



National Evaluation Series™

# NES

## PROFILE

**Early Childhood Education  
(Birth–Prekindergarten) (106)**

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# NES Profile: Early Childhood Education (Birth–Prekindergarten) (106)

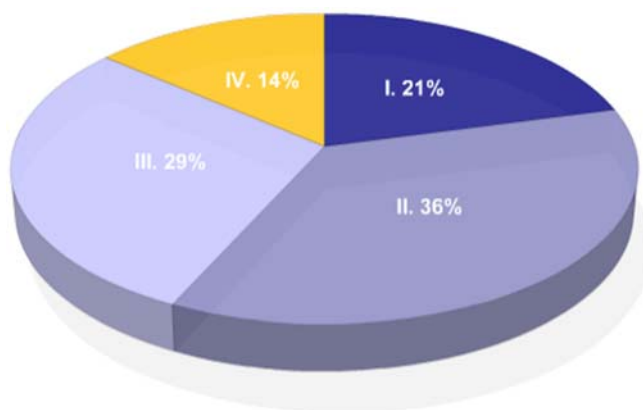
## Overview

The resources below provide information about this 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 the content domain,
- a set of descriptive statements that further explain each competency,
- a sample test question aligned to each competency.

<b>Test Field</b>	Early Childhood Education (Birth–Prekindergarten) (106)
<b>Test Format</b>	Multiple-choice questions
<b>Number of Questions</b>	Approximately 80
<b>Test Duration</b>	Up to one hour and 45 minutes
<b>Reference Materials</b>	None required



Key	Approximate Percentage of Test	Content Domain	Range of Competencies
I	21%	I: Growth and Development–Birth to Age 4	0001–0003
II	36%	II. The Learning Environment–Birth to Age 4	0004–0008
III	29%	III. Learning Across the Developmental Domains	0009–0012
IV	14%	IV. Professional and Ethical Practices	0013–0014

## Content Domain I: Growth and Development–Birth To Age 4

### Competency:

0001 Understand the stages and progressions of early childhood development from birth to age four.

### Descriptive Statements:

- Demonstrate knowledge of theories and principles of development and stages and processes of development in various domains (e.g., physical, social-emotional, cognitive, language, aesthetic).
- Demonstrate knowledge of how the development in one domain relates to the development in other domains (e.g., relationships between language development and aspects of cognitive and social-emotional development; relationships between social-emotional development and learning).
- Demonstrate knowledge of characteristics, progressions, and individual variations in typical and atypical development in young children from birth to age four.

### Sample Item:

**Which of the following behaviors is most typical of seven- to nine-month-old children?**

- A. using fingers to point to things
- B. reaching for an object
- C. beginning to smile at people
- D. stacking up to four blocks

#### **Correct Response and Explanation**

**B.** A typically developing child between the ages of seven and nine months old is becoming increasingly aware of and intrigued by his/her environment. The child, therefore, can be expected to reach for an object of interest. By this age a young child will often reach for a bottle or food item, a familiar comfort object, and the face of a caregiver.

## Competency:

0002 Understand multiple influences on growth and development across the developmental domains of young children from birth to age four.

## Descriptive Statements:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the influence of stress, trauma, protective factors, and resilience; and supportive relationships on the cognitive, social-emotional, language, and physical development of infants, toddlers, and young children.
- Demonstrate knowledge of factors (e.g., family, culture, community) that influence development and learning and how these factors affect one another.
- Demonstrate knowledge of exceptionalities (e.g., giftedness and special needs) and/or health conditions and their implications for the development and learning of infants, toddlers, and young 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.

## Competency:

0003 Understand that young children construct knowledge and then use this understanding to create opportunities for young children to learn about and explore their world.

## Descriptive Statements:

- Apply knowledge of the multiple functions of play in infant, toddler, and young children's development and learning and the role of play in enabling children to meet developmental benchmarks and learning progressions across domains.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the continuum of teaching strategies—from child-initiated activities to adult-guided instruction for promoting learning; strategies and methods to capitalize on spontaneous opportunities for teaching; and ways to use the environment, daily routines, and personal and social interactions to support learning and development of children from birth to age four.
- Demonstrate knowledge of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) that supports and encourages young children's innate curiosity, self-initiated exploration, and intrinsic interest in learning.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the unique needs of English language learners (ELL/ESOL) and practices that build on home language systems to develop language proficiency.

