



National Evaluation Series™

NES

PROFILE

Early Childhood Education (101)

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NES Profile: Early Childhood Education (101)

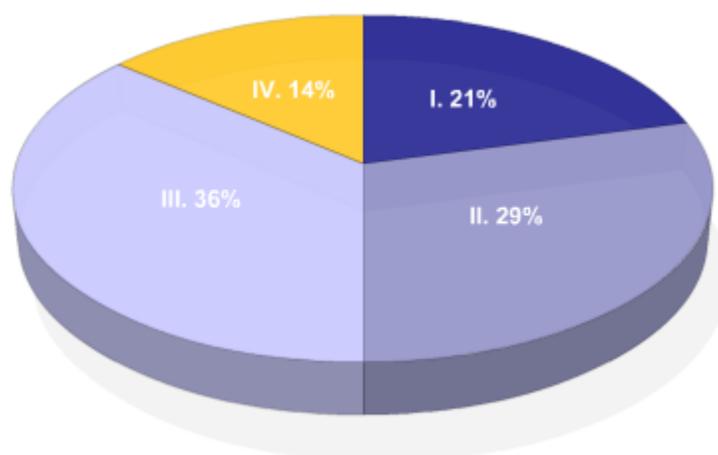
Overview

This *NES Profile* provides information about the test, including the approximate percentage of the total test score derived from each content domain. The complete set of the content domains, the test framework, is provided here and contains all of the competencies and descriptive statements that define the content of the test.

This *NES Profile* includes the following materials:

- » the test competencies associated with each content domain
- » a set of descriptive statements that further explain each competency
- » sample test questions aligned to the competencies
- » any applicable reference materials, as noted below

Test Field	Early Childhood Education (101)
Test Format	Multiple-choice questions
Number of Questions	Approximately 150
Test Duration	Up to 3 hours
Reference Materials	None required



Key	Approximate Percentage of Test	Content Domain	Range of Competencies
I	21%	I. Child Development and Learning	0001–0003
II	29%	II. Language and Literacy Development	0004–0007
III	36%	III. Learning Across the Curriculum	0008–0012
IV	14%	IV. Professional Relationships and Responsibilities	0013–0014

Content Domain I: Child Development and Learning

Competencies:

0001 Understand early childhood development from birth through age 8 and factors that influence young children's development and learning.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Demonstrate knowledge of theoretical foundations and current scientifically based research regarding the development and learning of children from birth through age 8.
- » Recognize characteristics, progressions, and variations of development in the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language, sensory, and aesthetic domains and the interrelationships between the various domains.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of appropriate procedures for meeting the health, nutrition, and safety needs of infants, toddlers, and children through age 8.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of exceptionalities and health conditions and their implications on development, safety, and learning.
- » Recognize the role of play in development and learning.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of factors (e.g., family, culture, community) that influence young children's development and learning and how these factors interact with one another.
- » Analyze potential influences of early childhood programs on short- and long-term outcomes for children.

Sample Item:

In his developmental theories, Jean Piaget sought to explain which of the following?

- A. how maturation, activity, and interpersonal experiences interact to influence cognitive development
- B. how caregiver responsiveness influences social and emotional development
- C. how internal needs, desires, and conflicts interact to influence personality development
- D. how guidance from knowledgeable others influences intellectual development

Correct Response and Explanation

A. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of theoretical foundations regarding the development of children from birth through age 8. Piaget theorized that as children mature, they progress through four stages of cognitive development and that, at each stage, their experiences are filtered through the cognitive structure characteristic of that stage. He further argued that, as children act on the world and interact with other people, they progressively adjust their thinking, constructing new knowledge to fit new situations.

