



# PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Education  
SINGAPORE

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## **CORE MODULES, NEW DIPLOMA & CROSS-CAMPUS EXPERIENCES FOR NIEC STUDENTS**

1. As announced at the 2017 National Day Rally, the Government will be making key moves to significantly uplift the Early Childhood (EC) sector. Apart from expanding provision of affordable and quality EC services, the National Institute of Early Childhood Development (NIEC) will also be established, with a national mandate to develop EC educators for the sector.

2. Formed from the consolidation of EC training capabilities and expertise of the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP), Temasek Polytechnic (TP), and NTUC's SEED Institute, NIEC will become a major EC training provider, when it begins operations from January 2019. NIEC seeks to provide consistent quality training of EC educators and has reviewed the existing EC courses to ensure coherence in curriculum coverage and standards.

### *Strengthened foundational training for all Diploma courses*

3. As a start, NIEC has curated a set of core modules, which will form the foundation for all diploma-level training – whether through Pre-Employment Training (PET) or Continuing Education and Training (CET). Beyond equipping students with the professional knowledge and skills to take on the role of a pre-school educator, the core modules will feature a strong emphasis on practice-based learning. Module content will also be enhanced to give students a more complete and holistic understanding of EC development needs of the entire age spectrum, including the very early years. A synopsis of the core modules offered as part of NIEC Diplomas is in Annex A.

### *New Diploma in Early Childhood Development & Education (ECDE), with revised electives and tracks*

4. With the consolidation and establishment of NIEC, it will also launch a new Diploma in Early Childhood Development & Education (ECDE) for the 2019 PET student intake which will be available at its NP and TP campuses. This new Diploma in ECDE will comprise the NIEC Diploma core and two EC-related electives. An indicative list of EC electives offered by NP and TP is available in Annex B. From 2021, students will also have the option of choosing an elective from another campus at NP or TP.

5. Recognising that ECDE students may wish to deepen their knowledge or skills in a specific area of interest, NIEC will also offer the Early Intervention Track and Visual Arts Track at NP and TP respectively. Students may choose to take three relevant electives in the Early Intervention or Visual Arts field in replacement of the two EC-related electives to complete the Track.

6. As part of the Diploma core, ECDE students will also be expected to complete two practicums and a 22-week Student Internship Programme, which will be spread throughout the curriculum so that they can gradually apply what they have learned. As EC training has to be practice-based within authentic work environments, hands-on learning at various preschools will enable students to apply their knowledge, attain the soft skills required in interacting with children, and develop their professional competencies.

7. The existing Diploma in Chinese Studies (Early Childhood) and Diploma in Tamil Studies with Early Education will continue to be offered by NIEC at NP. NIEC will also continue to offer the *Higher Nitec* in Early Childhood Education at ITE as a certificate course for EC educators. A list of NIEC's PET courses for the 2019 intake is available in [Annex C](#).

#### *An enriched student experience*

8. The NIEC student experience will be a unique one. Those enrolled in EC PET courses will be recognised as NIEC, as well as polytechnic/ITE students. They will complete the polytechnic/ITE core at their institutions and be fully immersed in campus life - participating in co-curricular and campus activities, as well as accessing student support and other campus services that are available to all students.

9. At the same time, students can benefit from NIEC student development activities, talks and workshops conducted by EC specialists and industry experts, as well as EC career guidance events. These cross-campus activities serve to strengthen NIEC students' sense of belonging as an EC fraternity. Beyond the students' graduation, NIEC will invite graduates to professional networking events, so they continue to have opportunities for continued learning and professional upgrading.

#### *Impact on existing students in PET courses*

10. With the launch of the Diploma in ECDE, NP's Diploma in Early Childhood Education (ECH) and Diploma in Child Psychology & Early Education (CPEE), as well as TP's Diploma in Early Childhood Studies (ECS), will no longer admit new students from AY2019.

11. NIEC will take over the running of the existing NP and TP courses, and is committed to ensure quality and continuity in students' learning. Students in these courses will complete their studies under the diploma they are enrolled in, with no change in curriculum structure or graduation requirements. Their diplomas will be jointly awarded by NIEC and NP or TP. They will also have the opportunity to enjoy cross-campus student development activities and have access to EC professional networking events and workshops organised by NIEC.

