OSAT

Early Childhood Education

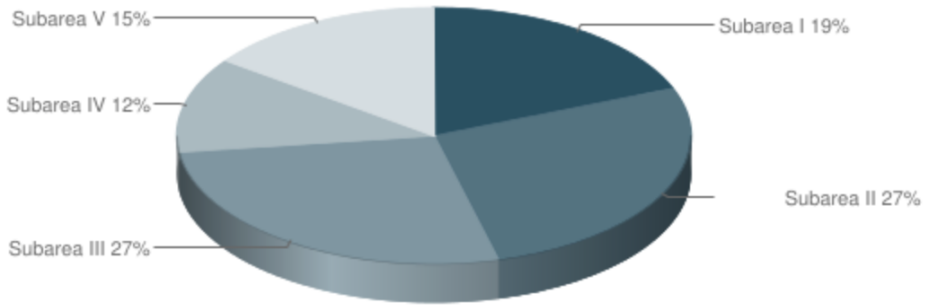
Your plan?

- When are you going to take the exam?
- How many hours a week are you going to commit to studying for the exam?

Today…

- We are focusing on Sections I & II
- These are the sections covering Child Development & Communication/Literacy
- These were selected because they are the lowest two areas for CU students.
- LOTS of information presented! Many slides are FULL of print.
- You WILL need to review this over and over to get it down
- Copies of the PPT are available for you…but for TODAY, you need to write-it-down…research shows that writing it down (taking notes) is MUCH more likely to help you retain information as compared to just listening and following along with printed PPT handouts.
- Email me at: dhilbert@cameron.edu for a copy of the PPT to study
- Feel free to leave when you need to go

Test Framework



Subareas		Range of Competencies	Approximate Percentage of Test
Selected-Response			
I	Child Development, Learning, and the Learning Environment	0001–0004	19%
II	Communication, Language, and Literacy Development	0005–0010	27%
III	Learning Across the Curriculum	0011–0016	27%
IV	Professional Knowledge and Responsibilities	0017–0018	12%
			85%
Constructed-Response			
V	Analysis of Communication, Language, and Literacy Development	0019	**15%**

Demonstrate knowledge of theoretical foundations and current scientifically-based research regarding the development and learning of children from birth through age 8

Research

Many areas of research inform a teacher's practice, such as research on motivation, temperament, and brain development.

Motivation

- A child's motivation affects how she achieves.
- Some children are interested in understanding something new or in acquiring some new skill; thus, they are oriented toward learning.
- Other children are motivated differently, going to great lengths to avoid unfavorable judgments about their competence. They might give up entirely on a project rather than have any mistakes revealed.
- Therefore, *differentiating instruction* so that children can deal with concepts at an appropriate level of complexity would motivate children to learn.
- Children are also motivated by engaging in activities that tap into their own particular interests or are relevant to something from their own lives.

Temperament

- Children react to new situations and change in different ways. Temperament refers to the predictable way that a child responds to events, new situations, and change, including learning activities.
- For example, some children are slow to adapt to change and often react with stubbornness if forced to do something before they are ready to try it. They might also withdraw from new learning activities and miss the opportunity to learn.
- Other children adapt well to change, have mild reactions to new events such as the opportunity to learn something new. They tend to be more confident about new learning activities.
- Teachers, therefore, will encounter some children who are **natural explorers and risk takers**, and others who are more **cautious and in need of reassurance and support**.

Brain Development

- According to Thompson (2008), learning affects brain development and brain growth, and change affects learning. This is true throughout life but is especially evident in the early years. In utero, neurons in a baby's brain produce at a rapid rate and begin to differentiate or specialize for various functions.
- While these neurons migrate and reproduce, they are affected by the mother's health, nutrition, and environmental risks like drugs or alcohol.
- During the first 2–3 years of a child's life, her brain overproduces synapses (connections that carry information between neurons) allowing for lots of new learning.
- But, the brain also begins to prune unnecessary or unused synapses as language and learning experiences shape the brain's wired connections. Early experiences such as neglect or stress can negatively affect brain development, but enriched experiences increase new learning, memory, and language development.
- Positive relationships, play, opportunities to explore the world, and healthy, safe environments also impact critical brain development.

Theories That Impact Early Childhood Education

- Theories of early childhood education are not just guesses or hunches but are guidelines backed by observations, facts, and research. Theories are useful to early childhood teachers because they help to organize knowledge about children's development and learning.
- There are many theories that have an impact on early childhood education. Piaget, Vygotsky, Gardner, and Erikson are four outstanding theorists that have significantly influenced early childhood education.

Piaget

- Piaget provides a *constructivist* perspective of learning, explaining how children build or construct knowledge of their world.
- According to Piaget, children construct knowledge through interactions with others and through their experiences using thought processes of *assimilation* and *accommodation*.
  - Assimilation, one of the processes that children use to construct knowledge, refers to taking in or "assimilating" new information into existing cognitive structures or schema.
  - Accommodation, the other process children use to construct knowledge, refers to how children can or will change an existing understanding to adopt new knowledge and revise, extend, or expand their conceptions.
- Some of Piaget's most basic ideas influencing early childhood education deal with how children learn through stages of cognitive development. Piaget's theory has helped teachers understand that children's thinking is qualitatively different at each of the four stages.

Table 1.1: Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development			
Name of Piagetian Stage	**Age of Children in This State**	**Major Characteristics of Thinking in This Stage**	**Example**
Sensorimotor	Birth to about 2 years	Center on own body; gain information through motor activity and the senses	Makes mobile move by swatting at it
Preoperational	2 to about 7 years	Uses symbols—words, paintings, drawings, movements—to represent experience and images in their mind; appearances of concrete objects are perceived naively. Does not understand conservation of matter.	Draws a picture of a flower in the garden at home. Perceives a tall glass as having more water than a shorter, wider glass, even though the child has observed that the same volume of water was poured from the shorter, wider glass into the taller glass.
Concrete Operational	7 to about 11 years	No longer "tricked" by appearances; think more logically but are limited to thinking about concrete objects; can reverse processes.	In the glasses of water experiment, older children would say, "All you did was pour the same water into the tall glass; you can just pour it back, too."
Formal Operations	11 years and through the rest of one's life	Applies logic to abstract ideas; solves problems efficiently	Can identify probable causes for a computer that freezes up or a car that does not start.

Vygotsky

- ***Social interaction is important in children's learning.***
- Like Piaget, Vygotsky stressed the important role of social interaction in children's learning. Learning, he believed, occurred first between people and later within a person.
- Children's learning takes place, in this theory, because the give-and-take between a teacher and a child makes learning possible.

Vygotsky

- ***Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).***
- According to Vygotsky, learning occurs in the zone of proximal development—the space or zone where children's learning and development takes place.
- At one end of the ZPD is a child's current ability, what he understands about some topic and what he can do on his own without adult help.
- At the other end, are tasks or learning goals that a child cannot accomplish even with help as he is not cognitively ready. A child's ZPD, therefore, is the zone where a child can complete learning tasks with the help of a knowledgeable other.
- To begin, teachers try to figure out what a child already knows about a concept or problem and then sets up a learning situation whereby the child can accomplish a related, more challenging task with structure and guidance.

ZPD

- For example, “What does a child know about classification?” A teacher begins by giving each child an assortment of buttons and asking them to sort them by color. After the children have divided their buttons into groups by color the teacher asks them to think of another way to sort the buttons. She leads students to consider looking at other attributes of buttons besides color, i.e., button size or number of holes. Over time, the teacher gives children other things to sort such as beans, peanuts, leaves, pencils, and so on so that they learn to compare and describe properties of objects by their attributes.
- The teacher begins where children are and leads them to more challenging tasks differentiating instruction to meet the needs of individual learning. As children begin to master certain classification tasks, more complex ones take their place. As they accomplish tasks independently, they are encouraged to take on more challenging tasks with the more competent individual, the teacher, providing structure and guidance so the children are not trying impossible tasks beyond their ZPD.

