



# Placement Booklet for Supervised Placement Practice Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice

*BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care  
Year 2*

*2024/25*

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## Contact Information

For all Placement queries, the first point of contact for student Early Childhood Educators should always be their assigned Placement Supervisor. Communication between the student Early Childhood Educator and Placement Supervisor will be via NCI email, Moodle, or Microsoft Teams.

<b>BAHECEC Programme Team</b>		
<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
Placement Supervisors	Student Early Childhood Educators will be assigned a Placement Supervisor in September.	
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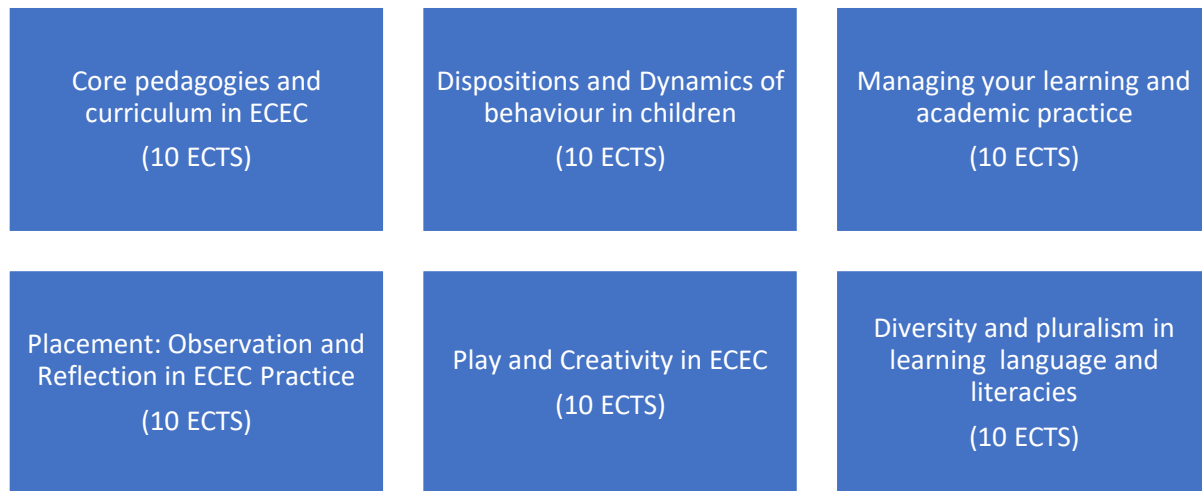
## Section 1 – General Information

### Introduction to the Module

National College of Ireland offers the BA (Honours) in Early Childhood Education and Care (BAHECEC) programme designed to provide student Early Childhood Educators with a firm foundation in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), to practice as Professional Early Childhood Educators in a range of ECEC environments for children from birth to six years. The programme aims to present Early Childhood Educators with a comprehensive foundation in the principles and pillars of professional practice of ECEC through the placement component of the programme.

The BAHECEC programme adheres to the Professional Award Criteria and Guidelines and is accredited by the [Qualifications Advisory Board \(QAB\) for the Early Learning and Care \(ELC\) Sector](#). The supervised placement component accounts for at least 35% of the overall Hons Degree.

The Supervised Professional Practice Placement is underpinned by all taught modules.



*Figure 1: Modules on year 2 of the BA(Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care (BAHECEC) programme.*

This Placement booklet describes a 10-credit module of the programme called **Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice**. The Placement module aims to introduce students to the integration of theoretical principles, concepts and professional knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through the taught modules while observing staff and children in supervised practice in an early childhood education and care placement setting.

**Specifically, the learning outcomes for *Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice* module are:**

- LO1: Illustrate an awareness through observations of diversity and plurality in language learning and literacies.
- LO2: Recognise and display essential ethical considerations and approaches to working with children, including child protection and well-being.
- LO3: Develop a reflective stance in diverse early childhood environments.
- LO4: Recognise and demonstrate an understanding of the holistic nature of learning and Development in Early Childhood.

