Pearson BTEC Level 3 Nationals Extended Diploma

January 2020

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Children's Play, Learning and Development

Unit 4: Enquiries into Current Research in Early Years Practice

Part A

You do not need any other materials.

Instructions

- **Part A** contains material for the completion of the preparatory work for the set task.
- **Part A** is given to learners six weeks before **Part B** is taken under formal supervision as scheduled by Pearson.
- **Part A** must be given to learners on the specified date so that learners can prepare as directed and monitored.
- **Part A** is specific to each series and this material must only be issued to learners who have been entered to undertake the task in that series.
- **Part B** contains unseen material and is issued to learners at the start of the specified formal supervised assessment session on the timetabled date specified by Pearson.

Turn over ▶

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Instructions to Teachers/Tutors

This set task has a preparatory period. **Part A** sets out how learners should prepare for the completion of the unseen task in **Part B** under supervised conditions.

Part A should be issued to learners **six weeks** prior to undertaking **Part B** of the assessment.

Learners should be provided with the opportunity to conduct independent research in order to select and read secondary source materials such as articles and journals. Centres may need to make facilities available to learners to support independent work. Learners are advised to spend approximately **8-10 hours** on selecting and reading their secondary sources and that spending any longer on this is unlikely to advantage them. Learners may bring their selected secondary sources into the monitored sessions, and these will be subject to monitoring by the teacher/tutor.

Learners should be monitored in **six scheduled hours** provided by the centre to compile notes on their secondary research. During this time they may only have access to:

- the internet to carry out searches and to access secondary sources in relation to their research
- outcomes of independent research such as sources that they have selected.

Learners must work independently and must not be given guidance or feedback on the completion of the preparatory work. Learners must not prepare potential responses.

Learners may take up to four A4 sides of notes into the supervised assessment. Learners' notes are the outcome of independent preparation and support learners in responding to the additional information and activities presented only in **Part B**. The notes may be handwritten or typed in a 12 point size font.

Learners' notes can only include:

- facts, figures and data relating to secondary sources covering the article's area of research
- the research methods used in the learner's own secondary research.

Other content is not permitted.

In addition to the four pages of notes, learners should use the monitored sessions to prepare a list of sources that they have used, to take into the supervised assessment.

Teachers/Tutors should note that:

- learners notes produced under monitored conditions must be checked to ensure that they comply with the limitations
- learner notes should be retained by the centre between the monitored sessions and the formal supervised assessment
- learner notes should be retained by the centre after the completion of assessment and may be requested by Pearson.

Centres should refer to the *Instructions for Conducting External Assessments (ICEA)* document for full information on the correct conduct of monitored assessment.

Instructions for Learners

Read the set task information carefully.

In **Part B** you will be asked to carry out specific written activities using the information in this **Part A** booklet and your own research on this topic.

In your preparation for **Part B** using this **Part A** booklet you may prepare short notes to refer to when completing the set task. Your notes may be up to four A4 sides and may be handwritten or typed in a 12 point size font. Your notes can only include:

- facts, figures and data relating to secondary sources covering the article's area of research
- the research methods used in the learner's own secondary research.

Other content is not permitted.

You will complete **Part B** under supervised conditions.

You must work independently and should not share your work with other learners.

Your teacher will provide a schedule for the **six hours** of monitored preparation.

Your teacher can not give you feedback during the preparation period.

Set Task Brief

You are required to use your understanding of research methodologies and associated issues related to a piece of current research on the early years education issue, and to use your own skills in carrying out secondary research around the issue.

It is recommended that you spend approximately **8–10 hours** on carrying out your secondary research.

To prepare for the set task in **Part B** you must carry out the following:

1. Analyse the article.
2. Carry out your own independent secondary research based on the content of the article. You must use at least three secondary sources in your research.
3. You must prepare the following for your final supervised assessment:
    - a list of your secondary sources
    - notes on your secondary research – you can take in no more than four A4 pages of notes into the **Part B** supervised session.

During the supervised time for **Part B** you will have access to this material.

You will be required to address questions, based on the given article and you own secondary research.

You will have **three hours** under supervised conditions in which to complete your final assessment.