Vygotsky

- ***Scaffolding*.** Teachers help children learn in the ZPD by scaffolding a child's learning. **Scaffolding is a teacher's changing support as a child constructs new knowledge or skills.** Teachers (and other knowledgeable people) help children in their knowledge construction by scaffolding or supporting the learning. Teachers usually give more help when a task is new or a child is having difficulty by listening, asking questions, offering suggestions, or modeling a skill. As a child gains skill in constructing the knowledge, the adult can gradually step back, providing less help in a gradual way.

- For a child working on learning better emotional regulation, a teacher would model using words and then coach the child in practice sessions, with the child eventually learning to say, "I'm mad that you took my place!" rather than pushing the child who jumped ahead of him. This is something that he is not likely to have learned on his own but he would learn it in interaction with a teacher who scaffolds his understanding.

Vygotsky

- ***Teacher-child dialogues.***
- Effective scaffolding relies heavily on dialogues or conversations between adults and children. A teacher uses language when conveying information, asking questions, or giving suggestions. It is the talking, using language that conveys meaning to children and helps them build on their existing ideas.

Gardner

- Educators use the theory of multiple intelligences to understand children's different learning needs and to motivate children by focusing on how they learn.
- When deciding, for example, about how best to help children detect and use patterns, they recall that some of the children would prefer painting patterns, others singing or producing patterns with a musical instrument, and others by using their bodies to stomp out a pattern

Gardner

- ***Linguistic Intelligence.*** While every child possesses linguistic intelligence, some have a higher-level ability to use language for a variety of purposes, e.g., to learn, remember things, communicate, and create things such as poetry. A child with high linguistic intelligence might find it easy to produce a poem, give a speech or to tell a story.
- ***Logical-Mathematical Intelligence.*** Logical-mathematical intelligence, linked with mathematical thinking, involves the ability to see patterns, to reason well, and think logically. Children with high logical-mathematical intelligence would probably enjoy solving mysteries and math problems and would be able to detect patterns well.
- ***Musical Intelligence.*** Children who possess a higher degree of musical intelligence use this ability to perform, compose, or appreciate patterns in music. Children with high musical intelligence would gravitate to a variety of musical activities such as, listening and responding to sounds, including different styles of music and cultural variations, singing and playing instruments, and developing a personal frame of reference for listening to music.
- ***Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence.*** A bodily-kinesthetic intelligence involves using the body and its parts to tackle problems. A child high in this intelligence might prefer to demonstrate that he can make a "V," not with a marker, but by lifting his arms in a "V."

Gardner

- ***Spatial Intelligence.*** Spatial intelligence involves thinking in pictures and an awareness of space and one's body in space. Children high in this intelligence do puzzles and mazes well. They would probably enjoy drawing and activities like map reading or creating simple maps.
- ***Interpersonal Intelligence.*** Children who possess interpersonal intelligence have an ability to understand what other people intend, want, and need. A child with high interpersonal intelligence plays and works well with other children.
- ***Intrapersonal Intelligence.*** A child who has an intrapersonal intelligence understands and knows herself. She would understand, for instance, that she really likes chess but is afraid of competing publically. She knows her strengths but also understands her fears.
- ***Naturalist Intelligence.*** Children who are naturalists recognize and categorize elements of the natural world and the environment created by humans. A child high in this intelligence would be interested, for example, in the organization and order of living things. For example, he might choose a poster for his room that shows how dogs are categorized by breeds. He might excel at summer camp, classifying different types of leaves and trees

Erikson

- Erikson proposed eight stages of psychosocial development, each presenting humans with a *psychosocial crisis*. The person's interactions with the other people affects whether she resolves the challenge of each stage in a positive or negative way.
- ***Adult influence.*** Teachers can help children to resolve psychosocial crises in a positive way by using their knowledge of child development. For example, a teacher who understands that toddlers have new motor and language abilities and strives for independence uses the information by encouraging a very young child's independence within limits.
- ***Stages of psychosocial development.*** The first four of Erikson's stages, which focus on childhood, birth to age 12 years, are shown in Table 1.2 with a statement of how to help children resolve the crisis in a positive way.

Table 1.2: The First Four Stages in Erikson's Theory		
Erikson's Stage	**Age**	**How Teachers Can Help Children During this Stage**
Trust vs. Mistrust	Birth to 18 months	Meet children's needs consistently.
Autonomy vs. Shame or Doubt	18 months to 3 years	Encourage toddlers to do things by and for themselves when it is possible and safe.
Initiative vs. Guilt	3 to 5 years	Encourage children to explore and make sense of their world.
Industry vs. Inferiority	6 to 12 years	Support new abilities to learn and to take on the challenges of which a child is now capable.

Recognize characteristics, progressions, and variations of development in the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, language, sensory, and aesthetic domains and the interrelationships between the various domains

Child Development

- You will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the various domains of child development: physical, cognitive, social (including stages of play), emotional, language, sensory, and aesthetic.
- Questions will target your understanding of the typical stages and sequences of child development in the domains. You will be expected to understand that there are varying rates of development from child to child, even though children go through the same stages.
- Questions will test whether you understand the concept of ***interrelatedness*** of the domains of development.

Child Development

- One of the most important parts of a teacher's knowledge base is understanding children's development. Teachers need to understand the orderly and predictable nature of development.
- **Domains of Development: Typical Stages and Sequences**
  Children develop in several domains: social, emotional, cognitive (including language), physical, and aesthetic. Early childhood teachers observe the increasingly complex nature of development in all domains.

Social Development

- …refers to changes in children's ability to get along with others and to changes in social skills. This involves changes in self-esteem, self-control, and problem-solving skills.
- Infants up to 12 months, for example show social interest by watching other babies and respond to a play-partner's behaviors, such as reaching out to a person who shows interest in playing with the infant.
- From 12 to 36 months children can imitate another person's activity, begins to take turns, and shows helping and sharing behaviors.
- From preschool through the primary grades, children can appropriately express positive emotions and can control negative thoughts about social partners; takes turns speaking in a conversation, and shows spontaneous acts of kindness and compassion.

Emotional Development

- Involves changes in how children feel, express, and understand feelings. They move from action and body-oriented expression of feelings during infancy and the toddler years to using words during preschool through the primary grades, ages four through 8.
- For example, an infant expresses emotions with arm waving, crying, and a scrunched up angry facial expression. In contrast, an angry 4 year-old might instead say, "You can't come to my birthday party!" A 7 year-old shows even more advanced emotional development when he experiences anger but masks his feeling with a neutral facial expression.

Language Development

- Involves acquiring the rules of one's culture for communicating thoughts and feelings. Speech refers to talking and how the child learns to express language. Milestones for language development are guides to what is considered normal development in terms of ability to pronounce words, use vocabulary, engage in conversation and use of the rules of grammar to form sentences.
- Teachers see the increasing complexity of language development in a developing child's sentences.
- For example, 2½ to 3 year-olds construct simple sentences with fewer words than they will use later and they tend to over generalize a rule that they are acquiring, "I comed to school."
- After age 5, a child can construct longer and more complex sentences, "I came to school after I ate breakfast."

Aesthetic Development

- Involves a child's emerging appreciation of beauty and the arts, such as dance, music, drawing, and painting. Preschoolers, for example, paint at the easel or kindergartners observe a sculpture in the park and later identify the same piece in a series of photographs.

