

The Ultimate FAQ for NIEC's Early Childhood Courses

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1 About NIEC

1.1 Who is NIEC?

NIEC is the national training institute for early childhood (EC) educators set up by the Ministry of Education to provide quality training and professional development at every stage of their career. The establishment of NIEC is part of the Government's efforts to uplift the profession. To find out more about us, click [here](#).

1.2 What's the difference between NIE and NIEC?

NIE is the institution which trains teachers for primary, secondary and junior college education while NIEC is the institution which trains teachers for early childhood education.

1.3 Will the NIEC certificate be recognised after students graduate?

Yes! All students will receive a Diploma or Higher Nitec certificate that will be awarded by NIEC in collaboration with the polytechnic/ITE. They will be eligible for certification as early childhood educators by the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA).

2 About NIEC's Courses

2.1 What are the early childhood courses available at NIEC?

Course	Campus	Duration
Diploma in Early Childhood Development & Education (N96 & T68)	NIEC (NP)/NIEC (TP)	3 Years
Diploma in Tamil Studies with Early Education (N95)	NIEC (NP)	3 Years
Higher Nitec in Early Childhood Education (V42)	NIEC (ITE)	2 Years

2.2 What is the difference between the Diploma in Early Childhood Development & Education course in NIEC (NP) and NIEC (TP)?

It's the same course, and students will go through the same EC core modules. But the differences are:

- Different tracks in Year 3
 - NIEC (NP) – Early Intervention or Mother Tongue Language Teaching – Chinese or Tamil
 - NIEC (TP) – Visual Arts or Mother Tongue Language Teaching – Malay
- Poly core modules are specific to the respective campuses
- Different campus life

2.3 Which is a better campus to enrol in for the Diploma in Early Childhood Development & Education? NIEC (NP) or NIEC (TP)?

The EC core modules that students will take in both campuses are the same! The main difference will be the core modules offered by the respective polytechnics and their campus life will be unique to the poly they are in. As mentioned in 2.1, there will also be different tracks to pick from in Year 3 for each campus.

2.4 Are there early childhood courses for N(A) and N(T) students?

N(A) or N(T) students taking O-Levels may apply for our Higher Nitec in Early Childhood Education at NIEC (ITE), if they do not qualify for NIEC's Diploma in Early Childhood Development & Education at Ngee Ann Poly or Temasek Poly.

N(A) students taking N-Levels may apply for NIEC's Diploma in Early Childhood Development & Education through the Poly Foundation Programme (PFP).

N(A) or N(T) students taking N-Levels may enrol into NIEC's [Advanced Certificate in Early Years \(ACEY\)](#). Graduates below 21 years old will receive the EY2C certification

to work as an assistant early years educator. Upon turning 21, they will automatically be re-certified to the EY2 certification level and be a full-fledged early years educator.

2.5 Student Experience

2.5.1 What will school be like when students join NIEC?

NIEC will prepare students to be preschool educators for young children. They will:

- **Pick up all the skills they need** to become a preschool educator, informed by national resources such as the Nurturing Early Learners (NEL) Framework and Skills Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education.
- **Experience practice-oriented learning**, such as microteaching, going on learning journeys, scenario-based learning, and going through practicums and internship at early childhood centres.
- **Receive guidance from highly qualified lecturers** with knowledge in diverse areas related to early childhood

NIEC students will also be part of the bigger NIEC fraternity and enjoy cross-campus learning opportunities (*see 2.2*). They will also have dual identities, being both an NIEC and one of the polys/ITE they are in. This means that the campus' facilities, student services and overseas learning opportunities will be extended to them.

2.5.2 Can students take modules from different campuses?

Diploma in Early Childhood Development & Education students in NIEC (NP) and NIEC (TP) may take up an EC elective module from the other campus in their 3rd year. This is subject to terms and conditions.

2.5.3 What is practicum?

NIEC's students gain experience working in early childhood centres during practicums, allowing them to understand the practical aspects of working with young children. They would take part in 2 practicums in their first and second year respectively.

For practicum in their first year (Practicum 1), students will be involved in daily routine care and taking on educator-assistant roles, including interactions with children during play.