Part A Set Task Information

Starting well: Benchmarking early education across the world

Introduction

The importance of starting well

Compared with education in general, preschools are a new arrival. Most point to Europe for the first examples of institutions dedicated to the development of young children. Johann Friedrich Oberlin, a pastor, set up one of the first known examples in 1767, in Waldersbach, France, encouraging three- and four-year-olds to attend.

In 1837, the German Friedrich Fröbel coined the term kindergarten for a play and activity institute he created that year. The nineteenth century in general saw the emergence of the first early childhood education (ECE) centres in many countries, including China and India.

The first UNESCO World Conference on Education for All, in 1990, initiated a new stage in the development and promotion of early childhood education. One of its widely cited declarations is: "Learning begins at birth. This calls for early childhood care and initial education. These can be provided through arrangements involving families, communities, or institutional programmes as appropriate."

Preschool programmes still vary widely from country to country today: from widespread state-led provision in some, to more limited private sector offerings in others. Furthermore, while primary and secondary educational systems are often compared across countries, especially in terms of educational outcomes, little such attention is given to the preschool environment as yet.

Ranking preschools

To overcome this shortage, and to measure the variability of national preschool systems on a like-for-like basis, the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) compiled this data. It allows for the ranking of 45 countries, on the basis of their overall preschool environments. It relies on a combination of quantitative statistical data from each country, as well as unique qualitative assessments. The underlying aim is to measure the extent to which such systems are available to all children, affordable for all families, and of a high quality.

Social context matters too: countries such as India or South Africa clearly focus on issues of child mortality and welfare, for example.

Another assumption is that it is not sufficient to just have a high-quality preschool environment—it must be inclusive. All this raises many questions, such as what constitutes high quality?

This data considers a range of factors, from the amount of training teachers have through to the involvement of parents. However, the data does **not** determine which actual classroom methods and approaches are best. Many approaches exist and all of these can be compatible with high quality preschool environments, providing certain core criteria are met.

This report highlights parts of the world where the preschool provision is best, with related case studies and insights into what is being done to improve the availability, affordability and quality of these environments.

Data snapshot: overview of key indicators and weightings	
Main categories	
Social context	5%
Availability	25%
Affordability	25%
Quality	45%

Social Context (5% of main category)		Availability (25% of main category)	
Indicator	Weight	Indicator	Weight
Malnutrition prevalence	20	Preschool enrolment ratio (pre-primary age 5/6 years)	20
Under 5's mortality rate	20	Preschool enrolment ratio, relevant age	20
Immunisation rate DPT (diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus)	20	Early childhood development and promotion strategy	35
Gender inequality data	20	Legal right to preschool education	25
Adult literacy rate	20		

Affordability (25% of main category)		Quality (45% of main category)	
Indicator	Weight	Indicator	Weight
Cost of a private preschool education programme	15	Student teacher ratio in preschool classroom	5
Government pre-primary education spending	25	Average preschool teacher wages	15
Subsidies for under privileged families	30	Curriculum guidelines	15
Subsidies for preschool aimed at including underprivileged child	30	Preschool teacher training	20
		Health and safety guidelines	10
		Data collection mechanisms	10
		Linkages between preschool and primary school	10
		Parental involvement and education programmes	15

Elements of top early childhood education environments										
Overall rank	**Country**	**Comprehensive and effective ECD strategy** Out of 5	**Clear legal right to preschool education** Out of 1	**Effective subsidies that reach under-privileged families** Out of 10	**Student teacher ratio under 15** Binary–1, 0	**Well-trained teachers in early childhood education** Out of 5	**Parental involvement in preschools** Out of 5	**At least 98% of preschoolers enroled at age 5/6** Binary–1, 0	**Well-defined curriculum and health and safety standards** Out of 10	**Healthy, nourished children coming into the system** Out of 15
1	Finland	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
2	Sweden	●	●	●	●	●	◕	●	●	●
3	Norway	●	●	●	●	◕	◕	●	●	●
4	UK	●	●	●	○	●	◕	●	●	●
5	Belgium	●	●	◕	○	◕	◕	●	●	●
6	Denmark	◕	●	●	●	◕	◕	○	◕	●
7	France	◕	●	◕	○	●	◔	●	●	●
8	Netherlands	◕	●	◕	●	◕	◕	●	◕	●
9	New Zealand	◕	○	◕	●	●	◕	●	●	●
10	South Korea	◕	●	◕	○	◕	◕	○	◕	●
11	Germany	◕	●	◔	●	◕	◕	●	◕	●
12	Austria	◕	●	◔	○	◕	◕	○	◕	◕
13	Switzerland	◕	●	◕	○	◕	◕	●	◕	●
14	Spain	●	●	◕	●	◕	◔	●	◕	●
15	Portugal	●	●	◔	○	◕	◕	●	◕	●
16	Italy	◕	●	◕	●	◕	◔	●	◕	●

