

Level 4 and 5 Professional Development Qualifications for Early Years Practitioners

As an alternative option to the higher education opportunities listed below from 2022 practitioners can access the [Level 5 Early Years Lead Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard](#). Universities are currently creating bridging modules to enable those who complete this apprenticeship to enter onto a top up degree. Currently in development is a [Level 6 Early Years Pedagogical Lead Apprenticeship Standard](#).

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

Following completion of either Foundation Degree or Higher Diploma and achievement of 240 Credits you would need to 'Top Up' to an Ordinary or Honours Degree if you then wish to undertake [Early Years Teacher Status](#).

Qualifications

The University of Northampton [Foundation Degree in Early Years](#)

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

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

North Warwickshire and Hinckley College in conjunction with the University of Warwick offer the [Foundation Degree in Early Childhood](#)

Study will take place at North Warwickshire and Hinckley College and some Saturdays at University of Warwick.

Pen Green Centre in conjunction with Hertfordshire University 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

Cost and Finance

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 £27,295. If you earn over £27,295 you pay back at a rate of 9% for your earnings ABOVE £27,295.

You pay back 9 pence for every £1 over £27,295.

So if you earn £28,800 you pay back 9 pence for every £1 over £28,000 = £11/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 during 2021

Income each year before tax	Monthly salary	Approximate monthly repayment
£28,000	£2,333	£11
£31,295	£2,608	£30
£35,000	£2,917	£58
£40,000	£3,333	£95
£45,000	£3,750	£133