#### *Application to NIEC PET Courses*

12. Final-year O-Level and ITE students who are interested to apply for the Academic Year 2019 intake to NIEC Diploma PET courses can do so through the Polytechnic Early Admissions Exercise (EAE) in June 2018 - while those interested to apply for *Higher Nitec* in Early Childhood Education at ITE can do so via the ITE EAE in May 2018. Applicants will be assessed by an NIEC panel, and selected based on their passion, aptitude and character attributes relevant to the EC profession. Applicants who are found suitable will be given conditional offers, to be confirmed if the applicants subsequently meet the course-specific minimum entry requirements.

13. All Singapore Citizens or Permanent Residents who are successfully admitted into the NIEC PET Diploma courses via EAE will be offered the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) Training Award (Polytechnic). The ECDA Training Award will provide full course sponsorship, a monthly allowance, grants for study-related expenses, and various professional development and networking opportunities. Recipients are expected to fulfil a year's bond to the EC sector (in an ECDA-registered/licensed kindergarten or child care centre) for every year of support received, upon completion of their course. ECDA will also work with the EC sector to engage and groom NIEC students early, to give them a smoother and stronger start to their career.

14. Interested students can also apply for their preferred EC course based on their academic performance after the release of their results via the Joint Admissions Exercise (for O-Level graduates) or the Joint Polytechnic Admissions Exercise (for ITE graduates).

15. More information on NIEC and the Diploma in ECDE can be found on the website: [www.niec.edu.sg](http://www.niec.edu.sg). Information on the ECDA Training Award is available at [www.ecda.gov.sg](http://www.ecda.gov.sg).

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## **MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

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## **Indicative List of ECDE Core Modules**

*Note: EC components within the Diploma in Chinese Studies (Early Childhood) and Diploma in Tamil Studies in Early Education at NP will also adopt a similar core.*

<p><b>Child Development I</b></p> <p>This module introduces students to research on early brain developments and its implications to the child's development. Early Years developmental milestones will be discussed with significant emphasis on child development from birth to three years of age. Students will develop an understanding of the philosophy of infant toddler care and development, and the Early Years Development Framework (EYDF)<sup>1</sup>. Students will also learn appropriate behaviour guidance and interaction strategies for this age group of children that are informed by observation and documentation.</p>
<p><b>Child Safety, Health &amp; Socio-emotional Wellbeing</b></p> <p>This module introduces policies and practices for establishing and maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment for educators and children in early childhood settings as they relate to the socio-emotional wellbeing of children.</p>
<p><b>Principles and Practices in Early Education</b></p> <p>This module provides students with an overview of the historical development of early childhood care and education, pedagogical principles and contemporary perspectives. Students will also gain an understanding of the different models of practice internationally including the Rights of the Child (UN-CRC) and how they relate to Singapore.</p>
<p><b>The Professional &amp; Reflective Practitioner</b></p> <p>This module explores the various roles of an early childhood educator in working with children, families, other professionals and agencies in the community. A range of professional issues will be examined, including stages of professional development, practitioner competencies, continuing education, advocacy and personal growth plans which are aligned with the current early childhood landscape in Singapore.</p>
<p><b>Language &amp; Literacy</b></p> <p>This module introduces students to the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of language and literacy development from birth to six years of age, including trends and issues within a multicultural and multilingual society. Students will learn to design, organise and evaluate literacy-rich environments that help facilitate language and literacy development; identify suitable prints and other media for reading activities to develop in young children an appreciation for a variety of children's literature.</p>
<p><b>Child Development II</b></p> <p>This module introduces the major theories in child development and their implications on practices in child-rearing and early care and education. The joint contributions of biology and environment to the various aspects of child development will be explored. Students</p>

<sup>1</sup> The Early Years Development Framework (EYDF) is a resource developed to help child care centres cultivate appropriate care and development practices, as well as create nurturing environments for young children aged three years and below.

will deepen their understanding of the holistic development of children through observation, recording and analysis of children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional growth and development. This understanding will help the student link theory to practice and guide the planning of learning experiences and techniques for behaviour guidance. The Nurturing Early Learners Framework's six learning domains<sup>2</sup> will also be discussed.