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17	Czech Republic	◕	●	◕	●	◕	◕	○	●	●
18	Ireland	◕	●	◔	●	◕	◕	●	◕	●
19	Hong Kong	◕	○	◕	●	●	◔	○	●	●
20	Chile	◕	●	◕	●	◕	◕	○	●	●
21	Japan	◕	○	◔	○	◕	◕	●	●	●
22	Hungary	◕	◒	◔	●	◕	◕	○	●	●
23	Israel	◕	◒	◕	○	◕	◕	○	◕	●
24	UAE	◕	○	◕	○	◕	◕	○	◕	●
25	USA	◕	◒	◕	●	◕	◕	○	◕	●
26	Canada	◕	●	◔	●	◕	◕	●	●	◕
27	Greece	◕	●	◔	●	◕	◕	●	●	●
28	Australia	◕	○	◕	○	◕	◕	●	●	●
29	Singapore	◕	○	◔	○	◕	◔	●	◕	●
30	Taiwan	◕	○	◔	●	◕	◔	○	◕	●
31	Poland	◕	◒	◔	○	◕	◕	○	◕	●
32	Mexico	◕	◒	◔	○	◕	◕	●	●	◕

Turn over ▼

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33	Russia	◒	◒	◔	●	◒	◒	○	◕	◕
34	Argentina	◒	◒	◔	○	◔	◔	○	◔	◕
35	Turkey	◒	○	○	○	◒	◒	○	◒	◒
36	Malaysia	◒	○	●	○	◔	◔	○	◔	◕
37	South Africa	●	○	●	○	◔	◒	○	◔	◔
38	Thailand	◒	○	◔	○	◔	◔	○	◔	◕
39	Brazil	◒	◒	●	○	◔	◔	○	◔	◒
40	Ghana	●	◒	●	○	◔	◔	○	◔	◔
41	Vietnam	◒	○	○	○	◔	◔	○	◔	◔
42	China	◒	○	○	○	◔	◔	○	◔	◕
43	Philippines	◒	◒	○	○	◔	◔	○	◔	◔
44	Indonesia	◔	○	○	●	◔	◔	○	○	◔
45	India	◔	○	○	○	◔	◔	○	○	○

(Source: The Starting Well Index)

The Starting Well Data

Europe dominates the data, taking all but four of the top 20 positions. This is of little surprise: it is culturally and politically accepted in Europe that the government will assume a significant role in delivering preschool education. Investment stretches back decades, helping ensure good availability and affordability, with typically high quality.

The Nordic countries do especially well, taking four of the top six places. In many respects, these countries have been dealt an easy hand: they have relatively high average incomes, fairly similar populations, and a well-defined and long-accepted role for the state. Nevertheless, they have also made significant efforts to emphasise the importance of preschool education. For example, the status afforded to teachers usually matches other respected professions, with corresponding qualifications and wages.

The wealth factor

In general, poorer countries do worse than rich ones. There is a strong correlation between a country's income per person and its overall ranking. Within Europe, for example, middle-income countries such as Hungary (22nd), Greece (27th) and Poland (31st) lag their wealthier neighbours. Worldwide, lower-income countries dominate the lower half of the rankings. In particular, China (42nd) and India (45th), two countries capturing much of the world's attention from an investment and growth perspective, perform poorly here.

