

**Quality Education Fund**  
**Application with Grant Sought Not Exceeding \$200,000**  
**Part B: Project Proposal**

<b>Project Title</b> Kids with Character: A Positive Education Program to Promote Children's Character Strengths and Well-being	<b>Project Number</b> 2018/0643(Revised)
--	---

**Basic Information**

**Name of School / Organisation / Individual** The Education University of Hong Kong

**Beneficiaries**

- (a) Sector:  Kindergarten  Primary  Secondary  Special  
(Please tick the appropriate box(es))
- (b) Students: 120 (in number) and K3 (class level)
- (c) Teachers: 30 (in number)
- (d) Parents: 240 (in number)
- (e) Participating Schools (excluding applicant school): 2 Kindergartens

**Proposal**

**(I) Project Needs**

- (a) Please state the aims of the project in clear and concise terms and elaborate on how the proposed project could impact on school development.

The core element of this project involves the implementation of a character strengths program for kindergarten children. We also involve the parents, teachers, and the school to make the approach holistic. We have the following aims:

On a *Student-level*, (1) to build key character strengths; (2) instill in children a sense of right and wrong, and (3) enhance the wellbeing of kindergarten children

On a *Teacher-level*, to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in delivering positive education;

On a *Parent-level*, to collaborate with parents in promoting positive education to children, and;

On a *School-level and beyond*, (1) to support kindergartens in achieving one of the core aims of the curriculum as stipulated in the Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide (2017), i.e., "to instill in children positive values and attitudes" (p.19); and, (2) to provide research evidence on the effectiveness of the positive education program to maximize its wider promotion.

- (b)
- (i) What are the areas of the needs and priorities of the school?  
 Promote students' social and emotional development
- (ii) Please give background information to justify the demonstrated needs as mentioned in (b)(i).  
(Please tick the appropriate box(es))  
 School development plan: The targeted participating schools are promoting characters' education in their school development year plans

- ☒ Literature review summary: Positive education should be started in early childhood education as students receive tremendous pressure in the HK competitive learning environment (SCMP, 2015, Shoshani & Steinmet, 2014; Stiglbauer, Gnams, Gamsjager, & Batinic, 2013). Developing inner character strengths and building positive attitudes and stronger resilience since early ages is essential for children to tackle future challenges (Park & Peterson, 2008).
- ☒ Others (please specify) The newly-released Kindergarten Curriculum (2017) indicates the need to instill positive attitudes and values among children

- (c) Please elaborate on the innovative ideas or new practices to enhance, adapt, complement and/or supplement the existing practices that will facilitate the development of the school to address the needs specific to its own context.

Our proposed positive education program is in line with the newly-released **Kindergarten Education Curriculum (2017)**, which attaches great importance in cultivating children’s positive values and attitudes. As explained in the Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide (2017), children are expected to possess positive values, i.e., *“to understand themselves, respect and care for others, have passion for life and exhibit good behaviour”* (p.20). Moreover, they should have the positive attitudes to be *“optimistic and confident and be courageous in facing changes in life and growth”* (p.20). In line with this principle, the program we designed is intended to instill children with the following core positive values:

- Love (feeling loved and to love themselves and others);
- Gratitude (showing grateful attitude to others and life);
- Kindness (showing care and respect for others);
- Hope (being optimistic and show passion for life);
- Bravery (being courageous in face of changes in life); and
- Perseverance (being assertive in face of problems and difficulties).

The program will help to address two main developmental objectives of the curriculum, including “Moral Development” by helping children “establish a positive self-image as well as optimistic and positive attitudes towards life” (p.23) and cultivate “positive attitudes towards people and help them to learn to respect and care for people around them” (p.23) and “Affective and Social Development”, by helping children “express their feelings and needs through appropriate means” (p.24) and “strengthen their interpersonal and communication skills” (p.24) so that they are able to establish good interpersonal relationships. Positive attitudes and values can be sustainably improved through targeted programs (Seligman et al., 2009).

The program promotes not only moral education, but also equip children with stronger inner character strengths and resilience, which helps them develop positive values and attitudes which may help them to prepare for transition to primary school.

## (II) Project Feasibility

- (a) Please describe the design of the project, including:
- (i) Approach/Design/Activity (Applicants are advised to provide details on project activities as well as learning and teaching arrangements.)

### ***1. A Positive Education Program for K3 students***

The positive education program will promote the six main character strengths of K3 students as discussed earlier, i.e., (i) Love, (ii) Gratitude, (iii) Kindness, (iv) Hope, (v) Bravery, and (vi) Perseverance. The program will have a total of 6 to 12 sessions that will last for 6 months (from Jan 2020 to June 2020). There will be 1 to 2 sessions (30 minutes to 1 hour each, depends on schools’ schedule) in each month to implement the program for the students and we will make sure the programme will not upset the children’s daily learning schedule.