## Sample Item:

**According to National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC®) guidelines regarding intentional teaching, a teacher's ability to make informed decisions about what is developmentally appropriate for children is most dependent on the knowledge of:**

- A. state mandates and regulations
- B. current instructional technology applications
- C. fundamental pedagogical practice
- D. each child as an individual

### Correct Response and Explanation

D. NAEYC's position statement *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8* (2009) described and explained the importance of intentional teaching to address instructional goals. Three core considerations were identified: knowledge of age-level characteristics in the development of children; knowledge of the social, cultural, and linguistic contexts specific to each child; and knowledge of each child as an individual. The consideration of these three areas enables a teacher to make informed decisions relevant to specific short-term and long-term instructional goals for children, which is the basis for both intentional and developmentally appropriate practice.

## Content Domain II: The Learning Environment—Birth To Age 4

### Competency:

0004 Understand how to create, structure, and manage safe, supportive, and challenging learning environments for young children.

### Descriptive Statements:

- Demonstrate knowledge of effective developmentally and culturally appropriate routines and schedules to address the varying stages and needs of all young children from birth to age four.
- Apply knowledge of practices and procedures to create intentional learning environments that encourage and support active engagement, exploration, construction of knowledge, and sense of autonomy.
- Demonstrate knowledge of considerations in the organization of the physical learning environment (e.g., accessibility, space, orderliness, stimulation) to support the physical, social-emotional, language, and cognitive development of infants, toddlers, and young children.
- Demonstrate knowledge of differences in children's strengths and needs and the instructional implications of such differences, including the importance of recognizing that every child can learn and communicating high expectations for all children's learning and progress.

### Sample Item:

**The teachers of a preschool class have prepared a number of learning centers (e.g., manipulatives, art, dramatic play, science) for the children to work in during free choice time. Which of the following guidelines would be most important for the teachers to follow with regard to the children's use of the learning centers?**

- A. ensuring that the children spend approximately equal amounts of time in each center on a given day
- B. having the children put checkmarks by their names at each center to keep a record of the center's popularity
- C. designing each center to include activities that pose a range of challenges at various difficulty levels
- D. establishing a minimum amount of time that a child should spend at a center he or she has chosen

#### **Correct Response and Explanation**

**C.** Preschool-age children demonstrate a variety of interests and strengths. Integrating learning center activities provides an ideal environment to allow young children to explore, create, and engage. In designing learning centers, teachers should seek to include a range of materials, activities, and experiences that provide challenges across developmental levels. By observing and interacting with the children in learning center activities, the teacher can adjust the level of challenge, support, and stimulation to maximize learning and engagement.

## Competency:

0005 Understand basic health, nutrition, and safety management practices and procedures.

## Descriptive Statements:

- Demonstrate knowledge of basic principles of personal, interpersonal, and community health and safety practices and procedures relevant to infants, toddlers, and young children.
- Apply knowledge of strategies and procedures for promoting health, nutrition, and safety in the learning environment and strategies for promoting health, nutrition, and safety practices and procedures for young children from birth to age four (e.g., universal precautions).
- Demonstrate knowledge of signs of physical and emotional distress, trauma, potential abuse and neglect, and procedures for addressing such concerns (e.g., mandated reporting; access to family, community, and medical services to support the family and child).

## Sample Item:

**In terms of student safety, which of the following features of a school playground should a prekindergarten 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.



## Competency:

0006 Understand diversity and how to create and foster environments and learning opportunities that are safe, responsive, respectful, and inclusive.

## Descriptive Statements:

- Demonstrate knowledge of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity and its significance for development and learning.
- Apply knowledge of strategies for working effectively with and meeting the needs of children with various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, talents, disabilities, family situations, socioeconomic circumstances, and prior learning experiences.
- Demonstrate knowledge of practices that support inclusive learning environments and promote cultural and linguistic diversity in infants', toddlers', and young children's environments.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the complexity and dynamics of family systems and the roles of parent/guardians as primary caregivers and as their children's first teachers.