Varying Rates of Development

- ***Variability in children's development.*** Even though there is a reassuringly predictable pattern evident in developmental domains such as motor development, it is difficult to predict exactly when any child will, for example, sit up, crawl, or walk unassisted, because of the variability in children's development.
- ***Healthy children achieve motor skills within windows of achievement for gross motor skill development.*** A window of achievement for gross motor skills is the time span during which a typically developing child, for instance, sits without support, stands with help, crawls on hands and knees, walks with assistance, stands alone, and walks alone.
- ***There is a normal range for these and other motor skills.*** A caregiver might notice that one infant walks alone at 9½ months, which is early but within a normal range. Another child walks alone at 12 months and a third child walks alone at 14 months and all are in the normal range for this gross motor skill.
- ***Cause for concern often arises when children do not meet developmental goals within these windows of achievement.*** An indicator of development that is not in keeping with expectations of a given age range alerts teachers that a child might be in need of assistance in a specific developmental domain, such as when a child does not walk alone by about 16 or 17 months.

Interrelatedness of Developmental Domains

- Each developmental domain affects and is affected by the other domains. The domains are interconnected or related. This interrelatedness is like the weaving of a cloth; different strands or domains of development are woven together to form the fabric of a child's development. The interwoven threads of cognition and language, for example, interact and support social and emotional development. Explicit examples follow:
- ***Cognitive development is enhanced when children engage in play which involves physical activity.*** Playful physical activity readies children's abilities to maintain focus and on-task behavior enabling them to perform higher-level cognitive tasks and increase the capacity for learning. Children are more attentive to learning tasks after physical activity. Fine-motor play is important to healthy brain development as it encourages small muscles to move which stimulates and strengthens the coordination between neurons and brain circuitry. These same muscles affect children's abilities to learn to shape letters, numbers, and write their names.
- ***Children's physical activity is also linked to social and emotional development.*** Children need to develop the idea that they can do things well in different areas, such as physical activity or interacting with others. Pretend play with other children, for example, helps children develop social competence such as working out a disagreement with a friend. It also reduces stress and increases self-confidence as children begin to master gross motor skills.

Demonstrate knowledge of appropriate procedures for meeting the health, nutrition, and safety needs of infants, toddlers, and children through age 8:

Health, Safety & Nutrition

- You will be expected to know how to support good nutrition for young children. Other questions will test your knowledge of how to support children's health.
  - You may be asked to recognize how to prevent the transmission of illness and disease in early childhood settings.
  - You may be expected to know about good hygiene and cleaning/sanitizing practices in early childhood settings.
  - Some questions may test your understanding of how to create a safe, early childhood setting, e.g., how to select and use equipment and materials with safety considerations in mind and how to make indoor and outdoor environments safe for young children.
  - Finally, you might be asked how to communicate with families about their children's nutrition, health, and safety.

Health, Safety & Nutrition

- Two of a young child's most basic needs are physiological (air, water, food, sleep) and security (physical and psychological safety and security) needs.
- Teachers, along with parents, support children by focusing on children's wellness and the connected topics of nutrition, health, and safety. Healthy, well-nourished children who feel safe are prepared to explore and learn in early childhood classrooms.
- Fostering children's wellness requires that we focus on all three—nutrition, health, and safety—not just one or two in early childhood settings.

Health

- Teachers can create a classroom climate that supports children's health. Guidelines focus on hand washing, cleaning and sanitizing practices, and controlling the transmission of disease.
  - ***Washing hands.*** Teachers teach children how to wash hands correctly. Teachers and children wash hands when they arrive at school and at other necessary times, such as before eating, after toileting, after changing diapers, and before and after play in the sand or water tables, or before working with food.
  - ***Cleaning and sanitizing.*** Toys should be cleaned whenever a child puts a toy in his or her mouth or at least once each week. Room surfaces should be cleaned and then sanitized and bathrooms should be cleaned and sanitized every day and as often during the day as needed.

Safety

- ***Select safe equipment and materials and use them safely.*** Tables and chairs should be child-sized with the table low enough for children to work with ease (preschoolers need chairs that are 10-14 inches high and kindergarten/primary grade children need chairs that are 16 to 18 inches high). Toilets and sinks should be child-sized. Furniture should meet United States product safety requirements. Wood surfaces should be smooth and teachers should check for splinters. Edges should be rounded. Upholstered furniture needs covers that are easy to clean. Shelving units should be attached securely to the wall.
- ***Make indoor environments safe.*** Store materials in a safe way. Store cleaning supplies in a locked cabinet. Keep the classroom clean by avoiding keeping items around that can attract insects or rodents or by keeping the items such as birdseed in tightly closed containers. Make it easy for children to store things that might cause accidents if left out. Electrical outlets must be covered and any plants chosen for the classroom must be safe.
- ***Make outdoor environments safe.*** Create an appropriately bounded outdoor space by installing fencing of at least four feet with gates that children cannot open. Make climbing structures safe by installing sand, pea gravel or shredded recycled rubber mulch under the structure and by placing them at least nine feet away from other structures. Swings and slides are the source of many of the outdoor area childhood accidents. Therefore, swings should be made of soft material. Slides should face away from other equipment. In this way, children coming down the slide will not bump into others. An outdoor area should not contain hazards such as broken glass or other trash. All stairs and surfaces that are elevated should have handrails. Elevated surfaces should have safe barriers. All handrails, guardrails, or barriers must be safe, preventing children from getting their head trapped between rails.

Nutrition

- **Supporting Good Nutrition**
  Early childhood is a time of rapid growth of the body, including the brain. A child's diet should supply nutrients that appropriately support a child's growth.
- ***Essential nutrients.*** Food and beverages should supply essential nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, and protein. The foods include fruits and vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, beans, grains, and dairy items. Fats are necessary in children's diets. Before the age of 2 years, there should be no fat restrictions for children's diets. After the age of 2 years, foods containing saturated fats or cholesterol should be limited.
- ***Energy requirements.*** Children need an appropriate amount of energy (calories) to support their activity and their body's growth. They need to consume foods supplying energy and calories in the appropriate amount. If children do not get enough energy (calories), they will not grow well. If they get too much energy (calories), they will gain too much weight. Obesity is a major problem among children today.

Recognize the role of play in development and learning

Play

- You will be expected to know how play helps children practice many different behaviors and how play helps them to interact with and learn about their environment.
- You may need to recognize how play enhances children's development, such as in social and motor skills, perceptual abilities, problem solving, self-control, self-confidence, and self-esteem.
- You also may be asked to identify play activities ranging from free play to guided exploration.

Play

- Play is not a luxury but is an essential vehicle for children's development and learning. Play is considered a right of all children and state boards of education have incorporated this thinking into state learning standards because children learn through activity and play. States now recognize the role of play in helping children develop in all domains and in helping them learn in all content areas.
- **Different Types of Play**
  - ***Free play.*** Some play is classified as "free play," in which children are the most self-directed. Examples of free play include pretend play in which a teacher might provide a few props but children develop the play episode on their own, such as when a child uses a cookie sheet and play dough to make cookies. Other examples of free play include outdoor play, painting, constructing models (with blocks, art materials, and manipulatives for example), and making up stories on one's own.
  - ***Guided exploration.*** Here, teachers give some direction in this type of play. Examples include music, reading, listening to and telling stories, drawing, and constructing models. A teacher could work with a small group of children to discover which items stick to magnets. Guided exploration play is also evident in a teacher's telling of a story and children acting out the story.

Play

- **Play Helps Children Learn About their Environment**
  Play provides a scaffold or source of support for children as they learn about their world, for example, learning about driving taxis as they engage in pretend play about taxis. Children learn about people who work in their community—such as community helpers—through field trips, visits from community helpers, and through play such as using figures of community helpers in the home or block center.
- **Play Enhances Children's Development**
  Play is extremely satisfying and beneficial for children and enhances their development in every domain—cognitive/language, physical and motor, social and emotional, and aesthetic.

