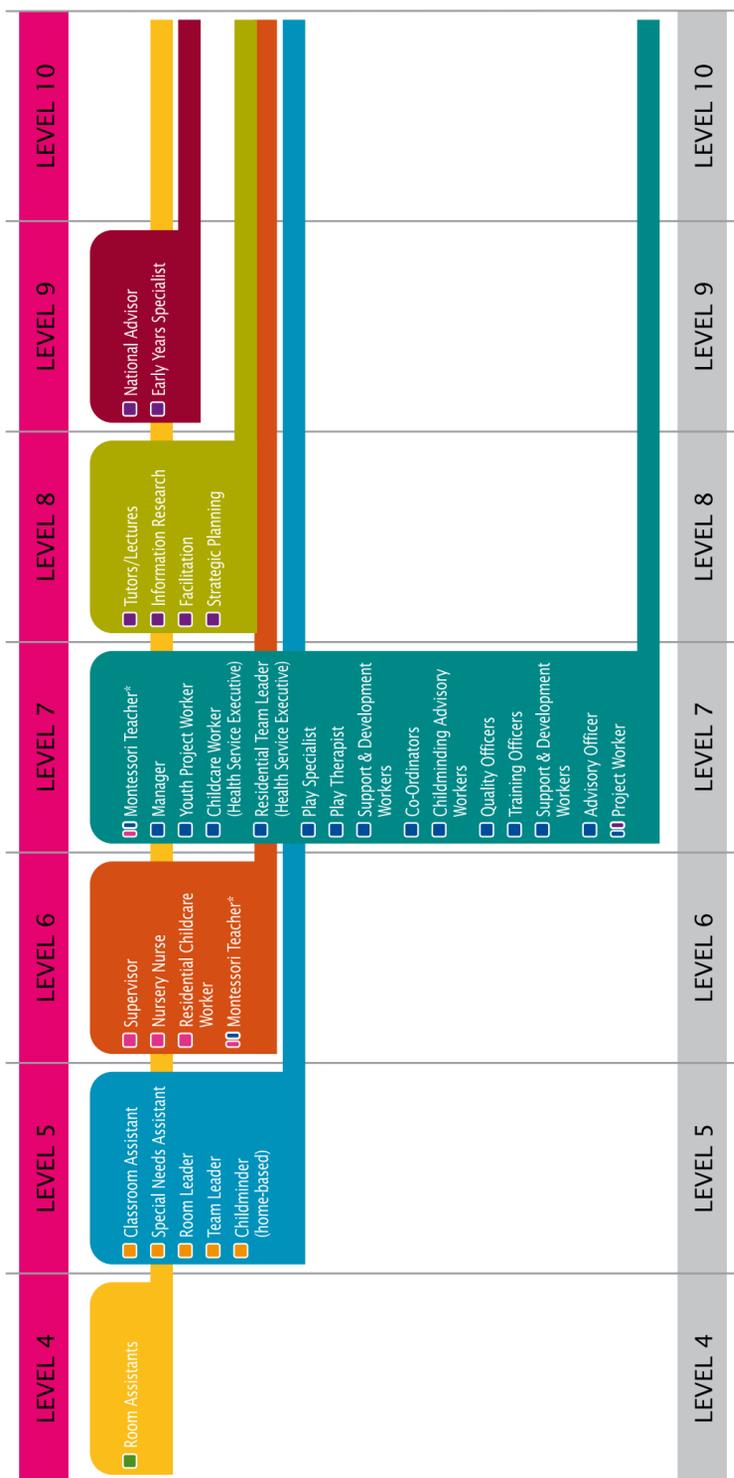


Guide to Childcare Training Paths – Suggested Qualifications



Basic Practitioner ■ Intermediate Practitioner ■ Experienced Practitioner ■ Advanced Practitioner ■ Expert Practitioner ■

*In the case of Montessori Teacher, Level 7 or higher may be required in certain areas

Regardless of where you are employed, the service must comply with all relevant legislation.

Before undertaking any childcare training, make sure the college, school, organisation or institute you are hoping to study with offers a recognised qualification which is accredited by one of the following:

Republic of Ireland	Northern Ireland
Universities	Universities
Higher Education Training Awards Council (HETAC)	
Further Education Training Awards Council (FETAC)	CACHE, NQO
DIT	

Childcare Courses:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHY TRAIN IN CHILDCARE?

