

Career in childcare guide

Early Years and Childcare Service

Start your career in early years and playwork

The guide to help you find the right childcare career



For more information visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyeycs

Call 01372 833900 or email
workforcedevelopment@surreycc.gov.uk

In this guide you will find information on:

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Thinking about working with children? It can be a challenging job but also hugely varied, rewarding and fun so we think you've made a fantastic choice!

Here at Surrey Early Years and Childcare Service, we can support you at every stage of your career with free advice and funded training. It doesn't matter where you're starting from, there's a way into early years or playwork for you.

What is early years and playwork?

Early years involves working with children from 0-5 years old in places like day nurseries, pre-schools, private nursery schools, maintained and independent schools or as a registered childminder or home childcarer (nanny).

Playwork involves looking after children between the ages of 4 and 16 in playwork settings, also known as out of school clubs, before and after school and during the school holidays.

How to get started in your new career

A great first step is to get some practical experience by volunteering. It'll give you a chance to try out different roles, will look great on your CV and may make you eligible for some funding towards a qualification.

If you're ready to do some formal training, you can find out about the courses and qualifications that are available and if you are be eligible for funding.

If you want some advice around interview skills or writing a CV, visit the National Careers Service at www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk. If you're aged between 13 and 18 years old they can also provide you with information about getting your first job.

If you've got a question at any stage, why not get in touch with our Workforce Development Team by email workforcedevelopment@surreycc.gov.uk, or call 01372 833900. Alternatively come along and meet the team at one of our careers events.

Skills and Qualities

In order to work with children, you'll need the following skills and personal qualities:

- patience
- empathy
- respect
- flexibility
- caring
- genuine
- committed
- active listener
- transparent and trustworthy
- reliable
- responsible
- a good sense of humour
- stamina
- motivation
- ability to work as a team
- observant
- inclusive
- encouraging
- imaginative
- professional.

Here are some of the duties you may be expected to carry out:

- wash dishes and clean up rooms
- administer First Aid
- listen to the children and young people
- change dirty nappies and wipe noses
- manage a budget
- carry out safety checks
- let children play freely
- plan sessions
- play with children
- record children's development
- let children play freely
- talk to parents
- work with children with disabilities
- maintain records
- prepare food
- read stories.

Safeguarding

Anyone who works or volunteers with children and young people must have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS).

It is the responsibility of an employer to carry out checks to make sure the people they employ are suitable to look after or be in regular contact with children. Employers must get an enhanced DBS check for all the staff and volunteers that work directly with children or who have unsupervised access to children. DBS checks are free for volunteers.

Job roles in early years and playwork

There are many different places to work in early years and playwork. The following information gives you an idea of the types of settings and the kind of salary you can expect to receive:

- day nursery
- Sure Start Children's Centre
- pre-schools and playgroups
- playwork (out of school)
- crèche
- registered childminder
- registered home childcarer (nanny).

Salary information

The figures we have included below are just a guide for full-time roles and have been taken from the [National Careers Service](http://www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/pages/home.aspx) (www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/pages/home.aspx) Pay scales are set locally rather than nationally and individual employers set their own salaries. Like other professions, the more experience and training you have, the more you can progress and increase your pay.

Day nursery

Take a role in a day nursery and you'll be helping children from birth to five years old develop and learn. You could work in a privately owned nursery or in a Sure Start Children's Centre. They are generally open from 8am - 6pm all year round so your working hours can be flexible and could include shifts to cover early starts and late finishes to meet the needs of parents.

Job roles in a day nursery may include:

- nursery assistant
- nursery nurse
- early years educator
- room leader
- senior room leader

- deputy nursery manager
- nursery manager
- day nursery owner.

The starting salary for a junior or trainee is between £10,000 and £12,000 pa and up to £30,000 pa for a manager.

Sure Start Children's Centre

Sure Start Children's Centres support children under five years old and their families. Not all children's centres offer child care but they all run services to meet their community's needs such as parenting support, health information and play and learn sessions for parents and their children.

Children's centres also work with other agencies, for example health visitors may run baby clinics there and Jobcentre Plus may come in to offer parents advice on employment and training. They are usually open all year round from 8am - 6pm.

Job roles at a Children's Centre may include:

- family outreach worker
- playworker
- nursery assistant
- nursery nurse
- early years educator
- room leader
- senior room leader
- nursery manager
- children's centre coordinator
- children's centre manager
- children's centre information and advice officer.