### Placement Timeframe

The Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice takes place during the academic year over semesters 1 and 2. The 2024/25 academic year commences on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2024. Placement activities in settings will commence in early October after all pre-placement documentation and planning for placement is complete. Placement activities will continue until the end of April 2025.

Student Early Childhood Educators are required to attend the ECEC placement setting between 2-3 days per week over semesters 1 and 2. A minimum of 9 hours per week is required to engage in the placement activities.

### Communication and Identifying a Setting

Student Early Childhood Educators are required to identify their own placement settings. If required, the Programme Team will provide guidance on the suitability of the placement. **Communication throughout the programme is managed exclusively through NCI e-mail, Moodle, e-portfolio and Microsoft Teams systems.** It is the responsibility of student Early Childhood Educators and Placement Supervisors to access and check their NCI emails regularly. Should a student Early Childhood Educator have difficulties contacting their Placement Supervisor, they should inform the Placement Coordinator at their earliest convenience.

### Vetting and Code of Conduct

Garda Vetting is required as part of the admissions process to the BA(Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care programme. Student Early Childhood Educators may not commence their placement until this process has been completed. Student Early Childhood Educators are expected to adhere to the stated Code of Conduct (see appendix 1) and NCI's disciplinary codes of behaviours and policies.

### Child Protection Guidelines

As per section 3.3 of [NCI's Child Protection Guidelines](#) (as outlined below), Student Early Childhood Educators must comply with the Child Protection Guidelines/Policies within the placement setting.

*3.3 Students on placement or volunteering in schools, colleges or with any other bodies providing services to children must comply with the Child Protection Guidelines/Policies of those bodies.*

## Assessment Strategy

The table below outlines the placement requirements and documentation that is required and the weighing that is allocated to each.

<b>Weighting</b> Placement: 100%	<b>Condition</b> Student Early Childhood Educators <b>must attempt and pass</b> all elements of the Placement in order to pass the Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice module.	
<b>Placement Documentation Required</b>		<b>Weighting</b>
Planning for Placement		10%
Placement Logs		10%
<b>Holistic Child Learning and Development</b>		
(i)	Schedule, Record and Reflect on Observations (Part A)	20%
(ii)	Holistic Child Learning and Development Story	15%
<b>Instances of Inclusive Practice</b>		
(i)	Schedule, Record and Reflect on Observations (Part B)	20%
Contribution to Learning Community in Practice		5%
Final Reflective Practice Report		20%
Note: The absence or poor completion of any one part in any Phase will impact the other parts.		

## Placement Orientation

The placement orientation for the Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice will take place in September 2024. All student Early Childhood Educators should attend this orientation. Student Early Childhood Educators will be provided with an overview of the placement and processes that support it.

## Section 2 – Commencing the Placement Process

### Arranging an appropriate setting to complete the Placement

In advance of participation on the programme, student Early Childhood Educators are required to identify and make arrangements with a suitable ECEC setting to complete practical experience of working as an Early Childhood Educator in an Early Childhood Education and Care setting. Appropriate settings include crèche, pre-school, Montessori, 'Naionrai', Early Start preschools in Primary schools, registered childminders or other environments deemed appropriate by the Programme Director. The setting must be TUSLA (the Child and Family Agency) registered and inspected as per the [Register of Early Years Services](#).

The setting must facilitate the student Early Childhood Educator to fulfil the placement requirements through engaging in activities with children from between birth to six years of age. The student Early Childhood Educator is required to have a mentor in the setting assigned to them for the duration of placement. Further information about the role of the mentor is available on page 13.

Some advice when looking to secure a suitable setting for your placement:

- It is a good idea to call the ECEC setting and ask to speak to the person who looks after placements – this may be the Setting Manager.
- Use the template letter in appendix 2 to approach an ECEC setting.

