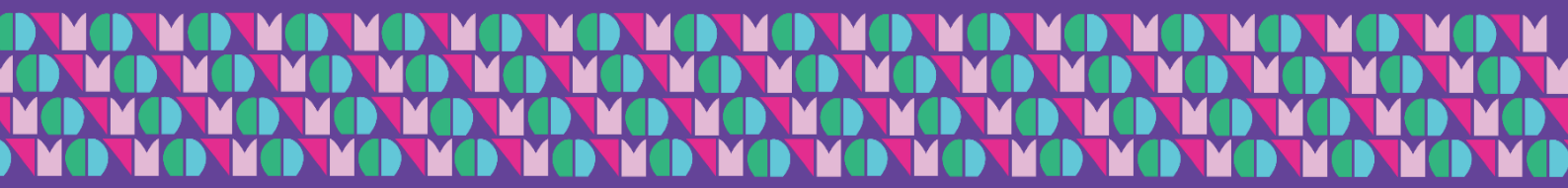




# PARENTING FOCUS OCN PORTFOLIO OF QUALIFICATIONS



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## BACKGROUND

Parenting Focus (formerly Parenting NI) has long been recognised as the leading parenting support organisation in Northern Ireland, dedicated to empowering and supporting parents. As the challenges faced by families continue to grow and evolve, Parenting Focus identified a crucial need to ensure that practitioners across various fields—including social care, childcare, and family support—are fully equipped to meet the increasing demands of the families they serve.

In response to this need, Parenting Focus, in collaboration with the Open College Network (OCN) NI has developed qualifications aimed at both individuals and practitioners. By addressing key areas such as communication, healthy living, emotional wellbeing and parenting strategies, the OCN equips individuals and professionals with the knowledge and skillset to address the complex needs of today's families. By investing in the development of both parents and professionals, we are committed to building a brighter future for children and young people across Northern Ireland.

## PARENTING FOCUS

Parenting Focus, Northern Ireland's leading parenting support charity, has 45 years of experience providing needs-led family support services to improve the lives of children, young people and parents. We effectively engage and empower families through diverse support services, understanding the importance of involving parents in service development. Parenting Focus defines a 'parent' as anyone with a significant role in raising a child, not just biological parents. Our mission is to enhance parents' skills and wellbeing, promoting physical, emotional and mental health through preventive and early intervention programs. We collaborate with parents to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Parenting Focus (formerly Parenting NI) firmly believes that the most effective way to support children is by empowering and supporting those who parent them. Our core mission is to enhance the skills, understanding, and opportunities available to parents, while promoting the physical, emotional, and mental health wellbeing of both parents and their children. We achieve this through the development and delivery of tailored support programmes that are designed to meet the evolving needs of families.

Parenting Focus delivers a wide range of high-quality support services to meet the needs of parents:

**One-to-One Support:** Our Freephone Information and Support Line, email, and web chat services provide parents with one-to-one guidance, listening, and reassurance. This entry point offers a safe, non-judgmental space for parents to explore issues, while connecting them to additional services when necessary.

**Group Programmes:** We offer evidence-based parenting programmes and workshops, designed to improve parenting skills and confidence. These include Sink or Swim which supports parents with mental health challenges and Keeping Your Cool which helps parents manage anger. Programmes aim to reduce stress and promote positive outcomes for children and families.

**Family Support Services:** Our Dad's work supports all dads but also has a focus on separated dads to help them build parenting confidence and social connections. We also provide home-based family visits in Belfast and the Southern Trusts, offering practical and emotional support to families facing life challenges.

**Parental Participation:** We ensure parents' voices are heard through steering groups and consultations that influence policy decisions affecting families.

**Training for Practitioners:** We offer workshops, accredited training, and seminars for professionals working with parents and families.

**Employee Wellbeing:** We provide wellbeing workshops and access to our Parenting Family portal for employers across Northern Ireland, giving parents 24/7 access to parenting resources.

**Online Resources:** Our website, social media all offer a wealth of parenting tips, videos, podcasts, and articles.

As a result of our work, parents feel supported, less stressed, and confident that their voices are heard.

For more information about the qualifications or to register your interest please email [education@parentingfocus.org](mailto:education@parentingfocus.org).

