



# **New Mexico**

## **Teacher Assessments™**

# **Study Guide**

New Mexico Assessment of Teacher Competency™

## **05 Early Childhood**



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# **An Overview of the Testing Program, How to Prepare for the Assessments, and the Day of the Test: Helpful Hints**

The first three sections of the study guide are available in a separate PDF file. Click the link below to view or print these sections.

[An Overview of the Testing Program, How to Prepare for the Assessments, and the Day of the Test: Helpful Hints](#)



# **An Introduction to the New Mexico Assessment of Teacher Competency (Early Childhood)**

The New Mexico Assessment of Teacher Competency (Early Childhood) is designed to measure professional/pedagogical knowledge and skills. It should be taken by individuals seeking a PreK–3 teaching license.

The New Mexico Assessment of Teacher Competency (Early Childhood) consists of the following:

- A set of 75 selected-response questions,
- 3 restricted-response assignments, and
- 1 extended-response assignment.

For each of the restricted-response assignments, a single-page answer document will be provided for your response. For the extended-response assignment, a two-page (four sides) answer document will be provided. Your response to the extended-response assignment may be up to four pages in length.



# Test Framework

Child Development and Learning  
Instruction, Assessment, and the Learning Environment  
The Professional Environment

## SUBAREA I—CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

**This section focuses on what teachers should know about how children develop and learn. It addresses how factors in children's lives, including their social and cultural environments, affect growth and learning. It also addresses how teachers can promote growth and learning by responding to each child's specific strengths and needs.**

**0001 Understand child development (from birth to age eight), developmental, cultural, linguistic, and other differences among children, and effective strategies for supporting children's growth and development.**

For example:

- demonstrate knowledge of theories of development and stages and processes of development in various domains (i.e., physical-motor, social, cultural, emotional, cognitive, and language)
- recognize relationships between development in one domain and development in other domains (e.g., relationships between language development and aspects of cognitive, social, and emotional development; relationships between social and emotional development and learning)
- analyze interactions between environmental factors (e.g., sociocultural and political contexts, home environment) and development in various domains
- understand diverse family literacy practices and how these practices affect children's language and literacy learning
- demonstrate knowledge of how children acquire and use verbal, nonverbal, and alternative means of communication
- demonstrate knowledge of individual differences in development, similarities and differences between children who are developing typically and those who have special needs, and the significance of individual developmental differences and cultural context for teaching and learning
- use knowledge of children's developmental characteristics and needs to identify teaching and learning strategies that facilitate development of the whole child

**0002 Understand how children learn and how to use developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practices to promote children's exploration and learning.**

For example:

- analyze processes by which young children construct knowledge and acquire skills and concepts, including the role of play and other experiences in learning
- demonstrate knowledge of individual differences in learning and the significance of these differences for early childhood programs
- analyze factors that influence children's learning (e.g., interactions with peers, interactions between children and adults), and identify strategies for adapting environments and experiences to help ensure all children's success in learning
- identify activities, approaches, and resources that encourage children's exploration and promote a positive attitude toward learning
- apply knowledge of developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate strategies for facilitating children's exploration and learning in varied contexts, including strategies for helping children reflect on their own thinking and learning

**0003 Understand factors that influence children's growth and development, and use this knowledge to create environments in which all children can grow and learn.**

For example:

- analyze ways in which diverse family patterns and other aspects of the home environment may affect children's development and learning
- know how community factors (e.g., cultural and socioeconomic diversity) may affect children's development and learning, and identify strategies for using the community as a resource to promote learning
- analyze ways in which factors in the school environment (e.g., tracking, inclusion, grouping patterns, student-teacher interactions, acknowledgment of children's achievement and progress) may affect children's self-concept and learning
- analyze ways in which individual factors (e.g., risk factors, developmental variations) may affect children's development and learning
- demonstrate knowledge of strategies for creating and modifying environments and experiences to respond to the individual needs of all children, including those with disabilities, developmental delays, special abilities, and cultural and linguistic differences

**0004 Understand different types of diversity, and know how to create learning opportunities and environments that are responsive to differences among children and that foster children's appreciation of and respect for diversity.**

For example:

- demonstrate knowledge of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic diversity and its significance for child development and learning
- recognize developmental patterns associated with developmental delays and specific disabilities
- apply knowledge of strategies for working effectively with and meeting the needs of children with various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, disabilities, talents, family situations, socioeconomic circumstances, and prior learning experiences
- demonstrate knowledge of differences in children's strengths and needs, and recognize the instructional implications of these differences, including the importance of acknowledging that every child can learn and of communicating high expectations for all children's learning and progress
- identify practices that support inclusion and cultural and linguistic diversity in early childhood environments
- recognize the importance of creating a supportive and nurturing environment for all children, including the use of strategies to foster children's understanding and appreciation of diversity

**SUBAREA II—INSTRUCTION, ASSESSMENT, AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

**This section focuses on what teachers should know about how to help children become successful learners. It addresses how teachers should organize instruction, use assessment, and interact with children to help them learn. It also addresses how to enhance children's motivation and encourage their use of positive, productive learning behaviors.**

**0005 Understand how to design, implement, and evaluate learning experiences that promote all children's development and learning.**

For example:

