



**CIMSPA PROFESSIONAL STANDARD:
POPULATION SPECIALISM**

Working with Children

(FULL STANDARD)

EDITION: V1.0

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Working with Children

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ABOUT THIS STANDARD

This document is a CIMSPA Professional Standard: Population Specialism (full version).

This full version of the standard is available to CIMSPA awarding organisation, skills development, higher education and further education partners.

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1. Overview

Professional Standard: Population Specialism Working with Children

This Professional Standard: Population Specialism, Working with Children outlines the essential knowledge and skills that are needed to meet the requirements of the sector minimum deployment standards.

Note: “Professional Standard: Population Specialism” will be abbreviated throughout this document to “Population Specialism”; the reader should understand this abbreviation as the full title.

This full version of this standard is available to CIMSPA awarding organisation, skills development, higher education and further education partners. It provides guidance for the development of education products that will be endorsed by CIMSPA.

The Working with Children Population Specialism covers job roles that sit within the sport and physical activity sector as part of all industries.

This CIMSPA Population Specialism allows you to demonstrate your expertise in working with children in a sport and physical activity setting.

This Population Specialism can be used as follows:

1. Combined with an occupation standard to form an educational product: e.g. Occupation: Coach; Population Specialism: Working with Children.
2. Combined with an occupation standard and additional specialism(s) to form an education product: e.g. Occupation: Coach; Environment Specialism: Working in the School Environment (Out of Curriculum); Population Specialism: Working with Children.
3. As a standalone product that can be completed as continuing professional development: e.g. working with secondary-school children.

Endorsed qualification logo

Qualifications that meet the requirements of this CIMSPA Professional Standard will display this official CIMSPA endorsement logo.



2. Scope of the Working with Children Professional Standard: Population Specialism

This Population Specialism supports an individual who is working with the following people:

- Core population: children aged 5–18.
- Specialist population: primary age 5–11, secondary age: 11–18.

Individuals that meet this standard will:

UNDERSTAND:

- How to work with a range of children with different needs in a way which suits the children's needs and over a period of time that is sufficient enough to show improvement against the children's needs and aspirations.

HAVE DEMONSTRATED:

- The ability to work with a group of children with different needs in a way which suits the children's needs and over a period of time that is sufficient enough to show improvement against a child's needs and aspirations.

Activities could include:

- Coaching children to learn a new skill.
- Instructing children to improve their fitness.
- Delivering sport or fitness activities for fun and enjoyment.

This Professional Standard outlines the population specialism's knowledge and skills.

3. Summary of knowledge and skills

Working with Children

Topic	Knowledge and understanding	Skills
The rights of a child and their access to sport and physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the relevant UN guidelines on the rights of a child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act in accordance with the relevant UN guidelines on the rights of a child when delivering sport and or physical activity activities with children.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the relevant UN guidelines on access to sport and physical activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide all children with inclusive opportunities to enjoy sport and physical activity in line with the UN guidelines.
Safe and inclusive practice when working with children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the professional boundaries when working with children. Know what components comprise a safe environment for children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure safe environments for children to participate in sport, even when authority figures may need to be challenged.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the reasons for supporting inclusive activity. Know how to make an environment inclusive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure inclusive environments for children to participate in sport and physical activity.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand when, where and how to appropriately challenge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain appropriate professional and personal standards in coaching practice and follow the relevant codes of practice.
The development stages of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of whole-child development through the physical, social, emotional and cognitive domains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and adapt sport and physical activity delivery appropriately. Interpret development models to meet children’s needs, regardless of their relative development stage.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and understanding of current best practice using at least one youth development model: e.g. Youth Physical Development Model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan and deliver progressive activities, appropriate to the development stage and aligned to current best practice: e.g. the Youth Physical Development Model.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and understanding of which physical attributes should be prioritised for each child at various stages of development. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and understanding of the physical development of children and the factors that may affect this, such as relative age effect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate an ability to adapt practice that prioritises the appropriate physical qualities for each child’s stage of physical development, including an understanding of the prioritisation of Fundamental Movement Skill (FMS) development and bodyweight management training.

Topic	Knowledge and understanding	Skills
The development stages of children (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and understanding of the social development of children at various stages of development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for children to develop and practise their social skills, including the development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Confidence. – Competence. – Autonomy. – Decision-making. – Leadership. – Relatedness and connection, both with peers and adults. • Understand a range of delivery methods to support children to practice their social skills, including the development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Confidence. – Competence. – Autonomy. – Decision-making. – Leadership. – Relatedness and connection, both with peers and adults. • Adapts delivery to promote the children’s social skills.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and understanding of the emotional development of children, and associated models. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the different stages of emotional development in children. • Adapt activities according to children’s needs at various stages of emotional development. • Adapt activities according to children’s needs at various transition points.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and understanding of the cognitive development of children and associated models. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the different stages of cognitive development in children. • Adapt activities according to children’s needs at various stages of cognitive development. • Adapt activities according to children’s needs at various transition points.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know how to address gender differences, understanding motivations via programmes equally attractive to girls and boys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiate sessions based on gender needs and motivations.
External factors influencing participation in sport and physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the influence of transition phases including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Family changes. – School changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ From primary to secondary, ○ From secondary to further education and higher education. – School club links. – Exit pathways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide, and/or offer signposting to and/or support for children that require additional guidance during a transition period to retain their enjoyment and participation in sport and physical activity.