### Confirming the Placement setting

To confirm the Placement setting, student Early Childhood Educators are required to inform the Programme Team of their placement arrangements. The Placement Coordinator will assign a suitable Placement Supervisor to each student Early Childhood Educator after they have completed the Placement Information MS Form. This will be sent via an email from the Placement Coordinator.

### Meeting your Placement Supervisor

At the beginning of the placement, Placement Supervisors will schedule an introductory meeting with the student Early Childhood Educator. This meeting can take place in the placement setting, via Microsoft Teams or on campus.

### Completing the Pre-Placement Documentation

Student Early Childhood Educators are required to complete the following documents within the first week of commencing placement. These documents will be provided to students at the start of the semester.

- Tri-Party Agreement - Students must complete this agreement with their placement mentor/setting manager. Once complete, the agreement must be agreed and signed by the student, Placement Supervisor and Placement Mentor/Setting Manager and uploaded to Moodle.
- Placement checklist - Students must complete this checklist with their placement mentor/setting manager and upload to Moodle.



## Commencing your Placement

Student Early Childhood Educators must complete all pre-placement documentation and the Planning for Placement document within the first week of commencing placement.

The purpose of the Planning for Placement is to plan what Early Childhood Educators want to focus on in practice over a short period of time (e.g. 4-week period). This must be realistic and achievable. The plans should be reviewed and approved by the mentor in the setting.

**The Placement Supervisor must also review and approve the Plan.**

## Section 3 – Placement Overview

### Visits, Observations, and Interactions

Each student Early Childhood Educator will have a minimum of three observation visits (one in semester 1 and two in semester 2) from their Placement Supervisor throughout the placement. The observation visits will take place onsite in the placement setting. These visits are entirely formative and designed to give students useful feedback on their practice. The Placement Supervisor will arrange a suitable time after each observation visit to provide the student Early Childhood Educator with formative feedback and written feedback will be provided at a later date. The Placement Supervisor may also meet with the Placement Mentor.

Dates and times for observation visits will be planned in advance in agreement with the Placement Supervisor, Placement Mentor and student Early Childhood Educator. Student Early Childhood Educators should ensure that the mentor/setting manager are aware of the dates and times for all observation visits.

Placement Supervisors are also required to contact the Mentor before each of their visits to ensure they can accommodate the visits and where possible, arrange to discuss feedback on the student's engagement etc.

➤ **Introductory meeting**

The introductory meeting is with your Placement Supervisor. This will take place before placement commences or at the beginning of semester 1. The meeting can take place in the placement setting, via MS Teams or on campus. Placement Supervisors will link with students to arrange a suitable time.

➤ **Formative observation visit (1)**

The first observation visit, and reflective dialogue will take place in the placement setting towards the end of semester 1 i.e. November – early December.

➤ **Formative observation visit (2)**

The second observation visit, and reflective dialogue will take place in the placement setting towards the beginning of semester 2 i.e. January – February.

➤ **Formative observation visit (3)**

The third observation visit, and reflective dialogue will take place in the placement setting in semester 2 between March-April.

**Note:** Placement Supervisors may arrange further observation visits if they deem it necessary.

## Placement Process

Student Early Childhood Educators will develop skills in a variety of ways to integrate their knowledge in placement including observation, critical reflection, discussion/supervision, collaboration, planning and conducting appropriate early childhood learning experiences and other placement-based assignments.

Their practice will reflect on learning and practice in relation to children, collaborating with staff and engaging in professional practice, as outlined below:

Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observing children</li><li>• Building relationships with children</li><li>• Embracing diversity in children's needs</li></ul>
Collaborating with staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building relationships and collaborating with the team/setting</li><li>• What you receive or gain working with this team/setting</li><li>• What you contribute to the team/setting</li></ul>
Engaging in professional practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adhering to all policies and procedures</li><li>• Engaging with the curriculum in the room or setting</li><li>• Engaging with the pedagogical approach in the room or setting</li><li>• Professional behaviours: confidentiality, being punctual and reliable.</li><li>• Ethical practice in working with children</li></ul>