- know the role of various factors (e.g., learning goals, children's language and literacy development, other characteristics of children, available time and resources) in instructional planning for young children, and recognize the importance of planning blocks of uninterrupted time for children to persist at self-chosen activities
- apply knowledge of procedures used for instructional planning (e.g., defining lesson or unit objectives, developing effective lesson plans, choosing learning activities, sequencing activities) and integrating curriculum
- demonstrate knowledge of developmentally and culturally appropriate instructional practices (e.g., play, small-group projects, open-ended questioning, group discussion, learning centers, cooperative learning, inquiry experiences, observational learning) and their use in promoting children's academic and social competence and in helping children develop intellectual curiosity, acquire skills and concepts, solve problems, and make decisions
- know how to select and use various methods and resources, including print, manipulative, technological, and human resources, that facilitate learning and are appropriate for children's developmental levels, special needs and abilities, and linguistic and cultural backgrounds
- apply knowledge of strategies for evaluating instruction on an ongoing basis and for modifying instruction to enhance children's development and learning

**0006 Understand how to structure and manage supportive, challenging learning environments that encourage positive social interactions and enable all children to develop and learn.**

For example:

- demonstrate knowledge of alternative program models and learning environments that meet all children's needs, including children with special needs
- demonstrate knowledge of effective, developmentally and culturally appropriate schedules and routines in early childhood education, and analyze ways in which physical setting, schedules, routines, and transitions affect children's development and learning
- apply knowledge of strategies for creating and adapting indoor and outdoor learning environments that encourage active involvement, initiative, responsibility, and a growing sense of autonomy
- demonstrate knowledge of effective, developmentally and culturally appropriate individual and group guidance techniques and strategies for promoting positive interactions, helping children learn to handle their emotions appropriately, and encouraging children to have positive attitudes about themselves and others
- know how to create and manage learning environments that provide opportunities for individual children and collaborative groups to construct their own knowledge and engage in decision-making, problem-solving, and inquiry experiences
- demonstrate knowledge of developmentally and culturally appropriate strategies for promoting children's independence, interdependence, and self-confidence

**0007 Understand the importance of a healthy, safe environment for children's development and learning, and know strategies for providing an emotionally and physically safe environment for early childhood programs.**

For example:

- analyze relationships among children's health, nutrition, and learning, and know how to recognize and respond to individual children's needs regarding emotional and physical health, nutrition, and safety
- know how to plan and use indoor and outdoor learning environments in ways that ensure children's physical and emotional well-being and safety
- know how to use basic health appraisal and management procedures, and make referrals when necessary
- recognize signs of emotional distress, child abuse, and neglect in young children, and know appropriate procedures for addressing given situations (e.g., initiating discussions with family members, referring to appropriate professionals, reporting suspected abuse or neglect to designated authorities)
- know how to provide a consistent daily schedule for rest/sleep, as developmentally appropriate, and how to establish an environment that provides children with opportunities to practice healthy behaviors related to nutrition, injury prevention, and physical and psychological well-being
- know how to provide children and families with effective, culturally responsive learning opportunities that encourage health-promoting behaviors

**0008 Understand how to use effective and culturally responsive communication to promote children's active inquiry, learning, collaboration, self-esteem, and positive interactions in the learning environment.**

For example:

- recognize effective communication techniques for various situations and needs in early childhood learning environments (e.g., collaborating with and responding to children, conveying and clarifying ideas, resolving conflicts, questioning, engaging in active listening)
- analyze ways in which individual and group differences can affect communication, and know how to interact with all students in ways that demonstrate respect and sensitivity
- demonstrate knowledge of the effective use of communication, including nonverbal communication, to promote children's understanding, foster positive interactions with peers and adults, and encourage children's development and use of expressive language
- apply knowledge of strategies for modifying communication to facilitate children's understanding
- analyze communication issues in various teacher-child interactions (e.g., communicating expectations, providing feedback, maintaining children's self-esteem)

**0009 Understand how to use varied and culturally responsive assessment strategies, including observation, to learn about children, plan instruction, monitor children's progress, and modify the teaching/learning process to enhance children's development and learning.**

For example:

- demonstrate knowledge of characteristics, uses, and limitations of formal and informal assessment tools and strategies (e.g., teacher observation, portfolios, peer assessment, parent/guardian interviews, checklists, screening tools, standardized tests), and evaluate the appropriateness of specific assessment tools and strategies for given purposes
- recognize the importance of gathering assessment data from multiple sources in order to make educational decisions about children, and know how to maintain records of children's development, behavior, and progress in ways that safeguard confidentiality and privacy
- analyze the influence of cultural and linguistic differences, developmental levels of learning, and teacher practices and academic expectations on the assessment outcomes of diverse learners
- demonstrate knowledge of the role of families as active participants in the assessment process, and identify effective ways to involve families and other team members, as appropriate, in assessing children's development, strengths, and needs
- apply skills for interpreting assessment results and using results to plan and modify instruction and to make educational decisions about children
- identify effective strategies for sharing information about the purposes, methods, and outcomes of assessments with children and parents/guardians in clear, supportive ways

### **SUBAREA III—THE PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

**This section focuses on the role of teachers as professionals in a complex environment. It addresses strategies teachers can use to ensure ongoing professional development and improvement in their own teaching. It also addresses ways to collaborate with others to create an effective learning environment for children, as well as foundational knowledge regarding early childhood education programs and the rights and responsibilities of all those involved in early childhood education in New Mexico.**

**0010 Understand the importance of reflecting on and continually assessing one's own practice, and know how to utilize resources and opportunities to enhance professional development and effectiveness.**

For example:

