



Training Works (NW) Limited

*'Training for Care
Professionals'*



CAREERS IN **early years**

A complete guide to apprenticeships and
careers in early years education





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Welcome

People working within early years always laugh and smile as their day is often just as fun for them as it is for the children. Early years is a sector which offers the immense satisfaction of nurturing and developing essential skills and knowledge in children - skills which they will use throughout their entire lives.

Early years education is a career path that is both exciting and rewarding with plenty of professional development routes available for people wanting to work with children. If you wish to work within early years or gain some experience working with your local community, now is a great time to join this growing industry.

This is your go-to guide whether you're a job seeker, careers advisor or school leaver who wants to know what opportunities are out there and how apprenticeships can put you on the path to an enjoyable career in a fun-filled environment. This e-guide will walk you through the possible routes to curate a successful career in early years. Here, we'll share the opportunities, requirements and qualifications available to further your personal development and advance your career in the sector.

Early years: nurturing the next generation

A growing industry, actively recruiting motivated staff

The total number of Ofsted-registered childcare places in England increased by nearly 15,000 (1 per cent) between 2021 and 2022, to 1,568,500.

Between 2021 and 2022, the total number of apprentices employed by school-based and group-based providers increased by 34%

There are an 1.57million Ofsted registered childcare places available in England as of December 2022.

There are an estimated 60,000 early years providers in England as of December 2022.

(Source: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/childcare-and-early-years-provider-survey/2022>)

UNIVERSITY

Undergraduate degrees last between **3-4 years**

Tend to focus on **individual, academic study with little work experience**

Tuition fees up to £9,500 p.a. in England

Large **student debt** – an average of £45,000 per student in 2022

Over **120** universities in the UK offer Early Childhood courses like Early Childhood Education and Care or Early Childhood Studies.

Early years advanced and higher apprenticeships last between **12 months and 30 months**

Specific focus on **on-the-job training**

Apprentices develop practical skills, alongside qualifications

No tuition fees. Costs are covered by the employer (often with government funding)

Receive a salary for the duration of the programme

There are currently **thousands** of early years apprenticeship opportunities with employers in the UK

APPRENTICESHIPS

Apprenticeships, what are they?

An apprenticeship is a genuine job, with training, meaning you can earn while you learn and gain a nationally recognised qualification.

Because the apprenticeship scheme is designed with the help of employers, apprentices fit into their job role effectively, develop the appropriate skills and secure on-going employment. The majority (80%) of the learning and assessment is conducted 'on-the-job' so you can remain focussed without the interruption of off-site study.

Off-the-job training must take place during the apprentice's contracted hours, over the total duration of the apprentice's planned training period. It can be delivered in the apprentice's normal workplace or at an external location.

Apprenticeships are available to all current employees or new entrants aged from 16 and over. They are conveniently set at the level of entry to suit your interest.

GET A BETTER JOB

**Level 3 - Advanced
Equivalent Education Level:
2 A level passes**

GET A DREAM JOB

**Level 6 and 7 - Degree
Equivalent Education Level:
Bachelor's or Master's Degree**



1

GET A JOB

**Level 2 - Intermediate
Equivalent Education Level:
5 GCSE passes**

2

3

GET A CAREER

**Level 4, 5, 6 and 7 - Higher
Equivalent Education Level:
Foundation Degree and above**

4

The benefits of apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a truly unique opportunity offering first-hand work experience within your chosen role, a paid job position and promotion possibilities through vocational training.

There are chances to move up the hierarchy within your workplace, opportunities for further education and, more favourably, the chance for higher earnings.

Apprentices often receive salary increases upon the completion of their training, in addition to improved knowledge and an upwards movement in the company hierarchy.



92%

of apprentices in work felt that their apprenticeship had resulted in a positive impact on their career.

What does an apprenticeship include?

An apprenticeship is a work-based placement that combines practical, on-the-job training with continued study towards a recognised qualification. Apprenticeships are designed to make you 'job-ready' in the role you're training for. Once your apprenticeship is up and running, and you're gaining more experience and learning new skills, you can start to plan for the next steps.

Functional skills

Functional skills provide you with essential knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable you to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and work.