## Sample Item:

**In the context of infant and toddler programs, the importance of family systems theory lies primarily in its examination and expression of which of the following factors related to an infant's growth and development?**

- A. the attitude held by the child's family regarding the purpose of schooling
- B. the effect of the child's birth order on his or her status within the family unit
- C. the role played by the child's family networks and relationships
- D. the sequence in which the child achieves major developmental benchmarks

### **Correct Response and Explanation**

**C.** Within the realm of early childhood education, the family systems theory helps us to define, visualize, and understand the complex and diverse relationships within families. A fundamental principle in this relationship is that a family includes interconnected members, each influencing the others in unique, predictable, and sometimes unpredictable ways. An important factor in this interconnectedness is the role of the child's family networks (e.g., individual family members, caregivers, as well as cultural, faith and ethnic communities) and relationships with others. Early childhood teachers and programs can provide effective, developmentally and culturally appropriate educational experiences by understanding and engaging effectively within the family network.

## Competency:

0007 Understand how to use appropriate, authentic, and culturally responsive assessments and assessment strategies, including observation, to learn about young children, plan developmentally appropriate activities, and monitor progress.

## Descriptive Statements:

- Demonstrate knowledge of characteristics, uses, advantages, and limitations of different types of informal and formal assessments (e.g., observations, screening tools, criterion- and norm-referenced tests, checklists).
- Apply knowledge of considerations and strategies for conducting ongoing systematic observations and informal assessments using developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate assessment practices.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the role of families as active participants in the assessment process and effective strategies to involve families in assessing the strengths and needs of infants, toddlers, and young children.
- Demonstrate knowledge of strategies and methods for interpreting assessment results and how to use assessment results to design and/or modify instruction and make sound and developmentally appropriate educational decisions.

## Sample Item:

**Which of the following factors would most seriously compromise the validity of a teacher's anecdotal records?**

- A. The notes contain the first names of all students involved in the observed activities.
- B. The teacher uses abbreviations, phrases, and shorthand to record the observations in real time.
- C. The teacher uses evaluative language to explain possible feelings and motives of the student.
- D. Observations were conducted in a variety of settings, time frames, and student groupings.

### **Correct Response and Explanation**

**C.** The primary guideline in the gathering and use of anecdotal records and notes is that they describe the events and actions of a student in objective, non-evaluative language. Observational notes and details should *not* include interpretation, judgements, inferences, or conclusions in order to be valid as a means of informal assessment. Anecdotal observations should contain specific, relevant information and be included with additional assessment tools as part of a valid, responsible assessment practice.

## Competency:

0008 Understand how to foster positive, collaborative, and culturally and linguistically responsive relationships with parents/guardians, families, other professionals, and community agencies.

## Descriptive Statements:

- Demonstrate knowledge of how to create a safe, collaborative environment for families and how to use family-centered skills and strategies to promote effective, ongoing communication and involvement with families and to encourage families' active involvement in their children's education.
- Apply knowledge of skills and strategies for working effectively with families from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and how to build positive relationships by respecting and valuing families' preferences and goals.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the roles of professionals who provide related services to infants, toddlers, and young children and their families; and strategies for collaborating with colleagues and other professionals to respond to the needs and concerns of families.

## Sample Item:

**During a home visit, an early childhood teacher talks with family members of a three-year-old child. The teacher provides information about the current areas of study, activities, and scheduled field trips, and answers the family's questions. Then the teacher spends 15–20 minutes playing a game with the child and the parents. Which of the following outcomes is the most likely benefit of conducting this type of home visit?**

- A. establishing a foundation for a positive relationship between the teacher and the family
- B. alerting the family to any areas of concern regarding the child's language and social-emotional development
- C. aligning the values of the teacher and family members to appropriately support the child's learning
- D. providing access to information related to child development and early childhood education policies

### **Correct Response and Explanation**

**A.** Home visits by teachers are becoming more widely used due to the benefits they have been shown to provide. Parents/guardians may be unable to attend back-to-school programs or other school-sponsored functions for a wide variety of reasons. Research has shown that home visits often provide the initial step in developing a collaborative and effective home–school relationship. Young children also benefit from observing their parents/guardians and teacher interacting in their home.