- apply strategies for critical reflection and self-assessment with regard to effectiveness in promoting children's learning and development; strengthening rapport with children, parents/guardians, and colleagues; and avoiding cultural, gender, and other biases
- know how to use various resources and opportunities (e.g., journals, colleagues, professional associations, inservice training, community activities, continuing education) to promote professional growth and enhance knowledge and skills in working with young children and adults
- apply knowledge of strategies for collaborating with other members of the school community (e.g., other teachers, mentors, supervisors, support personnel) to enhance skills and solve problems
- demonstrate knowledge of how to evaluate and respond to feedback (e.g., from supervisors, parents/guardians, colleagues)

**0011 Understand how to foster positive, culturally and linguistically responsive interactions and collaborative relationships with parents/guardians, families, other professionals, and community agencies in support of all children's learning and well-being.**

For example:

- know how to create a safe and welcoming environment for families and how to use family-centered skills and strategies to promote effective, ongoing communication and collaboration with families and 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 recognize the importance of demonstrating respect for cultural and other differences and incorporating families' goals for their children into classroom and/or intervention strategies
- demonstrate knowledge of the complexity and dynamics of family systems, including the effects of family stress on children and other family members
- know the roles of professionals who provide related services for young children and their families, and know strategies for collaborating with colleagues and other professionals to respond to children's needs and to enhance the learning environment
- identify strategies for involving community members in contributing to the learning environment and for using community resources (e.g., cultural institutions, social agencies) to enhance teaching and learning
- apply skills and strategies for initiating and maintaining positive, productive relationships with parents/guardians, families, community agencies, and other professionals to meet the needs of all children

**0012 Understand the foundations of the early childhood profession; the organization, operation, and evaluation of early childhood programs; issues and trends affecting early childhood education; and roles of early childhood educators in various contexts.**

For example:

- demonstrate knowledge of the historical, philosophical, and social foundations of early childhood education and current thought and practice in the field
- apply knowledge of basic principles of administration, organization, and operation of early childhood programs, including supervision of staff and volunteers
- identify techniques and procedures for systematic, ongoing evaluation and modification of early childhood programs to ensure quality of the total environment for children, families, and the community
- demonstrate awareness of conditions affecting children, families, and early childhood professionals and current issues and trends in early childhood education
- demonstrate knowledge of the various roles of the early childhood educator (e.g., advocate for children, families, and programs; member of the assessment team for Individual Family Service Plans [IFSPs] and Individual Education Plans [IEPs]) and how to implement those roles appropriately and effectively

**0013 Understand the rights and responsibilities of individuals involved in early childhood education, ethical guidelines for early childhood educators, and laws and regulations related to programs and services for children.**

For example:

- demonstrate knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of early childhood education teachers in various contexts (e.g., teaching children with identified disabilities, referring children with suspected disabilities, choosing curriculum materials, implementing discipline, addressing suspected child abuse and/or neglect)
- apply knowledge of children's rights in various contexts (e.g., equal access to programs and services, provision of appropriate education for children with special needs, confidentiality of records and personal information)
- apply knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of parents/guardians in various contexts (e.g., access to children's confidential records, program attendance, program services to meet children's needs)
- demonstrate knowledge of legislation and other public policies affecting children, families, and the early childhood profession
- demonstrate knowledge of federal, state, and local regulations regarding programs and services for young children
- demonstrate knowledge of professional codes of ethics and conduct for early childhood educators, and incorporate these into professional practice
- apply knowledge of constitutional guarantees and legislation affecting early childhood education (e.g., instruction of bilingual students and English language learners, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, due process)



# Sample Test Directions

A sample of the general directions for the New Mexico Assessment of Teacher Competency (Early Childhood) is shown in the box below.

You should have in front of you:

- (1) a test booklet for the assessment for which you registered (check the assessment name on the front cover);
- (2) a Teacher Competency Answer Document;
- (3) a Written Response Booklet B; and
- (4) a No. 2 lead pencil.

*IF YOU ARE MISSING ANY OF THESE MATERIALS, NOTIFY YOUR TEST ADMINISTRATOR. REMOVE ALL OTHER MATERIALS FROM YOUR DESK.*

## TEST DIRECTIONS

This test consists of two sections: 1) a section with selected-response questions and 2) a constructed-response section.

Each question in the first section of this booklet is a selected-response question with four answer choices. Read each question carefully and choose the ONE best answer. Record your answer on the first two pages of the Teacher Competency Answer Document in the space that corresponds to the question number. Completely fill in the circle having the same letter as the answer you have chosen. *Use only a No. 2 lead pencil.*

Sample Question:

1. What is the capital of New Mexico?
  - A. Albuquerque
  - B. Las Cruces
  - C. Santa Fe
  - D. Silver City

The correct answer to this question is C. You would indicate that on the Teacher Competency Answer Document as follows:

1.  A  B  C  D

Try to answer all questions. Even if you are unsure of an answer, it is better to guess than not to answer a question at all. You will NOT be penalized for guessing.

The second section of this booklet consists of four constructed-response assignments: three restricted-response assignments and one extended-response assignment. You will be asked to provide a written response to each assignment. Directions for completing your written responses to the constructed-response assignments appear immediately before the assignments.

You may use the margins of the test booklet for scratch paper, but all of your answers, including your responses to the constructed-response assignments, must be recorded in the appropriate sections of your answer documents. Answers that are in the test booklet will not be scored.

The words "End of Test" indicate that you have completed the test. You may go back and review your work, and be sure you have answered all questions before raising your hand for dismissal. Your test materials must be returned to a test administrator when you finish the test.

