



National
Qualifications
2026

2026 Childcare and Development

Higher

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

These marking instructions have been prepared by examination teams for use by Qualifications Scotland appointed markers when marking external course assessments.

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General marking principles for Higher Childcare and Development

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the specific marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

- (a) Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.
- (b) If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or specific marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- (c) We use the term 'or any other valid response' to allow for the possible variation in candidate responses. Award marks according to the accuracy and relevance of candidates' responses. The skill of using appropriate terminology is reflected in exemplar responses. However, at this level candidates may be awarded marks where the answer is accurate but expressed in their own words.
- (d) For **identify/name/give/what is/what are** questions, candidates must recall key points of knowledge or give examples. The number of marks available for these questions reflect the number of points the candidate needs to make. For example, if **1 mark** is available the candidate needs to give one correct key point. If **3 marks** are available, the candidate needs to make three correct key points.
- (e) For **describe** questions, candidates must apply their knowledge and understanding to make a point and then develop this point by giving further information. For example, if **2 marks** are available then award **1 mark** for making the main point and a further mark for developing the point by giving additional or related information.
- (f) For **explain/use/in what way** questions, candidates must apply their knowledge and understanding of childcare and development to give further information about the meaning of something, relate cause and effect and/or make relationships between things clear. This may include explaining features of a theory, or explaining behaviour using approaches, concepts or theories, or relating these to a childcare context. For example, if **3 marks** are available for an explain question, award **1 mark** for making a key point of explanation and a further mark for each additional correct key point of explanation.

Marking instructions for each question

Section 1 – Child development

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
1.	(a)		This question has an ‘identify’ command. Award 1 mark for correctly identifying each age-appropriate physical milestone.	2	Candidates must correctly identify two physical milestones for 0-6 months (for Petra): • begin to lift their chin and hold their head upright • start to lift their torso and raise their upper body-prone position • begin to roll back and forth • can sit by themselves and move all their limbs freely • early on, children develop a strong palmer grip • hands and feet and start moving each finger and toe independently • holding a toy, shake and pull-on toys • begin to hold their bottles and other objects in their hands Or any other valid response.
	(b)		This question has a ‘describe’ command. Award 2 marks for correctly describing each age-appropriate activity for linguistic development.	4	Candidates are asked to describe two activities to promote Keith’s (2yrs old) linguistic development: • action nursery rhymes like twinkle twinkle little star, row, row, row your boat and incy wincy spider • reading stories – naming characters • picture books – naming objects • environmental walks – pointing out things when walking to park • outings to Zoos – naming animals • naming colours of cars as they pass in the town, door colours, etc. • looking at and discussing photographs of family Or any other valid activity.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
	(c)		This question has an ‘evaluate’ command. Award up to 6 marks in total for evaluating each environmental influence.	6	Candidates should evaluate environmental influences on the children’s holistic development. Some answers could include: Housing/geography: • high rise flat so no garden space to allow children to play and run around – fresh air/sun light – physical development • accessibility to flat – Mum may find it hard to take children out to play dates with friends as hard to alone go up and down stairs – social development/emotional development • busy roads outside flat in town centre – safety – physical development • good access to local amenities like library – language development and book bug sessions to build language skills and meet friends • good access to local play park for socialisation and meeting friends – physical development • access to the local soft play centre for socialisation and meeting friends – physical development Or any other valid answer.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
2.			This question has a ‘describe’ command. Award 3 marks for correctly describing an observation technique suitable for a 3-5-year-old.	3	Candidates should describe an appropriate technique for observing a 3-5-year-old. Developmental checklists: • pre-set checklists and charts based on the expected developmental norms • aspects of development recorded and measured separately and are plotted on a pre-prepared list of skills and competencies at age 3-5 based on normative developmental milestones of this age • recordings can be based on observations, testing and can also record discussions with others eg. parents and other professionals Naturalistic Observations: • observed in their natural environment • shows how they behave in certain situations • observe children’s development to see if milestones are reached • the observer can be a participant or non-participant • the observer must be objective and record details accurately • observations should be evaluated against a pre-set aim • observations can be narrative, duration and event sampling, tracking, on the spot and photographic/videoing Learning journals: • encourage children to engage and be more active in the process of recording their learning • child will have their own learning journey where staff, children, parents and professionals can contribute • education and childcare settings may have their own format Or any other valid answer.