0002 Understand the goals, benefits, types, and uses of assessment.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Recognize types, characteristics, goals, uses, and limitations of various formal and informal assessments and their applications in early childhood programs.
- » Apply knowledge of considerations and strategies for selecting, designing, adapting, and modifying assessments in given situations.
- » Apply knowledge of strategies, procedures, and tools for administering assessments and documenting outcomes.
- » Apply knowledge of the interpretation of assessment results and the use of that information to differentiate instruction and to guide practice.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of the rationales and strategies for involving families and other professionals in the assessment, application, and referral processes.
- » Recognize legal and ethical issues related to assessment and responsible assessment practices.

Sample Item:

Which of the following informal assessment tools would be most useful for documenting a preschool child's ability to perform specific skills?

- A. an interview
- B. a rating scale
- C. a worksheet
- D. a running record

Correct Response and Explanation

B. This question requires the examinee to recognize informal assessments and their applications in early childhood programs. Although more subjective than various other assessments, a rating scale is a quick, efficient way to gather information without disrupting learning. Using a rating scale over time would allow the teacher to monitor and document a child's performance of specific skills and to provide timely intervention as necessary.

0003 Understand how to create positive indoor and outdoor learning environments for children from birth through age 8.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Apply knowledge of the development, characteristics, and needs of young children to create learning environments that are safe and healthy and that promote children's sense of security and independence.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for creating learning environments that reflect respect for children as individuals and that are respectful of their cultural, family, and community contexts.

- » Apply knowledge of the development, characteristics, and needs of young children to create supportive and challenging learning environments that promote children's sense of competence and motivation to learn.
- » Apply knowledge of how to develop curricula that build on children's individual interests and prior knowledge, respond to children's needs, and promote the development of prerequisite skills and positive dispositions toward learning in the content areas.
- » Apply knowledge of how to select appropriate learning resources and materials, including technology, and how to set up the physical environment to meet the needs of all children, including those with exceptionalities.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of the continuum of teaching strategies—from child-initiated to teacher-directed learning—for promoting children's learning, ways to capitalize on incidental and spontaneous opportunities for teaching, and ways of using the environment, daily routines, and personal and social interactions to teach young children.
- » Apply knowledge of how to manage the learning environment by creating schedules and routines, facilitating transitions, and addressing behaviors through scientifically valid, research-based guidance strategies.

Sample Item:

Which of the following would be a second-grade teacher's best strategy for promoting all students' sense of competence and motivation to learn?

- A. emphasizing homogeneous grouping to minimize comparisons between students who perform at different levels
- B. differentiating instruction to present each student with tasks that can be achieved with persistence
- C. creating frequent opportunities for friendly competitions such as spelling bees and math bees
- D. offering praise for the completion of work regardless of a student's level of effort or the quality of the final product

Correct Response and Explanation

B. This question requires the examinee to apply knowledge of supportive learning environments that promote students' sense of competence and motivation to learn. Research has shown that children are motivated by high but realistic learning expectations. Differentiating instruction allows teachers to set learning expectations at the appropriate level for each student. Students who believe that they can achieve success through effort and persistence become self-confident, motivated learners.

Content Domain II: Language and Literacy Development

Competencies:

0004 Understand oral language development and how to promote listening and speaking skills in children from birth through age 8.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Apply knowledge of language development, factors that affect language development, and indicators that a child may be experiencing difficulties or demonstrating exceptional abilities in language development.
- » Apply knowledge of developmentally appropriate strategies for fostering the ability to listen and speak for various purposes (e.g., expressing needs, interacting with others, responding to experiences, developing concepts).
- » Demonstrate knowledge of the relationships between listening, speaking, reading, and writing and of strategies for building on children's oral language to lay the foundations for formal reading and writing instruction.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of the influence of a home language other than standard English on oral language development and of strategies for using English language learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds to promote their listening and speaking skills.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of how to infuse opportunities for meaningful language and communication into all areas of the early childhood curriculum.

Sample Item:

As part of the regular daily schedule, a second-grade teacher reads a story aloud and discusses it with the class. Several students are English language learners, and the teacher wants to use the discussions to promote and extend these students' oral language skills. Which of the following would be the teacher's best strategy for achieving this goal?