## Required Documentation during the Placement

1. Student Early Childhood Educators must complete the **pre-placement documentation** within the first week of commencing placement. Further guidance on this will be provided at the start of semester.
2. Student Early Childhood Educators must also complete their **Planning for Placement** within the first week of commencing placement. The Plan must be uploaded to Moodle for review and approval by the Placement Supervisor. The plan will also have been agreed and approved by the mentor. Early Childhood Educators will discuss their plan with their allocated Supervisor during the introductory meeting. Supervisors will review key learning moments from your plan during the observation visits.
3. **Placement logs** are to be submitted once every 14 days throughout the placement.
4. **Holistic Child Learning and Development:**
  - (i) Student Early Childhood Educators will identify a child to observe as part of the **Scheduling, Recording and Reflection on Observations Part A**. Their learning from these observations will help students to develop their Holistic Child Learning and Development Story.
  - (ii) Student Early Childhood Educators will create a **Holistic Child Learning and Development Story** based on their observations.

#### 5. **Instances of Inclusive Practice**

Student Early Childhood Educators will **Schedule, Record and Reflect on Observations for Part B** which focuses on the student educator observing children in diverse contexts as part of instances of inclusive practice.

6. Student Early Childhood Educators will be **observed** in the placement setting by their Placement Supervisor a minimum of three times over the duration of Placement.
7. Student Early Childhood Educators are required to **contribute to the learning community**.
8. At the end of the Placement student Early Childhood Educators must submit the **Final Reflective Practice Report**.

#### Planning for Placement

The purpose of the Planning for Placement is to plan what Early Childhood Educators want to focus on in practice over a short period of time (e.g. 4-week period). This must be realistic and achievable. The plans should be reviewed and approved by the mentor in the setting.

**The Placement Supervisor must also review and approve the Plan.**

If there are changes to the plans, student Early Childhood Educators must inform their Placement Supervisor and update it in the logs.

#### Placement Logs

Student Early Childhood Educators are required to maintain an up-to-date Placement Log every 14 days on the portfolio. Each entry on the Log will be between 100-150 words, dated and state the number of hours completed to date.

The Placement Log is characterised by brief comments and factual information – it is not intended for reflection. The Log is used by the Programme Team to keep track of the student Early Childhood Educator's progress throughout the Placement.

Changes to expected observations, activities, unique incidents observed, unexpected absences, meetings with Placement Supervisors, meetings with Placement Mentor may all be signalled in the Log. If the Placement deviates from your intended Plan for Placement, record a brief update of this in your Log. An ethical awareness should be demonstrated in your log.

Logs cannot be back dated so it is important that student Early Childhood Educators upload their logs every 14 days. Failure to keep the Log up-to-date is considered during grading of the Placement.

#### Holistic Child Learning and Development:

##### (i) **Schedule, Record and Reflect on Observations Part A**

Student Early Childhood Educators will **schedule, record and reflect on observations**. Part A focuses on the student educator observing a child. Their learning from these observations will help students to create their Holistic Child Learning and Development Story.

Student Early Childhood Educators will complete **4 observations** in Part A based on the following four observation methods.

- Running Record
- Event Sampling
- Time Sampling
- Reggio Approach

Observations should include a diversity of the child's experiences which capture their strengths, interests and needs. Experiences might include:

- Activities they engage within the curriculum (indoor or outdoor) such as free play, guided activities like circle time, story time, music and movement, art, drama, field trips etc.
- Interactions and relationships with other children and Educators
- Health and well-being routines such as feeding/snack time, toileting/nappy changing, dressing, sleep/nap time etc.
- Transitions such as arrival and departure, in between activities.

Guidance on observations will be provided in the placement workshops.

#### (ii) [Holistic Child Learning and Development Story](#)

Student Early Childhood Educators will create a **Holistic Child Learning and Development Story** building a unique picture of their learning and development from the observations. This will be approximately 800 words.