**FOR TEST SECURITY REASONS, YOU MAY NOT TAKE NOTES OR REMOVE ANY OF THE TEST MATERIALS FROM THE ROOM.**

This testing session will last four hours. You may work at your own pace. If you have any questions, please ask them now before beginning the test.



DO NOT GO ON UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.



# Sample Selected-Response Questions

This section presents sample selected-response questions for you to review as part of your preparation for the New Mexico Assessment of Teacher Competency (Early Childhood). To demonstrate how the test competencies may be assessed, each sample question is preceded by the competency that it measures. On an actual test, the competencies will not be given.

The sample selected-response questions are designed to illustrate the nature of the test questions. They should not be used as a diagnostic tool to determine your individual strengths and weaknesses. The selected-response questions require you to demonstrate more than the ability to recall factual information. They ask you to think critically about the information, to analyze it, to consider it carefully, or to apply it to a hypothetical situation.

Work through each question carefully before referring to the answer key, which is located at the end of the section.

**Competency 0001**

*Understand child development (from birth to age eight), developmental, cultural, linguistic, and other differences among children, and effective strategies for supporting children's growth and development.*

1. According to Piaget's developmental theory, a child who is able to recognize that a quantity of water does not change when it is poured from a tall, narrow glass into a short, wide glass is demonstrating an understanding of which of the following concepts?
  - A. categorization
  - B. assimilation
  - C. conservation
  - D. accommodation

**Competency 0001**

*Understand child development (from birth to age eight), developmental, cultural, linguistic, and other differences among children, and effective strategies for supporting children's growth and development.*

2. A child with significantly impaired vision would be most likely to demonstrate which of the following communication characteristics?
  - A. inconsistent vocal pitch
  - B. reduced or exaggerated gestures
  - C. hyper- or hyponasal resonance
  - D. increased nonverbal language

**Competency 0002**

*Understand how children learn and how to use developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practices to promote children's exploration and learning.*

3. A preschool teacher wishes to teach the concepts of *first*, *middle*, and *last* to a group of four-year-old children. The teacher's best strategy for introducing these concepts would be to:
  - A. draw three familiar characters in a row and indicate which character is in which place.
  - B. have the children take turns standing in a line and ask them to identify who is in which place.
  - C. line up three stuffed animals and indicate which animal is in which place.
  - D. show the children picture cards of sets of three objects and ask them to tell which object is in which place.

**Competency 0002**

*Understand how children learn and how to use developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate practices to promote children's exploration and learning.*

4. Near the beginning of the school year, Ms. Lopez's first-grade students are finishing a science unit by conducting several simple experiments throughout the course of a week. Which of the following assignments would best encourage the children to reflect on their learning from this unit?
  - A. having them write or draw pictures of the sequence of steps in their favorite experiment
  - B. asking them to complete a fill-in-the-blank quiz regarding all of the experiments
  - C. having them write a paragraph detailing two of the experiments they conducted
  - D. asking them to design a new experiment similar to the ones they conducted

**Competency 0003**

*Understand factors that influence children's growth and development, and use this knowledge to create environments in which all children can grow and learn.*

5. Philip is a second grader who is extremely distractable. He has trouble paying attention during whole-class lessons, and he often leaves his desk to wander around the room during individual work times. Assessments have determined that Philip does *not* have any identified condition such as attention deficit disorder. Under these circumstances, which of the following would be the teacher's best strategy for meeting Philip's needs?
- A. responding immediately with a negative reinforcer (e.g., sending Philip to a timeout area) whenever he is off-task
  - B. asking Philip's parents to observe in the classroom and offer suggestions for addressing the problem
  - C. making various modifications (e.g., planning more small group projects, setting up study carrels) that may help Philip focus on his work
  - D. arranging for Philip to work in the school library-media center during certain classroom activities

**Competency 0004**

*Understand different types of diversity, and know how to create learning opportunities and environments that are responsive to differences among children and that foster children's appreciation of and respect for diversity.*

6. Anna, a kindergartner in Mr. Murgia's class, reads and comprehends books at a second-grade level. Which of the following would be the best approach for Mr. Murgia to take with regard to Anna?
- A. Keep her involved in all regular classroom activities so the other children do not notice the difference in ability.
  - B. Request that she receive reading lessons in one of the second-grade classrooms.
  - C. Have her act as a tutor to other children whose reading skills are at a lower level.
  - D. Ensure that she has ample opportunity to work with materials written at her reading level.

**Competency 0004**

*Understand different types of diversity, and know how to create learning opportunities and environments that are responsive to differences among children and that foster children's appreciation of and respect for diversity.*

7. As part of a lesson on the five senses, Ms. Jenkins plans to have her kindergarten students try out various types of foods. Prior to this activity, it would be most important for her to know if any of the children:
  - A. do not like any of the foods they will be tasting.
  - B. have already participated in a similar activity in preschool.
  - C. cannot eat specific foods due to allergies or family beliefs.
  - D. are especially fond of any particular foods.

**Competency 0005**

*Understand how to design, implement, and evaluate learning experiences that promote all children's development and learning.*

8. A kindergarten teacher schedules a free time period during each school day when the students are offered a variety of activities, including looking at and/or reading books of their choice. The teacher wishes to encourage more students to choose to use this time for books. Of the following, the best way to achieve this goal would be to:
  - A. offer prizes to the students who look at the most books during this time.
  - B. provide books that are slightly above the students' reading levels.
  - C. set out a wide range of books that reflect the students' known interests.
  - D. place several easy-reader books in a container on a low table.

