



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

School
Of
Education.



MA In Early Childhood Education.

The MA in Early Childhood Education is a unique, internationally renowned course, which has been running successfully since 1998, designed for a range of early childhood professionals including: early years practitioners, FE and HE lecturers, teachers, nursery nurses, voluntary and independent providers, advisors, inspectors and managers working in areas relevant to early childhood. Students living all over the UK and many other countries including Japan, India, Malta, Czech Republic, Germany, United Arab Emirates, Cyprus and Vietnam have successfully completed the course and applications from all over the world are welcomed.

The course covers a broad range of issues, encourages students to reflect on their practice, on current policy, and addresses theory and research relevant to their interest.

Aims

The course supports students to:

- Examine their work within the changing field of early years provision.
- Further understand and support children's learning and development.
- Develop research skills and conduct small-scale projects.
- Examine current policies.
- Study international developments.
- Critically evaluate a range of literature.
- Enhance their understanding of early childhood education and care from birth to eight.

Weekend study schools

This mixed-mode, distance learning course is designed to be completed in two years, with students studying four modules and completing a dissertation. Five compulsory weekend study schools take place in Sheffield; three in the first year and two in the second year. Students work with their tutors on a mixed-mode programme of lectures, seminars and workshops. Specialised library services exist for distance learning students including a wide range of electronic journals and databases.

Structure of the course

The course allows students from a diverse range of settings and backgrounds to gain further qualifications, drawing on their own experience. Four features of the MA are particularly suited to the needs of those working with and for children in a range of settings and services:

- The possibility of completing the degree in two years.
- A modular structure which allows course members to study at their own pace within the course timetable.
- Assignments related to the professional interests and roles of all students.
- The research expertise of staff within the School of Education at the University of Sheffield.

The course has four modules – with unique, specially prepared units or topics:

Module 1: Early Childhood Education: History and Policy

The development of Early Childhood Education in the UK; Policy development in Early Childhood Education; International contexts in Early Childhood Education; Equality and Inclusion; History of Literacy; Early Intervention

Module 2: Development, Learning and Curriculum

Child development and learning; Theories of learning; Teaching and learning in Early Childhood Education; The learning and development of Babies and Toddlers; Early literacy development; Bilingualism and Early Childhood Education; Schemas and young children's learning

Module 3: Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood Education

Children's Rights; Parents and Early learning; Risk and Early Childhood; Popular Culture and Media; Babies and Toddlers; Inclusion; Globalisation and Early Childhood Education; Creativity and the Arts; Child Poverty, Neglect and Abuse; Gender and Sexualities



Module 4: Research Methods in Early Childhood Education

Observation, interviews and questionnaires; Assessment; Basic research designs; Qualitative research; Involving children in research; Ethnography; Life historical study; Evaluation; Ethics; Research writing.

Assessment

Each module will normally be assessed through a 30-credit assignment. Students will be able to negotiate with their personal tutor assignment themes most suited to their circumstances and interests. Students meet their academic tutors at weekend schools and maintain contact by telephone, post, email and meetings as convenient.

The dissertation

The dissertation is an opportunity to focus on an issue of personal/professional interest to the student. The dissertation represents one third of the MA (60 credits out of 180, approximately 15,000 words). Past dissertation studies have included such topics as:

Assessment; Curriculum; Careers in childcare; Management and leadership; Language development; Inclusion; Parents roles in Taiwan; Gender issues; Birth to three; Meeting children's individual needs; Play; Gun and weapon play; Children's story telling; The

impact of national policies; Creativity; Digital literacies; Key person; Children's rights; Parental involvement; Children's friendships; Men in childcare; Preschool education in Korea; Children's drawings; Outdoor play.

Entry requirements

Candidates will usually have a first degree. Applicants without a first degree are encouraged to apply and may register for a Diploma in the first instance, with transfer to the Master's course on completion of satisfactory coursework.

English Language requirements: For applicants whose first language is not English, the Department requires a score of 6.5 (IELTS) with at least 5.5 in each component or 232–250 (TOEFL computer-based score) or 575–600 for the TOEFL paper-based scale.

How to apply

For full information on how to apply, please go to the University website at

www.sheffield.ac.uk/education/courses/masters/maece/apply.html

Full contact details can be found on the back page of this leaflet.



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Course team

The course has been designed and developed by Professor Cathy Nutbrown [BEd, MEd, PhD]. She was previously an early years teacher and has experience of LEA work in in-service training and development with teachers, multi-disciplinary training on early literacy, parental involvement and other early childhood issues. Current research interests include early assessment, curriculum, children's rights, comparative approaches to teaching and learning, arts and learning, inclusion, and family literacy. Publications include: *Key Concepts in ECEC (2011)*; *Threads of Thinking (2011)*; *Early Childhood Education: History, Philosophy and Experience (2008)*; *A Students' Guide to Methodology (2007)*; *Inclusion in the Early Years (2006)*; *Family Literacy Work with Parents (2005)*; *Research Studies in Early Childhood Education (2002)* and *Experiencing Reggio Emilia (2001)*.

The Course is directed by Dr Jools Page, Lecturer in Early Childhood Education and formerly Senior Early Years Foundation Stage Consultant (Birth to Three) in Kent. Jools' research interests primarily focus on relationships between babies and their key adults and the rights of babies and young children, specifically those under three. In her most recent research *Mothers, Work and Childcare: Choices, Beliefs and Dilemmas* Jools conducted life historical interviews with six mothers whereby she examined their views of the complex issues of 'love' and 'care' in day care provision.

The team includes Professor Cathy Nutbrown, Professor Peter Hannon, Professor Jackie Marsh and Dr Rachael Levy. The teaching team has an established national and international reputation in teaching, researching and publishing in a range of early childhood topics including birth to three, family literacy, digital literacies, bilingualism, inclusion, play, participatory research with children and the rights of babies and young children.

What our students say:

"If you want to do an MA do this one. The tutors are fantastic, and it's amazing to study with the people whose books I have read."

"It's a brilliant networking and learning community."

"Doing the course has given me so much professional confidence."

"I've just got promotion and I would never have got it if I hadn't done this course."

"I've just registered for a PhD – the MA got me going and I don't want to stop."

The MA in Early Childhood Education is not only an internationally recognised qualification in its own right, but provides an ideal foundation for those wishing to pursue their studies at doctoral level on the Sheffield EdD in Early Childhood Education.

Contact details

If you would like further details of the course, please contact:

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