### **Practicum I (100 hours)**

This practicum is for students to relate to the practical aspects of working with young children in early childhood settings with focus on ages three plus and younger. It will support students' learning in the area of child development, observation of children in various contexts, safety, health, hygiene and nutrition matters and the learning environment for play. Students will also be involved in daily routine care of the early childhood setting, taking on teacher-assistant roles and engage in reflective writing.

### **Effective Learning Environment for Young Children**

This module equips students with the principles to design conducive learning environments to support play and learning for children from birth to six-years of age, noting that the conditions in the environment also affects the behaviour of children. Students will also learn to set up appropriate learning areas to enhance the physical, cognitive and social and emotional development of children. The selection of print and non-print materials, use of technology and the role of the educator will also be covered.

### **Motor Skills Development**

This module equips students with the knowledge and skills to help young children develop perceptual, fine motor and fundamental movement skills consisting of locomotor, non-locomotor and object control skills in a safe environment. Students will learn to observe, plan, implement and facilitate fun, meaningful and age appropriate indoor and outdoor play activities and fundamental movement experiences using an integrated approach to learning.

### **Social Emotional Learning**

This module equips students with the theoretical knowledge and pedagogical skills to nurture social-emotional competencies and positive values necessary for character formation in young children. It also addresses the role of teachers, in modelling good character traits, in helping children develop self-awareness and self-management skills for their emotional well-being as well as social competence to build strong interpersonal relationships. Students will also take reference from PRAISE<sup>3</sup> and use children's picture books to teach values, pro-social behavior, understanding of self and others and integrate social emotional learning across the curriculum.

### **Aesthetics & Creative Expression**

This module introduces students to an array of visual and performing arts and exposures for the appreciation of the creative art forms. In addition, students will be introduced to progressive theories on Arts education to build firm foundations on the key roles the Arts play within early years learning settings. Theories related to aesthetic and creativity will

<sup>2</sup> The Nurturing Early Learners (NEL) Framework articulates MOE's belief and principles about how children learn and develop, and what constitutes quality pre-school education. The Framework also contains learning goals for six learning areas that establish what children should know and be able to do at the end of their kindergarten education, to ensure they have a smooth transition from kindergarten to primary school.

<sup>3</sup> As part of the NEL Framework, it states six learning dispositions (PRAISE) that pre-schools seek to develop in every child – perseverance, reflectiveness, appreciation, inventiveness, sense of wonder and curiosity, and engagement.

also be introduced. Students will learn multiple approaches to engage young children in creative-arts expressions that are aesthetically rich and imaginative. Through both theory, experiential sessions, students will encounter the Arts first hand and will design Arts experiences that are developmentally appropriate, meaningful and informed by practice.

### **Early Numeracy**

This module examines the theoretical framework which underpins young children's learning of mathematics. Students will be introduced to the principles, knowledge and skills required to plan, implement and evaluate learning experiences that lay the foundations for children to become problem solvers and abstract thinkers. Students will learn to choose developmentally appropriate materials and resources, set up mathematically-rich environment, teaching techniques to nurture children's mathematical thinking and assess their learning. The use of technology and integration of numeracy in the other learning domains will also be emphasised.

### **Discovery of the World**

This module provides an overview of how young children make sense of the world they live in and how they acquire knowledge and concepts. The scope of Science, environment awareness, technology in everyday life and learning, the Social Sciences, and culture and heritage, for children's inquiry will also be covered. Students will learn to use the Constructivist approach to teaching, engage in field exploration and setting up discovery centres. Teaching techniques that support inquiry and independent learning in children and planning developmentally and culturally appropriate learning goals and experiences for children from birth to six years of age will also be covered.

### **Practicum II (200 hours)**

This practicum is for students to relate to practical aspects of working with children from three plus to six years of age in early childhood settings. Besides taking on teacher-assistant roles, the focus will be on setting up or reviewing the learning corners, engagement and facilitation in small group play and activities, as well as large/whole group teaching. Students will learn to plan a series of structured and unstructured sequential learning experiences for children. Students will also engage in reflective writing on their roles as a professional early educator and their interactions with children.