**Competency 0006**

*Understand how to structure and manage supportive, challenging learning environments that encourage positive social interactions and enable all children to develop and learn.*

9. Ms. Pabon has noticed that the children in her first-grade class frequently have a difficult time settling down when they arrive in the morning. Which of the following practices would most likely facilitate a smoother transition period?
- A. Assign a regular activity, such as drawing or writing in a journal, when they first come into the classroom.
  - B. Give each child a different daily chore to complete within twenty minutes of his or her arrival.
  - C. Allow the children to bring toys from home to play with when they first arrive at school.
  - D. Provide a variety of classroom activities, including at least one new activity, during the first thirty minutes of the day.

**Competency 0006**

*Understand how to structure and manage supportive, challenging learning environments that encourage positive social interactions and enable all children to develop and learn.*

10. Of the following, a teacher's best strategy for promoting positive interactions among preschoolers would be to:
- A. design all classroom activities to be done in small, cooperative learning groups.
  - B. reward children who demonstrate positive social behavior by giving them "happy face" stickers.
  - C. involve the children in developing classroom rules at the beginning of the school year.
  - D. reinforce acts of cooperation and sharing and respond to disputes by helping the children resolve them.

**Competency 0007**

*Understand the importance of a healthy, safe environment for children's development and learning, and know strategies for providing an emotionally and physically safe environment for early childhood programs.*

11. An early childhood education teacher has been informed that many children in the school are out sick with colds or the flu. Which of the following preventive measures is the most appropriate action for the teacher to take in this situation?
- A. Require that parents keep home children who show even the slightest symptoms of a cold.
  - B. Increase the frequency with which children and staff engage in routine hand washing throughout the day.
  - C. Teach children signs to watch out for in order to help them self-assess whether they have a fever.
  - D. Ask that parents send in cold medicine so that children may be treated as symptoms occur.

**Competency 0007**

*Understand the importance of a healthy, safe environment for children's development and learning, and know strategies for providing an emotionally and physically safe environment for early childhood programs.*

12. Early childhood programs in New Mexico must follow which of the following safety requirements with regard to outdoor play areas?
- A. A 36-inch-high fence with one gate must surround the entire area.
  - B. The director of the center must be present when children under the age of two are playing.
  - C. No more than ten children may play in an outdoor play area at any given time.
  - D. An energy absorbing surface must be placed beneath any climbing structures, swings, or slides.

**Competency 0008**

*Understand how to use effective and culturally responsive communication to promote children's active inquiry, learning, collaboration, self-esteem, and positive interactions in the learning environment.*

13. Ben, a four-year-old in Mr. Dorato's preschool class, is making a tower out of wooden blocks when his classmate Maria accidentally bumps the tower, knocking it over. Ben yells at Maria and is about to hit her when Mr. Dorato intervenes. Which of the following is the most appropriate way for Mr. Dorato to communicate with Ben immediately following this incident?
- A. "If you act like that, the other children won't like you anymore."
  - B. "Tell Maria you are sorry, then put away your blocks."
  - C. "If you can't behave yourself, I may have to call your parents."
  - D. "I know you are angry, but you may not hurt your classmates."

**Competency 0008**

*Understand how to use effective and culturally responsive communication to promote children's active inquiry, learning, collaboration, self-esteem, and positive interactions in the learning environment.*

14. Shortly after the beginning of circle time in a preschool, a number of children begin fidgeting and interacting with each other instead of paying attention. Of the following, the teacher's best response would be to:
- A. direct the group's attention to the misbehavior of the specific children who are not paying attention.
  - B. stand up and clap her hands together briskly until all of the children are looking at her.
  - C. modify the activity by introducing a song or fingerplay that will promote direct involvement by everyone.
  - D. sit quietly and look around the circle until everyone realizes that she has stopped speaking.

**Competency 0010**

*Understand the importance of reflecting on and continually assessing one's own practice, and know how to utilize resources and opportunities to enhance professional development and effectiveness.*

15. As the school year progresses, a kindergarten teacher becomes increasingly concerned about a student who has a great deal of difficulty using scissors, writing upper- and lowercase letters, and drawing simple objects. Which of the following members of the school community would be able to provide the teacher with the best insights into this situation?
- A. an occupational therapist
  - B. the school nurse
  - C. a guidance counselor
  - D. the principal or vice principal

**Competency 0011**

*Understand how to foster positive, culturally and linguistically responsive interactions and collaborative relationships with parents/guardians, families, other professionals, and community agencies in support of all children's learning and well-being.*

16. Which of the following actions by an early childhood teacher best demonstrates an awareness of the importance of family systems?
- A. encouraging the children to take home their artwork and other productions to share with their families
  - B. issuing an invitation to all families to visit the classroom at any time
  - C. maintaining ongoing communication with families in regard to events and circumstances at home and at school
  - D. beginning every school year with an instructional unit on families

**Competency 0011**

*Understand how to foster positive, culturally and linguistically responsive interactions and collaborative relationships with parents/guardians, families, other professionals, and community agencies in support of all children's learning and well-being.*

17. The teachers in an early childhood program wish to gain the support of the local business community for their program. The teachers' first step in this effort should be to:
  - A. create a list of all parents/guardians who are owners or employees of local businesses.
  - B. define what they hope to achieve for the school program through such an initiative.
  - C. publicize the idea to the children's families to build support within the school community.
  - D. survey local businesses to determine the general level of interest in such a program.