## *OCN I – PARENTING SKILLS: QUALIFICATION AIM*

The OCN NI Level 1 Award in Parenting Skills qualification has been designed to provide learners with an introduction to parenting skills.

Learners will develop an understanding of how to care for children and on the roles and responsibilities within parent and family units. *Duration: 4 weeks*

### *QUALIFICATION OBJECTIVES*

Learners have a choice of units to complete with the objective to enhance the skills, knowledge of parenting skills by providing support through

#### *Budgeting for Parenting*

- Know about sources of income and expenditure for a household
- Understand how credit and interest applies when buying equipment for a household
- Know about debt management
- Be able to prepare a budget for a household

#### *Caring for Children*

- Understand how care for children of different ages
- Be able to choose appropriate clothing and footwear for children of different ages
- Understand the importance of play for children of different ages
- Recognise the importance of safety and hygiene when caring for children
- Be aware of the nutritional needs of children

#### *Child Safety and Wellbeing*

- Understand how to protect children from accidents in the home
- Be aware of food safety when preparing food for children
- Be aware of childhood immunisation
- Know how to care for children with common childhood conditions

#### *Communicating and Reading with Children*

- Know how to communicate with children and encourage language development
- Recognise the benefits of reading with children
- Be able to make a resource to support story reading

### *Exploring Family Relationships*

- Recognise different types of family units and the roles within
- Recognise causes of problems in family life and their impact
- Understand own personal responsibilities within the family
- Be able to develop own strategies for future development as a member of the family unit

### *Skills for Parenting*

- Understand the role of a parent
- Recognise different responsibilities and rights within a family
- Understand the importance of listening to children
- Recognise the major stages of a child's development
- Know how children learn through daily activities

### *Understanding Healthy Eating for Children*

- Recognise the importance of healthy diets for children
- Know how to encourage children to eat healthily
- Know how to wean a baby
- Be able to plan menus for children in line with healthy eating guidance

## *OCN I – COMMUNITY INDEPENDENCE: QUALIFICATION AIM*

*The OCN NI Level 1 Award in Community Independence qualification has been designed to provide learners with foundation skills in the areas of communication. This will assist them in developing life and work skills. It will also encourage learners to become more independent and to demonstrate confidence in applying decision making skills within various situations. This will enable the learner to make informed decisions and understand human rights and responsibilities within society. Duration 6 weeks.*

### *QUALIFICATION OBJECTIVES*

The objective of this qualification is to enhance the skills, knowledge and practice of learners by providing support through

#### *Decision Making*

- Understand how to make informed decisions

#### *Applying Assertiveness and Decision-Making Skills*

- Know how to be confident in various situations
- Know the roles and responsibilities of others in various situations
- Know how to use negotiation to achieve a desired outcome
- Know how to be assertive and use self-control to achieve a desired outcome

#### *Human Rights and Responsibilities within Society*

- Be aware of human rights
- Understand the role of the law within society
- Understand different election processes
- Understand rights and responsibilities

## *OCN I – APPROACHES TO WELLBEING: QUALIFICATION AIM*

*The OCN NI Level 1 Award in Approaches to Wellbeing has been designed to provide learners with the basic skills and knowledge of mindfulness. The learner will also develop techniques which may contribute to an individual's wellbeing. Duration 4 weeks.*

### *QUALIFICATION OBJECTIVES*

The objective of this qualification is to enhance the skills, knowledge and practice of learners by providing support through

#### *Exploring Mindfulness for Wellbeing*

- Understand the role of Mindfulness and its significance for wellbeing
- Understand the techniques required to carry out a basic Mindfulness session
- Be able to use basic techniques to facilitate a short Mindfulness session
- Be able to evaluate own practice

## *OCN II – AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING: QUALIFICATION AIM*

*The OCN Level 2 award in Mental Health and Wellbeing will enable learners to gain an introductory awareness of mental health and understand how their own well-being and that of individuals living with mental health issues may be improved. They will gain an understanding of difference between mental health and mental illness, the impact of these on individuals along with the stigma and support networks, including interventions to promote positive mental health and make appropriate choices to improve mental health and wellbeing. Duration 4 weeks.*

### *QUALIFICATION OBJECTIVES*

The objective of this qualification is to enhance the skills, knowledge and practice of learners by providing support through

#### *Understanding mental health and wellbeing*

- Understand mental health and mental illness
- Understand the impact of mental illness
- Be aware of mental health interventions and support
- Understand the person-centred approach to mental health improvement and the legislative framework.