The activities included in this program are based on the latest research on character strengths interventions in the positive psychology literature (Layous & Lyubomirsky, 2014; Park & Peterson, 2006) which the project team contextualized in the Hong Kong kindergarten setting. Key features of the program to promote the six character strengths include:

**(i) Six character strengths as the schools' monthly themes**

The six character strengths will be promoted as the monthly themes in the two participating kindergartens, first by posting character education bulletin boards in the public places / hallway and kindergarten classrooms. Schools will also be given a set of picture books so that they can cultivate the relevant values to all the students through story-telling while the books should be age-appropriate for the K3 students (Pictures books with fewer words and more pictures), and the content should be interesting and related to the monthly themes in the programme. Schools are also encouraged to design a regular period in each week for students to reflect on what they have done in the past week that can show the relevant character strengths and to discuss what more could be done to practice the relevant strengths in their lives.

**(ii) Diversified play and learning activities, including the use of picture books, games, arts activities, discussions, experience sharing, role plays and behavioural rehearsals with feedback**

Picture books are effective in teaching core values of character strengths to children. Storytelling not only enhances children's interest to learn, but also helps illustrate the abstract meanings of different character strengths to children. We will also include elements of role play in the program. Role play stimulates children's imaginations, clarifies their feelings and emotions and enhances communication, cooperation and behavioural rehearsal of desirable behaviors. Other teaching strategies and extended activities like games, arts, discussions, experience sharing and behavioural rehearsals would be designed based on the themes and books, and we will make sure the learning activities are developed age-appropriately for K3 students.

**(iii) Collaboration with parents**

Parents play an important role in reinforcing appropriate behaviours of children when different character strengths are demonstrated, hence parents will participate in trainings on positive education in daily life. They will also implement extended home activities after each lesson so that children can practice different character strengths in naturalistic real-life settings.

**(iv) Production of learning resources and deliverables**

Learning resources will be produced for the programme and we confirm the copyrights of the materials should be vested with the QEF. Any reproduction, adaption, distribution, dissemination or provision of the deliverables to the public for commercial purpose by the service provider is prohibited

And we will also ensure the procurement of equipment and services on an open, fair and competitive basis. Measures will be taken to avoid any conflicts of interest in the procurement process.

**2. Teacher Professional Development Workshops**

The teachers are critical to the success of the project because they will be implementing the program to their students. Teacher workshops (about 2 to 3 hours) open to all kindergarten teachers, with the proposed topic "Promoting positive education at schools", aims to enhance teachers' knowledge in positive education and practical skills in promoting it in daily teaching practices. Through equipping teachers with relevant knowledge and skills, it facilitates sustainable school-based development of promoting positive education to students. Guest speaker with background of positive education/educational psychology will be invited.

In addition to the teacher workshops, since class teachers in the target classes will be responsible to deliver the program, they will join our implementation workshop where the project team will share the curriculum, lesson plans with teaching materials that were designed for this project. The project team would also provide ongoing support, including a follow-up evaluation after each workshop. Teachers are welcome to provide feedback to enhance the classes/teaching strategies together and develop a more school-based curriculum according to their children's needs.

**3. Education Seminars for Parents**

For the parents' seminars (about 2 hours), with the proposed topic "The power of Positive Parenting at home", aim at introducing positive education to parents and more importantly, the parental roles in supporting children's development of different character strengths and positive

attitudes and values. The seminars will also explain to parents the design of the positive education program and how they can collaborate with school to foster their child's different character strengths and positive attitudes and values at home. Guest speaker with background of promoting positive education/parenting will be invited.