Students will also engage in reflective writing on their roles and interactions with children aged 18 to 36 months. They will need to be in the centre for 10 days over 2 different weeks and clock in 8 hours each day for a total of 80 hours.

In their second year (Practicum 2), students will focus on setting up or reviewing learning corners, engaging and facilitating small group play and activities, as well as large group teaching. They will also learn to plan a series of learning experiences for children aged 3 to 6 years old. They will need to be in the centre for a period of 25 days and clock in 8 hours each day for a total of 200 hours.

2.5.4 What is internship like?

In their final year, NIEC's students will embark on a full-day internship for 22 weeks – allowing them to experience what a full-fledged educator does. They will plan and implement learning experiences for preschool children using the teaching aids/ resources they have prepared. They will also be involved in either one field trip organised by the host preschool or one class/ preschool community partnership activity.

In addition, students will design and evaluate a take-home activity kit for the parents and children. Throughout the internship, students will be guided by their mentor from the host preschool, who will meet them regularly for about 1 to 2 hours a week. Students will document and share their reflection on their learning through peer sharing as well as their teaching portfolio.

2.6 After Graduation

2.6.1 Can students immediately work as a preschool educator after graduation?

When students graduate from any of NIEC's poly/ITE courses, they will meet the academic requirements needed to be certified as a preschool educator*.

For further studies and training, a wide variety of options are available in the following areas:

- Child Support and Family Services
- Early Intervention, Special Needs Education
- Curriculum Development
- Play Therapy
- Teacher Education

**To be granted certification to teach up to Kindergarten levels by the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), graduates of our Diploma courses must have a minimum B4 grade for English Language (EL1). Those who do not possess a B4 or above in GCE O-level EL1 are given 2 years from the point of teacher registration to obtain a minimum band of 6.5 in IELTS (General) or other ELAA. Otherwise, graduates will only be certified to teach up to Nursery levels.*

2.6.2 Can NIEC graduates become a primary/secondary school teacher?

The NIEC diploma/certificate will qualify graduates to teach in preschools, and not schools at the primary/secondary level. If they would like to become a primary/secondary school teacher, they will need to take up relevant courses to be certified.

However, for Diploma in Tamil Studies with Early Education graduates, they can proceed* to become a primary school Tamil teacher after completing their 4th Year of studies at NIE.

*Graduates will need to meet MOE's criteria to become a primary school teacher. For more information, head to MOE's website [here](#).

2.6.3 How can students further their studies after they graduate?

Students will be able to apply for full-time degree programmes offered by the Autonomous Universities or overseas universities.

If they'd like to deepen their knowledge in early childhood education, there are early childhood degree courses they can take from both local and overseas universities. Currently, the local option is the *Bachelor of Early Childhood Education with Minor* from the *Singapore University of Social Sciences' (SUSS)*. Our graduates receive "advanced standing", subject to meeting the academic criteria.

For more information on the list of full-time degree programmes offered by the Autonomous Universities or overseas universities, please visit [here](#).

NIEC also offers post-diploma and continuing professional development courses that graduates can consider to either upgrade their skills or pick up new ones. Some examples include the Specialist Diploma in Early Childhood Intervention (Special Needs) and Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Leadership.

3 Admissions

3.1 Entry Requirements

3.1.1 What is the cut-off point for NIEC's courses?

Course Title	Campus	Course Code	Net Aggregate Range for JAE AY 2025
Diploma in Early Childhood Development & Education	NIEC (NP)	N96	6 to 19
Diploma in Early Childhood Development & Education	NIEC (TP)	T68	9 to 17
Diploma in Tamil Studies with Early Education	NIEC (NP)	N95	13 to 21
Higher Nitec in Early Childhood Education	NIEC (ITE)	V42	20 to 36

3.1.2 How do students calculate their ELR2B2?

All our courses are calculated based on ELR2B2-A.

- English Language grade between 1 – 6
- Mathematics (Elementary/Additional) 1 – 6
- Any three other subjects 1 – 6

Note: Students with a D7 in Mathematics may apply for the course provided they have GCE O-level passes (1- 6) in 5 subjects (including English). To be eligible for selection, applicants must also have sat for one subject listed in the 1st group of relevant subjects and another different subject listed in the 2nd group of relevant subjects.

