

Early Childhood Education (0020)

Test at a Glance

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| Test Name | Early Childhood Education | | |
| Test Code | 0020 | | |
| Time | 2 hours | | |
| Number of Questions | 120 | | |
| Format | Multiple-choice questions | | |
| | Content Categories | Approximate Number of Questions | Approximate Percentage of Questions |
| | I. Understanding the Nature of the Growth, Development, and Learning of Young Children | 37 | 31% |
| | II. Recognizing Factors that Influence Individual Growth and Development | 12 | 10% |
| | III. Recognizing Applications of Developmental and Curriculum Theory | 14 | 12% |
| | IV. Planning and Implementing Curriculum | 35 | 29% |
| | V. Evaluating and Reporting Student Progress and Effectiveness of Instruction | 15 | 12% |
| | VI. Understanding Professional and Legal Responsibilities | 7 | 6% |

About This Test

The Early Childhood Education test is intended primarily for examinees who have completed their undergraduate preparation and are prospective teachers of preschool through primary-grade students.

The 120 multiple-choice questions are based on a teaching approach that emphasizes the involvement of young children in a variety of play and child-centered activities and on a curriculum that reflects a concern for the development of the whole child, including the child's physical, cognitive, social, and language development. The six content categories include understanding the nature of the growth, development, and learning of young children; recognizing factors that influence individual growth and development; recognizing applications of developmental and curriculum theory; planning and implementing curriculum; evaluating and reporting student progress and effectiveness of instruction; and understanding professional and legal responsibilities.

Although most questions refer to children ages 3 through 8, a few questions concern development at earlier and later ages so as to examine the full range of early childhood development.

This test may contain some questions that will not count toward your score.

Topics Covered

Representative descriptions of topics covered in each category are provided below.

I. Understanding the Nature of the Growth, Development, and Learning of Young Children

- Cognitive development: concepts of the physical world and of causal relationships and signing in all communication systems, such as art, music, and mathematics; skill development in areas such as manipulative skills, symbol recognition, and logical reasoning
- Language development: oral language development, including listening comprehension, speaking (storytelling, bilingual skills), developing vocabulary, and understanding the systems of language; written language development, such as expressing ideas in writing, print awareness, and invented spelling
- Physical development: typical and atypical growth and development, fine and gross motor development, symptoms of illness, health, and safety
- Personal/social development: self-concept, learning style, locus of control, temperament, stages of social behavior, gender role, sex, physical attractiveness, effects of discrimination, stereotypes, and aggression

II. Recognizing Factors that Influence Individual Growth and Development

- Physiological factors: effects of genetic and congenital maturational factors
- Familial factors: family relationships, parental attitudes, siblings, and birth order
- Nutritional/hygienic factors: diet, exercise, sleep, and environmental conditions
- Cultural factors: effects of the interaction of cultural values; roles of the primary transmitters of the culture (family, schools, community, mass media); and effects of economic, political, and cultural influences, including regional, ethnic, and religious influences

III. Recognizing Applications of Developmental and Curriculum Theory

- Understanding the contributions of major streams of developmental and learning theory to early childhood education practices, such as psychoanalytic, cognitive, social-learning, and behaviorist theories

- Understanding major early childhood curriculum models and approaches, such as Bank Street, Bereiter/Engelmann, Froebel, Montessori, Kamii, Weikert, Head Start, Emergent Literacy, developmentally appropriate practice, play-based and integrated curriculums

IV. Planning and Implementing Curriculum

- Planning, selecting, and implementing appropriate curriculum experiences and instructional strategies: whole language, language experience, and basal approaches; mathematics manipulatives; inquiry and discovery in science; physical/motor experiences; aesthetic and affective experiences; social experiences
- Organizing and managing the physical learning environment: use of materials, equipment, indoor space, and outdoor space
- Utilizing outside resources in curriculum planning and implementation: community and family
- Managing interpersonal interactions in the classroom: helping children learn to manage their behavior, recognizing how teacher's behavior and attitudes affect children's learning and development

V. Evaluating and Reporting Student Progress and the Effectiveness of Instruction

- Selection and use of formal and informal assessment instruments for evaluating developmental progress and effectiveness of curriculum experiences
- Maintaining useful records of a child's development and progress in learning
- Using formal and informal assessment results in planning for a class and for individuals
- Communicating effectively with parents about a child's total developmental progress

VI. Understanding Professional and Legal Responsibilities

- Maintaining effective interactions with other adults who function within the learning setting
- Being cognizant of legal responsibilities and regulations that affect teaching in the early childhood setting

Sample Test Questions

The sample questions that follow illustrate the kinds of questions in the test. They are not, however, representative of the entire scope of the test in either content or difficulty. Answers with explanations follow the questions.