## Content Domain III: Learning Across the Developmental Domains

### Competency:

0009 Understand oral language development and how to facilitate receptive and expressive communication.

### Descriptive Statements:

- Demonstrate knowledge of characteristics, processes, and progressions in development of receptive and expressive speech, language, and alternative forms of communication in infants, toddlers, and young children (e.g., typical and atypical language development, second-language acquisition, visual supports).
- Apply knowledge of language development, factors that affect language development, and indicators that an infant, toddler, or young child may be experiencing difficulties or demonstrating exceptional abilities in language development.
- Apply knowledge of developmentally appropriate strategies for fostering young children's ability to speak and listen for various purposes (e.g., expressing needs and wants, interacting with others, responding to experiences and the environment, developing concepts).
- Demonstrate knowledge of the influence of a home language other than English on young children's oral language development and strategies for using English language learners' (ELL/ESOL) linguistic and cultural backgrounds to promote the listening and oral language development of young children from birth to age four.

### Sample Item:

**An infant and toddler classroom includes several children who are English language learners (ELLs/ESOLs). Which of the following strategies would most effectively promote the children's listening and oral language development?**

- A. talking and singing to the children in both languages every day
- B. using only the home language to refer to everyday objects
- C. conducting brief English-language lessons with the children each week
- D. giving the children tokens or other favorite rewards whenever they attempt to speak English

#### **Correct Response and Explanation**

**A.** Exposing an infant or toddler to both languages through talking and singing promotes oral language development, listening skills, and early cognitive development. Research indicates that songs or musical rhymes of every culture prepare the child's brain for language. Neuroimaging indicates that music and rhyme activate both sides of the brain.

## Competency:

0010 Understand factors that influence and facilitate cognitive development.

## Descriptive Statements:

- Demonstrate knowledge of cognitive development indicators and recognize how to adjust and scaffold learning experiences in response to feedback from infants, toddlers, and young children.
- Demonstrate knowledge of activities, approaches, and resources that encourage and support exploration and engagement and promote a positive disposition toward learning.
- Apply knowledge of developmentally appropriate and engaging learning experiences, resources, and methods for developing and enhancing early cognitive skills and foundational concepts in infants, toddlers, and young children.
- Apply knowledge of developmentally appropriate strategies, activities, and resources for facilitating creative self-expression, problem-solving, and self-regulation skills.

## Sample Item:

**Which of the following strategies would be most effective for promoting infants' development of problem-solving skills?**

- A. performing everyday tasks where infants can watch you
- B. giving infants access to technology-based toys and screen media
- C. supplying infants with age-appropriate objects to explore
- D. playing tickling and peek-a-boo games with infants

### **Correct Response and Explanation**

**C.** The ability to solve problems begins very early in a child's developmental progression and looks different depending on the child's level of development. At the earliest age, infants and toddlers learn cause-and-effect relationships as a foundation of problem-solving skills. Providing a very young child with age-appropriate objects to explore supports the development of a schema of his/her environment through sensory engagement. For example, giving a young child teething rings of different shapes, textures, and colors will allow for a variety of tactile and sensory exploration.

## Competency:

0011 Understand how to facilitate the physical development from birth to age four.

## Descriptive Statements:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the indicators and progressions of physical development in infants, toddlers, and young children (e.g., fine-motor, gross-motor, and sensory skills).
- Demonstrate knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices and methods for developing the fine-motor, gross-motor, and sensory skills of infants, toddlers, and young children.
- Apply knowledge of strategies and practices for promoting and supporting the physical well-being and development of infants, toddlers, and young children (e.g., consistent daily schedules that include sleep/rest; structured and unstructured play; importance of daily physical activity and outdoor time).
- Demonstrate knowledge of how to create and manage an environment that provides opportunities to learn and practice healthy behaviors related to nutrition, injury prevention, and physical and emotional well-being.

## Sample Item:

**Which of the following activities would likely be most effective for promoting the understanding of playground safety to four-year-old children?**

- A. sending home a list of playground "do's and don'ts" in the weekly newsletter for parents/guardians to review with their child
- B. displaying pictures throughout the classroom illustrating the specific playground expectations to reference as needed
- C. modeling expected safety behaviors using the playground equipment and role-playing actions and consequences with children
- D. selecting a playground monitor each day to report incidents of children engaging in unsafe behaviors and activities

### **Correct Response and Explanation**

**C.** Modeling appropriate and safe behaviors and actions is the most effective practice for teaching young children. Adults look at a playground and see the potential for an accident and injury. Children look at a playground and see "fun." By teaching and modeling appropriate and safe behaviors on the playground and using the equipment, the teacher provides a visual for the children that by following simple rules, the children can have fun and be safe.