**Competency 0012**

*Understand the foundations of the early childhood profession; the organization, operation, and evaluation of early childhood programs; issues and trends affecting early childhood education; and roles of early childhood educators in various contexts.*

18. In an interview for a position as a pre-school teacher, Ms. Chee is told that the school follows the High/Scope curriculum model. Ms. Chee should know that under this model, teachers in the school are expected to:
  - A. encourage children to plan, engage in, and review their own activities as they participate in key active learning experiences.
  - B. directly teach children academic skills and provide extrinsic rewards for correct answers to the teacher's questions.
  - C. plan small group centers throughout the day at which specific children will be assigned to play or complete activities.
  - D. encourage children with similar academic abilities to participate in activities with one another throughout the day.

**Competency 0012**

*Understand the foundations of the early childhood profession; the organization, operation, and evaluation of early childhood programs; issues and trends affecting early childhood education; and roles of early childhood educators in various contexts.*

19. Which of the following would be most appropriate to include in the philosophy statement of an early childhood education program?
- A. the certification requirements for teachers in the program
  - B. an anecdotal description of a typical day in one of the program's classrooms
  - C. the goals for the children enrolled in the program
  - D. a listing of all of the program's teachers and their professional degrees and/or training

**Competency 0013**

*Understand the rights and responsibilities of individuals involved in early childhood education, ethical guidelines for early childhood educators, and laws and regulations related to programs and services for children.*

20. Based on a special education team's assessment of a second grader's progress, the student's special education services will be reduced. The student's parents disagree with the findings and wish to maintain the current level of services. In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as well as the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC), which of the following is the best action for the parents to take?
- A. Request a due process hearing.
  - B. Write a dissenting opinion to be placed in their child's permanent file.
  - C. File a civil action lawsuit.
  - D. Arrange for a team of private professionals to assess their child's needs.



# **Answer Key for the Sample Selected-Response Questions**

1. C
2. B
3. B
4. A
5. C
6. D
7. C
8. C
9. A
10. D
11. B
12. D
13. D
14. C
15. A
16. C
17. B
18. A
19. C
20. A



# Information About the Constructed-Response Assignments

Each candidate's written responses to the Teacher Competency (Early Childhood) constructed-response assignments will be scored using a method known as focused holistic scoring. In this method scorers judge the overall effectiveness of each response in meeting specified criteria. Each response is scored by at least two scorers and is assigned a score based on a holistic scale. The score points on the holistic scoring scale reflect the extent to which the candidate demonstrates the knowledge and skills included in the set of performance characteristics that have been defined as important for the assignment. Although this method *focuses* on the specific performance characteristics, it is *holistic* in that each assigned score describes the overall effectiveness of these characteristics working in concert in response to the assignment.

## Performance Characteristics—Restricted-Response and Extended-Response Assignments

<b>PURPOSE</b>	The candidate fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding to the given task and demonstrating an understanding of relevant professional knowledge.
<b>APPLICATION OF PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE</b>	The candidate accurately and effectively applies relevant professional knowledge.
<b>SUPPORT</b>	The candidate supports the response with appropriate examples, evidence, and rationales based on relevant professional knowledge.

## Scoring Scale—Restricted-Response Assignments

The three points of the scoring scale correspond to varying degrees of performance. The following statements describe typical responses at each score point.

Score	Score Point Description
3	<p><b>The "3" response reflects a thorough understanding of relevant professional knowledge.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response completely fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding fully to the given task.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates an accurate and effective application of relevant professional knowledge.</li> <li>• The response provides strong supporting examples, evidence, and rationales based on relevant professional knowledge.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>The "2" response reflects a general understanding of relevant professional knowledge.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding generally to the given task.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates a generally accurate and reasonably effective application of relevant professional knowledge.</li> <li>• The response provides some supporting examples, evidence, and rationales based on relevant professional knowledge.</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>The "1" response reflects limited or no understanding of relevant professional knowledge.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response partially fulfills or fails to fulfill the purpose of the assignment by responding in a limited or inadequate way to the given task.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates a limited or ineffective application of relevant professional knowledge.</li> <li>• The response provides limited or no supporting examples, evidence, or rationales based on relevant professional knowledge.</li> </ul>
U	<p><b>The "U" (Unscorable) will be assigned to responses that are off topic, illegible, primarily in a language other than English, or not of sufficient length to score.</b></p>
B	<p><b>The "B" (Blank) will be assigned to written response sheets that are completely blank.</b></p>

## Scoring Scale—Extended-Response Assignment

The four points of the scoring scale correspond to varying degrees of performance. The following statements describe typical responses at each score point.

Score	Score Point Description
4	<p><b>The "4" response reflects a thorough understanding of relevant professional knowledge.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response completely fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding fully to the given task.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates an accurate and effective application of relevant professional knowledge.</li> <li>• The response provides strong supporting examples, evidence, and rationales based on relevant professional knowledge.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>The "3" response reflects a general understanding of relevant professional knowledge.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding generally to the given task.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates a generally accurate and reasonably effective application of relevant professional knowledge.</li> <li>• The response provides some supporting examples, evidence, and rationales based on relevant professional knowledge.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>The "2" response reflects a limited understanding of relevant professional knowledge.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response partially fulfills the purpose of the assignment by responding in a limited way to the given task.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates a limited application of relevant professional knowledge.</li> <li>• The response provides limited supporting examples, evidence, and rationales based on relevant professional knowledge.</li> </ul>
1	<p><b>The "1" response reflects little or no understanding of relevant professional knowledge.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response fails to fulfill the purpose of the assignment by responding in an inadequate way to the given task.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates an ineffective application or no application of relevant professional knowledge.</li> <li>• The response provides inadequate or no supporting examples, evidence, or rationales based on relevant professional knowledge.</li> </ul>
U	<p><b>The "U" (Unscorable) will be assigned to responses that are off topic, illegible, primarily in a language other than English, or not of sufficient length to score.</b></p>
B	<p><b>The "B" (Blank) will be assigned to written response booklets that are completely blank.</b></p>

## Sample Directions for the Restricted-Response Assignments

A sample of the directions for the restricted-response assignments for the New Mexico Assessment of Teacher Competency (Early Childhood) is shown in the box below.