(ii) Key Implementation Details

**Project period:** Aug 2020 to Jan 2022

<b>Month / Year</b>	<b>Content / Activity / Event</b>	<b>Target Beneficiary/Participants</b>
Aug to Oct 2020	Phase One –Preparation Stage 1. Program Development (Aug to Oct 2020) 2. Meetings and coordination with schools leaders (Oct 2020) 3. Implementation workshops for the Positive Education Program (Nov – Dec 2020)	
Nov 2020 to Aug 2021	Phase Two – Implementation Stage (i) Positive Education Program for K3 students (Jan 2021 to June 2021) (ii) Professional Development Workshops for Teachers (Oct 2020) (iii) Education Seminars for Parents (Nov 2020) (iv) Data collection: Pre-test (Dec 2020) and post-test (June to July 2021) on K3 children taking the Positive Education Program	120 K3 students from 2 kindergartens (30 students x 2 classes x 2 kindergartens) 30 teachers from 2 kindergartens (15 teachers x 2 kindergartens) 240 parents from 2 kindergartens (30 students x 2 parents x 2 classes x 2 kindergartens)
Sept 2020 to Jan 2022	Phase Three – Dissemination Stage (i) Production of Deliverables (Online version of learning package with lesson plans) (ii) Dissemination of project findings (iii) Holding a sharing session at the kindergartens at the end of the program	Findings will be disseminated through sharing sessions with the kindergartens, as well as conference and journal papers, which can benefit all educators, administrators and policy makers

(b) Please explain the extent of teachers' and/or principal's involvement and their roles in the project.

(i) Number of teachers involved and degree of input (time, types, etc.):

30 teachers attending the training

4 class teachers from 2 kindergartens who are responsible for the program's delivery (2 teachers x 2 schools)

(ii) Roles of teachers in the project:

Co-ordinator

Service recipient

(c) Please provide the budget of the project and justify the major items involved.

**Grant Sought: HK\$ 198,000.00**

Budget Item*	Expenditure Detail (Including the breakdown for the budget items)		Justifications
	Item	Amount (\$)	
Staff	1 Part-time Project Assistant (PA) \$181/hr (rate+MPF) x 570 hours	\$103,170	Responsible for project administration, curriculum and teaching materials development, data collection and report writing. Preferably more than 3 years' kindergarten teaching experience.
	1 Student helper \$63/hr (rate+MPF) x 125 hours	\$7,875	Support data collection and data entry
Services	Seminars and Workshops	\$26,000	<b>2 Parents' seminars and 2 teachers' workshops (about 2 to 3 hours each):</b> Guest speaker: \$11000 Teaching/workshop materials: \$4000 Delivery fee (Teaching materials): \$1000 <b>2 teachers' implementation workshops:</b> Teaching/workshop materials: \$7000 Delivery fee (Teaching materials): \$1000 <b>2 sharing sessions:</b> Workshop materials: \$2000
General expenses	Miscellaneous	\$5,588	Reference materials, photocopying, stationery and Consumables, travelling, venue, etc.
	Teaching aids, worksheets, manuals	\$9,000	Including cost for development
	Books and supplies for 2 kindergartens	\$14,000	\$7000 x 2
	Audit fee	\$5,000	
	Admin Overhead	\$25,582.00	
Contingency	Contingency	\$1,785.00	
<b>Total Grant Sought (\$):</b>		<b>\$198,000.00</b>	

**(III) Expected Project Outcomes**

(i) Please describe how to evaluate the effectiveness of the project.

- Pre-and post-activity surveys: Questionnaires will be administered to parents and teachers at the end of the workshops and seminars. Students, parents, teachers and principals will also be interviewed to gather feedback on the project.
- Performance change of students in assessment: Pre- and post measures on children's character strengths and well-being will be gathered. To ensure valid and reliable measurement, due regard will be paid in selecting instruments that are age appropriate. Character Strengths Inventory for Early Childhood (CSI-EC), which is developed to measure young children's character strengths based on the VIA Classification of Strengths and Virtues (Shoshani, 2019), which is age-appropriate for the K3 students. Data about students will be collected via parents and trained interviewers.

- (ii) Please state the project deliverables or outcomes.  
 Learning and teaching materials

#### Assets Usage Plan (N/A)

The applicant commits to submit proper reports in strict accordance with the following schedule:

<b>Project Management</b> (Should be submitted via the “Electronic Project Management System” (EPMS) )		<b>Financial Management</b> (Hard copy together with supporting documents should be submitted to the QEF Secretariat by mail or in person)	
<b>Type of report and reporting period</b>	<b>Report due on</b>	<b>Type of report and reporting period</b>	<b>Report due on</b>
Progress Report 01/08/2020 - 31/07/2021	31/08/2021	Interim Financial Report 01/08/2020 - 31/07/2021	31/08/2021
Final Report 01/08/2020 - 31/01/2022	30/04/2022	Final Financial Report 01/08/2021 - 31/01/2022	30/04/2022

#### Appendix 1: Project Team

**Project Leader – Dr. Ricci Fong** – Assistant Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, EdUHK.

**Dr. Ronnel B. King** - Head of the Positive Psychology and Education Research Group; published more than 100 journal articles and book chapters on topics related to student motivation, well-being, and positive psychology/education. “Rising Star” awardee by the Association for Psychological Science (APS).

