

WORKING IN **EARLY YEARS** AND **CHILDCARE**



A POSITIVE CAREER CHOICE

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WORKING IN EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE



Early years and childcare practitioners play a vitally important role in helping children from birth to school age reach their full potential by encouraging their development.

There are over 18,000 people working in regulated early years and childcare in Wales with around 4,500 training to work in the sector at any one time. With Government initiatives making early years and childcare provision more accessible, there is an ever increasing demand for qualified and trained practitioners who can provide a high quality service to children, their families and carers.

There are opportunities for everyone, whether you've just left school, looking for a career change or returning to work. There are numerous job roles and a variety of

settings you can work in, either on a full-time or part-time basis to suit your own personal circumstances. You could work in a day nursery, playgroup, cylch meithrin, integrated children's centre or from your own home as a childminder. Additionally, there are other types of job roles available working within playwork and education (further information available from [Play Wales](#), [Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs](#) and your [Local Education Authority](#)).

Whichever role and setting you decide to work in, you can be certain of a varied, challenging and rewarding career, where you will be working closely with children of all backgrounds and abilities, helping them develop skills that they'll use throughout their life. It's a career that brings fun, enjoyment and job satisfaction to every day, seeing the children in your care develop as individuals and knowing that you're giving them the best possible start in life.

TYPICAL DUTIES INCLUDE:

- Planning, setting up and participating in educational and play based activities to support children's development;
- Ensuring the safety of children in your care at all times;
- Protecting and promoting children's rights;
- Storing away equipment safely and ensuring cleanliness of the workplace;
- Providing personal care for babies or children, including preparing bottles, feeding, changing nappies, assisting with bathing, getting dressed and using the toilet;
- Observing and assessing children's behaviour and ensuring that their individual needs are met;
- Maintaining accurate records and producing brief written reports; and
- Working closely with parents, carers and others within the children's workforce.

Please note that some of the duties listed may vary depending on the type and level of service provided.

TO WORK IN EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE, YOU'LL NEED:

- Creative flair and imagination to deliver a wide variety of stimulating, challenging and interesting activities;
- Energy, enthusiasm and a sense of fun;
- Excellent communication skills with the ability to interact with children;
- The ability to work on your own initiative or effectively as part of a team;
- Patience and the ability to deal calmly and consistently with challenging behavior;
- An awareness and understanding of the needs of children at various ages;
- A good understanding of child development;
- To be a positive and responsible role model;
- The ability, desire and commitment to undertake training and continually improve your practice; and
- To have an up to date enhanced [CRB](#) disclosure.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Some experience of working with a range of children would be an advantage, such as undertaking voluntary work with children in your local community. However, you can still start your career with minimal experience as there is plenty of opportunity to acquire the necessary experience and qualifications in the workplace. This can include working through the [Early Years and Childcare Induction Framework for Wales](#) when you are appointed, and then completing further qualifications.

You could study at college, undertake an apprenticeship or start employment and complete work based qualifications. The type and level of qualification required will depend on the job role and setting that you intend to work in. Those working in the sector for the first time would usually start out within a supervised role at assistant level, where a Level 2 qualification would be the minimum requirement. The recommended qualification is [QCF Level 2 Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development \(CCLD\)](#) (Wales and Northern Ireland).

The [List of Accepted Qualifications for the Early Years and Childcare Workforce in Wales](#) provides further guidance on recommended and accepted qualifications.

SALARY AND CAREER PROGRESSION

Early years and childcare services can be run by local authorities, voluntary sector organisations or privately, with approximately 2,400 businesses within Wales employing staff. Therefore, there are plenty of potential employers out there who will be actively recruiting, as evidenced in the growth of the workforce which expanded by as much as 8% from 2005 to 2010. Alternatively, you could be your own boss and consider self-employment, working from the convenience of your own home as a registered childminder.

Starting salaries for those working in the sector for the first time will be close to [national minimum wage](#), but may increase with experience and qualifications. Career progression can be achieved through undertaking college based or work based qualifications such as the [QCF Diplomas in Children’s Care, Learning and Development](#), in addition to receiving continuous professional development training to keep you up to date. There is plenty of scope to further your career and progress into roles with greater responsibility and higher financial rewards. For example, you could start out as a nursery assistant and with the right training and experience end up managing a nursery with overall responsibility for staff, recruitment and budgets.