- A. meeting with the English language learners beforehand to preteach key vocabulary and make connections to their prior knowledge
- B. asking the English language learners to repeat the teacher's questions in statement form as a preface to their responses
- C. holding the discussions in two sessions, one for the English language learners and the other for native English speakers
- D. using the discussions as a regular opportunity to give feedback on the English language learners' progress in English language production

Correct Response and Explanation

A. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of strategies for fostering English language learners' ability to speak for various purposes. If English language learners are unfamiliar with key words and concepts in a story, they will be unable to participate fully in a discussion about it. Conducting a prereading activity to explain the story's vocabulary and link the content to the children's existing knowledge will facilitate comprehension and, thus, active oral participation.

0005 Understand the foundations of literacy development in children from birth through age 8.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Demonstrate knowledge of literacy development, factors that affect the development of reading skills, and indicators that a child may be experiencing difficulties or demonstrating exceptional abilities in reading.
- » Apply knowledge of the role of phonological and phonemic awareness in early reading development, methods of assessing phonological and phonemic awareness, and strategies for fostering the development of phonological and phonemic awareness.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of concepts about print, ways to assess children's understanding of concepts about print, and strategies and resources for promoting understanding in this area.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of the alphabetic principle and its significance for reading, ways to assess children's understanding of the alphabetic principle, and strategies for promoting skills and understanding in this area.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of spelling development and its relationship to reading, stages of spelling development, ways to evaluate children's spelling development, and strategies and resources for promoting spelling skills.
- » Apply knowledge of approaches for integrating literacy with other areas of the curriculum and with everyday activities.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of the rationales and strategies for involving families and other professionals in literacy development.

Sample Item:

Four-year-old Kima draws a picture of a girl. She then writes the letter *K* all around the edges of the paper, remarking, "This is my name. It says *Kima*." This behavior suggests that Kima has attained some understanding of:

- A. the function of print.
- B. how to decode words.
- C. the alphabetic principle.
- D. how to track print.

Correct Response and Explanation

A. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of concepts about print. Kima's behaviors indicate that she makes a distinction between letters and pictures and that she recognizes that letters are used to represent spoken language.

0006 Understand instruction in reading and reading comprehension for children from birth through age 8.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Demonstrate knowledge of phonics and its role in decoding, ways to assess children's phonics skills, and strategies for promoting the development of phonics skills.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of word identification strategies other than phonics (e.g., syllabication, morphology, context clues), ways to assess children's use of word identification strategies, and strategies for promoting word identification skills.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of the role of sight words in reading, ways to assess children's mastery of common irregular sight words, and strategies for promoting sight-word recognition.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of the role of fluency in reading comprehension, ways to assess children's reading fluency, and strategies for promoting reading fluency.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of the role of vocabulary development in reading, ways to assess children's vocabulary development, and strategies for promoting vocabulary development.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of various comprehension strategies (e.g., previewing, self-monitoring, self-correcting, rereading), factors that affect reading comprehension, ways to assess children's use of comprehension strategies, and strategies and resources for promoting skills in this area.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for promoting children's ability to locate, organize, and use information from various sources for purposes such as answering questions, solving problems, communicating ideas, and making connections.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for promoting children's literary response and analysis and for motivating children to read independently.

Sample Item:

Which of the following would be the most effective way for a third-grade teacher to promote students' comprehension of a new chapter they are about to begin reading in their science textbook?

- A. having students skim the chapter, write down any unfamiliar words, and look up the words in a dictionary
- B. assigning students to small groups in which the members take turns reading sections of the text out loud
- C. holding a brief discussion of the word identification strategies the class has learned and listing the strategies on the board
- D. helping the class generate a chart of what they know about the subject and what they would like to learn

Correct Response and Explanation

D. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of strategies for promoting reading comprehension skills. Research indicates that students who are actively engaged when reading show greater comprehension of expository text than students who are not. Involving students in creating a chart of what they know about a topic and what they would like to learn promotes active thinking during the reading process by encouraging questioning, providing specific things to look for, and prompting reflection.

