



**General Certificate of Secondary Education  
June 2011**

**Home Economics: Child  
Development**

**45803**

**(Specification 4580)**

**Unit 3: Child Study**

***Report on the Examination***

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## General comments

It was clear that where centres had a clear understanding of the requirements of the new specification, especially related to the controlled assessment tasks, they were able to give appropriate guidance and support.

While some excellent work was seen there was evidence that a number of centres seemed to have clearly allowed candidates to spend much more than the suggested time recommended for completion of the tasks, resulting in work that was overlong, especially in terms of research. Often this research was not relevant to the chosen task which made it difficult to justify awarding high marks when assessment criteria required work to be “concise”, “selective” and “relevant”.

Similarly some centres made reference to “BAR and FAR” which was a requirement of the legacy specification but not relevant to the new specification.

## The assessment criteria.

Both controlled assessment tasks are marked holistically using the AQA provided assessment criteria. Teachers need to select statements/parts of statements within the mark bands that best reflect the levels of skills and understanding shown in the work. Highlighting these and using a “best fit” approach can help both teachers and moderators to determine the marks to be awarded.

Where work clearly meets all the requirements of the specification and the descriptors at a level expected for candidates working at GCSE then full marks can and should be awarded. It is important when deciding on marks to be awarded that teachers recognise that “strong performance in one area can balance weaker performance elsewhere” (page 38 of specification).

## 45803: Unit 3 Child Study

Although some aspects of the child study build on the very good practice developed in the legacy specification this is a new child study with new requirements marked against a new set of assessment criteria.

Centres have generally responded well to the new format and some excellent and high quality studies were seen. Many centres have recognised the fact that the research requirement is only one part, albeit important, and that planned research should concentrate on information which will help candidates to understand how the chosen topic might help to encourage and enhance the development of the child being studied. Consequently candidates have produced more concise and selective research which has resulted in more realistic and manageable studies. Some centres are still allowing candidates to include an unrealistic amount of unnecessary research which could not possibly have been completed within the timeframe suggested in the specification. This puts unnecessary and unfair pressure on candidates.

Centres are reminded that candidates are required to select one of the Child Study Tasks provided by AQA which they subsequently research, investigate and plan appropriate activities for two of the four required visits.

Centres are also reminded that the child being studied should still be under the age of 5 years **at the end of the study**.

### **Introductory visit.**

- This should be the first piece of work that candidates carry out and should be completed **before** they choose a Child Study Task.
- Generally, introductory visits were of a good standard, covered all the required areas and showed sound knowledge and understanding of all four areas of development as well as play and learning.
- Assessment of levels of development was usually supported by actual observations made during these visits and supported by references to norms, quotes and specialist terms. All of this provided a firm foundation for the rest of the study.
- Where candidates did not support their assessment of the areas of development with observations, visits often read as an amalgam of milestones which possibly showed awareness of expected levels but no real understanding.
- Similarly the use of checklists of milestones was often limiting in terms of showing knowledge and understanding. To simply state “my child can do this” is limiting in terms of showing knowledge and understanding.
- Conclusions to the introduction were often absent.

### **AQA externally-set task**

- The choice of Child Study Task should be made after completion of the introductory visit and based on knowledge and understanding of the child’s initial level of development and interests – it should be written out and candidates need to give a clear rationale as to why they have chosen the task. It is recommended that several reasons are given.
- While tasks were usually appropriate to the child being studied it was clear that in many instances tasks had clearly been chosen for the candidates by the centre. This can make it more difficult to justify the choice in relation to the child.
- Candidates need to be given the opportunity to choose what they feel is appropriate for their child based on their own knowledge and understanding of their child’s development and interests.

### **Research**

- To be effective and useful research for the chosen task needs to be planned. As with the research task, candidates could be encouraged to have a clear focus for each piece of research.
- Where possible planning should include both primary and secondary research and there should be some consideration of suitable activities to enable candidates to make appropriate choices.
- Research should be concise and selective - and referenced specifically to the child being studied.
- Candidates need to show that they understand that the purpose of the research is to enable them to choose suitable activities which will help to encourage development and enable them to observe this – this should include some consideration of possible activities
- Any primary research must be focused and inform planning for visits.
- Many candidates chose to use questionnaires in their research. Often these were overlong, lacked a clear purpose and rarely related to the child being studied.