As the childcare sector in Ireland is becoming more regulated formal training is becoming more of a requirement than before. Having a formal qualification can give you the skills and confidence to work in a variety of childcare settings and can give you wider options in pursuing a career in childcare. Highly trained and qualified staff is an indicator of a good service. Early childhood practitioners should be knowledgeable about child development and early childhood education, understand and respect the diversity of children's backgrounds, and understand and respect the variety of child rearing practices as they apply to the children in their care. As a requirement of the self evaluation for childminders from the National Guidelines for Childminders all childminders including those who are not required to notify under the Pre School Regulations are encouraged to complete training such as Quality Awareness Programme, First Aid, Fire training and Child Protection/Keeping Safe. If you are currently working in childcare, you have probably gained very valuable experience and knowledge through working directly with children. Further training or education, in addition to keeping you abreast of new developments in childcare, can also complement this experience.

DO I NEED PREVIOUS QUALIFICATION?

Childcare training courses are suitable for both school leaver and mature students, most full-time courses require that people under 23 years old must be of Leaving Certificate standard or equivalent, mature students may be exempted from the need to have formal qualifications, but will normally be requested to attend for interview.

COULD I MAKE A CAREER IN CHILDCARE?

There are more opportunities now than ever before to pursue an interesting and challenging career in childcare. Employment potential in the childcare sector is on the increase as more people are availing of childcare services for their children. The kind of work you might be doing depends on the level of experience and qualification you gain and this in turn dictates the salary you would get paid. The work can vary from caring for babies and young children, to helping them to learn, to dealing with parents, to supervising or training staff, to managing a childcare project (see table on career paths). "A Childminder is a self employed person who minds other people's children in the childminders own home." (National guidelines for childminders). Childminding has always been supported as an integral part of the range of childcare options. Childminders who are not required to notify under the Pre School Regulations are asked to Voluntary Notify the County Committee as part of the National guidelines for childminders. Childminders offer a flexible service, helping parents and guardians to balance their work and family commitments. A childminder negotiates and agrees her/his term with parents. (National guidelines for childminders)

I ALREADY HAVE A QUALIFICATION IN CHILDCARE- IS THERE MORE TRAINING OR EDUCATION I COULD DO?

Yes, there are a number of options open to you depending on the level of qualification you already have and the way in which you want to proceed with your career. For example, if you have a basic qualification you may wish to upgrade your skills and improve your career prospects by doing a more advanced course. If you are interested in progressing to third level, it is worth noting that having a FETAC Level 5(formerly Level 2) Certificate means you can apply for a place in a number of higher education.

WHAT COURSE WOULD SUIT ME BEST?

Choosing a course can be a difficult task when you are confronted with a wide range of programmes to choose from. It is worth spending time finding out as much as possible about potential courses before deciding, which is the best for you (see tips on choosing a course). If you are considering becoming a childminder it is encouraged to complete a Basic First Aid course with Paediatric CPR training, Child Protection/Keeping Safe and Fire Safety training and the Quality Awareness Programme, Childminding in the Home course, topics covered are

- The role of the childminder
- Nutrition and healthy eating
- Health and safety in the home
- Play and play activities
- Child protection and awareness issues
- Business side of childminding

HOW DO I APPLY? WHAT ARE THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS?

In most cases you will be required to complete an application form, which is generally available from the training body.

WHAT ABOUT ACCREDITATION? WHAT QUALIFICATION WILL I HAVE AT THE END OF THE COURSE?

Before undertaking a course it is important that you find out if the qualification you receive at the end is accredited. Having a recognised qualification means that there is more option available to you in terms of employment and/or progressing to further training or education. Some one-off courses are not accredited but are useful in terms of improving your skills and knowledge for working in childcare (see section on National Qualifications Framework).

WHAT WILL THE TRAINING COST?

The cost of training courses varies according to the type of childcare training and the location in which it is being offered. For example, people on VTOS and BTEA schemes are not charged any fees, BTEI course are generally free or fees are reduced, PLC courses are free other than paying a small registration and exam fee, community-based courses charge a small training fee and adult education courses charge varying tuition rates. Third level institutions charge tuition fees, but for example, the Department of Education and Science, pays the fees for undergraduate students in Institutes of Technology and some third level students may be eligible for grants to attend college. Many students attending full-time college's courses are entitled to the same financial assistance as school leaving students.

HOW FLEXIBLE IS THE TRAINING?

Some courses are more flexible than others, in terms of when they are run and how they are run. For example, some training or educational bodies offer flexible courses than are run on a part-time basis, during the day, at night or on Sunday to facilitate people with children or those in full-time employment. Some courses are run on a modular basis, which means that you can study one module at a time and focus on passing it, before progressing to the next one.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO QUALIFY?

Some courses are part-time, with one day per week in class and others are full time with at least three days per week in class. Most courses require students to do a supervised placement in a childcare setting for a number of hours or days per week as part of the learning programme. It is important to gain practical experience of childcare in order to put into practice the theory you are studying.

guide to childcare training paths

HETAC FETAC NQAI