0007 Understand writing processes and strategies for developing children's writing competence.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Demonstrate knowledge of children's writing development, factors that influence the development of writing skills (e.g., phonemic awareness, fine-motor skills), and indicators that a child may be experiencing difficulties in written language development.
- » Apply knowledge of strategies and resources for promoting children's development and application of skills for communicating through writing (e.g., writing in various formats and for various purposes, applying conventions of standard English, using effective writing processes).
- » Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for integrating writing instruction with the other language arts and other content areas.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of how having a home language other than standard English may affect writing development and instruction and how to use children's linguistic and cultural backgrounds to promote writing competence.

Sample Item:

In a class of three year olds, which of the following would be the teacher's best strategy for fostering the development of the fine-motor skills prerequisite for writing?

- A. providing children with thick pencils to use to trace the outlines of letters and shapes
- B. engaging children in activities such as doing fingerplays and playing with interlocking blocks and beads
- C. involving children in singing activities in which they clap the rhythms of the songs
- D. engaging children in art activities such as fingerpainting and making prints of their hands in plaster

Correct Response and Explanation

B. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of factors that influence children's development of writing skills. The development of the fine-motor skills required for writing starts in babyhood, when children use a pincer grasp to pick up objects of interest. Preschool teachers can build on these skills by providing appealing activities with manipulative materials that support the further development of fine-motor strength and control.

Content Domain III: Learning Across the Curriculum

Competencies:

0008 Understand music, drama, creative movement, dance, and visual arts and how to facilitate arts learning for children from birth through age 8.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Demonstrate knowledge of the elements, characteristics, tools, technologies, and materials of music and approaches for creating developmentally meaningful music experiences.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of the elements, characteristics, tools, technologies, and materials of drama, creative movement, and dance and approaches for creating developmentally meaningful drama, creative movement, and dance experiences.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of the elements, characteristics, tools, technologies, and materials of the visual arts and approaches for creating developmentally meaningful art experiences.
- » Recognize connections between the arts and effective approaches for integrating the arts with other areas of the curriculum and with everyday activities.

Sample Item:

A first-grade teacher is planning an art activity in which students will explore texture. Which of the following activities would best foster students' understanding of this visual art concept?

- A. easel painting
- B. sketching
- C. crayon rubbing
- D. cutting and pasting

Correct Response and Explanation

C. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of the elements and materials of the visual arts. Crayon rubbing is a process in which a sheet of paper is placed over a textured material (e.g., tree bark, a piece of screening). The surface of the paper is then rubbed with a crayon, and the resulting image captures the textural qualities of the material beneath.

0009 Understand health, safety, and physical activity and how to facilitate learning about health and safety and participation in physical activities for children from birth through age 8.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Demonstrate knowledge of basic principles and practices of personal, interpersonal, and community health and safety relevant to children.

- » Apply knowledge of strategies and procedures for promoting children's health and safety in the learning environment and strategies for promoting understanding and application of health and safety principles and practices.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of various types of age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate motor skills and physical activities; indicators that a child may be experiencing difficulties in motor skills development; and skills, techniques, and safety practices for leading children in a variety of physical activities.
- » Apply knowledge of how to plan activities for children, including integrating health and safety principles and physical activities with other areas of the curriculum and with everyday activities; strategies for modifying activities to address individual needs; and strategies for promoting social skills, confidence, and enjoyment of movement.

Sample Item:

In terms of student safety, which of the following features of a school playground should a kindergarten teacher be most concerned about?

- A. The swings do not provide back support or seat belts.
- B. The surface below the climbing structure consists of packed earth.
- C. The platform at the top of the slide is five feet high.
- D. The playing area includes a blacktop made of asphalt.

