

# Nursery Assistant

## Introduction

As a Nursery Assistant you will play an important role in caring for young children. You will plan and organise both fun and educational activities, and also make sure you take care of the children's personal needs. If you love being around young children, this could be the career for you!

## Also known as

- Childcare Worker
- Nursery Worker



## Work Activities

As a Nursery Assistant, you will be responsible for providing the young children in your care with a safe, engaging and rewarding environment in which they can develop and grow. You will provide a high standard of physical, social, and intellectual care for the children in the nursery.

You will work closely with your fellow Nursery Assistants and Nursery Nurses, and also parents and family members, to deliver this care.

Your tasks as a Nursery Assistant will include the key elements of

- supervising - making sure play-time is fun and safe
- engaging - children's activities should be educational as well as fun, providing a learning experience

Along with all the other nursery staff, you will carefully plan upcoming activities to stimulate, interest and provide fun for the children.

Activities could include:

- taking the children on outings to places of interest
- helping children to develop language and numeracy skills through games
- arts, music, crafts, cooking activities

Other duties could include:

- making sure that each child is collected by someone known to the nursery
- performing domestic duties, such as preparing snacks, cleaning equipment and toys etc
- recording any possible accidents in the official accident book
- washing and changing children when necessary
- providing comfort to an upset or poorly child

## Personal Qualities and Skills

To become a Nursery Assistant, you will need:

- stamina and a lot of energy
- to be patient, tolerant and resilient
- flexibility
- a sense of fun
- great communication skills
- creativity and imagination
- to be understanding and able to give encouragement

- an understanding of children's physical, social, intellectual and emotional development

## Pay and Opportunities

### Pay

The pay rates given below are approximate.

- Starting: £14,500 - £15,000
- With experience: £15,500 - £17,500
- Senior Nursery Assistants earn £18,000 - £20,000

You may be paid an hourly rate. These normally range from £10 - £12 per hour.

### Hours of work

As a Nursery Assistant, you will normally work 35 - 40 hours a week. Shift work is likely.

Nursery Assistants often benefit from school holidays, and weekend work is not usually involved. There are part-time and job-share opportunities.

### Where could I work?

Opportunities for Nursery Assistants occur throughout the UK.

Employers of Nursery Assistants are nurseries, infant or special schools, day nurseries and family centres, hospitals and crèches.

Mudiad Meithrin is a voluntary organisation and is the main provider of Welsh-medium early years care and education in the voluntary sector [www.meithrin.co.uk](http://www.meithrin.co.uk)

### Where are vacancies advertised?

Vacancies are advertised in local/national newspapers, on recruitment and employers' websites, and on Find a Job ([www.gov.uk/jobsearch](http://www.gov.uk/jobsearch)).

Social media websites, such as LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook, are a great way to network, find vacancies and get in contact with possible employers. Make sure that your profile presents you in a professional manner that will appeal to potential employers.

Take a look at our General Information Article 'Finding Work Online'.

## Entry Routes and Training

### Entry routes

Employers might not ask for any specific qualifications, although some may ask for GCSE maths and English (A\*-C or 9-4). Relevant work experience will help you to stand out from the crowd. Start thinking now about what you can do to get experience of childcare e.g. babysitting.

There are also excellent relevant vocational qualification available. See below for more details.

### Training

Once employed you may be able to study for a relevant qualification, such as the CACHE level 2 qualification in childcare and education.

In this role you may be required to complete a care certificate before starting work. Take a look at our information article care certificate for more information.

BTEC also offer a level 3 diploma in health and social care. If you would like take this course, you will learn about:

- human lifespan development
- working in health and social care
- enquiries into current research in health and social care
- meeting individual support needs
- principles of safe practice in health and social care
- promoting public health
- supporting individuals with additional needs
- physiological disorders and their care
- nutritional health

Other courses could be available in your area.

### **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act**

This career is an exception to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that you must supply information to an employer about any spent or unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings, if they ask you to. This is different from other careers, where you only have to reveal information on unspent convictions if you are asked to.