India ranks last overall, behind other countries such as Ghana (40th), the Philippines (43rd) and Indonesia (44th), with a combination of limited availability, the lowest overall quality, and relatively high costs. This is partly related to the fact that India faces the toughest social conditions: high rates of child malnutrition and child mortality, combined with low rates of literacy and immunisation. All countries face difficult decisions regarding how to allocate scarce resources towards child development, but these are especially difficult in India.

It is worth highlighting, however, that a low performance does not necessarily represent a lack of effort. "We have very, very poor countries who are very much aware and would put this as a first national priority but don't have the resources to do so," notes Columbia University's Dr Kagan. Despite wealth being a major factor, it is certainly not the only determinant.

Many high-income countries, including Japan (21st), the United States and United Arab Emirates (joint 24th), Canada (26th) and Australia (28th), do relatively poorly in the ranking of early years education.

Balancing quality, availability and affordability

The wealthier a country is, the more likely it is to provide an affordable preschool environment. As such, low-income countries host the most expensive preschool places and children in low-income households are disadvantaged as preschools often act as a crucial source of nutrition for children in many countries.

This amplifies the overall impact of preschool in low-income communities: as UNESCO highlights, malnourished children are more likely to start school late, drop out earlier, and achieve poorer learning outcomes.

The case study below describes the preschool environment in Finland, the top-ranked country, and illustrate elements found in top preschool environments across the world.

Case study: Lessons from Finland's preschool

In Finland, preschool refers to a year of free half-day classes for six-year-olds, which is complemented with day care for the other half of the day. This builds on a programme that gives parents access to full-day childcare from birth till the age of six, at a capped cost. Today, it incorporates a range of rights for children: all have legal access to childcare, comprehensive healthcare, and local preschools.

To ensure quality, Finland has systematically developed teaching as a professional career. Teachers have to attain high university qualifications: all have a three-or four-year bachelor's degree in education, while many complete a master's degree (from primary level on, a master's degree is required). Studies are typically academic research-based courses at high-end universities, with detailed courses on curriculum planning and design, as well as leadership. Teachers are accorded the same respect as other professionals, such as lawyers, with comparable working conditions. Wages are good—although by no means the highest among the countries in this data—and class ratios are low with an average of 11 pupils per teacher.

All this helps Finland take a light touch when it comes to testing and monitoring, given the strong institutional trust in teachers. "This is why we have been deliberately staying away from the unnecessary standardised testing, or unnecessary external inspection of our schools," explains Dr Pasi Sahlberg, a Finnish education expert. It also allows Finland to delegate authority over curriculum planning to teachers. Indeed, trust is so high that this in turn can raise new challenges: Dr Sahlberg notes that more work is needed to educate parents about their own responsibilities in raising children, lest they assume that teachers will do it all.

Availability

The first column of this data measures the availability of preschool for families. One aspect of this is the legal right for children to get preschool education for at least one year prior to primary school. The main aim here is to ensure that the rights of young children are not overlooked, but are increasingly embedded within society. This has steadily improved in terms of rights around primary and secondary education, but many countries do not include preschool education in this. In countries such as China, Japan and the UAE, as well as many US states, such legislation is currently absent.

Belgium tops the list in terms of availability. Children there have the right to attend free preschool from the age of two and a half. It is not compulsory, but attendance is nearly universal. Many preschools share facilities with primary schools, which also helps with the transition between the two. Of course, Belgium is also a relatively small and wealthy society, which eases the provision of early childhood education. Such factors certainly matter: in countries such as South Africa, the physical distance of a preschool from homes can be a major practical deterrent, for example.

A further aspect to consider is what widespread availability means in practical terms. In the UK, for example, positive progress has been made in creating universal free access to preschools. However, three- and four-year-olds are entitled to just 15 hours per week, usually offered as five three-hour classes. "Fifteen hours per week is low in terms of what happens certainly in other parts of Europe and even in places like the developing world in Latin America," says Siobhan Fitzpatrick, CEO of Early Years, an organisation for young children in Northern Ireland. "In other countries, there is a recognition that to really effect change, especially for the most vulnerable children, you need a depth of coverage and a much longer day."