The table below illustrates the type of roles you could expect to progress into at different qualification levels:

| Qualification level | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 5 |
|-----------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Responsibility | Working under supervision | Working in a supervisory role | Senior practice and management |
| Examples of job roles | Playgroup Assistant; Nursery Assistant; Cylch Meithrin Assistant. | Playgroup Leader; Nursery Manager; Cylch Meithrin Leader; Childminder. | Flying Start Manager. |

NEXT STEPS

- To learn more about working in the sector, consider undertaking a [QCF Level 1 Award/Certificate Introduction to Health and Social Care, Early Years and Childcare \(Wales and Northern Ireland\)](#). This qualification will not confer occupational competence but can enable progression to the relevant work based qualifications. This qualification can also be gained via a [Traineeship](#).
- If you’re interested in undertaking college based study, contact your [local FE college](#) or training provider for courses at level 2 or 3. Please refer to the [List of Accepted Qualifications for the Early Years and Childcare Workforce in Wales](#).
- Consider looking for an [Apprenticeship](#) in working with young children, providing the opportunity to achieve a QCF level 2 or 3 Diploma in Children’s Care, Learning and Development.
- If you have relevant experience of working with children and wish to start employment, then apply for work in the sector. Tips on finding work can be found in the booklet [Social Care – A Great Career Opportunity](#).

The following organisations provide information, resources, training and support:

- **NCMA Cymru** (National Childminding Association Cymru). NCMA is a professional membership association working with registered childminders and nannies as well as other individuals and organisations such as local and national government. All childminders must be registered and inspected by the **Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)**.
- **Mudiad Meithrin** provides support for early years settings working through the medium of Welsh e.g. Cylchoedd Meithrin. **Cam wrth Gam** is a subsidiary of Mudiad Meithrin offering a wide variety of early years training throughout Wales.
- **National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA)** is the national charity and membership association promoting quality care and early learning for children in nurseries across the UK.
- **Wales Pre-school Providers Association** is a national charity and membership organisation that promotes and supports bilingual pre-school care, education and learning through play across Wales.
- **Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs** exists to help communities in Wales by promoting, developing and supporting quality, affordable, accessible out of school childcare clubs.
- **Family Information Services (FIS)** are available in each local authority in Wales and provide information and advice on a range of topics including childcare and training.



CASE STUDY

**AMY LOUISE KEMSHELL, NURSERY PRACTITIONER,
WYNGARTH DAY NURSERY, LLANDUDNO JUNCTION**

HOW DID YOU START YOUR CAREER IN EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE?

I have always wanted to work within an early years setting from a young age and have always liked the idea of helping children learn and develop. I started my career by doing lots of voluntary work within schools and a little bit within a day nursery, then completed a teaching assistant course. In September 2010 I began an apprenticeship in working with children at Wyngarth and completed it in July 2011. I am now qualified and working as a full time member of staff.

The apprenticeship scheme was very beneficial to me as I felt I really developed in my role. I learnt a lot through working in the nursery on a day to day basis and learning about the role of a nursery practitioner through my manager and other members of staff. I also enjoyed the written side of the apprenticeship, researching new things and furthering my knowledge within childcare.

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?

I currently work in the baby room, caring for up to nine babies aged 6 to 24 months on a daily basis. My main duties include:

- Observing children and planning activities to meet the developmental needs of each child;
- Ensuring activities are risk assessed before taking place;
- Creating a home from home environment for babies by following routines provided by parents; and
- Providing parents with communication books and communicating verbally with them on their child's progress throughout the day.

Other duties include feeding, bottle feeding, changing nappies, ensuring toys are kept clean, playing with the children, reading stories and singing songs throughout the day and providing a happy and stimulating environment for the children. I also take part in our company's operational plan. My roles in this are organising events such as our Toddle Waddle (sponsored activity for young children and parents) and Operation Christmas Child. At the moment I am also an apprentice buddy for our two trainees. This role includes helping them settle, explaining the daily routines of the nursery and helping them with any problems they may have. I also conduct half hour meetings once a month with the trainees to see how they are getting on with their apprenticeship.

WHAT TRAINING HAVE YOU RECEIVED?

Whilst working at Wyngarth I have completed an induction programme, CCLD level 2, paediatric first aid and fire safety training. I am also due to go on child protection, manual handling and risk assessment courses within the next month. I also hope to progress to level 3 as soon as possible and would love to start the course very soon.

WHY I ENJOY MY ROLE:

"I really enjoy my role as a nursery practitioner. I enjoy watching the children grow and learn. The children make each day exciting and every day is different. I look forward to going to work in the mornings and helping each child enjoy their day, by setting up activities they will enjoy and creating a happy environment for them. I feel that my job is one of the most rewarding jobs in the world and I definitely wish to further my career within my company and in early years and childcare."

Amy Louise Kemshell

