

Rewarding careers helping children to play, learn and grow



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Cymry Ifanc
Young Wales

www.cymru.gov.uk



Gwasanaethau Gwybodaeth i Deuluoedd
Family Information Services

You can go far helping children to play, learn and grow

A growing sector with opportunities for everyone

If you've been thinking about finding a job helping children to learn, we hope you find this booklet very useful. It's been produced to give you a real insight into the rewards and challenges you can expect when working with young children.

We cover all the different career options available to you, provide advice on the qualifications you'll need and explain what training is available to help you go further in your new career.

Today
we're flying
around the
world



But most importantly, this booklet will help you decide whether a job working with young children will suit the type of person you are. After all, you'll be expected to play a key role in the lives of the children under your wing, and help to lay a solid foundation for the development of each and every child in your care during these crucial early years.

It takes a very special kind of person, with skills and qualities to meet those responsibilities, but if you've got what it takes, then the opportunities are there to be grasped.



where will
your job
take you?

Do you get a buzz out of helping children to discover our world?

Today
we're going
to the garden
jungle



An enjoyable and immensely rewarding career awaits you

Are you good with children? Are they relaxed in your company? Do you find it easy to capture their imagination with activities and role-play?

If you do, then maybe you've found your true vocation in life. What could be more rewarding than spending your time at work in the company of young children, helping them to learn about themselves and the world around them?

But it's not just the immense job satisfaction that you will really appreciate. It's also the many daily challenges you'll face that will help to make it such an interesting and varied career.

Let's be realistic. Working with children can be very demanding – just ask any parent/carer – and there will be times when you need to deal with situations professionally and with compassion. That's when your caring nature and training takes over and that's when the job becomes so rewarding.

You will need a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check

This is another important issue to consider. Caring for children is a huge responsibility. Handing over your child to someone else to look after is the ultimate act of trust.

As a society we need to ensure that stringent regulations and quality controls are in place so that every child can learn in a safe, caring, and stimulating environment. For that very reason the law stipulates that the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) must run a check before you start your new job.

The same strict controls apply if you are thinking of starting up a new childcare business. You cannot operate before you are registered with Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).



where will
your job
take you?

The Independent Safeguarding Authority also has a stringent vetting and barring scheme, and works closely with the CRB to prevent unsuitable people working with children. Anyone on their barred list is banned by law from working in childcare.

For more information: Criminal Records Bureau: 0870 90 90 844 www.crb.gov.uk
Independent Safeguarding Authority: 0300 123 1111 www.isa-gov.org.uk

Top up your talents with training and go further in your job

Today we're going to Italy to cook pizzas

So, what skills do you need to work with children?

Well, let's deal first with the skills that you already have. Not the recognised qualifications like GCSEs, diplomas or degrees, but the skills that make you who you are. We're talking about your natural ability, your boundless energy and drive, your initiative, your communication skills, your creative flair and your imagination. All these qualities will stand you in good stead, especially when you build on your talents with formal training.



Make your job more fulfilling

Although not absolutely necessary in all working situations, having recognised qualifications has enormous career advantages. But don't be put off. There are plenty of opportunities to acquire these recognised qualifications.

Whether you've just left school, looking for a career change or returning to work after raising children, there are courses designed to let you learn at the pace you want to. You can train part-time, full-time, at work or at college. It's your choice.

But one thing's for certain: whether you are planning to get a full-time job, work a few hours a week, or set up on your own, you'll go further and enjoy the job even more if you are properly trained.

For more information on your training opportunities, see our list of contacts on page 18, or explore your 'Learning Choices' by logging onto www.careerswales.com/learningchoices or call The Learning and Careers Advice line on 0800 100 900.



where will
your job
take you?

**Careers
Advice**

Already in the early years sector? Improve your skills and aim higher in your career

Today
we're
going to
the moon



Are you trained to Level 2 or 3 in a recognised qualification?

We recognise that not everybody who reads this booklet will be new to the sector. Indeed, you may already have an enjoyable job helping children to play, learn and grow.

So what does all this information have to do with you? The answer is an awful lot. You may be aware that new legislation was introduced in April 2008, which means that all senior staff and those in charge of a group of children have to be trained to Level 3 or above, and 50% of all other people working in the sector require a minimum of a Level 2 qualification. People new to Childminding will have to complete the Unit One – Introduction to Childcare Practice (home-based) course. This can eventually lead to a Level 3 Diploma in Home-based Childcare.