As a general principle, most experts argue that funding should be prioritised towards investment in people, ahead of investment in infrastructure and technology. "It's not technology that educates children, so while it's great to have computers and smart-boards, that's not as important as the relationship between adults and children," says Tim Seldin, President of the Montessori Foundation. "There are very cost effective ways to teach and it can be done in basic early years' settings." He notes in particular that more child-centred approaches to education do not require major investments in infrastructure, yet are "highly effective and work beautifully in third world countries".

Towards greater inclusiveness

The research findings suggest there is a need to raise awareness around the importance of an inclusive preschool environment: for all income levels, languages, cultures and backgrounds. This is a greater challenge in some countries than others. The UK, for example, takes this very seriously. "If you are in our country, whether you are legal, illegal, temporary or whatever, you are in the statistics," says the Centre for Research in Early Childhood's Dr Pascal. "The government has a legal commitment to deliver that service." By contrast, many other countries, such as Singapore and the UAE, have high immigrant populations, which are often overlooked in terms of preschool provision.

Affordability

No matter how widespread preschool facilities are, what is crucial is that parents at all income levels can afford them. This can be done through subsidies directly to disadvantaged families, to give them funds to secure preschool places for their children. Alternatively, subsidies can be given directly to providers, with specific direction about the need to accept all children. In practice, countries usually provide both. But while the right to affordable access to education for all is strongly enforced at a primary level in many countries, this is far less certain for preschool. Accordingly, costs vary widely.

In general, those countries that are culturally and politically willing to recognise the importance of early childhood education are in turn more willing to ensure that such services are affordable for parents. Where state support is limited, (costly) private provision tends to step in. In South Africa, for example, limited availability of quality public preschools has led to a surge in private sector alternatives aimed at high-income earners.

However, it is not enough simply to target affordable services, countries have to also aim for high-quality provision. For policymakers, this means setting standards as well as providing financial and technical support to ensure preschools can attain those standards cost effectively. Typical government support includes funding, quality assurance processes and providing opportunities for professional development.

The poverty gap

One obvious issue is that many countries in this data not only face severe developmental challenges, but also significant limitations in both funding and people. For many, affordability is clearly a future goal; what matters in the short term is trying to provide any kind of child development support at all. The balancing act lies between ensuring some educational support with some healthcare provision. It is futile to try and educate sick children, or to raise healthy children without any other kind of development. "The starting point for early childhood is healthy, well nourished, well inoculated children," says Dr Kagan.

Case study: Chile's dramatic rise in preschool provision

Chile is a lower-income country that outperforms its peers in this data. It ranks 20th in the data overall, while others with a similar level of per capita income are firmly in the bottom one-third of the rankings. This comes as a result of concerted efforts by the Chilean government to improve access. Preschool provision has improved dramatically in recent years: between 2006 and 2009, the number of preschools increased from 781 to 4,300. About 85% of four-year olds, and 90% of five-year olds, now attend a preschool of some kind.

There is no national curriculum, but there are national guidelines. Although the Chilean government sees preschool as a key driver of social mobility, Dr. Cortazar, a researcher in early childhood development at the University of Chile, argues that the government has so far focused on provision rather than on quality. The difficulties, Dr. Cortazar says, lie in the lack of quality standards and regulations as well as suitable training for preschool teachers. Chile maintains a low bar for entry to preschool teacher training. Teachers in the public programs have only a two-year degree. All this drags the country down in the data: in the crucial Quality category, it is ranked 29th overall, its weakest score.

Quality

Achieving the desired long-term outcomes of a solid preschool education is contingent on ensuring good quality. An inspirational teacher can make a substantial difference to a child, almost regardless of the quality of the environment and resources at hand. Policymakers strive to ensure that standards are at a uniformly high level and experts emphasise three main elements that affect quality: teacher quality and training, curriculum guidelines and standards, ensuring parental engagement.

Teacher quality and training

In many countries, one of the main differences between preschool and primary education is the extent of teacher training. Often, preschools are treated as little more than basic childcare centres, with teachers lacking the skills to foster child development. Overall, a well-trained workforce is the most important determinant of quality. Countries vary widely on this. In some countries, preschools often hire literally anybody who is physically able and interested in working with children. By contrast, at the top of the rankings, Finland requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree for preschool teachers; many attain a master's degree, which is the norm for primary school and above.