Directions: Each of the questions or statements below is followed by five suggested answers or completions. Select the one that is best in each case.

1. The students in a third-grade class are going to perform an experiment in which they will measure the amount of time it takes for one, two, and eight ice cubes to melt in a given quantity of water at a particular temperature. They will then predict the melting times for four and for sixteen ice cubes in water of the same temperature. Of the following, a skill that is prerequisite to making successful predictions for this experiment is the ability to
 - (A) make accurate observations
 - (B) read a chart showing the data
 - (C) use a metric scale
 - (D) identify likenesses and differences
 - (E) estimate

2. A group of English-speaking 4-year-olds who have not yet learned to read or write are asked to “do some writing on this page.” Which of the following describes what the majority of 4-year-olds in the group would be most likely to do?
 - (A) Produce markings that are indistinguishable from those of children exposed to Arabic or Chinese
 - (B) Write a continuous string of letters with no breaks between them and with most letters reversed
 - (C) Create scribble that resembles the writing system to which they have been exposed, though the scribbles may not include actual letters
 - (D) React with puzzlement since they have no idea what writing is
 - (E) Fill the page with stick figures that represent their family members

3. Which of the following instructional approaches is likely to be most effective in helping children in a multiculturally diverse class of 3- and 4-year-olds achieve the goal of developing strong, positive self-concepts?
 - (A) Inviting parents to bring to school foods traditionally associated with the holidays observed in the racial-ethnic groups represented in the class
 - (B) Requiring that children accept each other equally, change playmates frequently, and show courtesy to all regardless of cultural and ethnic background
 - (C) Organizing the curriculum plan so as to feature holidays that are typically observed by the cultures represented in the class
 - (D) Providing a wide range of multicultural materials, such as books and pictures about children from different countries, including those countries represented by the students’ families
 - (E) Providing both learning activities and materials that affirm aspects of the different cultures of the children’s families, such as learning to say “Good morning” in the languages used by children’s families

4. All of the following are accurate generalizations about children’s biological development EXCEPT:
 - (A) Sex differences in growth are relatively small during the infant and early childhood years.
 - (B) Children’s hand preference develops around 2 years of age.
 - (C) Children’s physical characteristics tend to be more like those of the mother than those of the father.
 - (D) While most children follow the same sequence of growth, they may differ considerably in their rates of maturation.
 - (E) The average height and weight of children in the United States have both increased over the last century.

5. According to Kamii's curriculum theory, children build knowledge principally through the
- (A) process of trial and error
 - (B) generation of appropriate responses to stimuli
 - (C) use of their five senses to differentiate information from emotions
 - (D) imitation of the behaviors of adults or other children
 - (E) formation of mental relationships by interacting with objects, people, and events
6. According to Abraham Maslow, a child who frequently comes to school hungry, tired, and dressed in dirty clothing has which of the following unmet needs?
- (A) Self-actualization
 - (B) Self-esteem
 - (C) Safety and security
 - (D) Physiological
 - (E) Love and belongingness
7. A teacher rolls five balls of different size, color, and weight down an inclined plane several times, starting them all at the same time. The largest and heaviest ball, which is red, reaches the bottom first each time. The teacher then lets the children handle the balls. Which of the following teacher questions about this activity would be most likely to encourage a group of 5-year-olds to think and reason?
- (A) What is the color of the ball that gets to the bottom first?
 - (B) What can you tell me about the ball that gets to the bottom first?
 - (C) Does the same ball always get to the bottom first?
 - (D) What is the weight of the ball that always gets to the bottom first?
 - (E) Does the largest ball get to the bottom first?
8. An early childhood teacher who incorporates puppets, telephone conversations, and choral reading in daily plans is likely to be most concerned with providing which of the following?
- (A) Experiences in the classroom setting that is loosely structured
 - (B) Experiences in the classroom that allow every child to speak in class
 - (C) Experiences that allow the children to relax and have fun after more challenging learning activities.
 - (D) Experiences in which children can practice language rules
 - (E) Experiences that provide a variety of exposures to language through which children can express themselves
9. Which of the following would be the best indication to a teacher that students are beginning to think critically about science?
- (A) They talk about earthquakes, space probes, and science-related information in the news.
 - (B) They begin to read more books and articles about science on their own.
 - (C) They successfully plan and carry out simple experiments to test questions raised in classroom discussion.
 - (D) They ask the teacher to read stories to them about scientific topics.
 - (E) They correctly answer the teacher's questions about the procedures used after observing science experiments being done.