Play

- ***Emotional development.*** Play promotes mental health and joyful, complex play is a sign of mental health. Children who play, either alone (solitary play), next to another child (parallel play), or with others (cooperative play) can grapple with feelings in a nonthreatening way.
  - A child who plays in the dramatic play corner's "doctor's office," for example, can deal with anxious feelings about going to the doctor.
  - Playing outdoors also allows children to deal with feelings when they climb just a little higher or run just a little faster, situations slightly scary to them.
  - Play can help children develop positive self-esteem because it offers many chances to develop feelings of competence and confidence, both major elements of self-esteem.
- ***Social development.*** Play enhances a child's social development in many ways. Through play children learn self-control when they have to pay attention to rules such as having to wait their turn while playing with others.
  - Learning to wait one's turn can be accomplished as the role of a customer in the post office or "grocery" line.
  - Children not only learn but also practice social skills through play. For example, children learn about listening to others who are speaking when playing with them.

Play

- ***Cognitive/language development.*** Socially interactive pretend play fosters cognitive and language development. Socially interactive pretend play activates many areas of the child's brain, contributing to denser synaptic connections in the brain. This type of play involves children's emotions, language, sensorimotor, social, perceptual, and cognitive skills. Pretend play helps children to develop their memory and language skills. Pretend play, especially taking on roles involving other children, helps children to expand their problem solving and perspective-taking skills as they confront the ideas of other children during play. Janet, for example, might want to bathe a doll in one way while another child has a different idea.
- ***Motor skills and physical development.*** Play enhances motor skills and children's physical development. For example, playing with play dough, working with scissors and paper, fitting puzzles together, drawing with chalk or markers, carrying and moving blocks, or riding tricycles all contribute to better fine and gross muscle development.
- ***Aesthetic development*** refers to an appreciation of art and beauty. Play such as painting, drawing, and other visual arts contributes to this area of development.

Demonstrate knowledge of factors (e.g., family, culture, community) that influence young children's development and learning and how these factors interact with one another:

Influences on Development & Learning

- You will be expected to identify the influences of family, culture, and community in a child's development.
- Such questions would focus on factors such as adult support, adequate nutrition, availability of stimulating materials and activities, home culture and language, socioeconomic conditions, stress and trauma, and resilience, and protective factors.

Family Characteristics

- ***Children's school success is influenced by the characteristics of the family in which they grow up as well as different cultures and languages in their community and the overlapping spheres of influence of their families, the community, and school.***
  - Some children, for example, grow up in blended families, families headed by grandparents, multigenerational families, families in which both parents work, or families headed by a single parent. Family dynamics, parenting styles, sibling and multigenerational relationships all play a role in shaping a child's development as families usually follow cultural, social, and personal preferences when raising or interacting with their children.
- ***Also, children grow up in families from many different ethnic groups, of a variety of social and economic levels, and who adhere to different religious beliefs all of which can affect their world view.***
- ***Teachers and schools should build their policies to be inclusive and accepting of all families, whatever their structure, ethnicity, or income level.***

Relationships with Adults

- ***Children feel safe and secure in positive, warm, nurturing relationships with adults who set reasonable limits and who teach and model self-control and emotional regulation.***
- ***Children also construct social skills such as dealing with conflicts in positive relationships with adults.*** Children develop cognitive skills such as perspective taking in a positive adult-child relationship as the adult models and encourages such skills.
- ***On the other hand, children's development can be negatively affected by a relationship with an authoritarian adult.*** Authoritarian adults often make unreasonable demands on children and are less supportive of a child's development of independence. Authoritarian adults foster negative self-esteem, poor self-control, and aggression in children.

Relationships with Other Children

- ***Children benefit from interacting with other children.*** For example, they confront conflicts and learn about another person's perspective as they work to resolve conflicts.
- ***Children tend to develop better social skills and learn about building relationships when they play and work with peers.*** Peer acceptance has consistently predicted children's academic readiness and classroom involvement.

Protective Factors Fostering Resilience

- ***Some children face adversity in their homes and communities.*** Some children experience stress, a reaction to physical or psychological threats to well-being, and often the stress is traumatic, such as child abuse.
- ***A teacher can help children to develop resilience,*** the ability to recover relatively quickly from misfortune without being overwhelmed or acting in dysfunctional ways.
- ***Children become resilient in the systems in which they grow up—family, peer group, school, neighborhood, and larger society.*** Those developing resilience are protected in some way from stress, not completely, but something in the child's systems protects the child from major and potentially negative effects of harmful events. Someone or something absorbs some of the shock of the stressor, shielding a child and allowing him to develop well in the face of adversity.
- ***Teachers and parents can affect the development of feelings of safety and security.***
    - Caring relationships, in which a parent or teacher is highly responsive to a child's emotional signals and tries to respond appropriately.
    - High but reasonable expectations, which foster children's sense of confidence, competence, and worth, are all elements of positive self-esteem.
    - The child's opportunity to participate in groups and activities that bring him or her pleasure, positive relationships, and a sense of competence.
    - Teachers who observe behaviors or emotional responses that could indicate abuse. Teachers are legally responsible to report any suspicions of child abuse.

Stimulating Materials and Activities

- ***Children need appropriately challenging and novel learning activities,*** which require a child to perform mental operations using the stimulating materials and new information.
- ***Children, through interesting activities, develop the extensive knowledge base and vocabulary that they need for school success.***
- ***Children develop physical knowledge by working with real objects,*** such as blocks, sand, and water. They develop social knowledge by playing and working with peers and teachers.

Understand How to Create Positive Indoor and Outdoor Learning Environments for Children from Birth through Age 8

Environments

- Children thrive in healthy, safe, and appropriately challenging environments. They must be in a safe physical environment that allows them to engage in large motor and fine motor activities. They need a healthy interpersonal environment in which teachers show respect for children through words and actions and where they can develop self-esteem and positive relationships with others. They thrive in a learning environment where they can develop language and build their knowledge of mathematics, science, literacy, and social skills.
- Young children also require predictable routines and schedules that allow for extended periods for work, play, and learning. Early childhood teachers therefore must know how to plan for and manage safe, healthy, and challenging learning environments.

Apply knowledge of the development, characteristics, and needs of young children to create learning environments that are safe and healthy and that promote children's sense of security and independence:

Environments

- You will need to know how to provide physically and psychologically safe environments that meet safety requirements and take into account children's ages and developmental levels.
- You will be expected to understand that safe and healthy learning environments can help children to feel secure, connected, and nurtured.
- Effective teachers use their knowledge of child development to create two different types of safe and healthy learning environments—physical and psychological or interpersonal.

Value of Safe and Healthy Environments

- ***Safe and healthy physical environments*** provide food, water, and adequate rest and sleep; prevent illness; and keep children from harm, allowing children to focus on learning.
- ***Predictable, structured, and familiar surroundings help young children to feel safe and secure.*** All early childhood children, infants, and third graders alike need predictable physical environments. For example, pre-schoolers need to know where blocks, art supplies, math manipulatives are located; knowing how their teacher expects them to use equipment and how they should return things when done using them facilitates their development of self-esteem and security.
- ***More important, though, teachers need to be predictable*** because they have a major part in creating the interpersonal environment. Children need teachers whose personalities convey genuine affection, caring, and respect. Consistently respectful teacher behaviors create a cocoon, a safe interpersonal environment in which children spend time exploring, learning, and making friends.
- ***Safe and healthy interpersonal (psychological) environments support children's development*** because of their powerful effects on the child's developing brain, personality, and ability and willingness to learn. Children's curiosity paves the way for exploring, discovering, practicing, and understanding, but their curiosity-exploring-learning cycle is possible only when they feel safe and when they have appropriately affectionate and safe relationships.