Guidance on the Holistic Child Learning and Development Story will be provided in the placement workshops.

[Instances of Inclusive Practice:](#)

[Schedule, Record and Reflect on Observations Part B](#)

Student Early Childhood Educators will **schedule, record and reflect on observations**. Part B focuses on observing children in diverse contexts as part of instances of inclusive practice.

Student Early Childhood Educators will complete **4 observations** in Part B based on the following four observation methods.

- Running Record
- Event Sampling
- Time Sampling
- Reggio Approach

Observations should include a diversity of experiences within the placement environment that capture instances of inclusive practice within the curriculum. For example, curriculum areas that feature:

- Activities that place the child/children at the centre
- Promote their identity and belonging.

- Encourage active participation.
- Educators working in partnership with parents.
- Children's diversity and cultural backgrounds being recognised and respected.

Guidance on observations will be provided in the placement workshops.

### Contribution to Learning Community

Student Early Childhood Educators are required to **contribute to the learning community**. A learning community is a shared space for students to engage in relevant discussions/topics on Early Childhood Education and Care.

Student Early Childhood Educators are required to post **at least one topic for discussion** and engage in **at least one discussion** posted by a peer. Example topics for discussion would be 'What are your thoughts about including smart phones/iPads in children's learning environments?' or 'What are the strategies that can be used by parents, to help them to support children with additional learning needs?'

### Final Reflective Practice Report

At the end of the Placement student Early Childhood Educators must submit their **Final Reflective Practice Report**. This will be approximately 1000 words.

The report should focus on the entire learning journey of the student Early Childhood Educator over the duration of the Placement. This includes experiences related to the elements of the Portfolio as well as discussions and feedback with your Placement Supervisor, mentor and peers. It will also include theoretical principles linked to year 2 modules.

Student Early Childhood Educators can arrange for their Placement Supervisor to review a draft before the final submission. This must be agreed in advance with the Placement Supervisor.

Guidance for writing the Reflective Practice Report will be provided on Moodle.

## Section 4 – Guidance on Progress

### Deferral Request

Student Early Childhood Educators who are unable to complete a Placement due to extenuating circumstances such as illness, bereavement, etc. may apply for a module deferral. Students who apply for a Placement module deferral will not progress into Year 3 of the BAHECEC Programme until all requirements of supervised practice placement in the Year 2 Placement module have been completed. To apply for a module deferral, email the Placement Coordinator for details.

Where circumstances in the Placement setting change during Placement and the Placement setting is not in a position to accommodate the student Early Childhood Educator's Placement, the student Early Childhood Educator will be approved to continue/defer the Placement without penalties if they cannot find another Placement setting in sufficient time within the academic year.

### Withdrawal

On the advice of the Manager of the placement setting and the Placement Supervisor, the Programme Director may withdraw a student Early Childhood Educator from a placement. This may be necessary where there is serious infringement of the settings policies, code of practice of and for students on placement, or where the student Early Childhood Educator fails to follow procedures. A student Early Childhood Educator may appeal this decision in accordance with National College of Ireland's Appeals Process.

Where a student Early Childhood Educator fails to maintain a Placement, they will forfeit their place on the BA(Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care programme.

### Not-Progressing / Fitness to Learn

In certain circumstances, student Early Childhood Educators may be deemed to be 'not-progressing' during the Placement. The Placement is in effect paused.

- This may happen for a variety of reasons, for example, substantial changes to a Plan for Placement brought about by changes in employment, change of venue, problems with a host organisation, or changes in the student's circumstances.
- In some cases, this may be beyond the control of the student Early Childhood Educator and if this is the case the Programme Team will endeavour to work with the student Early Childhood Educator to find a suitable alternative.
- In other cases, the student Early Childhood Educator may be deemed as 'not progressing' by the Programme Team (usually the Programme Director in conjunction with the Placement Supervisor) due to a deficit in 'fitness to learn' on Placement. This can occur when the student Early Childhood Educator is deemed to be unable or unwilling to follow guidance from the Placement Supervisor, and/or in the event of persistent failure to progress with their Planning for Placement, and/or in the event of persistent failure to maintain a Placement Log, absence of communication with the Placement Supervisor, failure to act, and communicate professionally and within the standards required of the Placement setting, failure to prepare adequately to carry out the Placement tasks and failure to adhere to the Code of Conduct for Student Early Childhood Educators.
- Where a student Early Childhood Educator is deemed 'not progressing' due to fitness to learn issues the student Early Childhood Educator will be provided with communication outlining the