Progression towards, and attainment of, approved level 2 English and maths qualifications is an important part of the apprenticeship programme. For those undertaking a level 3 or higher apprenticeship, it is a requirement that they should hold or achieve an approved level 2 in both subjects before they can successfully complete the apprenticeship.

Level 1 (L1)

Recognised qualification equivalent to GCSE Grade D-G (3-1), includes: Functional Skills L1, Key Skills L1 in English or Maths.

Level 2 (L2)

Recognised qualification equivalent to GCSE Grade A*-C (9-4), includes: Functional Skills L2, Key Skills L2 in English or Maths.

Independent End Point Assessment (EPA)

Once your apprenticeship training is completed, an independent assessment takes place. This assessment is your opportunity to demonstrate that you are genuinely competent in the job role at the end of your training.

It also gives you the chance to show what you've learnt throughout the apprenticeship.

Details of the EPA are set out in the assessment plan and include an evaluation of the apprentice's knowledge, skills, behaviours.

Employment terms

As an apprentice you're entitled to the exact same rights as employees working at the same level or role as you. This includes annual leave, sick pay and your contract with your employer.

Your pay and conditions

It's a requirement to be paid during your apprenticeship and you're entitled to the National Minimum Wage for apprentices as a minimum. The current minimum wage rate for an apprentice is £5.28 per hour. This rate applies to apprentices under 19 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year.

These rates are for the National Living Wage and the National Minimum Wage. The rates change every April.

Year	23 and over	21 to 22	18 to 20	Under 18	Apprentice
April 2023	£10.42	£10.18	£7.49	£5.28	£5.28

Most employers pay higher wage than the current minimum wage rate for an apprentice.

Hours apprentices are paid for

You must be paid for:

- Your normal working hours.
- Training that's part of your apprenticeship (usually one day per week).

Holidays

You'll get at least 20 days paid holiday per year, plus bank holidays.

How to find and apply for an apprenticeship

There are a number of ways to apply for an early years apprenticeship.

- 1 Search for an employer you aspire to work for and find their website. With the number of child care providers increasing, it is possible they will have an apprenticeship opportunity waiting for you.
- 2 Apply for an apprenticeship through the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) website: apprenticeships.gov.uk.
- 3 Ask your employer to contact Training Works to enrol you as an apprentice.
- 4 Utilise career websites which specialise in apprenticeships, such as apprenticeships.gov.uk or nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/skills-assessment.



Early years apprenticeships and entry requirements

Whether your preference is to work in a domestic, non-domestic setting or to be self-employed, there are a number of early years apprenticeships available to help you on your way to a rewarding career.

- Level 2
Early Years Practitioner
- Level 3
Early Years Educator
- Level 3
Team Leader
- Level 5
Early Years Lead Practitioner

Legalities of working in early years education

Registers

It's important to note that domestic, non-domestic settings and self-employed childminders who care for children under 5 years old need to be confirmed on the **Early Years Register**. If your setting is caring for children aged between 5 and 8 years old, they need to be confirmed on the **Childcare Register**. It's common for settings to be on both registers.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check

Anyone in a role working within close proximity with children must have an **enhanced DBS check** before employment can be confirmed. This process is carried out by the DBS, resulting in the disclosure of your criminal record to your workplace. The organisation you're applying to should both pay for and complete this process for you.

First aid

Domestic and non-domestic settings confirmed on either the Early Years or Childcare Registers are required to have at least one **full paediatric first aid** qualified member of staff available at all times. Most settings typically have more than one person qualified, as paediatric first aid is a mandatory component of the Level 3 Early Years Educator apprenticeship.



Apprenticeship entry requirements

To start an apprenticeship you have to be aged 16 years or over and work full- or part-time in early years with a contract of employment.

You also need to be a resident in England and not taking part in any other full-time education. If you have already achieved a degree or equivalent qualification in this country or abroad, you may not be eligible for an apprenticeship unless the

skills acquired for the apprenticeship are different from your degree. Entry requirements for apprenticeships in **Scotland, Wales** and **Northern Ireland** are different to those in England.

Your employer will specify their entry requirements for each specific job role and what qualifications, if any, or experience is required.

Apprenticeship learning journey

What happens when you become an apprentice?

Whether you're an existing employee or new recruit, your apprenticeship learning journey will roughly follow these ten steps.