How to Create a Safe and Healthy Interpersonal Learning Environment

- ***Demonstrate respect and genuine affection for children.*** Speak with respect; be calm and composed. Children need to see teachers who smile and laugh easily. They need appropriate touch such as touching a hand when restating a limit or a shoulder as you request attention for a story.
- ***Behave in a consistent and positive way.*** Consistent and positive teacher expectations and behavior help children see you as a trustworthy person who is predictably positive, even when dealing with things such as aggression or distress.
- ***Take children's perspective.*** Try to understand things from a child's viewpoint. Get to their eye level, look at them when speaking to them, and spend time on the floor with them.
- ***Acknowledgment.*** Acknowledge each child every day; acknowledge their pleasant and unpleasant emotions; acknowledge what they do.
- ***Quiet times.*** Provide solitude—safe, quiet, reflective times. Older children enjoy quiet reading or listening to music, for example.
- ***Guidance.*** Take time to guide children's behavior appropriately; focus on teaching and never on punishment or any strategy that can hurt or humiliate children.

Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for creating learning environments that reflect respect for children as individuals and that are respectful of their cultural, family, and community contexts

Learning Environments

- Teachers demonstrate respect for children and families in so many ways, including how they structure the learning environment, by using positive guidance, and by encouraging positive interactions among children.
- ***Culturally competent teachers have an anti-bias perspective,*** and they structure the learning environment to reflect this perspective
  - Evaluating the classroom environment and beginning to make necessary changes is the third component…. Teachers must take a critical look at all the materials in the classroom environment, asking themselves what messages about diversity the children get from the materials. Do children see abundant images of people that reflect diverse abilities and current racial, ethnic, gender, and economic diversity? Do the images include depictions of important individuals who participated in struggles for justice? After this evaluation, teachers can make a plan for buying and making needed new materials and eliminating inappropriate stereotypical materials. (Hohensee & Derman-Sparks, 1992)
- ***Appropriate materials include music, art, and books showing different ages, genders, and countries.***

Positive Guidance

- Teachers using positive guidance demonstrate respect for children because they
  - ***Develop a warm and supportive relationship with children***
  - ***Understand child development***
  - ***Have realistic expectations of what children can do***
  - ***Communicate effectively, delivering messages simply, kindly, firmly, and consistently***
  - ***Influence behavior in a developmentally appropriate way.***
    - For example, they set limits well, state them clearly, and explain the reasons for limits.

Encourage Positive Social Interaction among Children

- Teachers meet this goal by creating a classroom community with a pervading sense of respect, by modeling positive interaction, and by teaching social skills that children need.
- ***Create a community of learners in which every child feels respected and has a sense of belonging.*** Children, in a community of learners, feel at home in their classrooms and their families feel welcomed and know that they are partners with the teacher in their child's education.
- ***Model respectful social interaction and teach key social skills.*** Supportive teachers demonstrate respectful interaction with children, parents, and other teachers by their polite and courteous manner. They teach key social skills by demonstrating the skill with puppets, discussing skills with pictures as a starting point, giving direct instruction, providing practice and coaching, and then encouraging children for their efforts. For example, a first grade teacher demonstrated how to express irritation in a non-aggressive way.

Apply knowledge of the development, characteristics, and needs of young children to create supportive and challenging learning environments that promote children's sense of competence and motivation to learn

- You will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the importance of adults' expressions of confidence in children's abilities.
- You may be asked to apply strategies for helping children make meaning from experiences in play, through guided investigations, and other developmentally appropriate activities.
- Some questions will test your understanding of encouraging children's active involvement, exploration, and sense of autonomy.
- You may also be expected to apply your knowledge of experiences that challenge children and encourage them to think critically.

- Supportive, challenging learning environments can contribute to the development of competent, capable children in their construction of knowledge. The following are meaningful guidelines that identify components of supportive and challenging learning environments including how to capitalize on seeing young children as competent and capable.

- **Children Construct Different Forms of Knowledge**
  - ***Physical knowledge*** refers to knowledge constructed by working with real objects such as pine cones. Direct experience allows children to learn about the physical qualities of the objects.
  - ***Social knowledge*** refers to understanding knowledge created by humans, such as the names of things—"pine cone," for example. In addition, children gain social knowledge through direct engagement with other people (e.g., by learning what different workers do and by talking with a teacher about the jobs).
  - ***Logico-mathematical knowledge*** refers to understanding relationships, such as the relationship of a pine cone to the tree on which it grew. Children build knowledge by connecting familiar ideas (e.g., many plants grow from seeds) with new ideas about what a seed might look like (e.g., an acorn) or where seeds might grow and develop (e.g., in a pine cone).

Create a Supportive and Challenging Environment

- Set the stage for all three types of knowledge construction by providing time, materials, and appropriately challenging and novel experiences for projects. Scaffold children's understanding and provide enough time for children to build different types of knowledge. Structure the schedule so that children have large uninterrupted blocks of time for play and learning.
  - ***Provide materials.*** Children, whether they are one month or eight years-old benefit from working with manipulatives. For example, babies and toddlers learn about the physical qualities of soft blocks while first graders learn mathematical concepts by using blocks as manipulatives. Children who are learning about their bodies would benefit from having access to a model of the human body.
  - ***Scaffold children's learning.*** Provide the experiences from which children begin to understand relationships. Observe children as they work. Ask questions. Help children learn labels for items. Help them understand relationships. For example, a teacher and her class of kindergarteners began an activity with evergreen trees by touching pine cones and counting and feeling evergreen needles. Then, all clutching clipboards, each sketched an evergreen tree with its pine cones. The teacher observed, questioned, and commented as the children worked.
  - ***Provide reasonably novel and challenging tasks for children.*** Cognitive growth revolves around facing questions about what we know, figuring out how to answer the questions, and finally understanding something new on that topic. For example, children in the kindergarten understood that some trees had apples but did not know about other trees having pine cones. When they first saw different sizes and kinds of pine cones on the discovery table, they manipulated them and talked about them with the teacher. Then, through various planned activities, they gradually constructed additional knowledge about pine cones and their relationship to evergreens.

Apply knowledge of how to select appropriate learning resources and materials, including technology, and how to set up the physical environment to meet the needs of all children, including those with exceptionalities

- You will be expected to understand criteria for selecting learning resources and materials, including technology.
- Questions will expect you to know developmentally appropriate resources and materials that support learning goals and that meet the needs of all children, including children with disabilities or with exceptional gifts and talents (differentiated instruction).
- You will also be expected to understand how to organize the physical environment, including accessibility and space needs.

Organizing the Physical Environment

- Effectively arranged classrooms acknowledge that children learn through play, active involvement, and social interaction. Teachers organize the classroom into learning centers, provide enough centers, and arrange the centers logically. A learning center is a play or work space in a classroom and can be for small groups, the entire class, or individuals.
  - ***Organize the classroom into learning centers***
    Learning centers vary in size and generally have specific materials connected with each. Learning centers should also be based on the curriculum and the developmental needs of the children in the classroom. For example, a kindergarten teacher might develop centers that emphasize various literacy skills including for the development of listening, reading, and writing. The following include considerations for the kinds of centers teachers might organize and tips for promoting successful use.
  - ***Small group learning centers:*** might include block, dramatic play, science or discovery, art, puzzles and manipulatives, math, writing, and sensory (water or sand, for example) table. Each is large enough for four to six children, and each has a specific function that helps the teacher meet program goals. Each center contains materials logically related to that school's curriculum goals.
  - ***Large group center*** is a space large enough to accommodate the entire class. This space should be large, open, and flexible enough to accommodate group activities related to math, dance, science, nutrition, and other curriculum topics.
  - ***Individual learning centers*** give children a chance to work alone. For example, the writing center and the reading-library center would serve nicely for individuals or for two children to work side by side.
  - ***Arrange learning centers logically.*** Group quiet centers together, for example, reading/library and science and discovery. Group centers with more vigorous activity together, such as blocks next to dramatic play and music. Create good boundaries for learning centers with shelves or other dividers so that children have a physical marker for boundaries.
  - ***Define effective traffic patterns.*** Traffic patterns refer to the flow of movement in the room. Create open pathways clearly leading to centers and that make it easy for children to move between areas. Provide enough space for wheelchairs so that a child with a disability can participate in any center.