The starting salary for a junior or trainee is between £10,000 and £12,000 pa and up to £30,000 pa for a manager.

Pre-schools and playgroups

Working in a pre-school or playgroup means you'll be caring and educating children aged between two and five years old. Pre-schools and playgroups are typically open for sessions in the morning and/or afternoon and some have lunch clubs so there are often opportunities to work full-time, part-time or during term-time. They are often organised by community or voluntary groups and run from community centres, church halls or schools.

Job roles in a pre-school or playgroup may include:

- pre-school assistant
- early years educator
- supervisor/ leader/ manager.

Starting salary for a junior or trainee is between £10,000 and £12,000 pa and up to £30,000 pa for a manager.

Playwork (out of school)

Playwork (out of school) care can include breakfast clubs, after school clubs, mobile play buses, adventure playgrounds and holiday play schemes. So you could be working in a school, community centre or leisure centre.

Your role as a playworker will be varied and usually very active. You can work with children and young people aged between 4 and 16 years old. Most out of school care is in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays so there are opportunities to work full or part-time.

Job roles in a playwork setting may include:

- playwork assistant
- playworker
- senior playworker
- playwork supervisor
- playwork manager.

Playworkers can earn between £12,000 and £20,000 pa.

Crèche

A crèche gives children a safe place to play while their parents are doing something else - like a sport or a training course. You can work in permanent crèches at gyms and shopping centres or you could join a company that runs mobile or temporary crèches at events like weddings and work functions. Sessions normally last one or two hours (but often there is more than one session a day) and the age of children can vary.

Starting salary for a junior or trainee is between £10,000 and £12,000 pa and up to £30,000 pa for a manager.

Registered childminder

Become a registered childminder and you'll be self-employed and running your own business. You'll work in your own home and you can be flexible with your working hours. You can set your own fees and how much you earn will depend on how many children you are registered to look after and the number of hours you work.

During the day you can look after children under five years old and then after school or during the school holidays you can work with older children. There are even opportunities to offer weekend, evening or overnight care if you want.

The Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY) membership survey 2012 reported that the average fee childminders charged in the south east was £4.42 and in Greater London it was £5.42 an hour for each child (across England and Wales the average was £4.26).

Registered home childcarer (nanny)

As a nanny you'll work in your employer's home and look after their children. You will be responsible for all aspects of childcare but your duties will vary depending on the number and ages of the children in your care. You will often look after babies and very young children. Your hours may be longer than a standard working week depending on the parents needs. You might live with your employer and their family or have a day only position. Nannies can earn between £12,000 and £28,000 pa.

To find out how to become a registered childminder or nanny click [here](#), visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyeycs, email childmindingenquiries@surreycc.gov.uk or call 01372 833833 and ask to talk to the Home-based Childcare Advisory Team.

Qualifications in playwork early education and childcare

There are full and part-time courses, college or workplace learning and e-learning packages so you'll be able to find something that suits you. First, you need to look at what type and what level of qualification you wish to undertake: -

- Level 2 qualifications
- Level 3 qualifications
- Foundation degrees (level 4/5)
- Level 6 qualifications
- Level 7 qualifications
- Early Years Teacher
- Apprenticeships.

Level 2 qualifications

Level 2 qualifications allow you to work in early years, childcare and playwork settings under supervision. Getting a qualification at level 2 is an excellent preparation for doing a level 3 qualification. However, you do not need to complete a level 2 qualification before progressing onto level 3.

Level 3 qualifications

Level 3 qualifications are for those who work unsupervised, planning and organising their own work and perhaps supervising others. You might be working as a practitioner in an early years or playwork setting, or be a childminder working in your own home.

Foundation degrees (level 4/5)

Foundation degrees are higher education qualifications that combine academic study with work based learning. The first year of a foundation degree is at level 4, whilst the second year and the final qualification are recognised as level 5. Some foundation degrees may require three years of study. Foundation degrees provide a career development route for practitioners who want to progress to senior positions within early years, childcare and playwork settings.

Level 6 qualifications

Level 6 qualifications are higher education, graduate qualifications that demonstrate high level specialist knowledge. A Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree is recognised at a level 6 qualification, as is Early Years Teacher (formerly Early Years Professional Status), which is recognised as a postgraduate qualification because you need a degree. Learning at this level involves a high level of professional knowledge, and is appropriate for practitioners in senior positions with strategic policy roles and those working towards Early Years Teacher. If you have completed a foundation degree you may be able to do a one year top up to a BA (honours).

