

Options with childhood studies

Your skills

Over the course of your degree you develop a good mix of subject specific and technical skills as well as transferable core skills. Consider these alongside your other activities, such as paid work, volunteering, family responsibilities, sport, membership of societies, leadership roles, etc. Think about how these can be used as evidence of your skills and personal attributes. Then you can start to market and sell who you *really* are, identify what you may be lacking and consider how to improve your profile.

A degree programme in childhood studies develops a range of skills useful in graduate roles as well as the critical thinking skills necessary to be an active citizen. Childhood studies draws together other disciplines by focusing on the child and so develops skills such as the ability to judge and evaluate evidence, appreciate the complexity and diversity of social situations and make reasoned arguments. Childhood studies degrees use key source documents such as legal texts, as well as journal articles and documents of evidence-based practice, so the ability to interpret evidence and texts is developed, along with the skill of reflecting on and synthesising the information found. Analysis is a key skill developed as you evaluate and consider the socio-cultural context of childhood and how the current legal, social and educational systems shape and influence childhood as a concept, as well as for individual children.

Childhood studies draws together several disciplines and so degrees in this subject emphasise group work generally and interdisciplinary work specifically. Typically a childhood studies degree will actively facilitate the development of teamwork skills, perhaps through the use of group-based assessment. Communication skills are also central to this degree and you develop the ability to formulate and make arguments both orally and in writing.

Job options

Bear in mind that it's not just your degree discipline that determines your options. Look at [your degree... what next?](#) for informed advice on career planning and graduate employment, or take a look at [what jobs would suit me?](#) a helpful starting point for self-analysis.

You can choose between jobs that are degree-related or those that appeal because they use other interests or elements of your degree.

Jobs directly related to your degree

- [Learning mentor](#) - provides a complementary service to teachers and other staff, addressing the needs of children who require assistance in overcoming barriers to learning in order to achieve their full potential.
- [Early years/nursery teacher](#) - fosters and develops the abilities, social skills and understanding of children aged three to five years old, focusing on optimum child development and preparation for a successful transition to primary school education.
- [Primary school teacher](#) - develops schemes of work and lesson plans in line with curriculum objectives, facilitating learning by establishing a relationship with pupils and organising learning resources and the classroom learning environment.
- [Special educational needs teacher](#) - teaches children with emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties at one or more stages. SEN teachers may range from responsibility for teaching entire classes to working with children on an

individual basis. It is the teacher's role to create a safe, stimulating and supportive environment for special needs pupils.

- [Social worker](#) - works with young people experiencing a variety of difficulties. Experience and/or professional qualification is usually required before embarking on social work in a formal capacity.
- [Psychotherapist, child/Counsellor](#) - works with children suffering from a range of problems, including serious psychological disturbances and behavioural problems. Training in psychotherapy is required for this role.
- [Educational psychologist](#) - applies psychological theory, research and techniques to help children or young people who may have learning, behavioural, social or emotional problems or difficulties. The work is usually conducted within an educational context.
- [Paediatric nurse](#) - cares for sick children, advising and supporting them and their families.
- [Speech and language therapist](#) - works closely with people of all ages, including children, with varying degrees of speech, language or swallowing problems.

Jobs where your degree would be useful

- [Community development worker](#) - aims to empower communities by developing the skills required to regain control over and improve quality of life, working with individuals, families or whole communities to facilitate the process
- [Museum education officer](#) - responsible for realising the potential of museum collections as learning resources for visitors and the wider community, including children. They develop learning opportunities, which can be either informal or curriculum based.

Other options

Childhood studies graduates are more likely than the average student to pursue non-traditional working hours or work for themselves. Recent examples of self-employed graduates include one who set up her own nursery, while another operates a consultancy service checking safety in early years facilities.

As many students do voluntary work, such as teaching or social work, during their course, a proportion will continue with it after graduating to gain the experience they need, sometimes as a precursor to embarking on postgraduate study.

Although some of the jobs listed here might not be first jobs for many graduates, they are among the many realistic possibilities with your degree, provided you can demonstrate you have the attributes employers are looking for. It's also worth noting that many graduate vacancies don't specify particular degree disciplines, so don't restrict your thinking to the jobs listed here.

[Explore types of jobs](#) to find out more about the above options and related jobs.

Career areas

Every year statistics are collected to show what HE students do immediately after graduation. These can be a useful guide but, in reality, with the data being collected within just six months of graduation, many graduates are travelling, waiting to start a course, paying off debts, getting work experience or still deciding what they want to do. For further information about some of the areas of employment commonly entered by graduates of any degree discipline, check out [what do graduates do?](#) and [your degree...what next?](#)

Childhood studies has a natural link with work in the social care and education sectors with around 17% of students progressing straight onto full-time further study to gain professional qualifications in fields such as primary teaching and social work. Childhood studies programmes often have larger than average numbers of mature students, and work-related learning is emphasised in most programmes. The effect of this is that many graduates continue to work for the employers they worked for as students, benefiting from promotion or increased responsibilities at course end.

Statistics show that in 2007, six months after graduation, less than half of childhood studies graduates were working full time. Typical alternatives include combining work with further study (13%) and working part time to achieve an effective work life balance, while graduates cared for their own children, for example.

Where are the jobs?

Childhood studies graduates enter employment in a variety of sectors and a range of employers. Often they are employed either in the public sector, by local councils for example, or by charities or smaller organisations. In recent years both the recently established Connexions (<http://www.connexions.gov.uk>) service and local Sure Start (<http://www.surestart.gov.uk>) initiatives have employed graduates from childhood studies. The majority of graduates will enter either the social care or education sectors so it is worth looking into the following sectors:

- [Education](#);
- [Social care](#);
- [Voluntary](#).

Career management is an ongoing process; one that you'll no doubt develop throughout your working life. [Explore job sectors](#) for further information on all the above employment areas.

Further study

A large minority of childhood studies graduates progress immediately on to further study with nearly a third studying full or part-time six months after graduating. These courses tend to be those which lead to professional status, such as Masters programmes in social work or a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), as many graduates go on to work as primary school or special needs teachers. Additionally, the fact that 13% of graduates study while working reflects that often their employers are supportive of further study and provide funding or time off to study.

These trends show only what previous graduates in your subject did immediately upon graduating. Over the course of their career - the first few years in particular - many others will opt for some form of further study, either part time or full time. If further study interests you, start by thinking [about postgrad study](#). [Find courses and research](#) to identify your options; you can also [apply for courses online](#).

Look at [funding my further study](#) for more details relating to finance and the application process.

What next?

Don't forget there are alternatives to entering employment or postgraduate study, such as taking time out, volunteering or travelling. Longer term, you may want to consider starting your own business. For something different, check out [self-employment](#) and [flexible working](#) or explore [working and studying abroad](#).

This should have started you thinking about your future. Whether you are in the early stages of career planning, or you have definite ideas about what you want to do, you will find further information to help you in the following sections:

- Analyse your skills, interests and motivations to find out [what jobs would suit me?](#)
- [Explore types of jobs](#) to find out about entry requirements, salaries and working conditions.
- [Explore job sectors](#) for hints on breaking into various

industries.

- [Find graduate employers](#) and see what they have to offer.
- Look at the advice on [applications, CVs and interviews](#).
- Get [work experience](#) through vacation work or a work placement.
- [Find courses and research](#) and investigate postgraduate study opportunities.
- If you have already graduated, get online [interactive advice](#).
- Visit [your university careers service](#) for a wealth of advice and resources to help with your career planning.

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