### **Curriculum Planning & Implementation**

This module provides students with the knowledge and skills for planning, implementing and evaluating developmentally appropriate curriculum for children from birth to three and from three plus to six years of age. Students will take reference from the Early Years Development Framework and the Nurturing Early Learners Framework to explore the scope and process of integrating Learning Areas and Learning Depositions. Philosophies and beliefs and theoretical underpinnings of how children learn and develop will also be fundamental to the meaning of curriculum for the different age groups, the supporting environment that ensue, the types of learning activities, the role of the educator and different facilitation techniques.

### **Student Internship Programme (22-week)**

The Internship Programme, with professional practitioners acting as mentors, enable students to acquire the work experience needed for their chosen areas of interest. The organisations involved are selected for their capacity to allow students to learn different aspects of work in the early childhood industry. The students' learning outcomes are assessed by their respective internship mentors and NIEC supervisors. Students could

also work closely with staff in the early childhood centres on projects that will benefit children, families and the community.

### **Family & Community Partnership**

This module equips students with the knowledge of family structure and dynamics in Singapore and skills for working with diversity in families, with the understanding of interdependence between schools and families. Various models of family involvement will be explored with the focus on schools working respectfully with diverse family groups and tapping on community resources for the education of young children.

### **Working with the Exceptional Child**

This module introduces students to various exceptional needs in young children including physical, cognitive, behavioural, emotional and sensory characteristics that make them different. Trends and issues in relation to inclusive practices and policies will be covered. Students learn about their roles in an inclusive learning environment, design of individualised learning plans and communication with families. Students will also explore community resources and professionals that provide support for children with additional needs.

**Indicative List of EC Electives Offered at Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) and Temasek Polytechnic (TP)**

NP	TP
<p><b>Assessment of Young Children</b> This module provides an overview of the skills and techniques to identifying and assessing learning, behavioural, psycho-social and communication needs in young children with special needs or those who are at risk of developing learning and behavioral challenges. Students will be introduced to an array of assessment tools to help them understand children and be able to develop appropriate Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals. The cycle of assessing, planning, implementing, monitoring, reflecting and reassessing will be addressed.</p> <p><b>Childhood Disabilities &amp; Disorders</b> In this module, students will learn about the genetic and ecological risk factors contributing to different types of disabilities. Definitions and presenting symptoms of disabilities including physical, sensory, intellectual and learning disabilities are discussed. Typical child development and how characteristics of the children with disabilities impact on their overall development will also be examined.</p> <p><b>Early Intervention &amp; Teaching Approaches</b> This module introduces students to the development of the Individualised Educational Plan (IEP) – a systematic plan that describes and prescribes the learning needs for the exceptional child. Students will also be introduced to a variety of activity-based strategies to help children with special needs develop language, literacy, social and functional skills as well as methods to manage their behaviours.</p> <p><b>Assessment &amp; Differentiated Instructions</b> This module builds on the understanding of diverse family circumstances children come from. It then provides an overview of the skills and techniques to identify, assess and support learning, behavioural, psycho-social and communication needs in young children who are at risk of developing learning and behavioural</p>	<p><b>2D &amp; 3D Art</b> This subject introduces students to the concept and practice of two and three dimensional representation and expression. In depth studio practice and art critique sessions will allow student the opportunity to acquire sound understanding of the use of art concepts and medium in effective and expressive representation. Additionally, meaningful art making plays an important role in promoting intellectual and emotional development in children and as such, pedagogical issues of facilitating artistic and aesthetic growth for the early years will be addressed.</p> <p><b>Book Illustration &amp; Design for Children</b> The emphasis of this subject is on the practice and understanding of design and illustration techniques for children’s books. In this subject, students will learn the art of children books design across time and culture in addition, students will have the opportunities to explore and use various classical and contemporary design language, and illustration techniques to unpack the relationship between text and images. Students will be required to develop a series of illustrated works that culminates in a group ‘showcase’ at the conclusion of the course.</p> <p><b>Digital &amp; New Media</b> This subject will expose students to the foundation of digital and new media practices. Through a combination of studio practice and theory, learners will use new media technologies to</p>

challenges. Using the linked system of assessment, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; students will be introduced to an array of assessment tools and the approaches involved in differentiating instructions to address specific needs of children in a pre-school setting.