A bright future for you and the children you care for

It's all part of a drive to build on the excellent work already being carried out by thousands of highly talented professionals in Wales every day.

We need to raise the profile of the sector and attract a new influx of highly skilled, highly motivated people who will value their worthwhile career and have the commitment, energy and enthusiasm required to be positive role models for our young children.

For those already working with children, this can only be good news. As the sector flourishes, you will have every opportunity to share in the success.

By focusing on your skills, you will be able to gain the new qualifications that help to maximise your expertise and experience, and open new doors.

It's time to make the most of your talents.



where will
your job
take you?

Training options

How do I learn?

If you're convinced you've found the career for you, then it's time to find the right course. You can either take the work based learning option, or you can attend an FE College or Adult Education Centre and train that way. Or you can train with any of the National Childcare organisations listed on page 18.

Work Based Learning

Apprenticeships give you the chance to train while you work, which means you can gain the expertise and qualifications you need without having to study full-time. As an Apprentice your working week will probably consist of a work placement for four days and a day at college or with a provider, where you will study the theory specific to your job.

FE Colleges and Adult Education Centres

You also have the chance to study a range of full-time and part-time courses at your local FE College or Adult Education Centre. Follow this learning route and you will also be given the opportunity to spend time in a real work setting, gaining vital experience. For details of where to go for more information regarding local courses and career opportunities, refer to the back of this booklet.

Family Information Service

Your local Family Information Service may also provide a range of short courses for early years and childcare workers. For more information please call 0300 123 7777.

Pointing you in the right direction

Once you have decided how you want to learn, it's time to decide what you need to learn, and this is where it can get a little confusing. So to help, we have provided, on the opposite page, a quick guide to the qualifications you could aim for, depending on your level of experience.

You'll also find more specific information relating to the qualifications needed for particular jobs on page 12 onwards.

But don't forget; expert, friendly advice is always on hand to help you make the right choices. There is a list of useful contacts to be found at the back of this booklet.

**Careers
Advice**

Which course is right for you?

Level 1 – Introductory Level

If you have little or no experience working with children, this is for you. You'll be given work placements to gain practical experience or be presented with the opportunity to train as you work in an apprenticeship role.

Level 2 – Certificate Level

This is the qualification you will need if you want to work under supervision as a classroom assistant, nursery assistant, playworker, cylch meithrin assistant, playgroup assistant or out of school playworker, for example.

Level 3 – Diploma Level

Gaining this qualification will allow you to work using your own initiative, planning, organising and supervising others. You could be a classroom assistant, nursery practitioner, or playgroup or cylch meithrin leader, for instance.

Level 4 – Management Level

This is for experienced practitioners carrying out managerial tasks. Reach this skill level to improve your skills as a manager of an integrated centre, nursery, cylch meithrin or playgroup.

Level 5 – Foundation Degree and above

This is the qualification that will help you gain the skills you need to manage at a strategic level. You could be running an integrated children's centre or be leading a local authority play department and managing at a strategic level.

Working through the medium of Welsh

If you chose to work in a Welsh-medium, bilingual school or cylch meithrin setting there are two training programmes available. Cam wrth Gam can help you gain up to a Level 3 qualification and can also help you develop your Welsh language skills. Geiriau Bach can help you gain a Level 4 qualification. FE colleges will also sometimes offer early years qualifications through the medium of Welsh.

For a full list of the accepted qualifications for the early years and childcare workforce please visit www.ccwales.org.uk

Career options

Six ways you can help children to play, learn and grow

1. Day Nurseries

What's the job all about?

Working in a nursery can be a very satisfying job. You will need endless energy and have a true empathy with the needs of children. If you have those attributes, the rewards are plentiful as you guide the children in your care through one of the most important stages of their development.

Your role would include helping to plan and organise educational and play activities and taking care of children's personal needs during meal times and rest periods. As you progress, you could become a Nursery Practitioner responsible for planning and organising activities and eventually move into management, overseeing finance, parent liaison and recruitment.

What are the opportunities for you?

There are all kinds of day nurseries in Wales. Some are run by voluntary or community groups, some by employers and local authorities, while others are privately run. Nurseries tend to provide full daycare, education and play for children up to five-years-old, from eight in the morning till six at night.

Working in a nursery presents lots of opportunities for you – whether you're looking for part-time employment or a full-time career – and with more experience and qualifications you can move into supervisory and management positions.

What qualifications will you need?