### **Evaluation of research**

- Candidates need to analyse and evaluate their research and use this to clearly identify and justify activities that they have chosen to use in two of their four visits.
- While it is acceptable for candidates to base all their visits on the chosen child study task this can often limit opportunities to observe and comment on all areas of development in some depth and can lead to repetition

<b>Planning for visits – additional research</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Candidates are advised to include a planning chart for their visits identifying chosen activities, indicating which are based on research and which areas of development they will mainly support.</li><li>• There must be some evidence of additional research for visits used to inform planning and the choice of expectations.</li><li>• In those visits based on the chosen child study task some reference should be made to the research already carried out. Additional research can be included appropriate to the planning of the activities for the visit – this could be a simple interview, a risk assessment, a choice of recipe for making cakes etc.</li><li>• For visits <b>not</b> related to the child study task some simple research to enable planning and understanding of how the activity might help development should be included.</li><li>• For all visits this “research should be concise and selective” and “should be presented on 1 – 2 sides of A4 paper” (see page 23 of the specification)</li></ul>
<b>Aims and expectations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visits need to have clear aims related to aspects of development and achievable and measurable expectations. However, candidates do not need to identify aims for all four areas of development in every visit and for every activity.</li><li>• Aims and expectations should be based on the activities chosen and supported by reference to expected milestones and knowledge and understanding of the child’s levels of development.</li><li>• Where candidates listed expected milestones as expectations without reference to activities, consequent evaluations were often brief, simplistic and not related to observations.</li></ul>
<b>Observations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These need to be recorded in sufficient detail to support analysis and evaluation of development.</li><li>• Observations should cover the whole of the visit and not simply concentrate on the activities planned as this can limit opportunities to observe other areas of development and play.</li></ul>
<b>Evaluation of visits</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is important that evaluations are based on and supported by observations, otherwise they cannot be credited.</li><li>• Although aims and expectations may concentrate on only 1/2 areas of development and learning candidates must evaluate all four areas of development in every visit, commenting on change and progress as necessary.</li><li>• There should be a brief conclusion to each visit and some consideration of the value of the chosen activities and related research in encouraging development</li></ul>
<b>Final evaluation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To justify the higher marks candidates need to compare how the child’s development has progressed from the start of the study to the final visit, identifying where possible specific changes which were evident.</li><li>• There should also be some consideration of how the research and choice of activities have helped the candidate to observe and encourage development and learning.</li></ul>

## **Marking and using the assessment criteria.**

### **AO1: Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of a range of contexts**

As for the research task, knowledge and understanding should be evident throughout all of the work submitted - observations, evaluations of development and learning, planning, selection and use of research and in the range of activities chosen for visits. Work should include reasoned, logical opinions and be supported with quotes, references to norms and a range of specialist terms.

### **AO2 (i): Apply skills knowledge and understanding in a variety of contexts and in planning and carrying out investigations and tasks**

To gain the higher marks planning must be evident for both research and all visits. Activities should be chosen to encourage the child's development and learning and reflect their age, stage of development and interests. Aims and expectations should be appropriate, achievable and measurable.

### **AO2 (ii): Recording, collating and presenting information appropriately**

Work should be well organised and presented using a range of appropriate techniques. Observations should be sufficiently detailed to enable effective evaluation of all PIES in every visit. If high marks are awarded high level communication skills should be evident throughout.

### **AO3: Analyse and evaluate information, sources and evidence, make reasoned judgements and present conclusions**

Where high marks are awarded all aspects of the study should be evaluated – including all research and all visits and observations (including the introductory visit). There should be a final evaluation which comments on change and progress seen as well as on the value of the chosen child study task in encouraging and supporting development. Candidates should be able to give logical opinions and draw reasoned conclusions relating these to their observations and supporting them with references and quotes.

## **Administration**

Centres must ensure that all documentation is completed and signed appropriately. This includes:

- Centre Mark Sheets
- Candidates Record Forms
- Centre Declaration Sheets.
- Centres must check that marks have been totalled and transferred correctly – often marks on annotation sheets did not match those on either the Candidates Record Forms or Centre Marks Sheets.

Candidates' work must be securely fastened, clearly labelled with the candidate's name and number and the centre name and number, and removed from hard backed folders before sending to the moderator.

## **Annotation of controlled assessment work**

It is a requirement of the Code of Practice that centres provide clear annotation to support the marks being awarded (Section 6.5 of the specification: page 31). While many centres provided excellent and detailed annotation using the annotation sheets provided by AQA and

highlighted copies of the assessment criteria, others provided no annotation to show how and why marks were being awarded which made it very difficult for the moderator to support the centre's assessments.

### **Internal Standardisation**

Where more than one teacher is involved in the delivery of the subject it is imperative that internal standardisation is rigorous to ensure that all work has been marked to the same standard and to avoid possible adjustment of marks.