Correct Response and Explanation

B. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of basic safety practices relevant to children. To minimize the potential for injury from a fall, the surface beneath playground climbing structures should consist of a material that will absorb an impact. Wood chips or rubberized materials have been proven effective for this purpose, while nonabsorptive surfaces, such as packed earth, statistically increase the chance of serious injury.

0010 Understand mathematical concepts, processes, and skills and how to facilitate mathematical learning for children from birth through age 8.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Demonstrate knowledge of basic concepts, processes, and skills related to the various areas of mathematics (e.g., number sense, operations, algebra, geometry, measurement, data analysis, probability).
- » Identify characteristics of and processes in children's mathematical development and indicators that a child may be experiencing difficulties or demonstrating exceptional abilities in mathematics.
- » Apply knowledge of approaches for determining children's current mathematical knowledge, identifying their individual needs, and providing instruction that follows a logical progression, builds on previous learning, challenges children appropriately, and is well integrated across grades and developmental levels.

- » Demonstrate knowledge of developmentally appropriate learning experiences and resources, including technology, for promoting children's understanding of basic concepts and acquisition of mathematical skills, knowledge, and vocabulary.
- » Apply knowledge of approaches for integrating mathematical content with other areas of the curriculum and with everyday activities.

Sample Item:

In a third-grade class, each student stands on a large sheet of 1-inch graph paper while a partner creates an outline of the student's foot by tracing around it. Students then count the number of squares inside each outline. This activity would best help students understand the mathematical concept of:

- A. perimeter.
- B. volume.
- C. proportion.
- D. area.

Correct Response and Explanation

D. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of basic concepts related to geometry. In geometry, the term *area* refers to a flat surface enclosed by lines. Outlining a student's foot on graph paper enables students to explore the concept of area by counting the number of unit squares contained within the outline.

0011 Understand social studies concepts and skills and how to facilitate social studies learning for children from birth through age 8.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Demonstrate knowledge of basic concepts of culture, geography, U.S. and world history, economics, and civics for children and the relationships between the areas of social studies.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of processes, skills, technologies, and resources used in exploring and understanding social studies content and phenomena.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of developmentally appropriate learning experiences and resources for promoting children's understanding of basic social studies concepts and acquisition of social studies skills, knowledge, and vocabulary.
- » Apply knowledge of approaches for integrating social studies content with other areas of the curriculum and with everyday activities.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of human diversity and of strategies for promoting children's appreciation and understanding of and respect for all people.

Sample Item:

Which of the following represents a third-grade teacher's best strategy for integrating art with the study of local history?

- A. contacting local organizations, such as the town offices and the historical society, to obtain brochures and other materials to use in a collage
- B. posting pictures of notable historical figures when teaching a lesson on important events and issues in local history
- C. distributing cardboard templates of historical images, such as log houses or horses and buggies, for students to use to create scenes from the past
- D. looking at local historical paintings and comparing features of daily life in earlier times, such as clothing and transportation, with those of today

Correct Response and Explanation

D. This question requires the examinee to apply knowledge of approaches for integrating the social studies and arts curricula. One traditional function of visual art has been to record and interpret features of a time or place. Local historical paintings provide a wealth of opportunities for students to compare today's world with that of the past, as well as to examine artists' use of art elements and principles to convey a mood or theme.

0012 Understand science concepts and skills and how to facilitate science learning for children from birth through age 8.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Demonstrate knowledge of basic concepts of the life sciences, physical sciences, and Earth and space sciences for children.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of processes, skills, technologies, and resources used in exploring and understanding science content and phenomena.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of developmentally appropriate learning experiences and resources for promoting children's understanding of basic concepts and acquisition of science skills, knowledge, and vocabulary.
- » Apply knowledge of approaches for integrating science content with other areas of the curriculum and with everyday activities.

Sample Item:

Which of the following animals is classified as a vertebrate?