At least 80% of non-supervisory staff must hold at least a Level 2 qualification, with half of these either with a Level 3 or working towards it. To progress to a manager's post, you must have a Level 3 qualification and have a minimum of 2 years' experience. Many nurseries may be happy to take on Nursery Assistants with no qualifications, and are especially keen to attract mature staff with experience of caring for their own children. However, most employers will expect a commitment from you to train to a Level 2 qualification, once they take you on.

2. Pre school Playgroups and Cylchoedd Meithrin

What's the job all about?

Playgroups and Cylchoedd Meithrin sessions cater for children aged 2-5, generally for 2-3 hours a day. Cylchoedd Meithrin provide children with the chance to learn and develop from high quality play experiences through the medium of Welsh. Both Playgroups and Cylchoedd Meithrin can be run privately or by a committee of local parents/carers. They often meet in local communities, schools or purpose built nurseries.

They recognise that children learn through play and active involvement, so your role as an Assistant will be to help the Leader deliver a varied programme of creative and imaginative activities that enhance the learning potential of every child.

What are the opportunities for you?

Being in the company of young children is enjoyable, fun and inspiring. As a Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin Assistant you will have opportunities to develop important caring, communication and creative skills with the children. There will also be opportunities to progress to become a Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin Leader where you'll be responsible for supervising

and supporting the staff and volunteers. You will also be expected to liaise with parents, who are highly valued for the contribution they can make and who are encouraged to get actively involved.

What qualifications will you need?

In each Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin, at least half the assistants need to be qualified to Level 2, so having suitable qualifications is an obvious advantage.

If you wish to work towards being a Playgroup or Cylch Meithrin Leader, then you will need to be qualified to a Level 3 or higher qualification in Early Years. You will also need to have had at least two years childcare experience under your belt and be qualified in First Aid.

Cylch Meithrin Leaders also need to be fluent in Welsh.



Career options

3. Registered Childminders

Six ways you can help children to play, learn and grow

What's the job all about?

Being a registered childminder gives you the chance to work in your own home caring for other people's children, from little babies right through to teenagers.

As a childminder you will only care for a small group of children at any one time. This means you'll get to know the children you care for really well and play an important part in their life. You'll be helping children develop with lots of activities, having fun with them as they play and sharing their successes as they grow.

On a typical day you might take the children on the school run; visit the park on the way home; paint pictures with the toddlers while the baby is napping; enjoy an after-school snack and read a story while waiting for the children's parents.

What are the opportunities for you?

Job satisfaction is something that you can't put a price on. You will have the pleasure of bringing up children in your own home whilst also bringing in a full-time wage. Many childminders are also parents/carers of young children themselves and look after other children at the same time. There is lots of support and advice available to get you started and

you may be eligible for some funding to help set up your business.

What qualifications will you need?

Introduction to Childcare Practice (Home-based) course, which is tailored to childcarers who care for children in a family home, rather than a centre, such as nursery. You will also need to gain, and maintain, a first-aid certificate which covers first-aid for children and young babies, as well as completing a food hygiene course.

Once you've started work as a childminder, you will get the chance to do more training; from one-off sessions on topics such as messy play to formal qualifications such as the Diploma in Home-based Childcare. If you would like to care for children under the age of eight, you will need to register with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales and show how you meet national standards for childminding. You can also join the National Childminding Association (NCMA), childminding's professional association. You'll get regular updates on important childminding issues to keep you informed, as well as money off NCMA's paperwork, such as contracts and attendance registers, which can help the business side of your new career run smoothly.

4. Out of school Clubs

What's the job all about?

After School Clubs, Breakfast Clubs and Holiday Clubs are aimed at offering play care for children aged from 3-14 years. Many of these clubs take place in the local school, while others are based in Village Halls, Community Centres or Day Nurseries. As a Club Playworker in one of these clubs, you will be expected to help the Senior Playworker organise fun activities for the children, ranging from arts and crafts, games and physical play.

Many clubs will have children of all ages, from toddlers to teenagers, which means you will need to be very adept at meeting a wide range of needs. One moment you could be helping with homework, the next playing with building blocks with a three year-old.

What are the opportunities for you?

The aim of the club organiser is to set up a relaxed, informal setting where children can 'chill-out' and have the chance to play and be in the company of their peers. Helping to create such environments and playing your part in providing a fun, safe, friendly club can be extremely satisfying. There are many of these clubs running in Wales, so there could be plenty of

job opportunities, especially as the organisation responsible for supporting Out of School Clubs in Wales – Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs – is very active in helping new clubs get off the ground.