Criteria for Materials and Resources for Centers

- Materials must be developmentally appropriate and support learning goals.
  - ***Safety first.*** All materials chosen for a classroom must be safe. Materials must have smooth, rounded edges, nontoxic paint, and must meet all safety requirements. Some materials or resources may need to meet school regulations. For example, many schools may not allow classroom pets because of potential health hazards.
  - ***Active learning.*** Materials for centers should encourage active learning. For example, a puzzle or manipulatives center would contain a variety of manipulatives that engage children in exploration. A preschool or kindergarten teacher, for example, might place flat, translucent plastic shapes that fit together on a light table.
  - ***Support learning goals.*** Materials should support learning goals, whatever the age of the children. For example, if a curriculum goal is to support children's development of mathematical concepts, small group centers might support children's active learning by providing boards with nails over which children can stretch rubber bands to create geometric shapes, geo blocks for counting, base-ten rods, tangrams, or attribute blocks. If the curriculum focus is on the arts, then the center might provide a variety of art mediums and materials.
  - ***Meet needs of all children.*** Because children learn differently, materials and learning activities should meet the needs of all children in a class. Teachers can differentiate instruction with classroom materials and resources to meet the needs of children so that they can learn with the appropriate amount of complexity. For example, a child gifted in spatial relations and needing a challenge might try to build or duplicate more complex patterns with a given set of shapes or more challenging kinds of interconnecting blocks.

Demonstrate knowledge of the continuum of teaching strategies—from child-initiated to teacher-directed learning—for promoting children's learning

- You will be expected to know a variety of developmentally appropriate, research-based teaching strategies and how to adapt teaching approaches to individual children's characteristics, backgrounds, and needs.
- You may also be asked about how to promote and support child-initiated learning and plan for appropriate teacher directed learning.
- You may also be asked to identify incidental learning and ways to use the environment to engage children in daily routines and social interactions.

Range of Teaching Strategies

- ***Child-initiated.*** Recognizing the needs and interests of the child motivates learners because it makes learning relevant to the child. Child-initiated teaching begins with a child selecting a learning activity and pursuing it with facilitation by the teacher. The teacher's role is to set up learning materials and resources that capitalize on or activate interest, arouse curiosity, or generate questions.
  - For example, suppose a child demonstrates an intense interest in animals. The teacher ensures that animal pictures and picture books are placed in learning centers. The child pours over the picture books and picture cards and seems particularly curious about unusual animals such as aardvarks and armadillos. The child asks questions about why these animals are so oddly shaped and wonders why they don't have fur like dogs, cats, or horses. These questions prompt teacher and child discussions and sets up further learning opportunities.

Guided Discovery

- Guided discovery involves child-selected learning, such as the question about oddly shaped animals or animals that typically aren't kept as pets. Through guided discovery, the teacher uses a child initiated idea and plans ways to guide discovery and learning.
  - In the case where the child has expressed an interest in odd animals, the teacher might engage the child (and other children who are interested) in a discussion about the physical qualities of each odd animal the child has discovered.
  - They might generate a list of questions they have about these animals—why they are shaped as they are, what kind of covering they have, where they live, what they eat, and so on.
  - The teacher would then seek resources to further engage children in exploration and discovery. She might find DVDs that discuss these animals and their habitats and are at an appropriate level for the children. She might allow the child, whose question began the study, to watch the DVD via a computer or she might now plan her teaching to benefit the whole class by showing the video footage to everyone. The teacher would discuss what they see in the video.
  - She would then engage children in a follow-up discussion recording answers to children's original questions on an oversized chart and collecting more questions.
  - The teacher may plan follow up activities that address social studies concepts (where these animals live), math concepts (graphs to count feet, snouts, foods these animals eat), science (characteristics of animals or animal classification), literacy (stories about these animals or made up animals), art, and so on. Through these continuing and extended activities children explore and the teacher guides further exploration and enrichment.

Teacher-Directed

- In a teacher-centered approach the decision about what will be learned and the direction of the learning is originated by the teacher. For example, a teacher might want to focus on teaching about specific animals and perhaps begin a unit of study on animals that live on a farm or at the zoo. Children do not have a choice in the original direction of the lesson or activities that accompany the lesson because the teacher has very specific learning objectives in mind. These learning objectives may be dictated by standards or a school- or district-wide curriculum. The lesson or activity still has basic components for motivating children, teaching them content and skills, and applied practice (e.g., sorting animal pictures by where animals live). But, the teacher-directed activity is dictated by a structured curriculum.

Take Advantage of Incidental and Spontaneous Opportunities for Teaching

- ***Routines offer numerous opportunities for teaching and learning.*** The arrival routine may focus on reading and writing, when children read the morning message on a chart and when they answer a question at the bottom of the message. The departure routine may foster social emotional learning when the teacher and children sing a good-bye song. Transitions; however, which happen throughout the day (and are discussed in a separate section more fully), allow for spontaneous learning.
    - For example, a transition might prompt the spontaneous use of mathematics to count the number of children whose names begin with a specific letter. Walks to the lunchroom or playground can lead children to look for and name shapes, count windows or doors, or read environmental print in signs on the way.
- ***Support child-initiated activities with opportunities and encouragement.*** Effective teachers plan the environment and choose materials carefully so that children's self-initiated learning will have meaning. For example, a kindergarten teacher fills the sensory table with sand and accessories and provides beautiful colored paints and an easel. A third grade teacher, discovering some of the children observing worms on the sidewalk after the rain, provides magnifying glasses, clipboards, paper, and pencils for drawing and note taking.
- ***Scaffolded support and modeling refer to strategies that teachers use to guide children's learning.*** Children learn many things through modeling. A model demonstrates some behavior or skill that the child observes. The child might later imitate the action because of that modeling. For example, a child observes how to be kind to animals from watching the teacher's kindness to the classroom pet.

  Scaffolded support involves a teacher's changing level of help as a child constructs an understanding or develops certain skills. If, for instance, a third grade teacher helps a child interested in wolves locate appropriate resource books and make a few notes from each, the child may go on to demonstrate the skill of seeking a variety of resources and making notes when doing another project. Though the teacher might check to see that the new resources are appropriate to the new project and ensure the child's note taking will lead the child to success, the teacher will gradually give less and less assistance for this skill.

Supporting Children's Self-Regulation

- Teachers want to guide children toward healthy self-control, also known as self-regulation, which involves the ability to control impulses, tolerate frustration, postpone immediate gratification, and to set a plan in motion and carry it out. Children begin to show voluntary self-regulation when they are about three-years-old but it takes several years for this ability to develop fully.
- Research-based strategies support children in developing self-regulation.
  - ***Adopt a warm supportive interactional style with children.*** Providing children with a warm and supportive interactional style is associated with authoritative caregiving and has been consistently linked in research to higher levels of self-regulation. An authoritative teacher sets reasonable limits and guidelines for behavior and communicates the guidelines clearly to children. The teacher supports children in learning and accepting guidelines.
  - ***Model self-regulation.*** Research has demonstrated that children learn many things by observing others. Children often emulate their teachers or other adults who are important in their lives. It is essential, then, for teachers to model self-control.
  - ***Communicate expectations for self-regulation.*** Research demonstrates that children are more self-controlled when teachers clearly communicate that they expect children to exhibit self-control. Providing children guidelines and models is important. For example, if one child responds to another with inappropriate anger the teacher can demonstrate through role modeling a more appropriate response.
  - ***Give specific information on how children can control themselves.*** Teachers need to provide scaffolding when children are learning self-regulation skills; (e.g., by engaging children in setting goals, evaluating their own performance, and celebrating their successes).
  - ***Acknowledge and encourage children's efforts to act in an age-appropriate self-regulated way.*** For instance, "You all listened carefully to the story," or "Did you give yourself a pat on the back for getting your work completed and handing it in on time?"

