EXAMINERS' REPORTS

LEVEL 3 CHILDREN'S CARE, PLAY, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

UNIT 331: Investigating current issues in children's care, play, learning and development in Wales.

EXTENDED INVESTIGATION

JANUARY 2024

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CHILDREN'S CARE, PLAY, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Level 3

January 2024

Unit 331: Investigating current issues in children's care, play, learning and development in Wales.
EXTENDED INVESTIGATION

The extended investigation of current issues in children's care, play, learning and development in Wales requires learners to investigate a contemporary issue for the sector selecting one of the following topics to research:

Topic 1

Accessing formal and informal learning opportunities can promote learning and development for children 0-19 years.

Research the value of promoting learning through a range of learning environments.

Topic 2

There are a range of factors that can impact on children's development in the short and long term.

Research factors that promote positive health and well-being.

This unit requires candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a range of key concepts, values and issues that are relevant to children's care, play, learning and development settings and contexts, and apply knowledge and understanding to analyse evidence-based practices (their own and those of others) within children's care, play, learning and development. Candidates are required to research and evaluate theories and practice that relate to children's care, play, learning and development and reflect on how they can influence practice.

Candidates are required to undertake independent research using a range of resources to investigate your chosen topic and focus areas and will need to collect adequate and reliable evidence in preparation for the completion of the tasks

General Comments

Number of Entries:	**127**
English – On screen:	**120**
Welsh – On Screen:	**7**

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Task.1

Write an introduction to your extended investigation.

Outline:

- the main focus; areas you have chosen to research in relation to your selected topic
- why you have selected the topic and the focus areas; you may wish to refer to personal interest, taught content, sector engagement and work placement the methods of research that you have used
- sources used as part of investigating the topic and focus areas

This task requires a focused introduction to the whole extended investigation. Focus areas should be clearly identified and central to chosen topic. One or two focus area should be identified with reasons for choice which may be based on personal/practical experiences within a work setting or learning environment which have raised interest and awareness to prompt further investigation. The focus areas need to be limited to ensure that the specific focus areas can be considered and evaluated thoroughly through the varied method of research involved through the whole process. Stating the evidence of research and chosen reading should be clearly identified.

Overall task 1 provided a good structure and introduction to the whole investigation, there was clear focus noted in this series. The key focus areas are identified with good links, although some learners did not identify their topic areas within task 1. Candidates were generally able to relate well to their personal experiences and classroom based taught content to express a further interest and specific reasons for their topic choice, this demonstrated the beginning of well-informed and interesting areas of research. As part of task 1 there is a focus on specifying the sources to be used as part of the investigation by providing types of further reading and evidence to express the planning involved in preparation, although there was generally a lack of focus in relation to the type of research to be undertaken and generally only brief discussions were evident on the sources of research to be used as part of investigating the topic and focus areas. Leaners need to indicate to the sources gathered as part of the planning process during the independent research within task 1.

Task.2

Discuss how your selected topic and focus areas support children's care, play, learning and development.

Your evidence **must** include:

- how the focus areas support (positively or negatively) children's care, play learning and development
- a variety of viewpoints including your own and/or those of others
- appropriate examples from theory and/or practice to support your discussion
- how relevant theory/legislation or frameworks (as appropriate) have impacted on the topic and focus areas
- traceable references or quotes to support evidence

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Candidates are required to show an understanding of theory/frameworks or legislation in relation to focus areas and apply this to practice. Positive and/or negative points should be considered as well as their own viewpoint with consideration to the thoughts of others, this might include work placement and practice observed during work placement experience which can be used to support viewpoints. Include appropriate and relevant theory, legislation or frameworks which will support the discussion. Candidates need to include effective use of relevant referencing.

