

BTEC AAQ
Early Childhood Development
Summer Transition Booklet



Welcome to the AAQ (BTEC) Early Childhood Development!

Welcome to the BTEC National in Early Childhood Development! This exciting course is perfect for anyone interested in working with babies and young children, supporting their growth, learning, and wellbeing. Whether you want to become a teacher, nursery practitioner, play therapist, paediatric nurse—or simply understand more about how children develop—this subject will give you the knowledge and confidence to take the next step.

You'll explore how children grow and learn (Unit 1), how to keep them safe and healthy (Unit 2), how play supports development (Unit 3), and how professionals reflect and improve their practice (Unit 4). Some of these units will have traditional exams ('External' assessments), whereas others will be more like coursework ('Internal' assessments).

All students will study:

Number	Unit Title	Assessed
Unit 1	Children's Development	External
Unit 2	Keeping Children Safe	External
Unit 3	Play and Learning	Internal
Unit 4	Research and Reflective Practice in an Early Childhood Setting	Internal

This summer booklet includes fun and thought-provoking activities to help you prepare for the course. You'll explore key vocabulary, learn about different careers, watch and listen to real stories from professionals, and begin to notice how children learn through play and everyday experiences. There are no right or wrong answers—just bring your curiosity, creativity, and care for children. We're so excited to meet you in September and begin this journey with you!

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Overview of Units



Children's Development

Focuses on the physical, cognitive, and emotional growth of children.



Keeping Children Safe

Emphasises creating and maintaining a secure environment for children.



Play and Learning

Highlights the importance of play in fostering learning and development.



Research and Reflection

Encourages continuous improvement through research and reflective practices.

Core Vocabulary

The following words are some of the most common vocabulary terms we will use within the subject. Take some time to look up what they mean. Consider why they are important in an Early Childhood Development context.

Core Vocabulary	Definition
Development	
Milestone	
Safeguarding	
Attachment	
Observation	
Play-Based Learning	
Fine Motor Skills	
Gross Motor Skills	
Cognitive	
Emotional Development	

Core Vocabulary	Definition
Social Development	
Language Acquisition	
Holistic	
Inclusion	
Risk Assessment	
Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)	
Reflective Practice	
Child-Centred	
Practitioner	
Resilience	

Once you look up those words, consider any real examples of these you have seen in the media. How are these words used and understood by the general public?

Career Pathways

Early Childhood Development can lead to a range of careers, including:

1. Early Years Practitioner (Nursery Assistant or Key Worker)
2. Primary School Teacher (especially Reception or KS1)
3. Teaching Assistant / SEN Support Assistant
4. Childminder
5. Nanny / Au Pair
6. Health Play Specialist
7. Paediatric Nurse
8. Speech and Language Therapist
9. Family Support Worker
10. Social Worker (Children & Families)
11. Child Psychologist
12. Early Years SENDCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator)
13. Play Therapist
14. Education Welfare Officer
15. Safeguarding Officer / Designated Safeguarding Lead

Select 2-3 of these career pathways that may interest you and do some wider reading on those careers.

Career 1:	Career 2:	Career 3:
<p>Qualifications needed:</p> <p>What the day-to-day job involves:</p> <p>Why it is important in society:</p>	<p>Qualifications needed:</p> <p>What the day-to-day job involves:</p> <p>Why it is important in society:</p>	<p>Qualifications needed:</p> <p>What the day-to-day job involves:</p> <p>Why it is important in society:</p>

Wider Engagement: News Articles

A key aspect of the course will be engaging with reading from news sources and keeping up with current events. Read through some of the recent news articles I selected for you and reflect on the questions.

Children in England growing up 'sedentary, scrolling and alone' ([The Guardian](#))

Published in The Guardian, this article highlights a year-long study by the Raising the Nation Play Commission showing a dramatic decline in children's outdoor play. Experts warn this trend harms physical health, mental wellbeing, and social development.

What are the developmental risks of children being "sedentary, scrolling and alone"?

How could a "statutory play sufficiency duty" improve wellbeing and development in early years?

Why might outdoor, child-led play be more beneficial than screen-based activities?

About 200 new nurseries to open at schools in England ([The Guardian](#))

A Guardian report outlines Labour's plan to open around 200 nursery units in schools starting September, adding 4,000 free childcare places and aiming for 6,000 spots.

In what ways might opening nurseries in schools help children's development before Year R?

How could linking nursery provision with free breakfast clubs support safeguarding and holistic development?

What challenges could schools face when integrating full-time nurseries?

Why childminders across the UK are giving it up
[\(The Times\)](#)

This Times article exposes a drastic 55% drop in UK childminders over the past decade, citing low pay, inadequate funding, and lack of professional respect.

How might fewer childminders affect children's experiences in early settings?

What are the implications for inclusion and child-centred practice if funding doesn't reflect the true costs of care?

How could raising the professional status and pay of childminders benefit children's development and the workforce?

Space for children to play should be a requirement in planning law, say MPs
[\(The Guardian\)](#)

A recent Guardian article reports on an all-party parliamentary group's push for a "play sufficiency duty" in England's planning framework. MPs and campaigners want developers to fund inclusive playgrounds through planning agreements, aiming to ensure all new residential areas include safe, accessible play spaces.

How does including play spaces in planning law support children's holistic development across physical, social, and emotional areas?

What challenges might local authorities or developers face when trying to implement a "play sufficiency duty"?

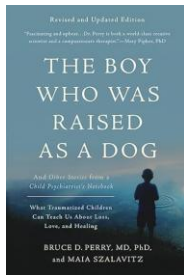
How could this policy change impact inclusion and support for children with SEND or from disadvantaged backgrounds?

