitioners to this important professional arena.

### B. Why is the subject Early Childhood Development important in the Education and Development programme?

The study of early childhood development is important as it:

- Builds on the foundations for early childhood development and care
- Promotes understanding of education in the early years
- Focuses on inclusion and diversity in early childhood development
- Presents early childhood development as a viable career option
- Contributes to the development of reflective practice in the context of early childhood development
- Supports learning by bridging theory and practice

### C. The link between Early Childhood Development Learning Outcomes and the Critical and Developmental Outcomes

- Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking
- Work effectively with others and in teams using interactive strategies and discussions
- Organise and manage oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively using language and visual resources
- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information fundamental to understanding how children grow, develop and learn in the early years
- Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes
- Use science and technology effectively and critically to access information about how children grow, develop and learn in the early years
- Understand the world as a set of interrelated parts of a system in terms of universal and local understandings of early childhood development

The Developmental Outcomes are supported by:

- Reflective practice and the exploration of a variety of strategies to learn more effectively
- Participation as a responsible citizen in the life of local, national and global communities through developing understanding of how children in the early years grow, develop and learn in a variety of contexts
- Being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of societal contexts with reference to early childhood development
- Use the knowledge gained in this subject to think about entrepreneurial opportunities in early childhood care and education.

### D. Factors that contribute to achieving Learning Outcomes in Understanding Early Childhood Development

- Generic knowledge must be supported by local examples that direct learning towards a variety of vocational fields dealing with early childhood development
- A variety of media must be used to facilitate learning
- Create opportunities for reflective practice as a tool for learning
- Lecturers must assist in negotiating access to sites for practical assignments

## 1 DURATION AND TUITION TIME

This is a one-year instructional programme comprising 200 teaching and learning hours. The subject may be offered on a part-time basis provided the student meets all the assessment requirements.

Students with special education needs (LSEN) must be catered for in a way that eliminates barriers to learning.

## 2 SUBJECT LEVEL FOCUS

- Approaches to early childhood development in the context of child-centred education, child-embeddedness, developmentally appropriate practice and models
- The role of parents, caregivers and the community as educators
- Effective practice
- The creation of learning environments
- Curriculum experiences appropriate for the early years
- Career opportunities in the early childhood field

## 3 ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

### 3.1 Internal assessment (50 percent)

#### 3.1.1 Theoretical component

The theoretical component forms 40 percent of the internal assessment mark.

Internal assessment of the theoretical component in Early Childhood Development Level 4 takes the form of observation, class questions, group work, individual discussions with students, class, topic and semester tests and internal examinations. Lecturers can observe students when marking exercises from the previous day and when responses are given.

Assignments, case studies and tests can be completed at the end of a topic. Tests and internal examinations must form part of the internal assessment.

#### 3.1.2 Practical component

The practical component forms 60 percent of the internal assessment mark.

Practical components include applications and exercises. All practical components must be indicated in a Portfolio of Evidence (PoE).

Internal assessment of the practical component in Early Childhood Development Level 4 takes the form of reports completed of visits to an Early Childhood Development setting.

In addition students may complete practical exercises daily. Assignments and case studies can be completed at the end of a topic. Practical examinations based on teaching practice in simulated situations can form part of internal practical assessment.

#### • **Some examples of practical assessments include, but are not limited to:**

- A. Presentations (lectures, demonstrations, group discussions and activities, practical work, observation, role-play, independent activity, synthesis and evaluation)
- B. Exhibitions by students
- C. Visits undertaken by students based on a structured assignment task
- D. Research
- E. Task performance in a structured early childhood environment

• **Definition of the term “Structured Environment”**

For the purposes of assessment, “Structured Environment” refers to a simulated workplace or early childhood environment. Activities in the simulated workplace or environment must be documented in a logbook with a clear listing of the competencies to be assessed. The following information must be contained in the logbook:

- Nature of department or environment in which practical component was achieved
- Learning Outcomes
- Activities in the environment with which to achieve the Learning Outcomes
- Time spent on activities
- Signature of facilitator or supervisor and student

For the logbook to be regarded as valid evidence, it must be signed by an officially assigned supervisor.

• **Evidence in practical assessments**

All evidence pertaining to evaluation of practical work must be reflected in the student’s Portfolio of Evidence. The tools and instruments used for the purpose of conducting these assessments must be part of the evidence contained in the PoE.

3.1.3 Processing of internal assessment mark for the year

A year mark out of 100 is calculated by adding the marks of the theoretical component and the practical component of the internal continuous assessment (ICASS).

3.1.4 Moderation of internal assessment mark

Internal assessment is subjected to internal and external moderation procedures as set out in the *National Examinations Policy for FET College Programmes*.

**3.2 External assessment (50 percent)**

A national examination is conducted annually in October or November by means of a paper(s) set and moderated externally. A practical component will also be assessed.

External assessment details and procedures are set out in the *Assessment Guidelines: Early Childhood Development Level 4*.

**4 WEIGHTED VALUES OF TOPICS**

| TOPICS  | WEIGHTED VALUE |
|---|----------------|
| 1 Approaches to Early Childhood Education           | 10%            |
| 2 Parents, Care Givers and the Community            | 25%            |
| 3 Effective Practice                                | 20%            |
| 4 Creating Learning Environments                    | 15%            |
| 5 Curriculum Experiences                            | 20%            |
| 6 Career Opportunities in the Early Childhood Field | 10%            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>100</b>     |

**5 CALCULATION OF FINAL MARK**

Internal assessment mark: Student’s mark/100 x 50 = a mark out of 50 (a)

Examination mark: Student’s mark/100 x 50 = a mark out of 50 (b)

**Final mark: (a) + (b) = a mark out of 100**

All marks are systematically processed and accurately recorded to be available as hard copy evidence for, amongst others, reporting, moderation and verification purposes.