## Competency:

0012 Understand how to facilitate the social-emotional development of children from birth to age four.

## Descriptive Statements:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the indicators and progressions of social-emotional development in infants, toddlers, and young children.
- Apply knowledge of developmentally appropriate strategies, activities, and resources for facilitating creative self-expression, problem-solving, and self-regulation skills.
- Demonstrate knowledge of strategies and practices for involving and collaborating with families of young children to promote positive social-emotional growth and development.
- Apply knowledge of strategies and practices to promote infants', toddlers', and young children's social-emotional growth and development, including positive interventions and the use of natural, logical, and situationally appropriate consequences to address behavior.

## Sample Item:

**Preschool children are taught to follow specific routines and procedures as part of daily classroom activities. For example, before moving from one center to another, children are expected to gather and secure all the materials in their assigned location to be ready for the next group. Such routines are especially appropriate and effective for teaching children to:**

- A. recognize the benefits of neatness and cleanliness.
- B. understand the concept of cause-and-effect.
- C. develop habits of personal responsibility.
- D. externalize the needs of others in the group.

### **Correct Response and Explanation**

**C.** Routines instill a sense of order and help children feel secure. They also provide opportunities for children to learn how to become contributing members of the classroom community. By teaching children clean-up routines and expecting their independent participation in those routines, the teacher is teaching them skills to develop habits of personal responsibility in a context that will make logical sense to them.

## Content Domain IV: Professional and Ethical Practices

### Competency:

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

### Descriptive Statements:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the roles of professionals who provide related services to young children and their families and strategies for collaborating with colleagues and other professionals to respond to the needs and concerns of families.
- Demonstrate knowledge of strategies and practices for collaborating with colleagues and other professionals to identify and use community resources to enhance learning.
- Demonstrate knowledge of professional codes, ethics, and conduct for early childhood teachers and incorporate these into professional practice.

### Sample Item:

**An early intervention special education teacher is providing services for two toddlers within the early childhood classroom twice a week. Which of the following questions should be addressed to most effectively support the development of a collaborative, effective relationship between the early childhood teacher and the special education teacher?**

- A. Which child will require the most assistance?
- B. Where can the special education be stationed?
- C. How can we regularly share feedback with each other?
- D. Who should have the most frequent contact with parents?

#### **Correct Response and Explanation**

**C.** Regular opportunities for teachers and service providers to share feedback, observations, instructional goals, and information about children's progress and needs are essential. Through regular, child-focused communication, teachers build collaborative relationships that support effective practice and improve the learning environment for both teachers and children. The teachers can share strategies and ideas about best practice and instruction.



## Competency:

0014 Understand roles and responsibilities of early childhood educators.

## Descriptive Statements:

- Demonstrate knowledge of conditions affecting children, families, and early childhood professionals and current issues and trends in early childhood education.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of early childhood education teachers in various contexts (e.g., serving as an informed advocate for young children and families; promoting research and evidence-based practices).
- Demonstrate knowledge of responsibilities and requirements of early childhood teachers regarding the development of Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- Demonstrate knowledge of the importance of ongoing professional development and personal reflection and strategies for identifying professional organizations, publications, and digital resources relevant to the field.

## Sample Item:

**Which of the following practices is most important for an early childhood teacher to demonstrate in order to effectively advocate for young children and their families in their class or center?**

- A. having access or connections with a number of potential sources of funding
- B. demonstrating a level of emotional detachment from the children to maintain objectivity
- C. awareness of laws and regulations pertaining to early childhood education
- D. understanding of the specific characteristics and diverse needs of families and children

### **Correct Response and Explanation**

D. Families are incredibly diverse and there are a wide variety of evidence- and research-based practices for addressing the needs of young children across all domains. To identify relevant practice, the early childhood teacher should possess knowledge and understanding of the diverse expectations, goals, and needs specific to the children and families in their class or center. With this understanding, the teacher is more likely to be successful in creating an effective environment to support and advocate for young children and their families.