What qualifications will you need?

Out of School Clubs must run a 1:8 staffing ratio for the clubs and the staff must have a minimum Level 2 qualification. Clubs for children under 8 years old must be registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in Playwork. Clubs with children between 8 and 14 years do not need to be registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales. It is recommended that you hold a First Aid and Food Hygiene certificate and have undergone child protection training. If you want to eventually become a Senior Playworker, you will need to be qualified to at least a Level 3 qualification in Playwork. New Out of School Clubs also have to be registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales if they operate for more than two hours a day.



Career options

5. Classroom Assistant

Six ways you can help children to play, learn and grow

What's the job all about?

As a Classroom Assistant, you'll support the teacher with their everyday work. You will work as part of a team planning the children's learning activities, providing a stimulating environment and supporting the teacher, both indoors and outdoors.

A typical day could include taking part in reading and number sessions, helping with arts, crafts and play activities and caring for children who are upset or who have had an accident. If you love children, you'll love this job.

What are the opportunities for you?

Most schools employ full-time Classroom Assistants. There are opportunities for you to work within a nursery school helping children from 3-5, an infant school with children from 3-7 or in a Primary School for children aged from 3 right through to 11-years-old.

Many schools also welcome volunteers to come in to provide extra one-to-one help, for instance with reading and number work, and this can be a great way to gain invaluable experience. Another big benefit is that you'll only work during school terms,

so if you're a parent/career you can have a job that fits around school holidays.

What qualifications will you need?

You can become a Classroom Assistant without any recognised qualifications other than your GCSEs, especially if you can offer plenty of real-life experience looking after children as a parent/carer or as a volunteer, for example.

However, once you start you'll probably undergo induction training and be encouraged to study up to a Level 2 qualification. Gain a Level 3 qualification and you could progress and become a Higher Level Teaching Assistant, which allows you to take on more responsibility and command a higher salary.

The more you learn, the more you'll earn.



6. Playwork

What's the job all about?

All round Wales, play projects have been set up to give children the freedom to play outdoors in a stimulating environment designed to offer a wide variety of choice where children can invent and extend their own play.

Unfortunately, today's society has restricted children's opportunity to spend time together outside in adult-free environments, but this is where you can make a difference in playwork.

Your role will be to facilitate children's play, working with them to create and manage play environments where, through their own natural exploration, they learn about themselves, each other and the world around them. You could expect to be with children toasting marshmallows around the fire, building dens or digging to China. You may be working in after school clubs, open access playschemes, adventure playgrounds, mobile play provision, as a playranger in open public spaces, or anywhere that children may play.

What are the opportunities for you?

Thankfully, society is becoming more enlightened regarding the importance of play in helping young children to develop their social and learning skills.

It is now firmly on the political agenda, and that is presenting more and more opportunities to work in this interesting and worthwhile field.

Vacancies arise regularly for Playworkers throughout Wales, and there will be plenty of chances to progress into more senior Playworker positions, providing you gain the required qualifications.

What qualifications will you need?

To be a Playworker, you will need to have attained at least a Level 2 or 3 qualification in Playwork, be familiar with childcare legislation and have previous experience of working with children. A variety of additional learning may be required, from First Aid and Food Hygiene to Chainsaw Certificates.

But as well as formal training, your soft skills, such as communication, will be equally important. You will work in an environment where mutual respect is vital and where you will need to support children emotionally and practically.

You will need to be prepared for a challenge, to work in all weathers and to offer care and consideration.



Family Information Services (FIS)

The Family Information Service is a free information service to help you find the job you want, and the training you need, for a rewarding career in childcare.

Whatever you are looking for in a career in childcare, your local FIS can help – whether you want more information on the types of jobs available or advice on the vacancies in your area, whether you are new to childcare and need advice on training, or whether you already work with children and want to upskill, or change jobs.

You can either phone or visit your local Family Information Service to talk to people who will be delighted to offer you some expert careers advice and set you on your way to a rewarding career in childcare.

There is a Family Information Service in every local authority. Call 0300 123 7777 to find your nearest one. Alternatively, go to the 'Useful Contacts' section of www.PlayLearnGrowWales.gov.uk.