Topic	Knowledge and understanding	Skills
Engage appropriately with children, families, responsible adults, carers and parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the range of wants and needs of those who support children in a sport and physical activity environment. • Understand an organisation's policies and procedures in relation to the positive engagement of responsible adults in children's sport and physical activity. • Knowledge of developing an appropriate learning environment and reporting procedures for inappropriate behaviour. • Knowledge of how to maintain a learning environment that is conducive to learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use responsible adults to support children's development in a positive manner and in line with policies and procedures. • Help responsible adults reinforce positive messages of sport, physical activity and healthy lifestyles. • Deal with conflict in a way appropriate to the child's environment. • Demonstrate the ability to communicate with a child's support system to explain development needs. • Maintain an appropriate learning environment, challenge inappropriate behaviour and report appropriately.
Positive behaviour management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of methods to positively engage all children in a group, or individually, which will both sufficiently challenge and offer opportunities to be successful. • Understand how to develop an agreed strategy for children to self-manage and self-maintain a positive environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead sessions that engage and motivate all children. • Calmly manage the behaviour of individuals and groups of children modelling behaviours of personal and group responsibility and self-management. • Consistently maintain and develop a positive environment appropriate to all children.
Health and wellbeing of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the age specific Chief Medical Officer (CMO) guidelines for physical activity. Understand nutritional requirements for children. • Identify the moral purposes of a coach to develop well rounded young people in and through sport and physical activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to provide sessions that meet strength, muscular and skeletal development needs of children. • Able to include appropriate levels of moderate and vigorous activity in sessions, to contribute to a child meeting Chief Medical Officer guidance. • Plan for, and draw out, the life skills children develop through their experiences in sport and physical activity and make clear links to their wider lives.
Working with a team of children's specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the role and type of assistants specific to a children's setting: e.g. parent or carer, assistant coach, young volunteer, apprentice, activity assistant and non-coaching volunteers, for example a club welfare officer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the ability to use a team to provide safe, engaging sessions aligned to the objectives of the organisation and/or programme.

Topic	Knowledge and understanding	Skills
Working with a team of children's specialists (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the skills required and parameters of each role and how to deploy them appropriately and in line with policies and procedures for each role: e.g. which positions require a DBS check. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate diligence in the recruitment, checks, mentoring and support offered to assistant roles.
Professional practice when working with children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the roles and values when working with children and ensure the motivations reflect the children's motivations. • Identify good practice in the industry when working with children through professional ethics, values and appropriate legislation such as health and safety and safeguarding children. • Understand the importance of being a positive role model to children and how children model behaviour on that of an appropriate adult. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to adapt delivery style and personal behaviours to meet children's needs, motivations and context. • Display professional conduct at all times when working with children

4. Product development guidance

This section is aimed at organisations developing formal educational products mapping to this Population Specialism. The guidance should be considered in the development of all educational products seeking CIMSPA endorsement.

The CIMSPA Professional Development Board (PDB) has agreed any of the formal educational products listed in the table below can be developed for the Population Specialism, Working with Children. Where evidence that all elements of the Population Specialism are included, CIMSPA endorsement can be sought.

Educational product	Mapping requirements	Professional Standard Population Specialism achieved on attainment?
Regulated vocational qualification	Fully mapped	YES
Apprenticeship programme	Fully mapped	YES
HE programme/modules	Fully mapped	YES
CPD programme/modules	Partially mapped	NO

All formal educational products that are seeking CIMSPA endorsement must be submitted to CIMSPA and should include all elements outlined in the Population Specialism and assessed in line with the intention of the standard.

Education providers seeking CIMSPA endorsement for a product against this Population Specialism are asked to consider the following:

- a) They determine and justify the level of the product they have developed, in line with regulator guidance. To ensure parity, the level for all educational products that fully map to this Professional Standard should be the same.

The level assigned is determined by leading awarding organisations currently offering qualifications in the sector in which this specialism resides.

This is not a first-to-post exercise but one in which education providers are invited to submit their levelled units/full qualification for review as part of the CIMSPA endorsement process.

Once agreed by CIMSPA, all subsequent fully-mapped educational products must conform to the level set for this Population Specialism.