Finland sets a high standard, but there are various ways of ensuring a stronger workforce. First, countries need to ensure a basic level of literacy and numeracy, as well as a clear grasp of early childhood development and pedagogy. Although an advanced degree is an excellent benchmark, other steps can help too. One is to ensure that teacher training courses proactively select the best candidates. Although this is usually not as strictly enforced for preschools, countries such as Finland and South Korea explicitly recruit from the top third of each cohort of school-leavers. The UK makes strong efforts to attract qualified working professionals from other careers to transition into teaching, to tap into their broader experience and backgrounds. Other governments provide scholarships or graduation bonuses, or else ascribe a higher pay grading to those who attain certain educational criteria, to further attract potential candidates.

Other factors also influence the overall attractiveness of the career, such as the ratio of children to teachers. Here, the variance can be significant: Denmark and Sweden average about six children per teacher, whereas teachers in Ghana, India and the Philippines must contend with 35 or more.

Setting out curriculum guidelines and standards

Policymakers also focus on developing clear curricula and standards. A country's approach is guided to some degree by the quality and training of its workforce. Those with highly educated teachers have far less need for a more detailed curriculum, but can simply set the overall principles and expectations. Much of the daily lesson planning and content can be left to the teachers. By contrast, those with a weaker workforce would likely benefit from closer guidance, especially in the form of prescriptive lesson plans. Similarly, more support will be needed to implement any curriculum changes. An important issue that many experts raise from a curriculum perspective is the need for this to reflect the values and attitudes of the country in question.

The quality data scores countries based on the presence of well-defined guidelines, which cover children's basic education, care, and cognitive and intellectual needs. It also considers whether there are adequate mechanisms to monitor and enforce this. On this basis, Finland, France, New Zealand, Sweden and the UK top the rankings. By contrast, India and Indonesia offer only general guidelines, with no specific curriculum relating to a child's cognitive and intellectual needs.

Case study: New Zealand's pioneering curriculum

Transformation of New Zealand's early childhood services began 26 years ago, when childcare and preschool education, such as kindergartens (for three- and four-year-old children), were integrated under one Ministry of Education and from 1990 there was a unified funding strategy.

All Early Childhood Education (ECE) services receive a funding subsidy for up to 30 hours a week for every child, from birth until the age of five. All three-and four-year-old children can access 20 hours of free ECE. New Zealand recognised that qualified teachers were the key to quality provision and preschool success. It set out to train early childhood professionals in universities, just like their primary and secondary school colleagues. All centres receive additional funding related to the number of qualified teachers they employ: the higher the number of teachers, the greater the funding.

New Zealand was also one of the first countries to develop a national curriculum for ECE. The Te Whãriki curriculum—translated from Maori as, "A woven mat for all to stand on"—was created in 1996. It is non-prescriptive and there are many possible 'patterns' for enacting Te Whãriki's fundamental principle of "empowering children to learn and grow". There is a strong emphasis on relationships and the wider context of family and community. Numerous experts give this as an example of an inclusive curriculum that honours the unique cultures of its indigenous people as well as the many migrant settlers who now live in New Zealand.

Ensuring parental engagement

Though opinions differ on the specific role of the state in preschool provision, it is clear that parents have a major role to play. Here, countries do have the ability to proactively encourage parental involvement.

"We know from research that 80% of what is important in young children's development happens in the home environment… Northern Ireland puts community development at the heart of its service delivery. It is a good way of getting local parents involved in supporting, delivering and understanding the importance of early education," (Fitzpatrick).

However, a surprisingly large number of countries do not do so: France and Italy both have significant gaps here, with limited parental education programmes and relatively low awareness.

By contrast, the Czech Republic bolsters its overall score through a strong performance, with the country recognising the family as a vital part of a quality preschool environment. It has a national Union of Parents, which works to strengthen the influence of parents, while the country's guidelines note that preschools should provide education support and help to parents, as well as children.

In some countries, such as Belgium, there is a statutory responsibility to work with the parents as well as the children and to offer parenting programmes and parenting support as well as early learning or childcare. "High performing countries really recognise that they have got a role to play with the family and particularly with the parents of the child around their parenting skills," (Dr Pascal).