issues of concern and will be required to demonstrate that these issues have been rectified before the Placement may re-commence.



## Section 5 – Roles and Responsibilities in the Placement Process

### Role of the Student Early Childhood Educator

The Student Early Childhood Educator should act in a professional manner, in keeping with the [Code of Professional Responsibilities and Code of Ethics for Early Years Educators](#) and they should also comply to all policies and procedures at the placement setting. Student Early Childhood Educators will undertake all components of placement in an ethical manner.

The student Early Childhood Educator must comply with the Child Protection Guidelines/Policies of the placement setting.

The student Early Childhood Educator should adhere to instructions given to them by the Setting Manager and Mentor.

It is the student Early Childhood Educator's responsibility to inform the placement setting of any unexpected absence due to illness or an exceptional circumstance, promptly and in keeping with local procedures. The student Early Childhood Educator should conform to the appropriate dress code and institutional policies on social networking and public behaviour.

[Garda Vetting with the National College of Ireland](#) is required as part of the admissions process to the BA(Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care programme. Student Early Childhood Educators are responsible for completing **Part 1 & 2** of the vetting process and may not commence their placement until this process has been completed. The placement setting may also require vetting to be completed by the student Early Childhood Educator.

The student Early Childhood Educator will also be required to submit all required documents throughout Placement. **Students will not progress into Year 3 of the BAHECEC Programme until all requirements of the Year 2 Placement module and all other modules have been completed.**

### Role of the Placement Supervisor

The Placement Supervisor is part of the National College of Ireland Programme Team who supports and evaluates student Early Childhood Educators during their Placement through meetings, feedback, observation visits and assessments.

The role of the Placement Supervisor is not simply evaluative. They will also support and guide throughout the Placement. Student Early Childhood Educators should share their plans, intended observations, challenges, and reflections with the Placement Supervisor allocated to them.

Placement Supervisors will guide student Early Childhood Educator in carrying out tasks such as planning, integrating ideas from theory and managing environment activities.

The Placement Supervisor will look for a cycle of continuous improvement and evidence of a professionally and academically appropriate reflective stance on the part of the student Early Childhood Educator.

## Role of the Mentor

A Mentor is an experienced Educator who works in the placement setting. They support and guide the student Early Childhood Educator through the placement activities while they are completing the Placement and act as a point of contact between NCI and the setting.

As stated in Best Practice guidelines (PLÉ 2019), 'A mentor is involved in a variety of tasks such as coaching, advising, modelling best practice, engaging in reflection with student Early Childhood Educators and prompting and supporting their interest in and commitment to working in the sector'.

The Mentor plays a significant role in the formation of the student Early Childhood Educator. The importance of the relationship between the Placement Mentor and the student Early Childhood Educator cannot be over emphasised. The student Early Childhood Educator will depend on the mentor to gradually introduce them to the professional practices of educating in an Early Childhood Education and Care setting.

Student Early Childhood Educators must remain under the auspices of their Mentor throughout the Placement. The Mentor will be willing to participate in reflective dialogue with the student Early Childhood Educator throughout the placement.

Mentors will guide student Early Childhood Educator in carrying out tasks such as planning for improvement and integrating ideas from theory. The Mentor should agree Planning for Placement are realistic and achievable for the student Early Childhood Educator **before** they commence.

It is important to emphasise that if the Mentor is concerned in any way about the behaviour and/or well-being of the student Early Childhood Educator, the Mentor should contact the Placement Supervisor or Programme Director.

