

Your guide to playwork

“ Playwork is a skilled profession that can enrich and enhance children's play. Children need opportunities to play in different ways at different times, as well as safe play spaces where they can be physically active as well as quiet and still. Children and young people's play needs will differ depending on their age, ability, culture and circumstance. Playworkers can help to create a secure atmosphere which welcomes and encourages all children to play. ”

SkillsActive playworker

What is involved?

Playworkers plan, facilitate, and take part in play and leisure activities for children and young people. They work in various settings, such as breakfast and after-school clubs, adventure playgrounds, church halls, leisure and community centres and mobile play buses. Playworkers give children and young people choices on how to spend their leisure time. The work includes arranging arts and crafts, drama, music, sports, taking children on outings, cooking, and other creative activities.

Is playwork right for me?

You need to have:

- an understanding of the needs of children and young people;
- respect for children from varied cultural backgrounds;
- the ability to build good relationships with children, their parents, and carers;
- a patient and caring nature and lots of energy and enthusiasm;
- the ability to work well as a member of a team and
- creativity, flexibility, and good listening skills.



What experience/qualifications do I need?

Registration requirements state that 50% of staff employed in playwork settings must have a minimum level 2 qualification in playwork or a related profession. It is, therefore, highly beneficial to have a level 2 qualification in playwork as many employers are looking for qualified staff. Most playworker vacancies do require experience of working with children. Many people start off on a voluntary or temporary basis to gain experience before moving into paid part-time or full-time playwork. Most playwork is part-time but managers often work full-time. It is also possible to volunteer while working towards a qualification.

You can do different playwork qualifications depending on your job. Most new playworkers work towards a level 2 qualification. Islington runs an Access to Playwork course which provides a basic introduction to playwork. Both Islington Young People's Service and City and Islington College run a CACHE level 2 and 3 in Playwork. However, the Islington Young People's Services course is only open to staff and volunteers currently employed within Islington.

All playworkers must undergo a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check before they start working with children.

How much could I earn?

Playwork is generally paid weekly or hourly between £6 - £10 per hour, depending on qualifications and experience. See the Islington CIS jobs list for local rates of pay at www.islington.gov.uk/cis and follow the link for Working with Children.

What are the working hours?

Most playworkers are needed before or after school, at weekends and during school holidays. There are some full-time positions, but the majority are part-time and some are seasonal.

Further training and opportunities

When you have experience as a playworker, you can do a level 3 qualification in Playwork/Working With Children. Playworkers may also progress to become play co-ordinators, supervisors, or managers. As a playwork manager you can work towards an NVQ level 4 in Playwork or undertake a foundation degree, a BTEC Higher National Diploma, or other degree relating to playwork. For further information about qualifications visit

<http://eypquals.cwdcouncil.org.uk/public/theearlyyearsandplaywork>

Useful contacts:

City and Islington College

020 7700 9200

www.candi.ac.uk

London Borough of Islington, YPS Training Officer

Nita Papadopolous

020 7527 5628

Islington Play Association

020 7607 9637

www.islingtonplay.demon.co.uk

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