### DIRECTIONS FOR THE RESTRICTED-RESPONSE ASSIGNMENTS

This section of the test consists of three restricted-response assignments. You are to prepare a written response of up to approximately 150 words on each assigned topic. ***The assignments can be found on the following pages.*** You should use your time to plan, write, review, and edit your responses to the assignments.

Read each assignment carefully before you begin to write. Think about how you will organize each response. You may use any blank space provided on the following pages to make notes, write outlines, or otherwise prepare your responses. ***However, your final responses must be written in the Teacher Competency Answer Document on the appropriate Written Response Sheet. Be sure to write your written response to each assignment in the appropriate area of the corresponding Written Response Sheet.***

Your response to each assignment will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- **Purpose**—You fulfill the purpose of the assignment by responding to the given task and demonstrating an understanding of relevant professional knowledge.
- **Application of Professional Knowledge**—You accurately and effectively apply relevant professional knowledge.
- **Support**—You support the response with appropriate examples, evidence, and rationales based on relevant professional knowledge.

The assignments are not intended to assess writing ability. However, your responses must be communicated clearly enough to permit valid judgment of your knowledge and skills. The final version of each of your responses should conform to the conventions of edited American English.

Be sure to write about the assigned topics. Please write legibly. You may not use any reference materials during the test. Your written responses must be your original work, written in your own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work. Remember to review what you have written and make any changes you think will improve your written responses.

**Record your written response to each assignment in the Teacher Competency Answer Document on the appropriate Written Response Sheet. The length of each response is limited to the lined space available on the Written Response Sheet for that assignment.**

## Sample Restricted-Response Assignment 1

### Subarea I

*This section focuses on what teachers should know about how children develop and learn. It addresses how factors in children's lives, including their social and cultural environments, affect growth and learning. It also addresses how teachers can promote growth and learning by responding to each child's specific strengths and needs.*

21. **Use the information below to complete the exercise that follows.**

Using your knowledge of developmental processes, identify one factor in the home, school, or community that is likely to have a significant effect on a preschooler's language development. Then describe one specific way in which this factor can be expected to influence a young child's language development.

## A Very Good Response to Sample Restricted-Response Assignment 1

Young children's language development can be heavily influenced by many factors in the home. One factor is the dominant language used in the home versus the language (English) used in the schools. If the parent speaks a language other than English, it can impact the child's ability to comprehend phonetic symbols that are being taught in the schools. An example is when the student is being taught the phonetic sounds of the alphabet in English at school and the parents utilize a different sound for the same letters in pronouncing words in their native language. For example, in Spanish, the "j" sounds like an "h" in English. This can cause some confusion to a child who is just beginning to associate how letters come together to form words. Because this is already a challenging area for beginning students to accomplish, extra attention must be paid in school and home to assist the student in differentiating but still learning both ways of developing languages.

## Sample Restricted-Response Assignment 2

### Subarea II

*This section focuses on what teachers should know about how to help children become successful learners. It addresses how teachers should organize instruction, use assessment, and interact with children to help them learn. It also addresses how to enhance children's motivation and encourage their use of positive, productive learning behaviors.*

22. **Use the information below to complete the exercise that follows.**

At the beginning of the school year, a first-grade teacher wishes to evaluate the academic skills of the children in the class. Identify one way in which the teacher can informally assess each child's academic skills. Then describe why that assessment technique is appropriate for the teacher to use.

## A Very Good Response to Sample Restricted-Response Assignment 2

A good way to informally assess academic skills of first graders at the beginning of the year is to assign them to draw pictures of their families. As the children work on these, the teacher can walk around the room observing and asking questions, perhaps even taking notes. This activity is appropriate because beginning first graders enjoy drawing, enjoy sharing about their families and will be motivated to sit still for a period of time while focusing on the project. They will also enjoy a sharing session with the teacher and the rest of the class.

An observant teacher will be able to assess many skills by noting the completeness of the figures depicted and the child's oral language capability during the sharing. She will note difficulties in holding a pencil or crayon, right/left-handed preference, and spatial difficulties. Does he write names identifying each family member? Can he point to and count each figure? A copy of the picture, along with any notes taken, can be placed in a folder to be compared with later work throughout the year.

## Sample Restricted-Response Assignment 3

### Subarea III

*This section focuses on the role of teachers as professionals in a complex environment. It addresses strategies teachers can use to ensure ongoing professional development and improvement in their own teaching. It also addresses ways to collaborate with others to create an effective learning environment for children, as well as foundational knowledge regarding early childhood education programs and the rights and responsibilities of all those involved in early childhood education in New Mexico.*

23. **Use the information below to complete the exercise that follows.**

A second-grade class includes students with special needs. The classroom teacher wishes to take steps to promote effective collaboration with the special education teacher in order to ensure that these students' needs are met. Identify one step the teacher can take to promote effective collaboration with the special education teacher. Then explain why this step is likely to be effective.