### **Capstone Project**

This module brings the students through the experience of developing, implementing and presenting an EC-related project which is intended to improve teaching practice and / or benefit the community. The project will allow students to demonstrate interdisciplinary knowledge, investigative skills and their character traits and values. Students will learn to write project proposals, make decisions, solve problems and think critically.

### **Children's Literature**

This module introduces students to children's literature and how it has reflected cultural, social and ideological change. Students will examine the ways in which the child has been depicted in literature, learn to appreciate and critique different genre of children's books and be able to select age-appropriate books for young children. A study of children's television and drama is included.

### **Drama for Pre-school Education**

This module develops students' critical thinking, imagination and creative expressions; discover and value themselves, seek novel experiences and be open to new ideas. Students will learn to plan and implement drama experiences for young children to guide them in developing confidence, empathy, appropriate communication, good oratory and literacy skills.

### **Issues & Trends in Early Intervention**

This module introduces students to the field of early intervention (special needs) in both inclusive and specialised settings for children from birth to 8 years. Students will examine the definitions, approaches and the inter- and multi-disciplinary services of early intervention in Singapore and internationally. Different theoretical perspectives, trends and latest developments will be examined. Policies and advocacy will be discussed and students will

develop insights and competencies in expression and representation. Linkages to early year's classroom practice will be made.

### **Classroom management & strategies in early childhood intervention**

This subject presents an overview of the teaching and intervention approaches in working with children with different types of special needs. Students will also explore various teaching strategies to support, specific types of special needs children in the preschool setting. Beyond the theoretical aspects, students will also have targeted opportunities to participate in field observations and/or case studies analysis.

### **Early Intervention & the Inclusive Curriculum**

This subject aims to provide students with fundamental knowledge on how to create and organize the early year's environment to promote physical, intellectual, emotional and social development of children with special needs. Students will have the opportunity to design, implement and evaluate various approaches and strategies of teaching special needs children alongside mainstream learners in an inclusive classroom setting. Both theoretical and practical experiences will form the basis of learning for this subject.

### **Transcultural Issues & Practices in Early Childhood**

This subject examines early childhood care and education (ECCE) approaches, practices and issues in various parts of the world. It includes global trends and educational issues; early years pedagogical models and approaches, policies, philosophies and practices. This subject aims to help students to differentiate between

<p>explore issues related to suitable placements for young children with special needs.</p> <p><b>Music &amp; Dance for Young Children</b>  This module equips students with the essential pedagogical knowledge and practical skills relevant to the various aspects of music and dance experiences for young children. Students will learn to plan and facilitate activity-based lessons that include music and dance, aural skills, sight singing, body movements, playing with rhythm and beats through the use of various musical instruments.</p> <p><b>Teaching Literacy to Diverse Learners</b>  This module builds on the knowledge gained in Language and Literacy and prepares students to apply effective instructional methods for the teaching of reading, writing and speaking English. The module also addresses the needs of diverse learners in terms of their abilities, cultural, racial and linguistic differences, and considers the linguistic development of learners from differing backgrounds. Differentiated strategies will be introduced to cater for learners' varying needs and addressing issues in language acquisition. Creative planning with an amalgamation of language arts techniques in the area of music and movement, storytelling, dramatic arts and children's literature, and the employment of technology in literacy teaching will be included, to cater for the diverse needs of these learners.</p>	<p>local and global early childhood education, approaches, practices and issues and to appreciate the characteristics of quality early childhood care and education programmes for young children locally and globally. Chief of all, to allow students the opportunity to contextualise global priorities in ECCE within the Singapore context.</p>
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<b>NIEC Pre-Employment Training (PET) courses for admission of new students in AY2019*</b>	
<b>Certificate course to train Early Childhood Educators</b>	
• <i>Higher Nitec</i> in Early Childhood Education	NIEC (ITE)
<b>Diploma courses to train Early Childhood Educators</b>	
• Diploma in Early Childhood Development & Education ( <b>NEW</b> )	NIEC (NP) NIEC (TP)
• Diploma in Chinese Studies (Early Childhood)	NIEC (NP)
• Diploma in Tamil Studies with Early Education	NIEC (NP)

*\*The Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Diploma in Child Psychology and Early Education – currently offered in NP – and the Diploma in Early Childhood Studies – currently offered in TP – will no longer be offered for incoming students from AY2019 onwards.*