Conclusion

As countries transition towards knowledge-based economies, policymakers need to consider what all can be done to develop their investment in early years practitioners. Encouragingly, this data highlights the growing global recognition of the importance of the whole of a child's development, rather than just from the start of primary school. Those countries that do this best will position themselves well for success in the decades ahead. Put another way, as countries increasingly compete on the basis of the skills in their workforce, they need to invest in all their people as early in life as possible.

As with the provision of education in general, ensuring high quality preschool education that is affordable for all requires major long-term government commitment and resources to achieve. For poorer countries, all this can feel like a luxury that lies beyond their grasp, not least as they try to manage the most basic challenges around child health and development. However, there are several encouraging lessons for policymakers that emerge.

The first is simply about ensuring that ECE is on the policy radar and not overlooked in the battle for funding. Greater attention should be given to the research that highlights how investment in the early years can in turn help cut costs in later years, both to the individual and society. This is more easily done in countries where society has accepted the importance of preschool provision.

Another lesson is that while quality provision is crucial for delivering on such benefits, investment in people should be prioritised ahead of infrastructure and technology. Again, for those with limited resources, this can be a useful principle to guide investment.

For countries seeking to improve their rankings, some simple measures are often overlooked. In a range of countries where preschool provision is close to universal, this is yet to be solidified as a legal right for children. In other countries, even though resources are limited, policymakers still fail to provide clear standards and guidelines to aim for, regardless of whether or not they are enforced.

One of the challenges for a *national government* assuming a greater role in preschool education, lies in reinforcing the vital role that parents still need to play in their children's education and development. This might be specifically outlined in policy, or countries may simply focus on promoting awareness, but this is a major element in ensuring that children get the best start. Similarly, even if funds for better wages and working

conditions are tight, policymakers can still work to set higher minimum targets for teacher training and do their bit in raising the profession's status in society.

What this study also highlights is that no country has yet perfected its preschool provision. As all countries seek to develop a more highly skilled labour force that can better compete in a world where education is increasingly important, greater consideration of the role of preschool education is needed. For all countries, there remains much to learn.

Acknowledgements:

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Particular reference goes to:

Siobhan Fitzpatrick, CEO, Early Years, Northern Ireland

Noirín Hayes, professor, Institute of Technology, Dublin, Ireland

Fioni Murray, research and evaluation director, Khululeka Community Education Development Centre, South Africa

Please check the examination details below before entering your candidate information

Candidate surname	Other names

Pearson BTEC Level 3 Nationals Extended Diploma

Centre Number | | | | | | |

Learner Registration Number | | | | | | | | |

Window for supervised period:
Monday 13 January 2020

Morning (Supervised hours: 3 hours) | Paper Reference **31599H**

Children's Play, Learning and Development

Unit 4: Enquiries into Current Research in Early Years Practice

Part B

You do not need any other materials.

Total Marks

Instructions

- **Part A** will need to have been used in preparation for completion of **Part B**.
- **Part B** contains material for the completion of the set task under supervised conditions.
- **Part B** should be undertaken in 3 hours during the supervised assessment period.
- **Part B** is specific to each series and this material must only be issued to learners who have been entered to undertake the task in the relevant series.
- **Part B** should be kept securely until the start of the 3 hour supervised assessment period.
- Use **black** ink or ball-point pen.
- Fill in the boxes at the top of this page with your name, centre number and learner registration number.
- Complete **all** activities.
- Answer the activities in the spaces provided
  – there may be more space than you need.

Information

- The total mark for this paper is 65.
- The marks for **each** activity are shown in brackets
  – use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each activity.

Advice

- Read each activity carefully before you start to answer it.
- Try to answer every activity.
- Check your answers if you have time at the end.

Turn over ▶

P 6 5 2 5 1 A 0 1 2 0

Pearson

Instructions to Teachers/Tutors and/or Invigilators

Part B set task is undertaken under supervision in a single session of **three hours** in the timetabled session. Centres may schedule a supervised rest break during the session.

Part B set task requires learners to apply research. Learners should bring in notes as defined in **Part A.** The teacher/tutor or invigilator needs to ensure that notes comply with the requirements.