- A. butterfly
- B. hummingbird
- C. earthworm
- D. jellyfish

Correct Response and Explanation

B. This question requires the examinee to apply knowledge of basic concepts of the life sciences. A vertebrate is an animal that has a backbone. Of the animals listed, the only one with a backbone is the hummingbird.

Content Domain IV: Professional Relationships and Responsibilities

Competencies:

0013 Understand strategies for building positive, collaborative relationships with children's families, other professionals, and community agencies and organizations.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Demonstrate knowledge of the roles of parents/guardians as primary caregivers and informal teachers of children, of factors in the home and community that may affect children's development and learning, and of strategies for working collaboratively with all families.
- » Apply knowledge of family dynamics and its implications for building positive and supportive relationships with children and their families.
- » Apply knowledge of strategies for initiating and sustaining communication with families to promote children's development and learning and for providing families with information, support, and referrals.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for creating meaningful, respectful, and reciprocal relationships with all families and for engaging families' and communities' active participation in promoting children's development and learning.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of the roles of other professionals, community agencies, and organizations that provide services to young children and their families and of strategies for working effectively with such entities.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for building collaborative partnerships with colleagues, supervisors, support staff, and administrators.

Sample Item:

A first-grade student with a disability is frequently pulled out from her general education classroom to receive services in the resource room. The first-grade teacher feels that the student is missing not only important instruction, but also opportunities to develop ties with her classmates. Which of the following would be the first-grade teacher's best *initial* response?

- A. scheduling a meeting with the school principal to emphasize the need to take immediate action
- B. rearranging the instructional schedule in the classroom to accommodate the student's resource-room schedule
- C. arranging to meet with the special education teacher to present his or her concerns and discuss how best to proceed
- D. limiting the time the student spends in the resource room to one half-hour session per day

Correct Response and Explanation

C. This question requires the examinee to demonstrate knowledge of strategies for building collaborative partnerships with colleagues. A direct meeting would provide the best opportunity for the teachers to share their perspectives, explore potential solutions, and forge a common understanding of how to meet the student's needs across domains.

0014 Understand the roles and responsibilities of early childhood educators.

Descriptive Statements:

- » Demonstrate knowledge of the historical and philosophical foundations of early childhood education and their influence on practices in the field.
- » Recognize the roles and responsibilities of early childhood educators (e.g., promoting children's learning; advocating for children, families, and early childhood programs; reporting suspected abuse and/or neglect).
- » Demonstrate awareness of current issues and trends in programs and services for young children and their significance for early childhood professionals.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of major laws, regulations, guidelines, and ethical standards related to early childhood education.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of the responsibilities and requirements of early childhood educators regarding the development of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- » Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for engaging in ongoing professional development and personal reflection, including developing, implementing, and evaluating professional development plans.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of organizations, publications, and other resources relevant to the field of early childhood education.
- » Demonstrate knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of early childhood educators in regard to organizational skills (e.g., time management; record keeping; stress reduction; and developing, implementing, and evaluating lesson plans).

Sample Item:

A young child with developmental delays has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The child will soon turn three, at which point he will enter a general education preschool program. Which of the following is a key responsibility of the general education preschool teacher in this situation?

- A. working closely with the child's family and service providers to promote a smooth transition
- B. obtaining permission to review the child's complete medical history in preparation for the child's entry
- C. informing the families of other children in the program of the child's upcoming enrollment
- D. submitting a formal request for a paraprofessional to provide support in the child's preschool classroom

Correct Response and Explanation

A. This question requires the examinee to recognize the responsibilities of early childhood educators. Transitions are especially sensitive moments for young children. The general education preschool teacher can facilitate a smooth transition by collaborating with the family and service providers in multiple ways (e.g., by learning about the child's routines, communication modes, and favorite toys and foods; becoming familiar with the services the child has been receiving; arranging to meet the child beforehand).

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