Section 2 – Child development theory

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
3.			This question has a ‘describe’ command. Award 1 mark for correctly identifying a relevant theory of language development in children and a further 2 marks for description of the theory.	3	Relevant theory: Noam Chomsky theory of language development – 1 mark • children are born with an innate ability for language • Language Acquisition Device • Universal Grammar • children should be bathed in appropriate language • adults should be a role model using appropriate language • children should be exposed to language rich environments and learning opportunities Or any other valid response.
4.	(a)		This question has a ‘describe’ command. Award 1 mark for correctly identifying one theory of social and emotional development. A further 2 marks can be awarded for points of development relevant to identified theory.	3	Relevant theory: Suzanne Zeedyk theory of emotional and social development – 1 mark Points of development: 1 mark for each point of development. • attachment is the biological need for relationships that all human beings are born with • attachment is especially important in the early years of life; Zeedyk believes it shapes the ways our brains and bodies handle emotions • advances in neuroscience have shown the importance of parent/carer responses for a baby/child’s brain development Or any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
	(b)		This question has an ‘explain’ command. Award 1 mark for any relevant point related to the theory and the application of this when working with children.	4	Relevant theory: Suzanne Zeedyk Points of explanation: 1 mark for each point of explanation. • practitioners ensuring that children have positive experiences throughout childhood will help to build healthy brains • practitioners need to be aware that childhood trauma and abuse can harm a child’s brain development • practitioners need to be aware that building positive experiences can help the brain to change and grow • it is important to be aware that caring relationships can help to build a healthy brain • caring relationships can reduce the harmful effects of negative experiences a child may experience Or any other valid response.

Section 3 – Services for children and young people

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
5.			This question has an ‘identify’ command. 1 mark can be awarded for identification of each UNCRC article.	2	Candidate responses could include: Article 31 – you have the right to play and relax by doing things such as sport, music and drama Article 34 – you have the right to be protected from sexual abuse Article 3 – Adults should always do what’s best for you Article 8 – You have the right to an identity Or any other valid response.
6.			This question has an ‘evaluate’ command. 1 mark can be awarded for identification of an initiative. With a further 1 mark for each point of evaluation. Up to a maximum of 6 marks in total.	6	Candidates could identify the initiatives: GIRFEC (SHANARRI) – 8 indicators Safe – freedom from abuse or neglect Healthy – high standards of physical and mental health and being supported to make healthy choices Achieving – supported in learning, developing skills and building confidence Nurtured – cared for in a secure, compassionate environment Active – having the opportunity to play, exercise and engage in recreational activities Respected – having their voices heard and opinions respected in decisions that affect them Responsible – encouraged to take on positive roles and responsibilities

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
					Included – helped to overcome inequalities and be accepted as part of a community. Candidates could include: • meeting the needs of individual children through observing • using the indicators to understand how children are feeling • using the indicators to provide support to help children to thrive • keeping children safe • ensuring care plans are up to date. • involving parents/carers • working with other agencies To evaluate candidates could: • explain how using the indicators ensures staff meet the individual needs and the holistic development of the children • involving parents/carers as the primary educators to ensure holistic needs are met • managing transitions smoothly • ensuring that settings are working in partnership with parents/carers and promoting links within the home • learning opportunities at home • ensuring that care plans are up to date and meet the needs of the child and parent/carers • identification of additional support needs and agreed plan of action to support child Or any other valid response.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
7.			This question has an ‘explain’ command. Up to 3 marks can be awarded for an explanation of the purpose of SSSC registration.	3	Explanations of the purpose of the SSSC registration could include: • a mandatory requirement for all care workers • underpins the codes of practice • encourages employers and employees to make use of both formal and informal learning • improves knowledge and practice, continuous professional development/learning • ensures currency of practice • helps to ensure quality of provision • ensures staff are qualified to correct level • assists with reflective practice • informs statutory procedures Or any other valid response.
8.			This question has a ‘describe’ command. Up to 4 marks can be awarded for a description of partnership working relevant to early learning and childcare practice.	4	Candidate responses could include: • how professionals may liaise with early years settings with regards to language development, our community, taking care of books • third sector organisations can promote language, social skills and wellbeing – such as, Play Talk Read, Bookbug, National Literacy Trust • early learning and childcare practitioners may work alongside primary teachers to promote active, play based learning and transitional support by visiting the local library Any other valid response relating to partnership work with the 2 organisations in question.

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]