Topic 2 provided a good range of discussion points and were generally focused on the chosen topic area. Candidates often offered the development of different viewpoints and an opportunity for positive or negative reflection of their focus areas, and it was identified that some included practical experiences and were able to reflect on practice examples which were supportive to the discussion. Candidates generally remained focused on their topic areas, although some candidates were unfocused on their choices. This was evident as they did not identify clear positive or negative evidence of the value of promoting learning through a range of learning environments or identify factors that promote positive health and well-being, which the whole investigation would be based on. Candidates often provided a good range of discussions for this task and identified a range of evidence areas to be focused on, this was enhanced through clear research, and providing a range of evaluative viewpoints and examples from theory/legislation or frameworks to support the discussion. There were often sources used to support or evidence the discussion, although any form of appropriate referencing to the source was absent, which impacts on the marks that can be awarded.

Task.3

Evaluate how the values and principles that underpin your selected topic and chosen focus areas are used in practice to support children's care, play, learning and development.

Your evidence **could** include reference to:

- effective communication
- teamwork and collaborative working
- equality/inclusion/diversity
- freedom to participate
- children's rights being upheld
- professional skills or any other as appropriate.

This tasks focus is to evaluate a range of values and principles. Evaluation could be developed through knowledge gained as part of taught content and examples from practice. Candidates were able to consider a range of discussions relating to practice and included clear points to meet the list of evidence that could be included, such as the importance of effective communication, teamwork, and professional skills.

Candidates were able to provide a range of evaluative discussions on the values and principles of their selected topic and chosen focus areas which are used in practice to support children's care, play, learning and development. This task provides a firm opportunity to discuss a range of personal experiences and reflections of occurrences in professional practice while in work-based practice. Generally, candidates were able to link their discussions to the range of evidence areas provided and develop focused responses on the specific evidence areas when relating to this task as a whole. References to valid and

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reliable sources generally were poor and evidencing of sources used were lacking throughout this task.

Task.4

Consider how relevant theories, legislation or frameworks (as appropriate) have influenced practice in children's care, play, learning and development settings.

Evidence **must** include clear links to how the theories, legislation or frameworks have influenced practice in the settings you have experienced.

This task requires candidates to include links to the influences of relevant theory, legislation and or frameworks relating to Wales (as appropriate to the topic focus) could be considered; to show depth and breadth of understanding with reference to the strengths and weaknesses in practice. Evidence should be developed to make clear links to placement. Candidates must discuss how legislation, frameworks and or theoretical perspectives have influenced current practice and made changes to the practice in children's settings through providing an interpretation of their own experiences of the effects on professional practice.

Candidates generally provided good discussions of a range of relevant theories, legislation or frameworks relating to the value of promoting learning through a range of learning environments or identifying factors that promote positive health and well-being. This task would have been enhanced with greater expression of how theories, legislation or frameworks link to practice. Often incorrect theoretical references were used and the specified legislation/frameworks were not relevant to Wales. Progression into the higher mark boundaries could have been developed through evidence of firm knowledge and understanding shown in discussions of how relevant theories, legislation or frameworks have influenced in practice. Traceable evidence of information gained and clear references to sources needs to clearly listed in text and within the reference list, referencing was often not evident.

Task.5

Assess how having knowledge of the selected topic and related theories and legislation can be used to bring about change in children's care, play, learning and development provision in the 21st century in Wales.

Your evidence **must:**

- Demonstrate an awareness of new and developing practice approaches
- Refer to a range of settings within the sector
- Make judgements that link practice with theory (topic focus, related theories and legislation)
- Make suggestions for future change that could be adopted in practice to support children's care, play, learning and development.

Evidence **must** refer to research undertaken and **must** relate to experiences in practice.

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This task looks towards changes for the future based on the candidate's research and understanding of their chosen topic and focus areas. Candidates are required to consider the knowledge they have gained through the research of their topic and related focus areas and assess how the related theories and legislation can be used to bring about change in children's care, play, learning and development.

Candidates were generally able to successfully develop their discussions in this task and assess how having knowledge of the selected topic and related theories and legislation can be used to bring about change in children's care, play, learning and development provision in the 21st century in Wales. Candidates were able to demonstrate an awareness of new and developing practice approaches and develop positive discussions of future ideas for progression in practice. Candidates often were able to provide assessments of practice which demonstrated how changes to provision has been used to enhance or benefit the best need of children. Some evidence of discussions based new legislation, frameworks, or theoretical perspectives was shown, and the majority of candidates were able to express a good understanding of new and developing approaches. Candidates raised key discussions relating to new and possible changes in learning environments and the impact of these for future practice. Candidates also developed discussions relating to the value of how current schemes, initiatives and/or programmes can benefit children and promote positive health and well-being.

