

Module specification

1. Factual information			
Module title	Innovation in Early Childhood Practice		
Module tutor	Viki Bennett Kane/Dr Alex Morfaki	Level	7
Module type	Taught	Credit value	30
Mode of delivery	100% online		
Notional learning hours	300 hours Contact hours (comprising online asynchronous recorded sessions and tasks): 30 hours Face to face (online supervision and tutorials): 2 hours Guided independent study hours (including hours for assessment preparation): 268 hours		

2. Rationale for the module and its links with other modules
<p>In recent times, nannies and early years educators have been conceptualised as leaders of pedagogical practice, and their contribution to the wellbeing of children and families has been gaining increasing recognition. Yet the concepts of leadership and entrepreneurship in early years remain under-researched and have not attracted the attention afforded to other disciplines. While management generally refers to organisational aspects of practice, leadership is synonymous with change and associated with innovative and creative approaches that aim to improve practice and challenge established understandings. This module builds on Evolving Perspectives on Early Childhood by providing opportunities for students to implement solution-focused approaches with the aim of effecting evidence-informed change within early childhood contexts. The distinctive features and theories associated with early years leadership and entrepreneurship will be explored, and students will implement action research focused on one of four specialist strands - supporting behaviour, food and nutrition, sleep hygiene and home-based pedagogy and care - and evaluate its implementation.</p>

3. Aims of the module
<p>This module aims to equip students with specialist skills within their distinct area(s) of either supporting behaviour, food and nutrition, sleep hygiene and home-based pedagogy and care. Students will have the opportunity to develop robust research, leadership, and entrepreneurial skills. They will be asked to conduct a systematic and rigorous action research which is centred on effecting changes that enhance children and family lives. This should be underpinned by innovative research and remain fully conversant with the ethical complexities associated with researching with children and families. It</p>

3. Aims of the module

should also aspire to transform praxis. This module is conducive to the expansion of specialist skills within the context of entrepreneurship and offers opportunities to expand practice to develop consultancy services and provision.

4. Prerequisite modules or specified entry requirements

N/A

5. Is the module compensatable?

No

6. Learning, teaching and assessment strategy for the module

Online teaching
Study planners
Interactive work
Independent research work
Research-based tasks
Video analysis
Podcast analysis
Analysis of case studies
Reflective diaries
Discussion fora
Tutorials

7. Intended learning outcomes

At the end of the module, learners will be expected to:

1. Apply a research-informed understanding to an aspect of practice in their chosen specialist area of supporting behaviour, food and nutrition, sleep hygiene, and home-based pedagogy and care.
2. Critically reflect on the process and impact of their action research inquiry on children and families and evaluate implications for wider practice.
3. Demonstrate a comprehensive application of ethical principles to their professional practice.
4. Apply transferable skills of leadership and entrepreneurship to enhance their professional practice within an early years context.

A. Knowledge and understanding	B: Cognitive skills	C: Practical and professional skills	D: Key transferable skills
A2	B1, B3, B4	C1, C2	D1, D3

8. Indicative content

Management and leadership in the early years - cultural and historical perspectives

Early years leadership: distinct theories, approaches and models

Reframing entrepreneurship: definition(s) and contextualisation

Current developments in supporting behaviour, food and nutrition, sleep hygiene and home-based pedagogy and care

Qualitative research/ interpretative and hermeneutical paradigms

Research methods in early childhood studies

Action research: principles into practice

Ethics in research

9. Assessment				
Assessment rationale				
<p>Understanding of diverse perspectives begins from critique of our own practice and the assumptions that underpin it. Students will compile a project portfolio which is based on an approach or artefact formulated in collaboration with families and children which will form part of their action research project. The aim will be to effect a change in their current practice as means of improving the lives and outcomes of children and their families. The artefact or approach should aim to utilise a range of existing or new resources in a creative manner, which demonstrates professional versatility, leadership and entrepreneurship and is underpinned by research-based evidence and practice. The compilation of the project portfolio will demonstrate a holistic and comprehensive application of ethical, practical and reflective components of early childhood pedagogy and evidence the student's framework of practice.</p>				
Assessment task	Weighting	Week submitted	Grading (pass/fail/%)	Module learning outcomes the assessment task maps to
Project portfolio – 5,000 words	100%	TBC	%	LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4