## Role of the Placement Coordinator

The Placement Coordinator has overall administrative responsibility for the BA(Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care placements. They will assign Placement Supervisors to each student Early Childhood Educator and will monitor progress to ensure that student Early Childhood Educator keep up-to-date submissions. The Placement Coordinator will also act as a liaison person with the placement setting.

## Role of the Programme Director

The Programme Director has overall academic responsibility and leadership of the BA(Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care programme. The Programme Director is responsible for moderating all marks and ensuring adherence to the module assessment policies.

## Role of the Programme Coordinator

The Programme Coordinator has overall administrative responsibility for the BA(Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care programme.

## Section 6 - Information for the Placement Setting

The Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice is an essential part of the BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care programme as it provides student Early Childhood Educators with the opportunities to learn their profession within an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) setting. The Placement forms an integral part of the programme where student Early Childhood Educators are required to demonstrate that they have achieved the appropriate level of competence in the practice of observation and reflection in an appropriate ECEC setting. This requires that student Early Childhood Educators are enabled and supported to gradually assume the role and responsibilities associated with professional practice in an ECEC setting.

The relationship between NCI and placement settings are an important aspect of the Placement and the information as set out here is intended to provide assurances on what is required, the supports in place, and to outline the benefits of such co-operation.

### Why should an ECEC setting support Early Childhood Education and Care placements?

- It is an opportunity to contribute to the enhancement and professionalisation of the ECEC sector through involvement in the formation of future Early Childhood Educators.
- Student Early Childhood Educators are willing participants to support many of the activities that take place in support of learning.
- Student Early Childhood Educators will work alongside your existing staff and enhance the community of educational practice.
- Student Early Childhood Educators may be a source of fresh ideas and new energy in the workplace.
- Participating ECEC settings will be invited to attend and engage in professional development events in Early Childhood Education and Care that take place from time to time in National College of Ireland.
- Placements help to promote and reinforce a lifelong learning culture within an organisation through links with National College of Ireland and to encourage staff to mentor student Early Childhood Educators.
- Student Early Childhood Educators will be supported by the Programme Team throughout their Placement.

### What is required of the placement setting?

- Provide the student Early Childhood Educator with a placement that facilitates fulfilment of the requirements of the programme (i.e. two or three days per week from September – May, with direct interaction with children from birth to six years of age)
- Ensure the student Early Childhood Educator reads and understands the Child Protection Guidelines/Policies of the placement setting.
- Designate an experienced Educator as Placement Mentor to support and guide the student Early Childhood Educator.
- Facilitate onsite observation visits by the Placement Supervisor for National College of Ireland and the Programme Team.
- Review and sign the student Early Childhood Educator's tri-party agreement.
- Support the student Early Childhood Educator to complete the placement checklist.

- Provide appropriate induction in compliance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and make the student Early Childhood Educator aware of workplace policies and procedures as appropriate.
- Notify NCI's Placement Supervisor or the Programme Director of any problems, in particular of any aspects of student Early Childhood Educators performance that are unsatisfactory.

### What is required from a Placement Mentor?

A Placement Mentor need to satisfy the following requirements:

- Be an experienced Educator who works in the placement setting.
- Be willing to work with the student Early Childhood Educator and help him/her develop as a competent Early Childhood Educator. This will also involve meetings with the Placement Supervisor throughout the Placement.
- Be willing to accommodate Placement Supervisors in completing the observation visits.

The Mentor has a meeting with the Placement Supervisor and may provide feedback on the student Early Childhood Educators placement. However, the Placement Supervisor and the Programme Team determine the module marks.

### Why should I become a Mentor?

- Mentors are contributing to the future of student Early Childhood Educators' profession through the support and example they provide to the student Early Childhood Educator.
- Mentors have an opportunity to grow their own professional experience by working alongside a student Early Childhood Educator and observing and supporting their practice.
- The Programme Team values the input of the Mentor and will maintain contact with Mentors throughout the programme inviting them to attend professional development workshops during the academic year.