Wider Engagement: Books, Films, TV shows, and Podcasts

Below, you will find a list of recommended books, films, TV shows, and podcasts that may start to give you an insight into the subject. **Choose a few of these to try and engage with over the summer.** Complete the 'Reflection Log' for those that interested you. This will also help you when you are preparing for Post-18 as evidence of 'Supra-curricular' work.

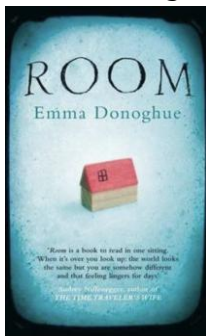
Books

"The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog"
by Dr. Bruce Perry and Maia Szalavitz



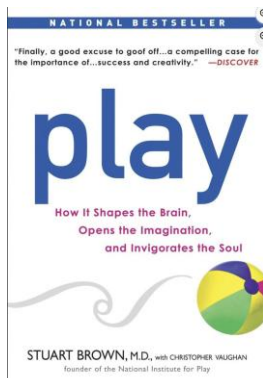
This accessible book shares real-life case studies of child trauma and development. It links closely with Unit 1 (Children's Development) and Unit 2 (Safeguarding), showing how early experiences impact emotional and brain development. It introduces ideas about attachment, resilience, and care in a compelling way.

"Room" by Emma Donoghue



Told from the point of view of a 5-year-old boy, this novel highlights how the environment shapes language, social, and emotional development (Unit 1). It provides a powerful, fictional insight into delayed development and safeguarding concerns, connecting with Unit 2 and the importance of early intervention.

"Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul" by Dr. Stuart Brown



Ideal for Unit 3 (Play and Learning), this book explains the science behind why play matters. It's readable, full of examples, and helps students see that play is essential for learning—not just something fun. It helps them value the professional role of play in development.

Films and TV Shows

Babies (Netflix Documentary Series)



This two-part science documentary explores the first year of life—from motor skills and brain development to social interaction. Directly connects to Unit 1 (Children's Development) and illustrates real-life observation and developmental milestones.

There She Goes (BBC iPlayer)



A poignant comedy-drama about raising a child with a learning disability. Offers real insight into early development, family support, and professional roles like A-child psychologists and SEN support.

A Special School (BBC iPlayer)



This documentary explores everyday life in a specialist school setting. It brings safeguarding, inclusive practice, and multi-agency working to life.

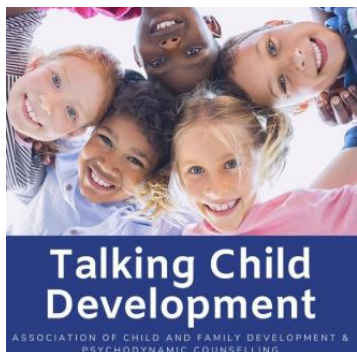
One Born Every Minute (BBC iPlayer)



A factual series filmed in maternity wards. It gives real-life insight into childbirth, bonding, early infant care, and professional roles like midwives and health visitors. Fantastic for connecting theory to real-world practice and observing key moments in early development and early parenting support.

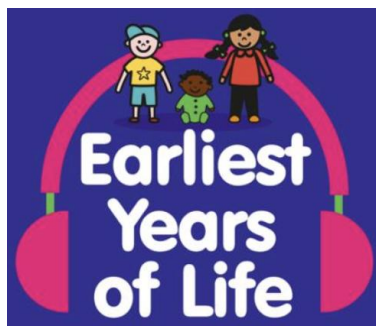
Podcasts

Talking Child Development – Dr Ruth Schmidt Neven



Expert-led conversations with paediatricians, therapists, and educators covering topics like attachment, communication, trauma, and mental health.

Earliest Years of Life – Better Start Bradford



Conversations with early years practitioners and specialists across the UK about giving babies the best possible start in life.

Birth to 5 Matters Podcast



Series where UK early years professionals share how they apply learning frameworks and support play-based learning in pre-school settings.

Talking Early Years – June O'Sullivan



Hosted by a renowned early years leader, this podcast explores current issues, leadership in childcare, and best practice in settings across the UK.

Reflection Log (1)

<p>1. Title of the Book / Show / Podcast</p>	
<p>2. What is it about?</p> <p><u>Sentence starters:</u> This story/ documentary/ podcast is about...</p> <p>It focuses on...</p> <p>The main issue discussed is...</p>	
<p>3. What did I learn about Early Childhood Development?</p> <p><u>Sentence starters:</u> I learned that early childhood development professionals need to...</p> <p>One important message was about...</p> <p>This helped me understand how care is given to people who...</p> <p>I now understand that people receiving care may feel...</p>	

4. A key **moment** or quote that stood out to me

Sentence starters:

A key moment was when...

This stood out to me because...

It made me think about...

5. How does this **connect** to real life?

Sentence starters:

This relates to real life because...

I have seen/heard about similar situations in...

It helped me think about the care people need when...

<p>6. What questions do I still have?</p> <p><u>Sentence starters:</u> I wonder why...</p> <p>I would like to know more about...</p> <p>This made me think more deeply about...</p>	
<p>7. My final reflection</p> <p><u>Sentence starters:</u> Overall, this helped me...</p> <p>I now feel more prepared to study Health & Social Care because...</p> <p>This made me realise the importance of...</p>	

Thank you and see you in September!

Thank you for taking the time to explore the world of Early Childhood Development over the summer. Whether you've watched a film, read a book, listened to a podcast, or reflected on real-life issues, you've already started thinking like a future care professional. I'm really looking forward to meeting you in September and beginning our journey together. We'll be learning how to support others with empathy, understanding, and professionalism—and you've already taken the first step. Have a great summer, and see you soon!