



Yorkshire  
Apprenticeship  
Service



Sector  
Spotlight



Early Years

Yorkshire Learning Providers

[www.yorkshireapprenticeshipservice.co.uk](http://www.yorkshireapprenticeshipservice.co.uk)



The Early Years sector is vital for laying the foundation of children's development, from birth to the age of five. It's an essential, rewarding field, focused on nurturing young minds, fostering emotional and social growth, and preparing children for future learning. As society increasingly acknowledges the critical role of early childhood education, demand for skilled professionals continues to grow. Apprenticeships are proving to be an excellent route into this sector, offering a practical, hands-on approach to gaining qualifications while making a real difference in children's lives.





# Why Choose an Apprenticeship in the Early Years Sector?

## 1

**High Demand for Skilled Professionals:** Governments and educators worldwide recognize the significance of early childhood education in shaping a child's future. This recognition has led to an increased need for well-trained early years practitioners. The sector is constantly expanding, with nurseries, preschools, and childminders seeking qualified staff who can support young children's development.

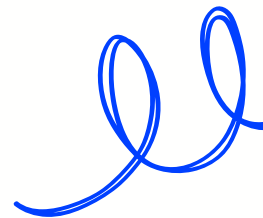
## 2

**Earn While You Learn:** One of the key advantages of apprenticeships is the ability to earn a wage while gaining qualifications. This makes apprenticeships in the Early Years sector an attractive option for school leavers or career changers who want to avoid student debt. Apprentices are employed by nurseries, preschools, or early learning centres, allowing them to gain real-world experience while studying for industry-recognised qualifications.

## 3

**Hands-On Experience:** Working directly with children in a real-world setting provides invaluable practical experience. Apprenticeships allow learners to apply theoretical knowledge from their coursework directly into practice, developing the skills and confidence needed to thrive in the sector. This immersive approach makes apprenticeships particularly beneficial in the Early Years field, where hands-on skills are crucial for effective learning and care.

# Key roles in the Sector



Apprenticeships in the Early Years sector can lead to various roles, depending on your interests and qualifications level. Some of the key roles include:

## *Early Years Practitioner (Level 2)*

As an Early Years Practitioner, you'll support the learning, play, and development of children in a variety of settings, such as nurseries or preschools. This role involves creating stimulating environments, observing children's progress, and working with parents and caregivers to ensure each child's individual needs are met.

## *Early Years Educator (Level 3)*

This advanced apprenticeship builds on the foundation of Level 2, with a greater focus on leadership and planning. Early Years Educators are responsible for developing age-appropriate learning activities, assessing children's development, and leading teams of practitioners. This role can lead to managerial positions and higher salaries within the sector.

## *Early Years Lead Practitioner (Level 5)*

For those seeking leadership roles, the Early Years Lead Practitioner apprenticeship is ideal. This role is focused on driving quality improvement in the care and education settings. Lead Practitioners oversee staff training and development, ensure compliance with regulations, and lead on curriculum design and implementation. They also work closely with parents and the community to enhance the overall quality of early years provision. Graduates of this apprenticeship often move into senior roles such as Nursery Manager or Early Years Coordinator.





# What to Expect During an Apprenticeship

An apprenticeship in the Early Years sector typically combines practical work in a nursery, preschool, or early education setting with academic study. Most programmes last between one and two years, depending on the level of the apprenticeship and previous experience. Apprentices are supported by a mentor and training provider who help ensure that their learning aligns with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.

## **Training and Assessment:**

Apprentices will study areas such as child development, safeguarding, health and safety, equality, and diversity. Assessments are conducted through coursework, observations, and practical evaluations by both the employer and training provider.

**Progression Opportunities:** Upon completing a Level 3 Early Years Educator Apprenticeship, apprentices can move on to higher-level qualifications, such as Foundation Degrees or BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education, which can open doors to leadership roles or even teaching positions in early years education.





# What real apprentices have to say...

*I loved every moment of my level 5 and would not change it for the world, it pushed me to lead my team in directions that I could not imagine doing before doing the level 5. I've become a more reflective and confident person in dealing with everyday tasks. Doing my level 5 qualification was made better by having other apprentices within the setting doing the same qualification. We were able to bounce ideas off each other, support each other as well as celebrate each others successes doing the qualification.*

*I want to thank my amazing TA who supported me in every direction with my level 5. No question was too small/silly or big. She eased my panics when everything felt like it got too much but equally she was there to celebrate mine and my nurseries milestones such as celebrating my promotion as well as celebrating our Ofsted results! I couldn't have asked for a better person to do my qualification alongside. – **Ashleigh-Marie, Level 5 Lead Practitioner apprentice with Realise***



# The Early Years sector provides an opportunity to play a pivotal role in children's lives and future success.



## *The Future of the Sector*

The Early Years sector is growing, with the UK government investing heavily in childcare funding, training, and expansion of early education programmes. With a focus on the professionalisation of the workforce, apprenticeships are becoming an increasingly popular route into the sector. This growth, coupled with an emphasis on quality and continuous professional development, means that career prospects are brighter than ever.

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