*Formerly known as Children's Information Services (CIS)

Useful contacts



Careers and Business Advice

Flexible Support for Business

Flexible Support for Business is to help all businesses in Wales access the advice and support they need to start, grow and prosper in a strong and enterprising Welsh economy. Whether you are already in business or planning to start an enterprise, we will do our best to find you a tailored package of support to help you fulfil your business growth ambitions.

www.FS4B.Wales.gov.uk

03000 6 03000

Careers Wales Association

Provides free careers information, advice and guidance. A careers adviser can discuss possible education, training and employment routes with you.

www.careerswales.com

0800 100 900

Mylocalcollege.com

www.mylocalcollege.com is the quickest way to find your local Further Education College.

It will help you to find lots of information about college courses, wherever you live in Wales.

Jobcentre Plus

Jobcentre Plus is an executive agency of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It aims to help more people into paid work, supports employers to fill their vacancies and gives people of working age the support they are entitled to if they cannot work.

www.direct.gov.uk

0845 6043719 (English) or 0845 604 4248 (Welsh)

Tax credits

A link to the HM Revenue and Customs Tax Credit site which explains tax credits and has a calculator to help you work out your entitlement.

www.hmrc.gov.uk/menus/credits

0845 300 3900

Job Related Advice

Classroom Assistant Contact

Contact your Local Education Authority for more information or visit www.playlearnrowwales.gov.uk

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs

Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs promotes and supports quality, affordable accessible out of school childcare clubs for children 3 to 14 years.

www.clybiauplantcymru.org
029 2074 1000 (Head Office)

Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin

Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin provides and supports the education, care and development of children under 5 years of age and provides information, resources, and support to parents/carers and early years settings through the medium of Welsh.

www.mym.co.uk 01970 639 639

National Childminding Association

The National Childminding Association is a national charity and membership organisation that speaks on behalf of registered childminders in England and Wales. NCMA promotes quality registered childminding so that children, families and communities can benefit from the best in home based childcare and education. NCMA offers information, training and advice to members, as well as working directly with childminders through its local offices.

www.ncma.org.uk
0845 880 0044 (Head Office)
0845 880 1299 (Wales Regional Office)

National Day Nurseries Association

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) is the membership association for day nurseries, providing information, training and support to nurseries across Wales.

www.ndna.org.uk
01824 707 823 (Wales office)
0870 774 4244 (Head Office)

Nestor Primecare Services Ltd Childcare Approval Scheme Wales

The Childcare Approval Scheme (CAS) is a list of approved carers working in family homes across Wales. Registering as a home child carer will verify to whoever uses your services that you have suitable childcare qualifications and training and by using an approved carer, an employer may be able to access financial support through the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit or through employer supported childcare.

www.childcareapprovalschemewales.co.uk

0844 736 0260

Play Wales

Play Wales promotes high quality play provision for all children, supporting all aspects of staffed playwork, playground development, playwork education and training.

www.playwales.org.uk 029 2048 6050

Wales Pre-school Providers Association

The Wales Pre-school Providers Association provides information, training, resources and support to parents/carers and early years settings.

www.walesppa.org 02920 451242

Supporting Associations

Cam wrth Gam

Cam wrth Gam is a registered sub-company of Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin and delivers training throughout Wales offering qualifications at Levels 2 and 3 through the medium of Welsh.

www.mym.co.uk 01970 639 639

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate (CSSIW) makes sure that care settings meet the standards that children have a right to expect. It is an operationally independent part of the Welsh Assembly Government.

www.cssiw.org.uk www.aggcc.org.uk

01443 848 450

Care Council for Wales

Aims to ensure that children and adults receiving social care services can rely on a workforce that is properly trained, appropriately qualified and effectively regulated.

www.ccwales.org.uk

Cardiff Office 029 2022 6257

St Asaph Office 01745 586 850

Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)

Contact to apply for your CRB check.

www.crb.gov.uk 0870 90 90 844

Independent Safeguarding Authority

To register contact

www.isa.gov.org.uk 0300 123 1111

Geiriau Bach

Geiriau Bach offer courses designed for early years' workers who either speak no Welsh at all or lack confidence in using the little they have.

www.drindod.ac.uk/geiriaubach 01267 676 603

SkillsActive

SkillsActive works across Wales leading the development of playwork education and training for all those working with children and young people.

www.skillsactive.com 029 2064 4526

Welsh Local Government Association

Represents the 22 Local Authorities in Wales. The three Fire Authorities, three National Park Authorities and the four Police Authorities are associate members.

www.wlga.gov.uk 029 2046 8600



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Family Information Services

CMK-22-07-459 19096 Choosing Childcare Booklets 978 0 7504 5572 5