Learners must complete the set task using this task and answer booklet.

The set task is a formal external assessment and must be conducted with reference to the instructions in this task booklet and the *Instructions for Conducting External Assessments (ICEA)* document to ensure that the supervised assessment is conducted correctly and that learners submit evidence that is their own work.

Learners must not bring anything into the supervised environment or take anything out without your approval.

Centres are responsible for putting in place appropriate checks to ensure that only permitted material is introduced into the supervised environment.

Maintaining security

- During supervised assessment sessions, the assessment areas must only be accessible to the individual learner and to named members of staff.
- Learners can only access their work under supervision.
- Any work learners produce under supervision must be kept secure.
- Only permitted materials for the set task can be brought into the supervised environment.
- During any permitted break and at the end of the session materials must be kept securely and no items removed from the supervised environment.
- Learners are not permitted to have access to the internet or other resources during the supervised assessment period.
- Learner notes related to **Part A** must be checked to ensure length and/or contents meet limitations.
- Learner notes will be retained securely by the centre after **Part B** and may be requested by Pearson if there is suspected malpractice.

After the session the teacher/tutor or invigilator will confirm that all learner work had been completed independently as part of the authentication submitted to Pearson.

Outcomes for Submission

This task and answer booklet should be submitted to Pearson.

Each learner must complete an authentication sheet.

Instructions for Learners

This session is **three hours** duration. Your teacher/tutor or invigilator will tell you if there is a supervised break. Plan your time carefully.

Read the set task information carefully.

Complete all your work in this taskbook in the spaces provided.

You have prepared for the set task given in this **Part B** booklet. Use your notes prepared during **Part A** if relevant. Attempt all of **Part B**.

You will complete this set task under supervision and your work will be kept securely during any breaks taken.

You must work independently throughout the supervised assessment period and should not share your work with other learners.

Outcomes for Submission

You should complete the task in this taskbook.

You must complete a declaration that the work you submit is your own.

Activity 1

One of the research methods used to inform this article was a review of data relating to the development of early years education in different countries across the world.

How has the use of data informed this article compared to other research methods you have found when looking into the issue?

Your answer should include:

- other methods of research used to explore the issue
- the reliability of the research methods used.

(15)

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(Total for Activity 1 = 15 marks)

Activity 2

The research article explores the factors that contribute to the successful development of a national system of early years education.

The article states "One of the challenges for a *national government* assuming a greater role in preschool education, lies in reinforcing the vital role that parents still need to play in their children's education and development".

How does this point and the conclusions in the article relate to your own secondary research into how a good working relationship between parents and education providers can support children in the early years?

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(Total for Activity 2 = 15 marks)

Activity 3

One of the key findings of the article was that:

"It's not technology that educates children, so while it's great to have computers and smart-boards, that's not as important as the relationship between adults and children," says Tim Seldin, President of the Montessori Foundation… He notes in particular that more child-centred approaches to education do not require major investments in infrastructure, yet are "highly effective…"

What are the implications of this key finding for developing a strategy for supporting high quality education for children in an early years environment?

In your answer you should refer to the article and your own secondary research.

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(Total for Activity 3 = 20 marks)

Activity 4

You have been asked by the preschool manager to investigate the effectiveness of involving parents in early years education settings.

The following research proposal has been provided:

- visit three settings
- focus on the preschool group (3 years to 4 years 11 months)
- interview the preschool staff to discuss how they approach involving parents in their child's education
- observe and record the activities that support the involvement of parents in their child's early education
- use these observations to compare children's 'school readiness' by the end of their preschool experience.

Drawing on your understanding of research methods and your preparatory research into the involvement of parents in their child's early education, provide the preschool manager with a report that critically analyses their proposal.

In your report you must cover:

- the ways in which this research could provide valid and reliable data analysis of the impact of involving parents in their child's early education
- potential limitations or weaknesses of the research proposed and how these could be addressed through suggesting changes or additions
- factors to be considered in setting up the research activities, which may include purpose and objectives, research skills and ethical considerations.

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(Total for Activity 4 = 15 marks)

TOTAL FOR TASK = 65 MARKS

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