10. Teaching staff associated with the module
Name and contact details

11. Core reading list				
Author	Year	Title	Publisher	Location
McNiff, J.	2017	<i>Action research: All you need to know.</i>	SAGE Publications	London
Moss, P.	2018	<i>Alternative narratives in early childhood: An introduction for students and practitioners</i>	Routledge	London
O'Sullivan, J. and Sakr, M.	2022	<i>Social leadership in early childhood education and care: An introduction.</i>	Bloomsbury Academic	

12. Other indicative text (e.g., websites)
<p>Baumfield, V., Hall, E. and Wall, K. (2013) <i>Action research in education: Learning through practitioner enquiry</i>. 2nd edn. SAGE.</p> <p>Bradbury, H. (ed.) (2015) <i>The SAGE handbook of action research</i>. 3rd edn. Los Angeles: SAGE Reference.</p> <p>Campbell-Barr, V. and Leeson, C. (2016) <i>Quality and leadership in the early years: research, theory and practice</i>. Los Angeles: SAGE.</p> <p>Clark, R.M. (2012) "'I've never thought of myself as a leader but...": the Early Years Professional and catalytic leadership', <i>European Early Childhood Education Research Journal</i>, 20(3), pp. 391-401.</p> <p>Clark, R. M. and Murray, J. (2012) <i>Reconceptualizing leadership in the early years</i>. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Open University Press.</p> <p>Dayman, T., Warren, A., Tuhakaraina, S., Robinson, L. and Haruru, E. (2024) 'Maori leadership and early childhood educational leadership in Aotearoa: A critical literature review', <i>Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice</i>, 38(1), pp. 68–86</p> <p>Harju, A. (2023) 'Leading change of practice: a study of challenges and possibilities from the position of preschool management', <i>Educational Action Research</i>, 31(5), pp. 881-893.</p>

Heikka, J. and Hujala, E. (2013) 'Early childhood leadership through the lens of distributed leadership', *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 21(4), pp. 568–580.

Heikka, J., Waniganayake, M. and Hujala, E. (2013) 'Contextualizing distributed leadership within early childhood education: current understandings, research evidence and future challenges', *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership*, 40(1), pp. 30–44.

Kangas, J., Venninen, T. and Ojala, M. (2016) 'Distributed leadership as administrative practice in Finnish early childhood education and care', *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership*, 44(4), pp. 617–631.

Luff, P., and Webster, R. (2014) 'Democratic and participatory approaches: Exemplars from early childhood education', *Management in Education*, 28(4), pp. 138–143.

Lund, H. H. (2024) "'We are equal, but I am the leader": leadership enactment in early childhood education in Norway', *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 27(6), pp. 1228–1253.

Lyon, F. and Fernandez, H. (2012) 'Strategies for scaling up social enterprise: lessons from early years providers', *Social enterprise journal*, 8(1), pp. 63–77.

Sakr, M. and O'Sullivan, J. (2023) 'Dialogical conceptualisations of leadership in social enterprise early years group', *Early years*, 43(4–5), pp. 938–951.

Stamopoulos, E. (2015) 'The Professional Leadership and Action Research Training Model: Supporting early childhood leadership', *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 40(4), pp. 39–48.

Varpanen, J. (2021) 'Early childhood education leadership in Finland through the lens of structure and agency', *Educational management, Administration & Leadership*, 49(3), pp. 518–533.

Whittington, V., Sisson, J. and Shin, A.-M. (2024) 'Enacting everyday democratic pedagogies in a birth-five early years setting', *Australian Educational Researcher*, 51(5), 1795–1811.

13. List of amendments since last (re)validation		
Area amended	Details	Date Central Quality informed