Level 7 qualifications

Level 7 qualifications are higher education, postgraduate qualifications that demonstrate highly developed and complex levels of knowledge. A Masters (MA) degree is recognised as a level 7 qualification. Learning at this level involves a high level specialist, professional knowledge, and is appropriate for senior strategic leaders and those responsible for commissioning integrated services at a regional level.

Early Years Teacher Status - EYTS (formerly Early Years Professional Status)

Early Years Teacher Status or EYTS (formerly Early Years Professional Status or EYPS) is the graduate level professional accreditation programme for leading practitioners in the early years sector. Early years teachers will work with babies and young children (0-5) and will also support and lead staff who work with babies and young children

EYTS is open to all, whether you've got experience in early years, you're a new graduate or you're looking for a career change. It is designed to allow you to build on your experience and develop new skills. You'll gain the confidence and abilities you need to lead practice in your workplace, inspire your colleagues and give children the best start in life.

There are four early years initial teacher training routes or pathways to gaining EYTS including a pathway for people who have an unrelated degree. The right route will depend on your experience and qualification levels. The training provider that you choose will be able to help you decide which route is the right one for you.

Before starting you will also need:

- a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check
- maths, English and science GCSEs grade A-C
- the right to work and study in the UK for at least the time you are training
- to be able to read effectively and communicate clearly and accurately in English.

All trainees must hold a degree awarded by a United Kingdom higher education institution (or recognised overseas equivalent) before assessment for Early Years Teacher Status is complete.

Take a look at the careers grid at the back of this booklet for further information about what level of qualifications are needed for specific job roles.

To find out who you can train with click [here](#) or visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyeycs. You can also contact the Workforce Development Team on 01372 833900 or email workforcedevelopment@surreycc.gov.uk

Volunteering opportunities in playwork early education and childcare



Would you like to get experience working with children, for example in a nursery, pre-school, children's centre or after-school club? Our **volunteer placement scheme** lists settings in Surrey who are happy to take volunteers. To find out where you can volunteer click [here](#) or visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyeycs and search for Volunteering Opportunities. You can also contact the Workforce Development Team on 01372 833900 or email workforcedevelopment@surreycc.gov.uk

Funding Opportunities

Workforce Development Fund

Surrey Early Years and Childcare Service provide funding called the Workforce Development Fund to eligible practitioners who are already working in playwork early education and childcare. This funding can help towards the cost of full and relevant early years or playwork qualifications.

To find out more and to see if you are eligible to apply click [here](#) or visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyeycs and search for workforce development fund. You can also contact the Workforce Development Team on 01372 833900 or email workforcedevelopment@surreycc.gov.uk

Volunteer Bursary

Do you volunteer in a day nursery, pre-school, children's centre, holiday playscheme or an after school club? If yes, then this could be your chance to get a bursary for a level 2 or 3 qualification in the Children and Young People's Workforce or Playwork.

Surrey's Early Years and Childcare Service offer bursaries to help volunteers working with children and young people to become qualified. Bursaries are offered on a first come first serve basis, so hurry up and apply for yours soon!

Our bursaries offer up to 80% of the cost of your qualification (up to a maximum of £1,000 for a level 2 qualification and up to a maximum of £2,000 for a level 3 qualification).

To find out more and to see if you are eligible to apply click [here](#) or visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyeycs and search for Volunteer Bursary. You can also contact the Workforce Development Team on 01372 833900 or email workforcedevelopment@surreycc.gov.uk

Student finance

If you are thinking about entering higher education then contact student finance. They will be able to tell you if you are eligible for funding to help cover the cost of your course and to support you whilst you are studying. Support includes:

- tuition fee loan to cover tuition fees
- maintenance loan for living costs such as rent (full-time students)
- maintenance grants (full-time students).

To find out more visit <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance/overview>

24+ Advanced Learning Loans

If you are starting a course on or after the 1 August 2013 you may qualify for a 24+ Advanced Learning Loan. These loans can help you pay the tuition fees charged by colleges and training providers. Most learners aged 24 and over, studying at level 3 and above, will qualify for these new loans. It's easy to apply, your household income isn't taken into account and there's no credit check. You won't have to pay anything back until your income is over £21,000 a year.