Your employer will work in partnership with an apprenticeship training provider, like Training Works, to deliver your training. Each employer and training provider will operate a little differently, so these steps are just a guide for you to know what will be expected of you during your apprenticeship.



Childminder

Childminders provide essential support to aid the early learning and development for children of all ages, working closely with parents to provide personalised care. The role of a Childminder plays a vital role in preparing the next generation for the world ahead of them.

Opportunities

Working as a Childminder often proves to be a valuable experience, leading the way for progression within early years. It's a lively, fast-developing career and registered childminders are often self-employed running their own business. Many go on to expand their business and employ Childminding Assistants so they can care for multiple children at once.

The average salary is variable and dependent on the **national minimum wage**, your age, the amount of hours worked per week and the individuals you are caring for. It is also possible to work both evening and weekends as per customer demands, but with the ability to manage your own schedule there is a potential for higher earnings.



Requirements

Childminders are required to have experience working with children in a capacity that is relevant to the role and determined by the customer. You can begin work as a Childminder without an academic childcare qualification, however you must be working towards your Level 3 Early Years Educator qualification.

Apprenticeships and other qualifications



**Level 2
Early Years Practitioner**



**Level 2 Functional Skills
Mathematics**



**Level 3
Early Years Educator**



**Level 2 Functional Skills
English**



Paediatric First Aid

**Career
Progression**

Childminder

Early Years Educator/
Nursery Nurse

Room Leader

Manager/Assistant Manager

Early Years Practitioner and Nursery Assistant

Early Years Practitioners and Nursery Assistants ensure that children are inspired, playing fairly, creating and sharing, with improved confidence every day. These roles are dedicated and committed to encouraging children to develop their core skills through play and gentle teaching.



Opportunities

Childcare providers always have Practitioners and/or Assistants on their staff. These positions are open to any school leavers and usually combine on-the-job training and working towards obtaining their qualification.

Salary expectations range from:

- **Practitioner/Assistant** (entry level): £17,600 p.a.
- **Practitioner/Assistant** (experienced): £19,794 p.a.
- If you run your own business as a Nursery Manager, there are opportunities for higher annual earnings.

Requirements

Depending on the position you're applying for, you may not need any academic qualifications. However, employers within early years like to see prospective employees demonstrate a good standard of education including maths and English at GCSE grade 2 (Grade E/F in the previous structure). Additionally you'll need to have good communication and listening skills, organisational and planning skills and the ability to inspire and enthuse young children.



Apprenticeships and other qualifications



**Level 2
Early Years Practitioner**



Paediatric First Aid



**Level 1 Functional Skills
Mathematics**



**Level 1 Functional Skills
English**

**Career
Progression**

Childminder

**Early Years Practitioner/
Nursery Assistant**

Early Years Educator/
Nursery Nurse

Room Leader

Manager/Assistant
Manager

Early Years Educator and Nursery Nurse

Are you ambitious? Do you have a passion for creating a friendly, caring and relaxing environment? Would you like to play a role in building the foundations for children's future? Then a career as an Early Years Educator/Nursery Nurse might be for you!

Opportunities

Childcare providers need Early Years Educators and/or Nursery Nurses to lead children in activities to stimulate and develop their intellectual, physical and emotional growth and ensure their security and wellbeing. There are plenty of opportunities to follow this career path for those who already have practical experience working with children.

Salary expectations range from:

- **Educator/Nurse** (entry level): £17,000 p.a.
- **Educator/Nurse** (experienced): up to £21,588 p.a.



Requirements

Early Years Educators and Nursery Nurses are required to have some experience of working with children. How much and what specific experience is required for the role is usually determined by the employer and varies by setting.

You can start this role unqualified, however you must be working towards your Level 3 Early Years Educator qualification.

Apprenticeships and other qualifications



**Level 3
Early Years Educator**



Paediatric First Aid



**Level 2 Functional Skills
Mathematics**



**Level 2 Functional Skills
English**

Career Progression

Childminder

Early Years Practitioner/
Nursery Assistant

**Early Years Educator/
Nursery Nurse**

Room Leader

Manager/Assistant
Manager

Room Leader

We expect childcare providers to maintain a high quality and stimulating learning environment for our children. That excitement, fun and enthusiasm that we feel in the air at these settings is down to the Room Leaders. They create a safe, yet energetic and educational setting, supervising staff and imparting their knowledge and skills to others.

