

SPECIALIST DIPLOMA IN EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING SUPPORT (SDELS)

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, implement, and evaluate the educational supports provided as well as the developmental progress of children in a holistic manner;
- d) Implement individualised support as well as in-class support in moving towards inclusive settings;
- e) Reflect on one’s personal and educational philosophy, values, and beliefs in formulating the framework of support to meet the needs of children, teachers, and leaders in school, families, and other related stakeholders; and
- f) 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.

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 and support services for parents of young children at risk. Transdisciplinary approaches / models and effective communication skills for collaborative teamwork will also be discussed.</p>

Post-Diploma Certificate 2 (90 hours)	
6	<p>Screening and Learning Support (60 hours)</p> <p>This module will guide students in fulfilling the Assessment, Planning, Implementation, Evaluation (APIE) cycle.</p> <p>Students will be introduced to a battery of screening tools as prescribed in the Development Support (DS) and Learning Support (LS) to identify children who may have mild developmental needs. They will also be guided in data collection by using standardised and non-standardised measures as well as understand the process of case filter meetings.</p> <p>Students will then gain knowledge and skills on how to design and deliver support packages for children identified with mild developmental needs in language, literacy, and social skills. Students will be familiarised on the administration of screeners and checklists, use of various teaching strategies and resources, as well as how to collaborate with teachers (in-class support) and caregivers. Content on fine motor / handwriting needs will also be covered.</p>
7	<p>Supervised Practicum (30 hours)</p> <p>This module provides practical hands-on experiences to allow students to apply knowledge and skills gained in the ‘Screening and Learning Support’ module, specifically on conducting of assessments, as well as language, literacy, and social skills supports.</p> <p>Students will fulfil the Assessment, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation (APIE) cycle by carrying out a range of assessments, design and communicate Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that shape structured and appropriate session plans for delivery to target children, and evaluate the process by completing session summaries and End of Intervention (EOI) reports.</p> <p>As part of the collaborative process, students will also be guided and assessed on their ability to work with various stakeholders such as the caregiver and class teacher. The purpose of this is to secure continuity of teaching and learning for the children under their care from individual support to small group learning, leading to in-class support and reinforcement at home.</p>