### What does the Mentor need to do before agreeing to become a Mentor?

The Mentor needs to familiarise himself or herself with this Placement Booklet, in particular the placement requirements. The student Early Childhood Educator will be required to complete a Plan for Placement and the Mentor must agree that these plans are realistic and achievable for the student Early Childhood Educator.

## Section 7 – Appendices

### Appendix 1: Code of Conduct for Student Early Childhood Educators

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to inform student Early Childhood Educators of the professional behaviour expected from them while undertaking the Placement element of the BAHECE Programme. Student Early Childhood Educators must abide by the terms, conditions and policies of their ECEC setting as well as NCI's policies and procedures.

#### **The responsibility of the student Early Childhood Educator**

Student Early Childhood Educators engage in a learning process where they will be guided and supported by their Placement Supervisor and Placement Mentor. They will come into contact with a range of stakeholders including children and their parents. Student Early Childhood Educators are expected to actively participate in activities appropriate to their level of knowledge and practical experience, under the supervision and guidance of their Placement Mentor. As their knowledge, skills and competences develop, it is expected that they will increasingly accept more responsibility. It is not expected that they will undertake unsupervised activities for which they are not prepared for.

#### **Professional code for student Early Childhood Educators**

- Approach your work diligently, take responsibility and show a willingness to use your initiative.
- Always act in a professional, respectful manner with the placement setting supervisors, staff team and all stakeholders.
- Fully adhere to the working practices and terms and conditions of the placement organisation – working conditions, health and safety, GDPR, confidentiality and child protection.
- Ensure that your health and safety needs are met.
- Be sensitive and responsive to the needs of the ECEC setting and stakeholders.
- Be aware of your limitations and seek help when necessary.
- The use of drugs or alcohol by a student Early Childhood Educator is a serious breach of conduct and will not be condoned. The use of drugs or alcohol by any student Early Childhood Educator during their placement period will necessitate a disciplinary action.
- Remember the principles of equal opportunities and implement them with respect to everyone you work with.
- Be willing to learn from all the professionals you work with in the ECEC setting.
- Organise thoroughly for all your activities by ensuring resources and activity plans are prepared in advance and in consultation with your Placement Supervisor/Placement Mentor as appropriate.
- Always notify the ECEC setting as early as possible on the day if you are unable to come in during school placement, for example, due to illness.
- Be punctual; you should be in the environment approximately 15 minutes before you are due to start work and remain long enough to clear up, review the activity with the Placement Mentor/room leader if they are available, and make provisional plans for your next session.
- Involve yourself in the wider life of the ECEC setting.
- Dress appropriately in accordance with the dress codes operating in the ECEC setting.

- Do not leave the premises during the duration of the placement, unless it is essential, in which case seek permission and let a senior member of staff know.
- Offer, and be available to attend, informal and formal meetings, which may be outside working hours.
- Attend the ECEC setting on the agreed days. Any changes to the agreed Planning for Placement should be notified to both the Placement Supervisor and the ECEC setting.

## Appendix 2: Template for approaching a Placement Setting for Placement

**Date:**

**Re: Early Childhood Education and Care Placement**

Dear xxxx:

I am undertaking a BA(Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care programme with National College of Ireland (NCI). As part of this programme, I am required to complete a module called Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice (also known as Placement).

The Placement requires student Early Childhood Educators to complete a minimum of 2-3 days placement per week, throughout the academic year from early October 2024 until the end of April 2025.

I would appreciate it if you would consider my application in accommodating me to complete this Placement within your setting. I am available to commence my Placement in October 2024, pending approval from NCI Programme team.

The enclosed booklet provides details of the Placement: Observation and Reflection in ECEC Practice and there is a section with information for the placement setting and the role of the mentor.

I hope my details are of interest and I look forward to speaking with you in due course.

Yours sincerely

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