Opportunities

Room leaders are responsible for safeguarding children, ensuring excellent high quality childcare and planning activities appropriate to the age and development of the children. Additionally they are often required to play an active role within the senior management team, including decision-making and researching methods to progress the childcare program.

Salary expectations range from:

- **Room Leader** (entry level): £21,000 p.a.
- **Room Leader** (experienced): up to £32,500 p.a.



Requirements

You'll be required to have experience of working with children, the length of time and specific type of experience will be determined by the employer. Room Leaders are required to have both their Level 3 Early Years Educator qualification and a strong understanding of maths and English at GCSE grade 4 (grade C in the previous structure).

Room Leaders possess excellent communication skills when interacting with children, parents and practitioners.

Apprenticeships and other qualifications



**Level 3
Early Years Educator**



**Level 2 Functional Skills
Mathematics**



**Level 3
Team Leader**



**Level 2 Functional Skills
English**



Paediatric First Aid

Career Progression

Childminder

Early Years Practitioner/
Nursery Assistant

Early Years Educator/
Nursery Nurse

Room Leader

Manager/Assistant
Manager

Assistant Manager and Manager

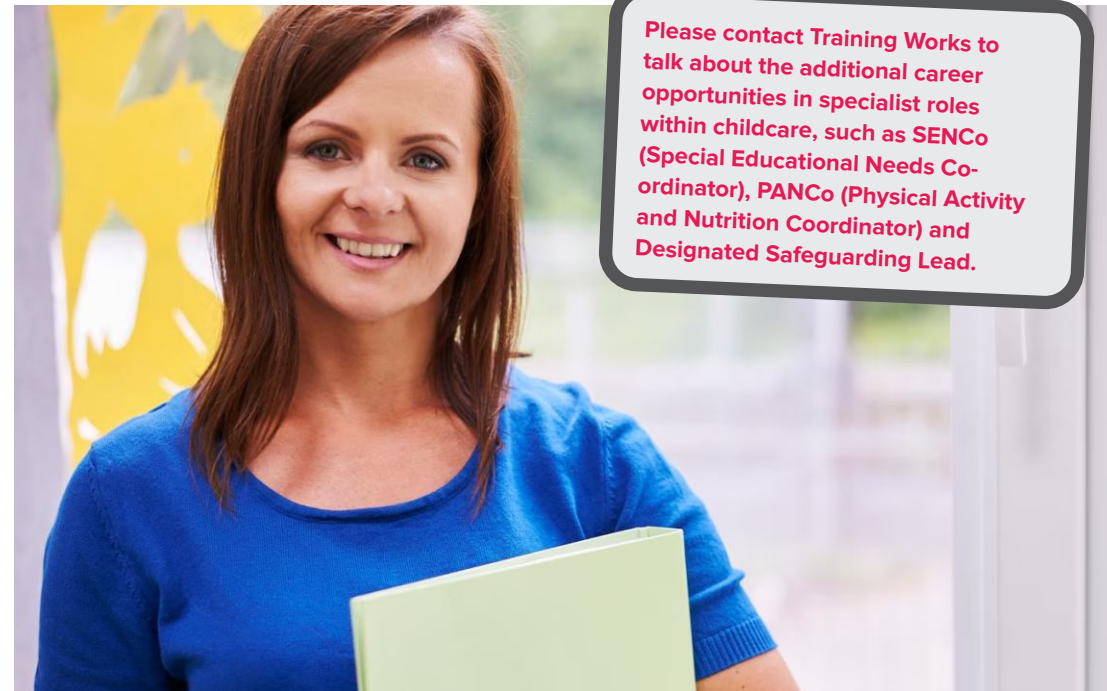
The role of an Assistant Manager and Manager is to provide professional leadership and management of the early years setting. They create an inspirational, outstanding and memorable atmosphere as you enter a room. They effectively manage the day-to-day running of the childcare setting and deliver the highest standards of care and education.

Opportunities

With providers who operate a hierarchy with Room Leaders and Early Years Educators, it is within reach to progress into management positions with experience.

Salary expectations range from:

- **Assistant Manager/Manager** (entry level): £30,000 to £40,000 p.a.
- **Assistant Manager/Manager** (experienced): up to £60,000 p.a.