To find out more visit <https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learning-loans/overview>

You may also want to visit our Other Sources of Funding for Professional Development webpage for further information by clicking [here](#) or visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyeycs and search 'other sources of funding for professional development.'

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a way of gaining qualifications and workplace experience. As an employee, you can earn as you learn and you gain practical skills from the workplace.

For more information about apprenticeships visit the National Apprenticeship Service website www.apprenticeships.org.uk

Men in playwork early education and childcare (MiPEC)



Here at Surrey Early Years and Childcare Service we support everyone who's interested in working with children.

We offer support for men who work with children in Surrey. Whether you're just starting out or looking to progress your career, whatever you want to know, our dedicated team can help. Email workforcedevelopment@surreycc.gov.uk or call 01372 833900.

We can also put you in touch with other men who are already doing the job to help you get a flavour of what it's like. Take a look at our MiPEC films [here](#) or visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyeycs and search for MiPEC.

Careers events – working with children and young people

Why not come along to one of our career events and chat to some of our experts about your options.

Free career in childcare information sessions

These sessions are available to anyone who wants to find out more about working with children and young people. You can find out what type of person you need to be, what skills you need to hold, the types of settings you can work in and how to get started. You will also meet a member of our team who will tell you what support is available.

Our next session is -Saturday 16 November at Epsom Downs Children's Centre, St Leonards Rd, Epsom Downs, Surrey KT18 5RJ from 10am-12pm with a tour of the Children's Centre from 12-12.30pm.

To book your free place click [here](#).

Working with Children Careers Fair

Our last careers fair was a real success! Around 500 people joined 40 stallholders (and about 300 balloons!) to find out about training, funding and career opportunities.

When we asked attendees what they thought about the day, they told us they enjoyed the variety of information stands and welcomed the chance to have their questions about careers and training answered.

One visitor said "Everyone was really friendly and it was good to talk to them face to face to get relevant information". Another said "It was well organised with very supportive people". On the workshops, a visitor said "I loved the delivery style and the fact that the speaker spoke about having worked with children himself".

Our next careers fair is - **Saturday 8 March at Leatherhead Leisure Centre**

If you're interested in attending, why not [register now](#) and we will send you more details nearer the time.

Other job roles working with children

There are many roles in different sectors that involve working with children and young people that you might not have come across. For example you could work in education, social care, health or youth work as well as working in early years and playwork.

Check out the list below to see just some of the job roles available and click on the job titles to find out more about each one (you will be directed to our web pages). If you are reading a paper version of this booklet, visit www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyeycs

Childcare inspector

Childcare inspectors carry out Ofsted's regulatory functions with regard to childminders, full day care, out of school care and crèches. The role involves a substantial amount of time spent with childcare providers.

Community nursery nurse

Nursery nurses work with children from birth to eight years in a number of different settings including day nurseries, schools, GP centres and children's centres.

Education welfare officer

Education welfare officers deal with young people who may be experiencing problems with absence or irregular attendance from school. Absences are investigated and initiatives developed to encourage and promote regular attendance.

Family support worker

Family support workers provide an outreach support service to children and families who live within the local community and work jointly with other services to promote positive outcomes for children.

Home Start volunteer

Home Start volunteers usually visit a parent in their home once a week for a couple of hours. How they help is really down to the needs of the family. Some might need a sympathetic ear, a shoulder to cry on or with practical help with activities like playing or reading stories.

Hospital play specialist

Hospital play specialists plan and supervise activities with children in hospital to help them express their feelings through play.

Portage worker

Portage workers provide a home teaching service for pre-school children (under five years) who have special educational needs. They also provide help and support for the children's parents/carers and can help them learn how to teach their children skills through a carefully planned and flexible programme. Read Michele's [day in the life of a senior portage teacher](#).

Social work assistant

Social work assistants work in a childcare team with children and families. They can contribute to making assessments of the needs of children and families.

Special educational needs coordinator

Every playwork, early education and childcare setting has to have a special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). As a SENCO you're responsible for coordinating the care of any children with special educational needs in your setting.

Speech and language therapist

Speech and language therapists work closely with children and adults who have various levels of speech, language and communication problems. They assess the client's needs and develop tailored treatment programmes to help the client improve as much as possible. They usually work closely with other professionals such as teachers, doctors, nurses, and occupational therapists. Read Barbara's [day in the life of a speech and language therapist](#).