## 6 PASS REQUIREMENTS

A student must obtain at least fifty percent in internal continuous assessment and fifty percent in the examination in order to achieve a pass in this subject.

## 7 SUBJECT AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of Early Childhood Development Level 4, the student should have covered the following topics:

- Topic 1: Approaches to Early Childhood Education
- Topic 2: Parents, Care Givers and the Community
- Topic 3: Effective Practice
- Topic 4: Creating Learning Environments
- Topic 5: Curriculum Experiences
- Topic 6: Career Opportunities in the Early Childhood Field

### 7.1 Topic 1: Approaches to Early Childhood Development

**7.1.1 Subject Outcome 1:** Discuss approaches to early childhood development in context.  
*Range: child-centred education, child-embeddedness, developmentally appropriate practice and models*

#### Learning Outcomes

The student should be able to:

- Define child-centred education
- Show the links to principles of child development
- Define child-embeddedness
- Show the links to social and cultural responsiveness to children in the developing world context
- Explain with examples developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood
- Discuss the models of early childhood education in the national context
- Describe institutions where early childhood education takes place
- Explain the importance of early childhood education and share ideas

### 7.2 Topic 2: Parents, Care Givers and the Community

**7.2.1 Subject Outcome 1:** Describe the role of parents, caregivers and the community as educators

#### Learning Outcomes

The student should be able to:

- Reflect on own experiences and explain the role of parents, caregivers and community in early education
- Describe ways in which parents and caregivers educate children in early childhood
- Investigate the role of parents and caregivers in supporting institutional early childhood development
- Discuss the role of the community in the lives of children in the early years
- Explain ways in which parents, caregivers and the community are supported in educating young children
- Explain with examples how special needs and culture influence the content of early childhood education

### 7.3 Topic 3: Effective Practice

#### 7.3.1 Subject Outcome 1: Define and explain effective practice

##### Learning Outcomes

The student should be able to:

- Define effective practice as compared to best practice in early childhood education
- Explain the principles of effective practice
- Identify and explain goals and outcomes for achieving effective practice
- Discuss the types of planning used to achieve effective practice with different categories of children in the early years
- Explain effective teaching and assessment strategies for children in the early years
- Visit an early childhood education setting, describe and evaluate the goals, planning and teaching approach against principles of effective practice

### 7.4 Topic 4: Creating Learning Environments

#### 7.4.1 Subject Outcome 1: Analyse and discuss the creation of learning environments

##### Learning Outcomes

The student should be able to:

- Define a learning environment for early childhood education
- Analyse the criteria for creating suitable environments
- Study plans for an outdoor space and room arrangement and evaluate the appropriateness for children in the early years
- Examine the characteristics of a daily schedule for children in different categories of the early years  
*Range: babies, toddlers, young children*
- Identify and explain routines
- Study a daily schedule and make a judgment on its provision for holistic development and developmentally appropriate practice
- Formulate a proposal on how the learning environment can be designed to support children in inclusive ways

### 7.5 Topic 5: Curriculum Experiences

#### 7.5.1 Subject Outcome 1: Discuss curriculum experiences appropriate for the early years

##### Learning Outcomes

The student should be able to:

- Define curriculum in early childhood education
- Describe curriculum experiences for different categories of children in the early years  
*Range: language and literacy, maths, science, technology and life skills including sensory activities, art, music and movement, dramatic play and creative dramatics*  
*Range: babies, toddlers, young children*
- Investigate two curriculum experiences and explain their importance in the early years
- Visit an early childhood education setting, observe, report, give feedback and reflect on two curriculum experiences
- Design and provide a practical demonstration of a curriculum experience for a particular category (babies, toddlers or young children) of children in the early years
- Explain how the curriculum can be differentiated to support special needs and diversity



## **7.6 Topic 6: Career Opportunities in the Early Childhood Field**

### **7.6.1 Subject Outcome 1: Identify and explain career opportunities in the early childhood field**

#### **Learning Outcomes**

The student should be able to:

- Identify and explain the types of careers aimed at working with children in the early years
- Describe entrepreneurship opportunities in early childhood
- Compile a list of organisations offering careers in early childhood
- Make a career choice and explain the importance of the career path

## **8 RESOURCE NEEDS FOR THE TEACHING OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT - LEVEL 4**

### **8.1 Physical resources**

- Classrooms equipped with data projectors, smart boards, overhead projectors, screens, TVs, Video/DVD machines, microphones and PA systems
- Computer rooms with internet access
- Simulation centre for practical work
- **Consumables**
  - Files for Portfolios of Evidence
  - Transparencies and printing paper
  - Blank CDs, memory stick, video cassettes, audio cassettes, ear phones, cartridges for fax and printers
  - Stationery; pens, pencils, crayons, magnets, cardboards and coloured paper
- **Learning and teaching materials**
  - Videos and DVDs
  - Students and facilitators guides
  - Magazines, posters, newspapers

### **8.2 Human resources**

The lecturer should be suitably qualified, preferably with Bachelor of Education specialising in Early Childhood Development or Foundation Phase. A degree with a specialisation in Psychology and Social Science is also recommended.