Demonstrate knowledge of literacy development, factors that affect the development of reading skills, and indicators that a child may be experiencing difficulties or demonstrating exceptional abilities in reading

- You will be expected to be familiar with the typical progression of young children's language, literacy, and reading development.
- Some questions may ask you to recognize environmental or personal factors that facilitate literacy development.
- Other questions may ask you to identify patterns of development that indicate exceptional reading ability or an area of reading difficulty.
- You may be given a description of a scenario or instructional strategy and then be asked how it is likely to affect a child's literacy development.

Stages of Reading

- ***Pre-reading stage. (Emergent Literacy)*** This stage typically spans children's early years to about age six, or the beginning of formal education (first grade). During this stage, children begin to develop the ability to comprehend and use oral language.
  - Children who live in a literate culture also begin to develop print awareness at this stage. They begin to show an interest in print in the environment and to realize that print carries meaning and represents spoken language.
  - They begin to develop book-handling skills, such as holding a book right-side up and engaging in "pretend reading" by reciting a familiar story while turning the pages of a book. Children whose culture has an alphabetic writing system learn to name some of the letters of the alphabet and/or to recognize their names in print.
  - They also begin to develop some insights into the sound structure of words, such as noticing that some words begin or end with the same sounds (i.e., **alliteration and rhyming**).
  - Near the end of the pre-reading stage, children typically develop the ability to distinguish the individual phonemes in words (**phonemic awareness**) and to grasp the concept that written letters represent the spoken sounds of words (the **alphabetic principle**).

    Young children's early language and literacy experiences vary widely. Effective, developmentally appropriate prekindergarten and kindergarten programs can play a strong role in compensating for some of these differences by providing explicit, systematic instruction in foundational language and literacy skills as children progress through the prereading stage.

Stages of Reading (con't)

- ***Beginning reading stage.*** This stage typically begins when children are in kindergarten or first grade.
  - During this stage, children typically master the ability to recognize the letters of the alphabet and to connect those letters with their corresponding sounds.
  - Children solidify their phonemic awareness skills and knowledge of letter-sound correspondences and begin to apply these skills to reading and spelling words.
  - Near the end of this stage, children typically have mastered basic phonics skills and are beginning to build a sight-word vocabulary and to learn more complex phonics skills, such as decoding more complex letter combinations and morphological units of words.
  - Children are able to decode words in grade-level texts with increasing accuracy and fluency.
- ***Primary stage.*** As children progress to the middle elementary years (second and third grade), literacy learning shifts from reading at the word level to reading more extended text. The purpose for reading begins to shift from simply decoding print to also comprehending the meaning of a print text. By the end of this stage, children should be able to read a range of grade-level texts with fluency and comprehension.

- Early childhood educators should be aware of these developmental trends in children's literacy learning and recognize that children whose emergent literacy skills are significantly behind these trends may be experiencing difficulties in literacy development. During these early stages of reading development, some indicators of possible difficulties in literacy development include:
  - Delayed oral language development
  - Difficulty pronouncing words
  - Limited interest in or awareness of books and environmental print
  - Difficulty recognizing or producing rhyming words
  - Difficulty recognizing the beginning sounds of words
  - Difficulty learning the names of letters or the sounds they represent
- Teachers should also be able to identify children whose literacy development is significantly ahead of typical developmental trends. Signs of exceptional reading ability include early interest in books and reading, along with early abilities to:
  - Recognize and name letters of the alphabet
  - Blend and segment sounds in words
  - Connect letters with their corresponding sounds

Literacy Development

- Young children's literacy development is facilitated when they are surrounded by print and observe others engaging in literacy-related activities. An ideal environment for literacy growth includes direct, explicit literacy instruction as well as parent- and teacher-modeling of reading and writing, ready access to books and writing materials, and plentiful environmental print. This literacy-rich environment fosters children's interest in reading and promotes their lifelong appreciation for the value and pleasure of reading.
- Teachers can support literacy development by providing children with engaging, meaningful literacy experiences throughout the school day. Some specific strategies include:
  - ***Creating a print-rich classroom environment.*** Teachers can include a variety of authentic print materials, such as signs, lists, and menus, in classroom learning centers. Teachers can fill the classroom walls with and draw students' attention to environmental print in the form of word walls, predictable charts, and engaging posters and displays.
  - ***Conducting daily read-alouds of age-appropriate, high-interest reading materials.*** Teachers can read storybooks and nonfiction articles from children's magazines to the whole class and with small groups. Effective read-alouds should be interactive, prompting students to engage with the text's language and content.
  - ***Explicitly modeling appropriate reading and writing behaviors.*** Children can learn a great deal about concepts of print and the value of reading and writing by watching a teacher read aloud a Big Book or write a message and then read it back to the class.
  - ***Encouraging families to provide children with literacy experiences at home.*** It is not necessary for parents/guardians to directly teach children to read or write, but they can foster literacy development by engaging them in conversation about daily activities, telling them stories, reading to them, pointing out features of environmental print in the community, and taking them to libraries and/or bookstores.
  - ***Building a classroom library and providing regular opportunities for students to make use of the materials in the library***

Apply knowledge of the role of phonological and phonemic awareness in early reading development, methods of assessing phonological and phonemic awareness, and strategies for fostering the development of phonological and phonemic awareness:

Phonological Awareness

- Phonological awareness refers to the **understanding that speech is composed of smaller units of sound**.
- As part of research-based instruction in phonological awareness, children receive explicit practice in distinguishing and producing the individual sounds in spoken language.
- Effective, systematic phonological awareness instruction typically follows a sequence from *larger units of sound, such as words, to smaller units of sounds, such as syllables, onsets and rimes, and eventually phonemes.*
- Early childhood educators can promote children's phonological awareness by providing them with direct instruction in such skills as:
  - segmenting sentences into words (i.e., detecting word boundaries),
  - segmenting words into syllables,
  - identifying the onset and rime of a word, and
  - recognizing rhyming words (when two words share the same rime).

Phonemic Awareness

- Phonemic awareness is a component of phonological awareness that refers to the **ability to distinguish the separate sounds, or phonemes**, in a spoken word.
- Research has shown that phonemic awareness is an essential element of learning to read an alphabetic language such as English.
- Phonemic awareness, or lack thereof, is a strong predictor of young children's reading success or failure; children with limited or poor phonemic awareness skills tend to have ongoing difficulties with reading.
- Phonemic awareness is an important *prerequisite* for phonics and spelling skills, which in turn facilitate and support reading fluency and comprehension.
- Although phonemic awareness is a prerequisite for phonics skills, phonemic awareness is an oral language ability and should not be confused with knowledge of how sounds are represented in written language.