Level descriptors set out the generic knowledge and skills associated with the typical holder of a qualification at a given level and it should be ensured that educational products fully mapping to this Population Specialism are a 'best-fit' for the level assigned.

- b) They determine the total qualification time for the qualification/unit and outline the minimum requirements for practical assessment.

When working with children, sufficient time between the first session and final assessment needs to be allowed to show improvements in the participant's skill development, lifestyle, health, and fitness dependent on the goals identified. For example, to show behaviour change a plan to cover

a 12-week period of delivery with a minimum of assessed evidence of six sessions of 30 minutes duration is advised.

- c) They stipulate practical assessment must be conducted, where practically possible, in a real-world environment. For example, 'on the job' or at work. For someone working with children in a sport and physical activity environment this could include; sports halls, swimming pools, outdoors, or other appropriate spaces.

Where possible a practical end-point assessment is conducted with 'real participants'.

The use of peers for an end-point practical assessment is not deemed appropriate.

Reasonable adjustments can be applied where specific circumstances make this unviable.

- d) Their quality assurance meets the appropriate regulator's guidance, including: internal and external quality assurance, staffing requirements and assessment generation and evidence.

5. Learning and development requirements (LDRs)

The LDRs outline the key areas of learning and assessment that should be contained within any educational product seeking CIMSPA endorsement against a Professional Standard. There are 9 key areas of learning and development for the Population Specialism: Working with Children, of which all areas are interconnected and mandatory. The key areas are:

1. The rights of a child and their access to sport and physical activity.
2. Safe and inclusive practice when working with children.
3. The development stages of children.
4. External factors influencing participation in sport and physical activity.
5. Engage appropriately with children, families, responsible adults, carers and parents.
6. Positive behaviour management.
7. Health and wellbeing of children.
8. Working with a team of children's specialists.
9. Professional practice when working with children.

N.B. Examples (e.g.) are given within the LDRs to provide an overview of the knowledge and skills most relevant to this population specialism. It is not mandatory to assess learners against 100% of the examples provided, however, sufficient coverage to ensure occupational competence on achievement must be ensured. This will be reviewed as part of the CIMSPA endorsement process.

1. The rights of a child and their access to sport and physical activity

Ref	Knowledge and understanding:	Those Working with Children must:
K1.1.1	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the components of the UNCRC, including the right to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education. Play. Health. Respect for privacy and family life.
K1.1.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the application of the UNCRC in sport and physical activity.
K1.2	UNESCO International Charter of Physical Activity and Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the UNESCO guidelines on access to sport and physical activity.

Ref	Skills:	Those Working with Children must be able to:
S1.1	Support the rights of the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and deliver activities in accordance with the UNCRC.
S1.2	Support accessibility of sport and physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and deliver activities in accordance with the UNESCO guidelines on access to sport and physical activity.

2. Safe and inclusive practice when working with children

Ref	Knowledge and understanding:	Those Working with Children must:
K2.1.1	Safe environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify what is a safe environment for a child.
K2.1.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail the process for challenging when environments are deemed unsafe.
K2.2.1	Safe practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the professional boundaries required when working with children.
K2.2.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail the process for challenging when practice and / or activities are deemed unsafe.
K2.3.1	Inclusive practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the importance of providing inclusive practice.
K2.3.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the elements of an inclusive environment.

Ref	Skills:	Those Working with Children must be able to:
S2.1.1	Safe and inclusive delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an inclusive and safe sport and physical activity environment for children.
S2.1.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate delivery of inclusive activities for children.
S2.1.3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhere to appropriate procedures, and professional standards.

3. The development stages of children

Ref	Knowledge and understanding:	Those Working with Children must:
K3.1.1	Child development models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe whole child development through different domains: e.g. physical, social, emotional, cognitive.
K3.1.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the relationship between the different domains.
K3.1.3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a range of child development models: e.g. Youth Physical Development Model.
K3.1.4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the application of a child development model in sport and physical activity.
K3.2	Children's physical development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the stages of children's physical development and factors which might influence it or be influenced by it.
K3.3	Children's social development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the stages of children's social development and factors which might influence it or be influenced by it.
K3.4	Children's emotional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the stages of children's emotional development and factors which might influence it or be influenced by it.
K3.5	Children's cognitive development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the stages of children's cognitive development and factors which might influence it or be influenced by it.
Ref	Skills:	Those Working with Children must be able to:
S3.1.1	Delivering sport and physical activity considering the whole-child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan progressive activities developing across all relevant domains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical: e.g. fundamental movement skills, bodyweight management training, relative age effect, transitions. Social: e.g. social skills, confidence, competence, autonomy, decision making, leadership, relatedness and connection, transitions. Emotional: e.g. emotional self-awareness, recognising other's emotions, emotional regulation. Cognitive: e.g. Piaget's cognitive theories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sensorimotor theory. Pre-operational theory. Concrete operational theory. Formal operational theory.
S3.1.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver progressive activities developing children across all relevant domains: e.g. physical, social, emotional, cognitive.
S3.1.3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate adaptation of activities based on the development needs of the child.
S3.1.4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate activities developing children across all relevant domains: e.g. physical, social, emotional, cognitive.