3.1.3 Can students who fail their English for O-Level still get accepted into NIEC's courses?

English is required for all our courses so they will need between Grades 1 – 6 to meet this requirement. Students can re-sit for their English O-level paper again as a private candidate and apply during the next intake. Alternatively, they can also obtain an [English Language Acceptable Alternative \(ELAA\)](#).

All students in our Diploma courses, including PFP students, without a B4 grade for GCE O- levels EL1 will be granted a conditional certification to teach Kindergarten levels upon graduation. These students have two years from the point of teacher certification to obtain at least a B4 for GCE O-levels EL1, or an [ELAA](#). Otherwise, students will only be certified to teach up to Nursery levels after the two-year conditional certification.

3.1.4 Can students who fail their Mathematics for O-Level still get accepted into NIEC's courses?

For the Diploma in Early Childhood Development & Education, students with a D7 in Mathematics may apply for the course provided they have GCE O-level passes (1-6) in 5 subjects (including English).

For the Diploma in Tamil Studies with Early Education, a pass grade in Mathematics is not a requirement.

4 Applications

4.1 How do students apply for NIEC's courses?

They can apply for our courses during the major admissions exercises such as the Early Admissions Exercise (EAE) and the Joint Admissions Exercise (JAE).

Note that for the Diploma in Chinese Studies (Early Childhood Teaching), students will have to apply for the Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Diploma in Chinese Studies during the respective admission exercises.

4.2 When can students apply for NIEC's courses?

January: Joint Admissions Exercise (JAE), Poly Foundation Programme (PFP) (after the release of O-level and N(A)-level results)

May - July: Early Admissions Exercise (EAE)

Note: Interested applicants are encouraged to list Diploma in Early Childhood Development & Education, i.e. course codes N96 and T68 for NIEC's Ngee Ann Polytechnic and Temasek Polytechnic campuses respectively, in their choices during the various Admission Exercises.

5 Financial Assistance

5.1 What is the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) Training Award?

Students may be eligible for the ECDA Training Award, which offers full course sponsorship, monthly study allowances and networking opportunities within the early childhood sector.

Successful Poly EAE applicants will receive conditional offers for the course, and the ECDA Training Award. For more information on the training award, click [here](#).

5.2 Would the respective polys/ITE provide financial assistance?

Yes, students may also be eligible for financial assistance schemes offered by the poly/ITE they are enrolled in. They may reach out to the respective institutes of higher learning to find out more.

6 About the Early Childhood Sector

6.1 What are the job positions and job roles that are high in demand in this sector?

Our children need preschool educators! NIEC's diploma courses will prepare students to become L2 preschool educators, who will be able to teach and care for children between the ages of 18 months and 6 years old, while graduates of NIEC's Higher Nitec in Early Childhood Education will be able to teach and care for children between the ages of 18 months and 4 years old.

6.2 How much money does a preschool educator make?

Based on ECDA's Press Release on 29 Oct 2022, fresh graduates graduating with an ECDA approved EC diploma joining an AOP can expect a starting salary of at least \$2,900 per month in 2024. Click [here](#) for more information.

6.3 What are the misconceptions about the EC sector?

Preschool educators don't just take care of children. They are equipped with professional skills to develop a child holistically! What a preschool educator imparts stay with a child for life, including values and life skills.

7 Employment/Career Progression/Hiring Practices

7.2 What are the career prospects in this sector?

Our graduates will enjoy ample career progression opportunities as preschool educators. With up to 13 different roles available in a preschool, there are plenty of career paths to explore within the sector. Plus, there are opportunities to progress beyond the preschool setting too! Some of these roles include Centre Leaders, Special Needs Educator, Child Support and Family Services, Curriculum Development and Speech or Play Therapy.

7.3 What advice does NIEC have for secondary school students interested in the sector to help them set realistic expectations for their potential career?

We believe that potential EC educators should possess the right attitude and a passion to make a difference in the lives of young children. They should also expect a rigorous education with NIEC as we equip them with various professional skills required of educators. As such, they should have:

- Resilience
- In a Team (Collaboration), working well with others
- Passion to nurture, inspire, educate and care for young children
- Professionalism
- Love for Learning
- Empathy for others