## *OCN II – HEALTHY LIVING: QUALIFICATION AIM*

*The OCN Level 2 certificate in Healthy Living will allow learners to develop skills and knowledge in health/hygiene, home and personal development. Duration 3 months.*

### *QUALIFICATION OBJECTIVES*

The objective of this qualification is to enhance the skills, knowledge and practice of learners by providing support through

#### *Healthy Living for the Individual*

- Recognise the importance of personal fitness and how it contributes to a healthy lifestyle
- Understand the importance of a balanced diet in promoting personal health
- Recognise the importance of personal hygiene
- Be aware of a range of contraception methods
- Know how to develop personal health through action planning

#### *Health Promotion*

- Be aware of the purpose and different types of health promotion activities
- Be aware of the benefits of health promotion
- Recognise how health promotion campaigns can address selected health risks

#### *Skills for Personal Development*

- Be able to develop a personal Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis
- Be able to identify own goals and objectives for self-improvement
- Understand effective time management
- Understand how to improve confidence and self-esteem
- Know what is meant by the term learning styles

#### *Employment within Hospitality, Sport and/or Care*

- Recognise different types of employment opportunities within the hospitality, sport and/or care sectors
- Understand what is meant by the terms labour market and hidden labour market
- Be able to produce a Curriculum Vitae (CV) and apply for a job vacancy

## *Mental Health Awareness*

- Understand what is meant by the term mental health
- Be aware of treatments for mental health conditions
- Understand anger management techniques
- Understand the role of therapeutic communication skills in mental health
- Be able to identify agencies offering support and information on mental health issues

## *OCN II – AWARENESS OF LONELINESS: QUALIFICATION AIM*

*The OCN Level 2 award in Awareness of Loneliness is to provide learners with an understanding of different aspects of loneliness and signpost individuals to appropriate support with an understanding of what is meant by loneliness and isolation and the causes and impact of loneliness and isolation with a plan for programme to address loneliness or isolation. Duration 4 weeks.*

## *QUALIFICATION OBJECTIVES*

The objective of this qualification is to enhance the skills, knowledge and practice of learners by providing support through

### *Understanding Loneliness and Isolation*

- Understand what is meant by loneliness and isolation
- Understand the causes and impact of loneliness and isolation
- Be aware of the support available to address loneliness and isolation
- Know how to develop a programme plan to address loneliness or isolation

## *OCN IV – WORK WITH PARENTS: QUALIFICATION AIM*

The OCN Level 4 qualification in Working with Parents is designed for key workers who provide support to children and families with multiple needs. It is ideal for professionals working in family intervention projects, community settings, and social care. The qualification also targets a wide range of roles, including:

- Childcare Practitioners in private settings
- SureStart Practitioners
- Classroom Assistants
- Community Workers
- Early years Practitioners
- After-school Practitioners
- Family support Practitioners
- Anyone working with parents

The programme equips these professionals with the skills and knowledge to better support families and enhance their capacity to meet complex needs. Duration 4-6 months.

### *QUALIFICATION OBJECTIVES*

The objective of this qualification is to enhance the skills, knowledge and practice of practitioners by providing support to parents through

Working with Parents to build and maintain effective relationships

- The principles and values of working with parents
- How to build and maintain positive relationships when working with parents
- The barriers to engaging effectively when working with parents (including separated parents)
- Their own organisational processes for working with parents

Supporting Parents with multiple and complex needs

- Understanding the diverse needs of parents and the impact on families
- Understanding family dynamics and the impact on family relationships
- Being able to work with parents to address multiple and complex needs to facilitate change
- Understanding the importance of partnership working with other support services

### Quality Improvement within Parenting Support

- Aware of current parent support services
- Able to develop and implement improvements to parenting support
- Embed quality approaches and improvement strategies to promote continuous service improvement.

### Promoting Parent and Child Play

- Understand the principles and values of parent/child relationship
- Understanding the theory of play
- Being able to improve parent and child play

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