Requirements

Assistant Managers and Managers of childcare providers in the UK are highly experienced both in working with children and leading teams. As well as experience, you're required to have your Level 3 Early Years Educator qualification. It's recommended that you also have maths and English qualifications at grade 4 (grade C in the previous structure). Regardless of the formal education employers require, the most important skills include your ability to lead, organise and manage all situations to create positive outcomes.

Apprenticeships and other qualifications



**Level 5
Early Years Lead
Practitioner**



Paediatric First Aid



**Level 2 Functional Skills
Mathematics**



**Level 2 Functional Skills
English**

Career Progression

Childminder

Early Years Practitioner/
Nursery Assistant

Early Years Educator/
Nursery Nurse

Room Leader

Manager/Assistant
Manager

Need Advice?



Training Works (NW) Limited

Training Works specialise in the delivery of quality training and apprenticeships to the Early Years sector.

01253 478 180

training-works.co.uk



The Early Years Alliance is the largest and most representative early years membership organisation in England. A registered educational charity, we represent 14,000 members and support them to deliver care and learning to over 800,000 families every year.

0207 697 2500

eyalliance.org.uk



Childcare.co.uk is the UK's largest online community of parents, childcare providers, household helpers, schools and private tutors.

support@childcare.co.uk

childcare.co.uk



PACEY is the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years. Formed in 1977, we are a charity dedicated to supporting everyone working in childcare and early years to provide high quality care and early learning for children and families. We provide training, practical help and expert advice to practitioners working throughout England and Wales. We also provide peer support and encouragement through our nationwide network of PACEY Champions.

0300 003 0005

pacey.org.uk



Provides careers information, advice and guidance. We can help you make decisions at all stages in your career.

0800 100 900

nationalcareers.service.gov.uk

Apprenticeship Discounts and Deals



NUS Extra (Totum)

The NUS Apprentice Extra card provides discounts in-store and online at your favourite brands to help your hard-earned cash go a little further. It's available to all UK apprentices and costs just £11 for 12 months, or £19 for 24 months.

Learn more here:

<https://www.apprenticeextra.co.uk/>

Council Tax Discounts for Full-time Students

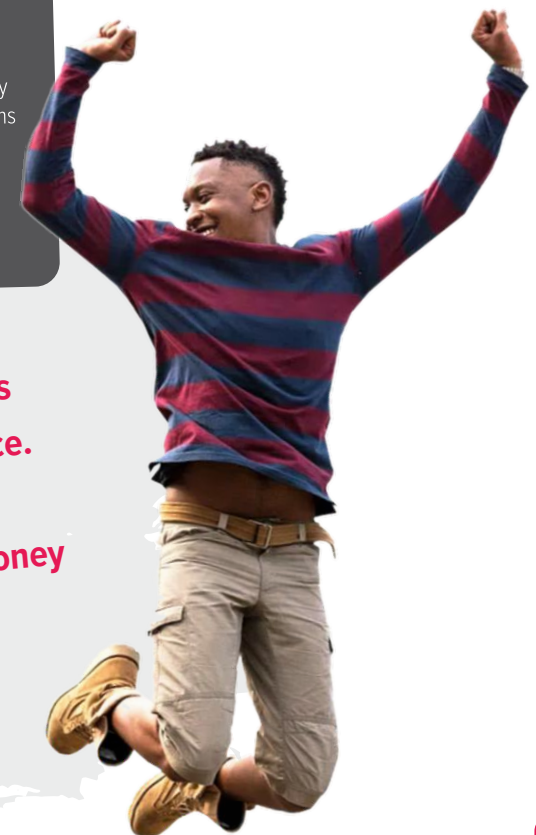


People on apprenticeship schemes may be eligible for Council Tax discounts. To benefit from this you'll need to show that you **do not qualify as an adult under the Government rules for Council Tax**. You'll need a declaration from your employer stating that:

- ▶ You will not be paid more than £195 a week.
- ▶ The training leads to a qualification accredited by a body recognised by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) or the Scottish Vocational Education Council (SVEC).

Contact your local council if you're unsure about whether you're eligible for a discount.

There are a handful of personal benefits associated with becoming an apprentice. Not only will you progress your career – but you could save yourself some money with available student discounts and deals!





training works

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