Teacher - primary school

Teachers provide education and support to children in schools. Primary school teachers work with children aged between 3 and 11 years old and teach all of the subjects in the national curriculum.

Teacher - secondary school

Teachers provide education and support to children in schools. Secondary school teachers work with children aged between 11 and 18 years old. They specialise in teaching one or two subjects from the national curriculum.

Teaching or learning support assistant

Teaching assistants and learning support assistants work alongside the teacher in a classroom. Some are attached to a whole class, others may support one child or a small group of children with special educational needs.

To find out more about a career in a school visit <http://www.education.gov.uk/get-into-teaching>

Youth worker

Youth workers are involved with young people aged 10–25 in a wide variety of settings. They contribute to individual and group development in an information, support and advisory role.

Finding a job in playwork early education and childcare

Universal JobMatch Service

Universal JobMatch is a new free online service available to everyone looking for work.

You can use it by visiting www.gov.uk/jobsearch

Universal JobMatch makes looking for jobs easier and quicker. It helps you find jobs that are right for you, by matching your CV and skills to jobs posted on the service.

When you register online for your own Universal JobMatch account you will be able to.

- Search and apply for jobs at a time to suit you, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Create a CV or upload a CV you already have.
- Receive email alerts when new jobs that match your CV and skills are posted.
- Record all your job search activity in one place making it easier to discuss it with your Jobcentre Plus adviser.

Jobcentre Plus

You may want to visit your local Jobcentre Plus and speak to an adviser.

Surreyjobs.info

Surreyjobs.info lists more public sector jobs in Surrey than any other site. From here you can search for specific jobs or skills, learn about the range of employers or register to receive information on suitable jobs as they become available.

<http://www.surreyjobs.info/>

Children's Workforce Career Pathways

Induction Level (Early Years workshops)	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8
<p>Developing Practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage</p> <p>Playwork & The Wider Role</p> <p>Childminding Induction Programme</p>	<p>Certificate for the Children and Young People's Workforce</p> <p>Award/Certificate/Diploma in Playwork</p>	<p>Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce</p> <p>Diploma in Playwork</p> <p>*Award in Transition to Playwork (from Early Years)</p>	<p>Higher Professional Diploma in Early Years</p> <p>*Award & Certificate in Playwork</p>	<p>Early Years Foundation Degree</p> <p>Playwork Foundation Degree</p> <p>Diploma in Playwork</p>	<p>BA/BSC (Hons) Early Childhood Studies</p> <p>BA (Hons) Degree in Playwork</p> <p>Qualified Teacher Status</p> <p>Early Years Teacher (formerly Early Years Professional Status)</p>	<p>MA (Masters) Early Childhood Studies</p> <p>MA Playwork</p> <p>National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL)</p>	<p>PHD/Doctorate in Early Years</p>
<p>Jobs include:</p> <p>Nanny Home-based Childcarer</p> <p>Volunteer/new recruit in any Playwork, Early Education or Childcare Setting</p>	<p>Jobs include:</p> <p>Playworker/Out of school club assistant, pre-school assistant, crèche assistant, day nursery assistant, nanny</p>	<p>Jobs include:</p> <p>Playworker/Out of school club supervisor, pre-school supervisor, crèche supervisor, home-based childcarer, Children's centre outreach worker, Room leader</p>	<p>Jobs includes:</p> <p>Day nursery manager, Playwork/Out of school club manager, pre-school manager</p>	<p>Jobs include:</p> <p>Day nursery manager, Playworker/Out of school club manager, pre-school manager, local authority employee</p>	<p>Jobs Include:</p> <p>Children's Centre Manager, Early Years Professional Qualified Teacher, Early Years Inspector and Advisors</p>	<p>Jobs Include:</p> <p>Head of Children's Centres, Early Years Inspectors and Advisors</p>	<p>Jobs include:</p> <p>National Research Posts</p> <p>University Professor</p>

This table is not an exhaustive list of the courses available. Please contact the workforce development team for further advice on workforcedevelopment@surreycc.gov.uk or call 01372 833900

*Not full and relevant as defined by The National College for Teaching and Leadership

Disclaimer: Whilst we have made every effort to obtain up to date information, we are unable to accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information provided