

MODULE DESCRIPTIONS

EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM, PEDAGOGY AND ASSESSMENT

This module introduces the student to curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment in the early years' context. The student will explore the South African National Curriculum Framework for Children from Birth to Four (NCF) and the National Early Learning and Development Standards (NELDS). The student will examine different curricula, transformative play-based pedagogies and the cycle of observing, documenting, assessing, and reporting on the development and learning outcomes of the baby, toddler and young child. Students will acquire the understanding and confidence needed to facilitate developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive programmes for the baby, toddler, and young child in diverse early childhood classrooms.

EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

This module provides students with a foundational knowledge of early childhood care and education, fostering appreciation for its significance and complexities. It explores diverse constructions of the child and childhoods from both Eurocentric and Afrocentric perspectives, examining the philosophical and theoretical foundations underpinning the field. A focus on early development, including how babies, toddlers, and young children grow, function, and learn, informs the facilitation of high-quality care and learning experiences in diverse early years' classrooms. Additionally, the module equips students with the ability to identify developmental red flags, implement differentiation strategies, and apply early intervention approaches to create inclusive environments where all children feel a sense of belonging.

FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION STUDIES

This module introduces students to education and its foundations through both Western and Afrocentric perspectives, fostering a comprehensive understanding of early childhood care and education (ECCE). It examines key educational paradigms—including history, philosophy, sociology, and psychology—and their application in creating equitable and inclusive learning environments for babies, toddlers, and young children. Students engage in the design of contextually relevant and socially just ECCE programmes, emphasising meaningful educator-child relationships. The module also explores critical issues in ECCE, equipping students to address these with professionalism, an ethics of care, and reflective moral deliberation. Furthermore, it cultivates advocacy skills, empowering students to champion the rights of all young children as positive agents of change.

FUNDAMENTAL LITERACIES

This module equips students with academic, mathematical, and computer literacy proficiencies essential for effective learning in higher education and functioning in daily life and professional contexts. It develops students' ability to read academic texts, write in an academic style, reference sources correctly, and navigate the library system independently. Mathematical competence is strengthened through practical applications, and students engage in creating online resources to support their studies and work in early childhood care and education (ECCE). Additionally, the module provides foundational knowledge of administration systems, MS Office tasks, and elementary research skills, while fostering cognitive and conceptual tools for self-reflection and informed decision-making in academic and professional settings.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND NUTRITION IN AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CONTEXT

Students will learn to manage a safe and health promoting ECCE school in a diverse context in South Africa. The aim is for students to explore the complex health, nutrition and safety needs of the baby, toddler and child and apply curative measures to handle outbreaks, disease and accidents successfully. The module will equip the student with understanding of policies to promote the optimal learning and development outcomes of the baby, toddler and child. The aim is to encourage the student to develop healthy habits and competence to collaborate with paraprofessionals as part of an interdisciplinary team. Critical issues will be explored enabling the student to become reflective and professional leaders of inclusive early years' settings.

LANGUAGE CONVERSATIONAL

The module will enable the student to learn to communicate in Afrikaans/IsiXhosa/IsiZulu/Sepedi/Setswana for the purpose of conversing with others in their daily context and to engage with the baby, toddler and young child in the early year's classroom meaningfully. The student will gain confidence to communicate in Afrikaans with elementary proficiency for the purpose of listening and speaking. The student will gain confidence to speak with clarity and understanding to engage in daily conversations and facilitate language-based activities in the early years' classroom in diverse contexts in South Africa.

LITERACY, LANGUAGE AND CREATIVITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

This module introduces students to the concepts and principles underpinning language, early literacy, and creative arts in early childhood care and education (ECCE). Using the National Early Learning and Development Standards (NELDS) and Early Learning Development Areas (ELDAs), students gain insight into language acquisition, perceptual-motor and creative development, graphic language, childhood literature, visual and performing arts, and play. The module equips students to facilitate language-rich and culturally responsive programmes, enabling babies, toddlers, and young children to communicate, make meaning, develop holistically, appreciate creative arts, and build a foundation for formal reading and writing. Emphasising mother tongue instruction and multilingualism, the module supports the development of young children as literate and expressive citizens.

STEM IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

This module introduces students to the foundational concepts and principles in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Students explore the NELDS and the ELDA's and briefly investigate plant and animal science, geographical and historical matters, design and coding and concept of early numbers. Students shall apply this beginning knowledge and understanding of the world to facilitate playful, explorative and investigative early learning experiences for the baby, toddler and young child. The aim is to empower students with the confidence and competencies needed to promote the baby, toddler and child's curiosity and inquiry and help lay the foundation for their active citizenship and formal and lifelong learning during the early years.

TEACHING PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

Students are required to spend six weeks on practical learning in a workplace ECCE setting. Students will learn to apply what they study by looking at case studies, watching videos, and observing real situations. In block one (two-week period semester 1) students will observe and acquire understanding of the contextual realities of ECCE, and in block two (four-week period semester 2) students will observe, shadow and support their mentor teacher to facilitate and assess play-based early learning experiences for the baby, toddler, and young child. Students will showcase professionalism, competence, and confidence as capable beginner ECCE educators in authentic work-based contexts.