

SPECIALIST DIPLOMA IN EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION (SPECIAL NEEDS) (SDESN)

Course Objectives

- a) Lay the foundation for students to understand stages of typical and atypical development in relation to the various domains of physical, cognitive, language, and social-emotional development;
- b) Screen and assess young children using appropriate standardised and non-standardised screening tools & practices and collect useful data to formulate intervention plans;
- c) Plan and manage individualized educational plan for each child through the use of functional assessments thereafter develop and implement appropriate strategies to critically evaluate an optimal outcome for the child and family;
- d) Adopt a transdisciplinary team approach for functional intervention through the use of a variety of teaching, embedded therapeutic approaches and curricula in a routines-based, developmentally appropriate, and naturalistic environment;
- e) Build a culture of communication and collaboration by working closely with caregivers, teachers, and relevant stakeholders to recognise and support children's developmental needs in a timely and structured manner; and
- f) Advocate for children with special needs by being a resource person to colleagues, stakeholders, and parents on strategies, keeping abreast of policies pertaining to the care, management, and education of children with special needs.

Module Synopses

Post-Diploma Certificate 1 (180 hours)	
1	<p>Typical and Atypical Early Childhood Development (60 hours)</p> <p>This module will examine the stages of early development in young children. The focus will be on physical, cognitive, social and emotional processes with some play behaviours. The module will further review determinants and risk factors associated with early development which may lead to atypical development in infancy and early childhood. The age range to be considered is from conception to age eight years. Risk factors refer to prenatal (to include genetic and heredity abnormalities), neonatal and postnatal factors, and other factors which may lead to premature and low birth weight infants with special care needs.</p>

2	<p>Issues & Trends and Professional Roles in Early Intervention (30 hours)</p> <p>This module provides an overview of some of the current issues in inclusive education and how these issues may impact the work of educators. The module will also touch on global shifts in the concept of inclusion and special education, key initiatives of policy makers and professionals in Singapore concerned with the care, management, and education of preschool children with developmental or special educational needs. Particular focus will be on learners and inclusive practices with specific reference to relevant theories, issues, trends, and research both internationally and within the Singapore context. Issues around translating policy into practice will also be addressed.</p>
3	<p>Principles of Assessment (30 hours)</p> <p>This module equips students with the principles of early childhood screening and assessment as well as skills and dispositions required to gather information for stakeholders (for example, educators and families) and work with specialist professionals for the purpose of intervention planning. This module builds on the understanding of diversity in the inclusive classroom and provides an overview of identification, assessment, and support for learning in young children who are at risk of developing learning and behavioural challenges.</p>
4	<p>Constructing a Meaningful Educational Setting (30 hours)</p> <p>This module builds on the students' knowledge of language, literacy, social and emotional, and motor development of children to further explore a variety of strategies for enhancing and supporting the development of these domains. A focus on differentiated instructions will be covered in tandem with classroom and behaviour management.</p>
5	<p>Working Collaboratively with Parents and Other Professionals (30 hours)</p> <p>This module includes theories and models of parenting / caregiving in managing children with diverse needs and issues & support services for caregivers of young children at risk. Transdisciplinary approaches / models and effective communication skills for collaborative teamwork will also be discussed.</p>

Post-Diploma Certificate 2 (180 hours)	
6	<p>Assessment, Evaluation and Programming (30 hours)</p> <p>This module will introduce students to an array of assessment tools adopted by the early intervention settings in Singapore, to help them understand children and be able to develop appropriate individualized management and educational intervention plans including the adoption of the ECHO framework. The functional assessment, transdisciplinary team practices and functional intervention approach will be emphasized. The cycle of assessing, planning, implementing, monitoring, reflecting and reassessing will be addressed.</p>
7	<p>Early Years Curricula and Intervention Strategies (I) (60 hours)</p> <p>This module will include the following areas: physical, sensory, intellectual, communication, social, emotional and behavioral difficulties and disabilities. A variety of curricula and teaching approaches will be covered although the main focus will be on routines-based, functional, developmentally appropriate activities, natural and inclusive environments, family-centered and child-directed approaches. Such strategies and approaches will be considered and critically evaluated for optimal outcomes for the child and the family.</p>
8	<p>Early Years Curricula and Intervention Strategies (II) (30 hours)</p> <p>This module explores various approaches of therapy used by the allied health professionals which can be embedded into the pedagogical approaches of the early interventionist via direct intervention or consultative approach. Students will be introduced to the sensory integrated approach, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) as well as the functional behaviour analysis. They will also examine the support in embedding these approaches into the early intervention curricula.</p>

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Supervised Practicum (60 hours)

This module provides practical hands-on experiences, specifically designed, to relate and extend students' theoretical knowledge in the core fields of study including typical and atypical child development, assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation, the developmental and routines-based approaches to curriculum and environmental design, and family / parent / caregiver / teacher relationships and communication.

The major emphasis will be on attachments to early intervention centres, where students will utilise theoretical knowledge and observation skills to design and arrange the physical learning environment and to plan, implement and evaluate developmentally appropriate, embedded learning opportunities within routines for two individuals and a group of children with a diverse range of needs.

Students will explore critical issues surrounding early intervention services and programmes in Singapore, through a personal, reflective journal and discussions with mentors and other professionals within the early intervention centre during the supervised practicum period.