10. Duffy, a 3-year-old, drew the picture above. On the basis of this single drawing, which of the following inferences that the teacher might make about Duffy is most defensible?

- (A) He may be afraid of aggressive feelings, as evidenced by his failure to draw arms on either figure.
- (B) His drawing demonstrates that he has a very positive outlook on life due to the facial expressions.
- (C) He has used the greatest detail on facial expression, indicating a strong need for acceptance.
- (D) His drawing is within the range of normal expression for a child of this age.
- (E) He is unaware of individual differences, as evidenced by the failure to show differences in the two figures.

11. Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires public school districts that receive federal funds to provide

- (A) early intervention services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities
- (B) procedural safeguards for all families whose children have special needs
- (C) interagency councils to administer public education programs
- (D) a public multicultural awareness program
- (E) special education programs for all children from ages 3 to 5

12. In regard to parent-teacher relations, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) advocates in its "Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice" that teachers do which of the following?

- (A) Establish clearly defined differences between their roles and responsibilities and those of students' parents.
- (B) Contact parents about every developmental change their children undergo.
- (C) Encourage parents to accept teachers as experts who know what is best academically for their children.
- (D) Clarify the limits of parents' access to their children's classrooms.
- (E) View parents as partners in the educational process.

Answers

1. The correct answer is A. Of the answer choices offered, only the ability to make accurate observations, choice A, is required to perform this experiment. Although the skills described in the other answer choices might enhance a student's general problem-solving abilities, none is needed to successfully complete this experiment.
2. The correct answer is C. Most children of this age have some understanding or knowledge of the graphic features of print and would, therefore, be most likely to do choice C. For the same reason, most children would be unlikely to do choice B or D. Choice E is not an acceptable answer because most children of this age can differentiate print features from nonprint features. Choice A is wrong because children's early writing efforts resemble the writing system to which they have been exposed in their everyday lives.
3. The correct answer is E. Because young children construct their cultural identities primarily in relation to families, the instructional approach, choice E, would be the most effective. In choice D, simply providing multicultural materials will not accomplish the goals described, nor will providing only the activities described in choices A and C. Choice B is unlikely to work for children of this age, because such behaviors cannot be dictated.
4. The correct answer is C. The "EXCEPT" in the question wants you to select the choice that does not fit. Choice C is not an accurate statement because children's parents contribute equal numbers of genes to their children, and it is these genes that determine the physical traits of the offspring. Thus, C is the correct response.
5. The correct answer is E. Building on the work of Piaget, Kamii has stressed the importance of manipulative materials and diverse experiences as parts of the early childhood curriculum in order to build students' mental relationships and concepts.
6. The correct answer is D. Hunger, lack of sleep, and wearing clothes that need to be washed signify unmet physiological needs. This child may also have unmet needs in the categories named in the other choices, but no information is provided about the choices, so they can only be logical (but unsubstantiated) inferences at best.
7. The correct answer is B. The teacher question in choice B causes the children to provide a more complex response than the other questions. Choice B encourages students to be more thoughtful about their responses. All the other teacher questions (choice A, C, D, E) can be determined by quick observation and brief responses which are less likely to encourage the students to think and reason than choice B.
8. The best answer is E. Puppets, telephone conversations, and choral reading provide children with a variety of experiences to express language.
9. The correct answer is C. Of the answer choices given, C is the only one that suggests that the students may be engaging in critical thinking about science, since they presumably must do so in order to complete such experiments. Choices A, B, D, and E suggest interest in science topics, but the activities do not require critical thinking.
10. The correct answer is D. This drawing is typical of the depictions of humans drawn by children of this age. A single drawing is insufficient information for inferring the statements in choices A, B, C, or E.
11. The correct answer is A. Only choice A describes a requirement of part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
12. The correct answer is E. The only practice among the choices given that is advocated by the NAEYC is choice E. The other practices would not generally be acceptable under the NAEYC guidelines.



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