**Dr. Stephen Y. W. Yip** - Senior Lecturer II at the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, EduHK. Expert in curriculum development.

**Prof. Li Hui** - Professor in the Department of Educational Studies at Macquarie University, Australia. Early childhood education expert. Former project leader for the QEF project on “Foster Kindergarteners’ Positive Values and Optimistic Attitude Through School-based Picture Books and Arts Activities” (2016/1102).

**Dr. Wilbert Law** certified educational psychologist trained at The University of Hong Kong and Rochester University.

**Prof. Kerry Lee** - Professor at the Department of Early Childhood Education, EduHK.

**Dr. Mei Lee Ng** – Assistant Professor and Associate Head of Dept of Early Childhood Education, EdUHK.

## Appendix 2: Proposed activities for the workshops:

Character Strengths	Themes	Aims and Lesson Activities	Themes and Extended Home Activities
<b>Strengths of the Heart</b>			
Gratitude	<u><i>I am Thankful Each Day!</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help children to count their blessings and to feel grateful for what they have in their lives</li> <li>Main activity: Children write down the things that they feel grateful for on the leaves and create a thankfulness tress on the classroom board</li> </ul>	<u><i>We Are Lucky!</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are asked to share with their child each night for 3 things that they feel grateful for that day for 1 week.</li> <li>At the same time, they help to ask children the 3 things that they feel grateful for each day and list them out on a sheet for 1 week.</li> </ul>
	<u><i>Gratitude in the Classroom</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To nurture children with grateful and appreciative attitudes to teachers and peers in school</li> <li>Main activity: 1) To design a Christmas card to express gratitude for a peer or a teacher at school; 2) explain what he/she did that made them feel so grateful for it.</li> </ul>	<u><i>Gratitude at Home</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are asked to list all their family members and they have to list 3 things for each member on why they are appreciative for them.</li> <li>They have to say thank you in person or over phone for the 3 things listed.</li> </ul>
Love	<u><i>Can You Feel That You are Loved?</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help children to know how love is expressed and how they can feel love from others</li> <li>Main activity: To draw a thank you card for parents</li> </ul>	<u><i>I love you, Daddy and Mommy!</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage children to show love and gratitude to parents</li> <li>Main activity: Children are to give big hugs and thank you card to parents.</li> </ul>
	<u><i>Always Love Yourself!</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help children to establish positive self-image and self-confident</li> <li>To help children to be aware of their own strengths and interests and know that they are unique individuals</li> <li>To help children to understand and respect individual differences</li> <li>Main activity: Show and tell – children are asked to bring their favourite toy back to school and talk about it in front of the class</li> </ul>	<u><i>I love You Because You Are You</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are asked to approach their parents, and/or other main carers (grandparents or helper) as well as friends to identify their strengths</li> </ul>

Character Strengths	Themes	Aims and Lesson Activities	Themes and Extended Home Activities
Kindness	<u>Being Kind to Others</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help children to know what we can do to show kindness to others</li> <li>Main Activity: Children are asked to role play on what would they do in the following situations – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a peer knocking down a tower of blocks which the child was building;</li> <li>a peer who resumes school after a week of sick leave; and</li> <li>a peer who would like to play the toy car in your hands.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<u>I am Happy that I can Help</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are asked to discuss with their child to – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>donate some of their red pocket money for charity; and</li> <li>choose one toy to donate it to children in need</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<u>Empathy: I Know How You Feel</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help children to develop empathy, i.e. to better understand the feelings and perspectives of other people</li> <li>Main Activity; Empathy Game – There is a set of situation cards, which are typical situations faced by children (e.g., your friend is sick or ice-cream fell off from the cone of a kid). Children are asked, “How would he/she feel?” in each of the situation.</li> </ul>	<u>Developing Empathy for Parents</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are guided to practice how to understand and acknowledge the feelings of their child, which is important in developing positive parent-child relationship.</li> </ul>
<b>Strengths of the Mind</b>			
Zest	<u>School is Fun and Exciting!</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help children develop a sense of excitement in school</li> <li>Main activity: Art activity – children are asked to draw about the things that they look forward to in school and share to the class what makes them excited about it.</li> </ul>	<u>Family Time is Exciting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After doing an activity the whole family looks forward to and enjoy—be it eating meals together, watching their favourite movie, or visiting their favourite place—parents discuss with their children about how exciting it is to do things together with the family.</li> </ul>
	<u>When I Grow Up</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help children develop a passion for things they want to pursue when they grow up</li> <li>Main activity: the teacher asks the children to bring pictures of what they want to be when they grow up. The students then explain their choice to the class and their plans in order to</li> </ul>	<u>Developing Passion for One's Dreams</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents share with their children about a thing they were passionate about when they were young and how being passionate helped them achieve their goals in life.</li> </ul>