### **A Very Good Response to Sample Restricted-Response Assignment 3**

As a teacher of a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade special needs student, I want to maintain an effective, collaborative relationship with the assigned Special Education teacher. A good way to do this would be to set a specific time and place to meet each week with the SE teacher to share information. I would make a folder for the child and place in it samples of the child's work and anecdotal record sheets. During the week, notes can be made on these sheets concerning behavior observed, problems noted, progress made, etc. Include any parental contact information and areas in which you need help for the SE teacher.

In preparation for the conference, an agenda sheet can be used to organize time efficiently. Discuss elements from the IEP such as academic areas and behavior/socialization issues. Keeping careful notes and sharing them on a regular basis will keep the communication flowing smoothly. Both teachers will learn to respect one another through regular sharing.

## Sample Directions for the Extended-Response Assignment

A sample of the directions for the extended-response assignment for the New Mexico Assessment of Teacher Competency (Early Childhood) is shown in the box below.

### DIRECTIONS FOR THE EXTENDED-RESPONSE ASSIGNMENT

This section of the test consists of one extended-response assignment. You are to prepare a written response of 300–600 words on the assigned topic. ***The assignment can be found on the following page.*** You should use your time to plan, write, review, and edit your response to the assignment.

Read the assignment carefully before you begin to write. Think about how you will organize your response. You may use any blank space provided on the following pages to make notes, write an outline, or otherwise prepare your response. ***However, your final response must be written in Written Response Booklet B.***

Your response to the assignment will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- **Purpose**—You fulfill the purpose of the assignment by responding to the given task and demonstrating an understanding of relevant professional knowledge.
- **Application of Professional Knowledge**—You accurately and effectively apply relevant professional knowledge.
- **Support**—You support the response with appropriate examples, evidence, and rationales based on relevant professional knowledge.

The assignment is not intended to assess writing ability. However, your response must be communicated clearly enough to permit valid judgment of your knowledge and skills. The final version of your response should conform to the conventions of edited American English.

Be sure to write about the assigned topic and use multiple paragraphs. Please write legibly. You may not use any reference materials during the test. Your written response must be your original work, written in your own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work. Remember to review what you have written and make any changes you think will improve your written response.

**Record your written response to the assignment in the separate Written Response Booklet B. The length of your response is limited to the lined space available in Written Response Booklet B.**

## Sample Extended-Response Assignment

### Subarea II

*This section focuses on what teachers should know about how to help children become successful learners. It addresses how teachers should organize instruction, use assessment, and interact with children to help them learn. It also addresses how to enhance children's motivation and encourage their use of positive, productive learning behaviors.*

**24. Read the information below; then complete the exercise that follows.**

You are a new teacher in an early childhood program in New Mexico. You are aware of the benefits of using a variety of technological and/or manipulative resources to facilitate children's learning. In an essay, identify a specific age level (through age 5) for which you are prepared to teach; then:

- identify a learning goal that would be appropriate for the children in your class;
- describe two strategies for using technological and/or manipulative resources to promote the children's achievement of that learning goal; and
- explain why those strategies would be effective for children at this age.

The audience for this writing task is a group of educators. Be sure to specify an age level (through age 5) in your essay and frame your ideas so that an educator licensed at your level will be able to understand the basis for your response.

## A Very Good Response to the Sample Extended-Response Assignment

Four-year-old children are just starting to get a grasp on differentiating between different species in the animal kingdom. As an instructor, I can utilize their interest in bugs to teach an intriguing lesson on sorting. Four-year-olds are just beginning to distinguish the sounds, physical attributes, colors, shapes, sizes and physical abilities that the bug kingdom encompasses.

One strategy that can be utilized to teach the sorting task is to set up a table where plastic bugs representing a variety of insects are located. The students can touch the bugs and observe the different colors of the insects. They will be able to see the black and yellow stripe on a bee as compared to the single black color of the beetle. They will be able to observe the relatively small size of the ant compared to the size of a butterfly. They will see the wings of the fly and the bee. Students will be asked to sort the bugs into a number of different categories perhaps over a week period including: (1) bugs that can fly (2) small and large sized insects (3) bugs with stripes or plain colors (4) insects that can hurt people (5) insects that have round bodies, thin bodies, long bodies or heads bigger than their bodies, etc. The students will be asked to work as partners and to agree on what bugs belong in each category. Prior to this activity, the teacher has had a class discussion with a picture book identifying each of the bugs and their characteristics. This strategy would be effective for 4 year olds because they get the opportunity to compare and contrast with a partner and have hands on experience. Another reason this activity would be effective is that students will be able to identify bugs from their environment that are safe for them to touch and then develop cautions to be utilized back in their real environment.

A second strategy, which can be used for four-year-olds learning to sort, can be a computer center with a specific sorting program using a bug theme. This gives the teacher an opportunity to instruct the students in computer familiarity and behavior including which parts they can touch, what they are not allowed to touch and how to use a mouse.

The program will have a brief instructional story in which various common insects make sounds (cricket chirp, bee's buzz). Then the student is asked to use the mouse to click on a picture of the appropriate insect as its sound is given. Some programs will have other sorting activities such as insects that fly or crawl or where various insects live - in a pond, on a leaf, in the ground.

This strategy is effective because it uses the auditory with the visual and kinesthetic interactively. Four-year-olds love to use the computer for games and a wise teacher will use this high motivation to support her educational goals.