4. External factors influencing participation in sport and physical activity

Ref	Knowledge and understanding:	Those Working with Children must:
K4.1	Personal influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe personal factors which may impact on participation: e.g. family, other physical activities, social activities, transitions.
K4.2	Education influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe educational factors which may impact on participation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary school. Secondary school / further education changes. School-club links. Transitions.
K4.3	External influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how to identify and respond to external factors which may influence participation.

Ref	Skills:	Those Working with Children must be able to:
S4.1.1	Reducing barriers to participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support to children facing external challenges to their participation in sport and physical activity.
S4.1.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide signposting to children facing external challenges to their participation in sport and physical activity.

5. Engage appropriately with children, families, responsible adults, carers and parents

Ref	Knowledge and understanding:	Those Working with Children must:
K5.1.1	People who influence participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the range of people who might influence a child's participation.
K5.1.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the potential wants and needs of the range of people who might influence a child's participation.
K5.2	Communicating with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe an organisation's policies and procedures to support communication with the range of people who might influence a child's participation, including those designed to promote positive engagement, and reporting inappropriate behaviour.
K5.3	Positive learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how to maintain a positive learning environment.

Ref	Skills:	Those Working with Children must be able to:
S5.1	Embedding policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate adherence to organisational policies which support participation.
S5.2	Positive relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate positive working relationships with adults who can influence children's participation. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforcing positive messages linked to sport, physical activity and health. Dealing with conflict.

S5.3	Positive learning environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the development of a positive learning environment and culture.
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6. Positive behaviour management

Ref	Knowledge and understanding:	Those Working with Children must:
K6.1	Positive behaviour management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define positive behaviour management.
K6.2	Differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe methods to differentiate groups to support attainable individual challenges.
K6.3	Positive learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how to support children to agree to take ownership of and manage a positive learning environment.

Ref	Skills:	Those Working with Children must be able to:
S6.1	Motivating children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver engaging sessions which motivate all children.
S6.2	Managing behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate behaviour management of individuals and groups in an appropriate manner.
S6.3	Modelling positive behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate modelling of appropriate behaviours: e.g. person and group responsibility and self-management.
S6.4	Positive learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the development of a positive learning environment through a fair and consistent approach.

7. Health and wellbeing of children

Ref	Knowledge and understanding:	Those Working with Children must:
K7.1	National health guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) Physical Activity Guidelines for Children and Young People (5-18 years).
K7.2	Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the nutritional requirements for children at different stages of physical development.
K7.3	Developing the whole-child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify reasons to develop the whole child through sport and activity: e.g. wider life skills.

Ref	Skills:	Those Working with Children must be able to...
S7.1.1	Needs of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the delivery of activities that meets the strength, muscular and skeletal development needs of children.

S7.1.2

- Demonstrate the delivery of activities which contribute to the achievement of the CMO guidelines.

S7.2 Wider life skills

- Relate the life skills being developed to the children's wider lives.
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8. Working with a team of children's specialists

Ref	Knowledge and understanding:	Those Working with Children must:
K8.1	Enablers of participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify those who might support children's participation: e.g. assistant coach, young volunteer, apprentice, activity assistant, club welfare officer.
K8.1.2		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Describe the role of those who might support children's participation.
K8.1.3		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify the skills required for the different roles and their associated parameters.
K8.1.4		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Summarise how to deploy the different roles effectively: e.g. which require DBS checks.

Ref	Skills:	Those Working with Children must be able to:
S8.1	Teamworking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrate the use of a team to deliver inclusive, safe and engaging activities.
S8.2	Supporting teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrate reference to the importance of recruitment, checks, mentoring and support offered to assistant roles.

9. Professional practice when working with children

Ref	Knowledge and understanding:	Those Working with Children must:
K9.1	Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify the values necessary to work with children.
K9.2	Industry good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Describe good practice in the industry when working with children: e.g. professional ethics, values, and the application of legislation.

Ref	Skills:	Those Working with Children must be able to:
S9.1	Adapting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrate adaptations in engagement to meet children's needs motivations, and context.
S9.2	Professional conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrate professional conduct when working with children.

6. Acknowledgements

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- Emma Atkins, David Turner, Steve McQuaid and Mat Glasson: UK Coaching (CIMSPA sector partner)
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