

MINOR IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

No	Course Code	Course Title	AU	Pre-requisites
1	AED16A	Practices and Issues in Early Childhood Education	3	
2	AED16B	Curriculum and Assessment in Early Childhood Education	3	AED16A and AED16D
3	AED16C	Learning Environments for Young Children	3	AED16A and AED16D
4	AED16D	Child Development in Early Childhood Education	3	
5	AED16E	Diversity in Early Childhood Education	3	AED16A and AED16D
Total AU			15	

Description of Courses

Course Title: Practices and Issues in Early Childhood Education

Course Code: AED16A

Academic Units: 3

This course will provide students/student teachers with the fundamental background of key historical perspectives and current influences underpinning the developments of early childhood education (ECE), both internationally and in Singapore. Theoretical perspectives and empirical research will be used as analytical lenses to examine the key trends and issues concerning the education and care of children from the ages of 0 to 8. In the Singapore context, this will include children in the preschools and the lower primary mainstream schools.

Examples of topics which will be explored include the concept of children and childhood, curricular approaches to ECE, concept of quality in ECE, diversity and inclusion, play and integrated learning, transition to formal schooling, relating to parents and community, and leadership, mentoring and professional development. Participants will explore how the developments in these various areas could impact learning and teaching in the lower primary classes in Singapore.

Course participants are expected to participate in critical discourses pertaining to the various topics and through the process to develop deeper appreciation and greater insights into how early childhood education has taken shape over the years and in different socio-cultural contexts. The emphasis of the course is for participants to take on a constructive stance, and develop their personal viewpoints and philosophy towards early childhood education or lower primary education, particularly within our local context. Hence the course will embrace a learner-centred pedagogy to provide opportunities for the participants to undertake serious reflection and to assume greater ownership of their learning experiences.

Course Title: Curriculum and Assessment in Early Childhood Education

Course Code: AED16B

Academic Units: 3

This course will explore the concepts and fundamentals of curriculum design, and examine assessment practices which can further support the curricular goals. It will emphasize the need to view these two segments as a seamless flow of ideas to support children's learning.

The research evidence conclusively attests to the early years being critical years for the acquisition not only of knowledge and skills, but more importantly desirable dispositions which have a life-long impact on the children's development. Curriculum designers for early years learners therefore need to understand children's development in this holistic manner. This course will introduce to the students/student teachers the dynamics of curriculum development. Participants will examine the curriculum concepts and theoretical foundations underpinning the different early childhood curriculum models. In addition, they will critically evaluate the different approaches and examine their relevancy and application in relation to the socio-cultural context of the Singapore education system.

A curricular framework should not only entail decisions of what, how and when to teach, but also how to assess the learning that has occurred. Participants will learn of current assessment concepts, and explore their roles in influencing the learning outcomes of children. Participants will also examine a wide range of assessment modes and ascertain their suitability for young learners. In particular, the role of observations and documentations will be given added attention. Participants can look forward to practical sessions in which they will be given opportunities to utilize appropriate assessment techniques to analyze young children's behavior and development, interpret their data and undertake responsive curricular decisions.

Course Title: Learning environments for young children

Course Code: AED16C

Academic Units: 3

This course will provide students/student teachers with an in-depth understanding of the instructive power of well-designed learning environments. The learning environment has been espoused as the 'third educator', a concept which is strongly rooted in early childhood education. Participants will gain insights into how the learning environments can provide stimulating and engaging activities that promote quality learning for the children across all learning domains. In order to be equipped with the essential knowledge and skills to design effective environments, they will learn how to consider the needs of diverse children (individual and group), the relevance of the learning contexts, the use of age-appropriate and open-ended resources, issues of safety (physical and psychological), and the interlocking roles of the teacher as the environmental designer and as the facilitator of the learning in the setting up of the environment.

To highlight the importance of exploration and play-based learning, and authentic experiences for preschool or lower primary children, the employment of learning centres will be extensively explored as an important pedagogical approach for teachers in the preschool or lower primary specialization. A key idea here is that the learning environment can support children as the protagonists of their construction of knowledge and foster respectful relationships. The course will therefore provide participants with an understanding of the principles and roles of learning centers and how these can be thoughtfully integrated within the preschool or lower primary curriculum and class setups (indoor and outdoor).

The course will have a strong practical orientation. There will be opportunities for participants to link theory to practice through hands-on activities and assignments. Where possible, field trips will also be organized to expose participants to actual environmental setups as part of their learning experiences.

Course Title: Child Development in Early Childhood Education

Course Code: AED16D

Academic Units: 3

This course conceptualizes children's development from birth to 8 years through the critical review of and reflection on various developmental theories, models, approaches and scholarly works. It will benefit participants working with young children in an early childhood context.

The course is designed to study children's growth and development in an integrated way by utilizing a multidisciplinary framework and approach. It is believed that children should not be studied using a single perspective or through developmental stages alone. However, a holistic view of children should be built across disciplines, domains, contexts and cultures.

Course Title: Diversity in Early Childhood Education

Course Code: AED16E

Academic Units: 3

Diversity is a key feature of early childhood education settings today. The diversity found in an early childhood classroom, though in many ways a strength for the educator, can also produce challenges. In this course, participants will first understand and define this key concept and examine the kinds of diversity a young child living and learning in Singapore may experience. It can include diversity of race, gender, socio-economic background, family structure and culture. In order to equip the early childhood educator with the means to celebrate diversity and engender a healthy respect for diversity in an early childhood classroom, this course will begin with an in depth examination of the development processes involved in the germination of prejudice and bias in young children.

For the educator to effectively counter the stereotypes and/or prejudice that can be found in the early childhood classroom, he/she must first understand their own personal understandings and applications of these key concepts. In this course, participants are facilitated to deeply reflect on their own preferences and deeply held assumptions regarding diversity. Participants will then explore the local setting to see how prejudice and bias is rooted in social experience, with a special focus on how key caregivers may be engaged to counter stereotypes and/or prejudice. The course seeks to equip participants with pedagogy for difference. To that end, five schools of thought on issues of respect for diversity will be explored in order to glean strategies that can help educators create a classroom where differences are accepted and seen as points for celebration, rather than suppression.