Task.6

Discuss how your research and learning will support your own individual practice moving forward.

Your evidence must include:

- a reflection of the value or benefits of what you have learnt as part of investigating this

  topic and focus areas

- what you would like to do, based on your findings, to improve your own future practice
- reference to any impact changes to your own practice could have on the practice of others

Candidates are required to reflect on their own personal learning of the topic and focus areas chosen. This reflection will bring together the varied discussions and viewpoints throughout the whole investigation. Candidates will be able to discuss the value or benefits of what they have learnt as part of investigating their chosen topic and focus areas.

Candidates can discuss what they would like to do based on their findings to enable a better understanding of practice with the aim of improving their own future practice.
Candidates will be required to refer to any impact changes will have to their own practice and the changes to the practice of others in the future.

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Candidates were able to provide firm links to their learning throughout the investigation and were able to link well to the criteria expectations of this task while methodically working through each evidence point consistently. Candidates were able to share their understanding of the investigation as a whole and express their opinion of the value and benefits of what they have learnt. This task provided a good reflection on the knowledge gained through each task and how completing an extended investigation on the topic area of their choice will help to support and inform their future practice. Candidates were able to provide an overview of their learning and the knowledge and understanding gained of their chosen topic, and make suggestions of how the investigation tasks will be of value to them as a professional in their future practice.

Recommendations to centres

Candidates generally expressed a good level of detail in their writing and provided varied responses showing knowledge and understanding, with some firm examples of learners linking theories and legislation well with their experiences in practice. Although, it has been noted by examiners that there is a lack of traceable references or traces used to support evidence, and a high identification of plagiarism was evident, which impacts on marks awarded. It was identified candidates' completion of tasks and focus areas were often based on centre guidance and class set task which do not provide opportunities for candidate's personal choice. The unit 331 investigation should be completed based on a candidate's individual choice and completion based on an individual candidate's research into a subject area of their choosing, allowing for the expression of opinion, viewpoints, personal consideration, and practical experiences to have the freedom of choice for their task and focus areas.

The examination marking process requires a set structure to ensure clarity and clear consideration of mark boundaries by the examination team and are key areas for future practice, teaching and learning relating to the structure of the investigation. The following key areas will support clarity and effectiveness of the extended investigation and enable candidates to access the range of marks available.

- Title and topic choice to be clearly indicated on first page of paper to ensure there is clarity of the task boundaries.
- Candidate centre number, candidate number and page numbers need to be placed on each page submitted.
- Tasks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 must be clearly labelled to identify task boundaries.
- Candidates cannot include links for further information, survey or questionnaires as they are outside the boundary of the mark scheme. Any further information gained from research must be discussed with the set tasks.
- Observe the evidence required including consideration of the emboldened '**must** include or **could** include' to ensure good coverage of the mark scheme
- Discussions of laws, legislation and frameworks must relate to Wales and be referenced appropriately.
- Reference lists should be provided at the end of the whole investigation.
- The Harvard referencing style is the appropriate choice for referencing.
- Centres should allow for individuality in the investigation completion.
- Word count stated clearly excluding reference and bibliography list.
- Word count should not exceed 5500, tasks over this allowance will not be marked.
- The topic focus area is central to their whole investigation. The assessment paper is marked as a whole and must link to topic choice throughout each task.

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- Presenting material copied directly from books or other sources without acknowledgment will be left unmarked.
- Candidates need to avoid the use of tables and bullet points.
- Proformas should be avoided, the unit 331 examination paper is the main source of guidance for successful completion.
- Word documents are required to be uploaded by centres rather than pdf documents.
- Candidates should only take on areas of discussion that they are able to discuss effectively as an individual choice rather that a centre choice.
- Accurate completion of specified areas on time sheets
- Evidence of theory to link to content learned in unit 330

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