

Syllabus

“A-P: Children’ s Development in China”

Cluster	Subject Title	Instructor	Credit	Semester
A-P	Children’s Development in China	Academic team from Nanjing Normal University	2	Winter 2025
Subject Description				
<p>The course is designed to help students to study children’s development in China. The optimal development of children is vital to society. It is important to understand the social, cognitive, emotional, and educational development of children. Increased research and interest in this field have resulted in new theories and strategies, with specific regard to practice that promotes development within the school system. In addition, some theories seek to describe a sequence of states that compose child development. It includes six seminars provided by the academic team from the Faculty of Education Science, Nanjing Normal University.</p>				
Objective				
<p>This course aims to explore the biological, psychological and emotional changes that occur in K-12 education. Students will examine theories and developmental milestones, discovering appropriate practices for childhood care, education, and services. Studies will provide a foundation for careers in working with children.</p>				
Leaning Method				
Seminars and group discussions				
Content				
<p>The course aims to provide cutting-edge professional knowledge and skills for participants. It has a flexible structure, and will update in real-time. It includes but is not limited to the following sub-areas.</p> <p><i>Psychosocial Adjustment Among Chinese Children: A Contextual-Developmental Perspective</i></p> <p>Understanding the psychosocial adjustment of children requires a nuanced exploration of the unique socio-</p>				

cultural and developmental contexts that shape their experiences. This seminar delves into the intricate dynamics of Chinese children's development, framed within a contextual-developmental perspective that integrates both traditional values and contemporary societal influences. Participants in this seminar will explore key factors influencing the psychosocial adjustment of Chinese children. Discussions will address the impact of digital media, urbanization, and globalization, providing a comprehensive overview of how these broad-scale changes are reshaping childhood and adolescence. The overall goal is to equip educational leaders with the knowledge and tools to better understand and support the complex developmental needs of children in rapidly changing societies.

A study on the current situation and relationship between home environment and early childhood development of left-behind children aged 0-3 years in rural China

Disadvantaged children exist worldwide for many different reasons. In China, there is a special kind of disadvantaged children - rural left-behind children. These children are facing early developmental risks due to the dual predicament of weak material resources and lack of parental accompaniment. The study investigated the early development of 0-3 rural left-behind children and their home environments in Shandong Province, East China, and explored the relationship between the two. The results show that the quality of home environments of the sample children is poor, as well as the children's early development, especially in the cognitive dimension which is the weakest. The home environment significantly and positively affects the early development of 0-3 left-behind children, especially the dimensions of responsiveness and involvement which have a stronger impact on children's early development. It is necessary to show concern and attention to the early development of 0-3 rural left-behind children and intervene as early as possible, which can be promoted by alleviating the parenting predicaments of the main caregivers, guiding them to develop positive parenting behaviors, and providing sensitive and responsive care for children.

From Mythic Narratives to Modern Narratives: The Changing Images of the Child in China

The development of children is closely linked to the images of children. In China, as in many other countries, there has been a transition in the perception of children from mythic narratives to modern narratives. This transition involves the "discovery of the child" and the establishment of their status. In mythic narratives, children were often depicted as non-human images like deities or animals, which laid the groundwork for their eventual recognition as individuals in modern society. In modern narratives, children are reintegrated into the human images, a process deeply connected to their images in mythic narratives and influential in the development of modern child education. This seminar will explore the transformation of the images of children and its implications for children's education.

Ideas of Children and Childhood in China: A Historical Review

Who are "children"? What constitutes a "childhood"? How have these concepts changed over time? These seemingly straightforward questions invite us to explore complex and diverse answers that have evolved across different cultures and historical periods. In this session, we will dive into the history of ideas about children and childhood in China, examining how people have understood and depicted these concepts throughout history. We will also briefly compare these ideas with those from other cultures for a broader perspective.

We will start by looking at traditional Chinese artwork featuring children. As we move through different historical periods, we will discuss core texts and social policies that defined age categories and children's roles within society. We will also examine evolving educational ideals concerning children and how they have influenced the experiences and expectations of young people.

By the end of this session, we aim to provide a broad overview of the historical and cultural dimensions of childhood in China, highlighting how these concepts have developed and changed over time.

STEM Teaching and Learning in Chinese kindergartens

Integrated Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education has increased in prominence internationally in early childhood settings over the last decade. Studies reveal that early STEM education can lead to young children developing positive STEM attitudes and skills. While there is an increasing awareness of the importance of early childhood STEM education and a growing interest in incorporating STEM education into kindergarten classrooms, a large body of research indicates that early childhood teachers tend to be less accustomed to planning integrated activities that related to science, technology, and mathematics, or have difficulty capitalizing on the science opportunities embedded throughout the classroom activities. This course aims to introduce Chinese kindergarten teachers' practices and reflections of providing early STEM learning experience to young children, providing us with valuable insight into ways of realizing STEM education in the EC context.

Young children's rights and citizenship in China: Global perspective and local progress

Young children's rights and citizenship form the foundation of a sustainable and democratic society. Recent studies have explored how these concepts are constructed and practiced in early childhood settings across the globe. Influential global discourses, such as child-centeredness, developmentalism, human capital formation, and sustainability, are prominent. However, local historical and cultural values also play a crucial role and cannot be overlooked. Considering the dynamic interaction between global and local discourses, children's rights and citizenship can be understood as culturally specific constructs that vary across different social and cultural contexts. As concepts rooted in the West, rights and citizenship introduce new perspectives on young children and their education in China. Over the past 30 years, policy and curriculum documents have increasingly depicted young children as rights holders and competent learners, emphasizing their rights to well-being, protection, and active participation within early childhood pedagogy. This seminar will discuss and reflect on these key concepts, share progress in honoring children's rights in diverse contexts, and explore alternative possibilities for young children and their education.

Requirement
Active participation.
Evaluation
Class participation (20%) A short essay related to the cluster with no less than 600 words (40%) Group presentation (40%)
Textbook and reference This course does not need extra textbooks or references. Students are encouraged to learn the educational system, social-economic context and policies related to children's development in China in advance.
Pre-course reading and preparation (if any)