Character Strengths	Themes	Aims and Lesson Activities	Themes and Extended Home Activities
		achieve it.	
Curiosity	<u><i>I Want to Find Out More</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage children to become more curious</li> <li>Main activity: Digital storytelling—the teacher tells the children a story using a digital, animated storybook. The teacher pauses at some parts of the story and prompts the children to guess the next thing that would happen</li> </ul>	<u><i>Searching for the Answer</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children ask their parents something they’ve always wanted to learn about and they look together for the answer (e.g., by reading a book, surfing the internet, etc.)</li> </ul>
	<u><i>I Learned Something New Today</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help children learn more through curiosity</li> <li>Main activity: The teacher asks the children to randomly pick a picture (e.g., an animal, a plant, a place, etc.) with instructions on how to learn more about it (e.g., which page of what book they can find out more about the picture). The children then share with the class their new learning.</li> </ul>	<u><i>“Today, I learned...”</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are asked to share with their parents something new they learned about recently.</li> </ul>
Perspective	<u><i>Understanding Others’ Point of View</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help the children see things from another person’s point of view</li> <li>Main activity: Digital storytelling—the teacher tells the children a story and ask them to explain what the characters are probably thinking and what made them behave the way they did.</li> </ul>	<u><i>Parent for a Day</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The children answer the question: “If you become your parent for a day, what would you do?” and share the answer to their parents.</li> </ul>
	<u><i>Offering a Good Advice</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help children develop the capacity to counsel others</li> <li>Main activity: the teacher gives the children problem situations and the children provide advice on how the problem can be solved.</li> </ul>	<u><i>My Advice for My Parents</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The children are asked about what advice they can give their parents and share it with them.</li> </ul>
<b>Strengths of the Will</b>			
Hope	<u><i>A Better Me Starting Now!</i></u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To let children to reflect on how they can improve themselves</li> <li>Main Activity: To help children to set 3 goals to be completed in the new year</li> </ul>	<u><i>How to be a Better Me?</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are asked to share their 3 goals set in school with their parents.</li> <li>Parents are to discuss with their child on what actions should be taken every day/week to realise the goals set.</li> </ul>

Character Strengths	Themes	Aims and Lesson Activities	Themes and Extended Home Activities
	<u>Hope: My Dream for the Future</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help children to develop positive attitudes towards life and to think about their future aspiration</li> <li>Main activity: Children have to act out what they aspire to be in future without using any words and let other children to make a guess</li> </ul>	<u>I Support You for Whatever Your Dream is</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are encouraged to share their dreams and future aspirations with their parents and then draw it out with the guidance and support of their parents</li> </ul>
Perseverance	<u>Keep Going: To grow with efforts</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To nurture children with growth-mind set</li> <li>To let children feel their own growth through efforts</li> <li>Main Activity: Behavioral rehearsal - To help children to develop positive self-talk with growth-mind set statements</li> </ul>	<u>Keep Growing (I)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are given a list of vocabularies and have to learn and write 3 vocabularies each day for a week.</li> </ul>
	<u>The Journey to Success</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To let children understand that failure is a part of learning process</li> <li>Main Activity: Children are asked to share their experience of learning new skills, such as swimming and riding a bicycle and to reflect on what are needed to be successful in acquiring these skills.</li> </ul>	<u>Keep Growing (II)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children are asked to grow a plant at home, which requires them to water it every day so as to experience the importance of perseverance.</li> </ul>
Bravery	<u>"I can do it!"</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help children to understand the feelings of fear and worried and the situations that would trigger them these feelings</li> <li>Main Activity: To practice positive statements that promote courage and self-belief</li> </ul>	<u>"I Know How You Feel!"</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are asked to share with their child the situations that would trigger them feelings of fears and worries.</li> <li>To share with their children how they overcome the situations</li> </ul>
	<u>Doing the Right Thing!</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help children to understand that sometimes, it needs to have courage in order to help others or to uphold what is right</li> <li>Main activity: Children are asked to role play on the actions that they would take in the following situations - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A group of kids are picking on another kid. They want you to join them. Yet, you think picking on the other kid is unfair.</li> <li>To ask for donations from others for charity purpose</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<u>Being Brave to be Kind</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are asked to provide help to children, who have to approach 5 people for donations to a charity. But the donation cannot exceed HK\$10 for each person.</li> </ul>