## Qualifications

To get onto an Intermediate Level Apprenticeship, you'll usually need at least 2 GCSEs at grade C/4 or above, possibly including English and maths.

A variety of relevant vocational qualifications are available, such as a BTEC level 2 or level 3.

Relevant subjects include:

- health and social care
- caring for children
- children's care, learning and development
- health and social care
- promoting food safety and nutrition in health and social care or early years settings
- residential childcare

### **Work Experience**

Previous experience working with children would be really useful for this career.

## Adult Opportunities

### **Age limits**

It is illegal for any organisation to set age limits for entry to employment, education or training, unless they can show there is a real need to have these limits.

### **Courses**

Skills and abilities gained in childcare are an advantage and can enable you to complete a recognised training course in less than the usual time.

Colleges usually consider adult candidates who don't have the regular entry requirements. Check the admissions policy of the college that runs the course you're interested in.

Some courses in nursery nursing are organised on a flexible basis at local colleges of further education. Others are available on a part-time basis.

The Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education (CACHE) offers a suite of relevant childcare courses, which can be studied on a full-time, part-time, weekend, work-based or open learning basis. A list of training providers is available from the CACHE website.

Edexcel offers relevant BTEC qualifications, available at some colleges by part-time study.

## Further Information

### Contacts

- **Apprenticeships: Get In. Go Far**  
National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)  
Tel: 0800 015 0400  
Email: [nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk](mailto:nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)
- **Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education (CACHE)**  
Address: Apex House, 81 Camp Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 5GB  
Tel: 0845 3472123  
Email: [info@cache.org.uk](mailto:info@cache.org.uk)  
Website: [www.cache.org.uk](http://www.cache.org.uk)
- **Skills for Care & Development (SfC&D)**  
Skills for social work, social care and children's services  
Address: 2nd floor, Westgate, 6 Grace Street, Leeds LS1 2RP  
Tel: 0113 2411240  
Email: [sscinfo@skillsforcareanddevelopment.org.uk](mailto:sscinfo@skillsforcareanddevelopment.org.uk)  
Website: [www.skillsforcareanddevelopment.org.uk](http://www.skillsforcareanddevelopment.org.uk)
- **Careers Wales - Welsh Apprenticeships**  
Tel: 0800 028 4844  
Website: [ams.careerswales.com/](http://ams.careerswales.com/)
- **Social Care Wales**  
Address: South Gate House, Wood Street, Cardiff CF10 1EW  
Tel: 0300 30 33 444  
Email: [info@ccwales.org.uk](mailto:info@ccwales.org.uk)  
Website: [www.ccwales.org.uk](http://www.ccwales.org.uk)
- **Mudiad Meithrin**  
Email: [post@meithrin.co.uk](mailto:post@meithrin.co.uk)  
Website: [www.meithrin.co.uk](http://www.meithrin.co.uk)
- **People Exchange Cymru (PEC)**  
Public sector recruitment portal for Wales  
Email: [peopleexchange@cymru@gov.wales](mailto:peopleexchange@cymru@gov.wales)  
Website: [www.peopleexchange@cymru.org.uk/home](http://www.peopleexchange@cymru.org.uk/home)

## Related Careers

- Nursery Nurse
- NVQ Assessor
- School Lunchtime Supervisor
- History Teacher
- Geography Teacher
- Modern Foreign Languages Teacher
- Teaching Assistant
- Music Teacher
- English Teacher
- Maths Teacher
- Science Teacher
- Education Welfare Officer
- Playworker
- Special Educational Needs Teacher
- Art and Design Teacher
- Design and Technology Teacher
- Early Years Teacher

- Physical Education Teacher
- Primary Teacher
- Secondary Teacher
- Training Manager
- Higher Education (HE) Lecturer
- School Business Manager
- Teacher of English as a Foreign Language
- Lecturer
- Teacher
- Welsh Teacher
- Headteacher