Table 5.1: Phonemic Manipulation Tasks

Phonemic Manipulation Task	Description	Example
Phoneme isolation	Recognizing the initial, medial, and/or final phoneme in a spoken word.	A teacher asks a student to identify the first sound and last sounds of the word *sat*; the student identifies the first sound as /s/ and the last sound as /t/.
Phoneme blending	Orally combining a series of individual phonemes to form a word.	A teacher pronounces the sounds /s/, /ă/, and /t/; a student produces the word *sat*.
Phoneme segmentations	Orally breaking a word into its individual component phonemes.	A teacher pronounces the word *sat*; a student pronounces each sound (i.e., /s/, /ă/, and /t/) separately. Alternately, the student taps/claps three times, once for each sound.
Phoneme deletion	Orally removing a phoneme from a given word and recognizing the remaining word.	A teacher asks a student to remove the /s/ sound from the word *sat*; the student produces the word *at*.
Phoneme addition	Orally producing a new word by adding a phoneme to a given word.	A teacher asks a student to add the /s/ sound to the beginning of the word *at*; the student produces the word *sat*.

- Findings of the National Reading Panel (2000) indicate that phonemic awareness instruction should be explicit, and that it is most effective when only one or two types of phoneme manipulation are taught at a time and when phonemic awareness instruction is reinforced in conjunction with instruction in letter-sound correspondence. Some classroom activities that foster children's development of phonological and phonemic awareness include
  - ***Engaging children in word play***
  - ***Listening to books, singing songs, or reciting poems and chants that contain alliteration and/or rhyming words***
  - ***Clapping or tapping the syllables or phonemes in words and***
  - ***Using manipulatives to represent the sounds in words***
- A teacher can assess a student's phonological awareness by asking him or her to identify the number of words in a spoken sentence or syllables in a spoken word and/or recognize or produce rhyming words. A teacher can assess a student's phonemic awareness by asking him or her to complete any or all of the phoneme manipulation tasks listed in Table 5.1.

Demonstrate knowledge of concepts about print, ways to assess children's understanding of concepts about print, and strategies and resources for promoting understanding in this area

- Questions on concepts about print will focus on your understanding of **concepts about print and how to promote and assess children's print awareness.**
- Some questions may ask you to identify evidence-based **teaching practices** that promote children's development of concepts about print.
- Other questions may ask you to identify **strategies** for assessing students' concepts about print.
- You may be given a description of a scenario or instructional strategy and then be asked how it is likely to affect a child's development of print concepts.

Core Content: Concepts About Print

- Concepts about print, or print awareness, refers to basic knowledge of conventions and characteristics of written language. Most basic print awareness is the recognition that written symbols represent spoken language and that writing conveys meaning. As children grow in their awareness of print concepts, they develop book-handling skills, such as recognizing the front and back of a book, as well as the title and author's name, and turning the pages of a book. They also develop knowledge of the directionality of print, including the ability to track print left-to-right, and conventions of written sentences, such as spacing between words.

  Since young children's prior experiences with print vary widely, early childhood teachers need to provide children with explicit instruction and practice in print awareness skills. Some classroom activities that foster children's development of print awareness include

  - ***Participating in interactive read-alouds of Big Books.*** Teachers can involve students in page turning and pointing to words in the book. Teachers can model tracking the text with a finger while reading aloud and/or can use a paper frame to draw children's attention to individual words in the text.
  - ***Listening to a book read aloud while sitting next to a teacher or on the teacher's lap.*** Facing a book while the teacher models appropriate book-handling and print-tracking skills allows a student to view the book from the same perspective as the reader.
  - ***Pretend-reading.*** A student can be encouraged to use pictures to "read" a familiar book to a friend or stuffed toy while pointing to the text and turning the pages of the book.

Assessing Literacy

- In addition to administering standardized tests that include assessment of students' print awareness, teachers can informally assess these skills in a variety of ways, including
  - ***Asking a child to complete tasks such as identifying the different parts of a book (e.g., front, back, title) and where a reader should start reading***
  - ***Pointing to the words in a book as the teacher reads or as the child pretends to read, and asking the child to point to or explain the purpose of words, capital letters, and punctuation marks***
  - ***Asking a child to start reading a book and then observing the child's behaviors***
  - ***Presenting a child with an unconventional book- or text-related situation (e.g., handing a book to the child upside down) and prompting him or her to identify anything that is wrong***

Demonstrate knowledge of the alphabetic principle and its significance for reading, ways to assess children's understanding of the alphabetic principle, and strategies for promoting skills and understanding in this area

- Questions on the **alphabetic principle** will focus on your understanding of letter-sound correspondence in English and how to promote and assess children's understanding of the alphabetic principle.
- Some questions may require you to be familiar with **typical sequences of skills** in effective instruction in these areas.
- You may be asked to identify evidence-based **teaching practices** that promote children's ability to recognize the connections between letters and their corresponding sounds.
- You may also be asked to identify **strategies** for *assessing* students' understanding of the alphabetic principle and letter-sound correspondence.
- You may be given a description of a scenario or instructional strategy and then be asked how it is likely to affect a child's development of alphabetic understanding.

Alphabetic Principle

- The **alphabetic principle** is the understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds.
- As children learn to recognize and name the letters of the alphabet, they begin to grasp the concept that letters represent spoken sounds and begin to associate letters with their corresponding sounds.
- As children's knowledge of letter-sound correspondence grows, they begin to apply this knowledge to decoding and spelling words.

- Instruction in the alphabetic principle should include explicit, systematic instruction in letter recognition and letter-sound correspondence. There are a number of guidelines teachers should follow when designing instruction in alphabetic knowledge.
- First, since the majority of words in texts are composed of lowercase letters, teachers should teach lowercase letters before uppercase letters. The exception to this is letters that are identical in the upper- and lowercase form (e.g., *s* and *S*), which can be introduced at the same time.
- Second, teachers should teach high-frequency letters before less common letters. For example, the letters *s* and *t* appear much more frequently in print than the letters *q* and *z*. This facilitates children's ability to begin decoding a larger number of words.
- Third, teachers should sequence instruction so that letters that are visually similar (e.g., *b* and *d*) or auditorily similar (e.g., *m* and *n*) are taught separately. This helps children avoid confusing the two letters.
- Fourth, teachers should start by teaching the most common sound for a particular letter. For example, the letter *c* can represent either the /k/ sound, as in *cat*, or the /s/ sound, as in *cent*. Since /k/ is the more common sound for *c*, teachers should present this correspondence first.

Alphabetic Principle

- Some classroom activities that foster children's understanding of the alphabetic principle include
  - ***Singing the alphabet song and listening to alphabet books***
  - ***Engaging in physical activities that promote letter knowledge (e.g., bending their bodies to form the shape of a given letter)***
  - ***Identifying the letters in their own names and other common words***
  - ***Identifying words based on the first sound and letter of a word. For example, a teacher might show children a series of simple words (e.g., fish, man, sun) and then ask them to choose which word is man by recognizing that the letter m corresponds to the initial sound /m/ in man***
  - ***Using manipulatives, such as magnetic letters and alphabet blocks, to form target words***
- In addition to administering standardized tests that include assessment of students' understanding of the alphabetic principle, teachers can informally assess these skills by asking students to perform various tasks that require knowledge of letters and their corresponding sounds, including
  - ***Showing a child a written letter and asking the child to identify the letter's name and/or the associated sound***
  - ***Pronouncing a letter's name/sound and asking a child to point to the letter that corresponds to that sound***
  - ***Analyzing children's early spellings as a source of information about their understanding of the alphabetic principle:***
    - ***Children's invented spelling reveals if and how they represent sounds in writing.***

Demonstrate knowledge of spelling development and its relationship to reading, stages of spelling development, ways to evaluate children's spelling development, and strategies and resources for promoting spelling skills

- You will be expected to be familiar with the typical progression of young children's spelling development.
- Some questions may require you to be familiar with stages of spelling development from pre-communicative spelling through standard or conventional spelling.
- You may be asked to identify evidence-based teaching practices that promote children's spelling development.
- You may also be asked to identify strategies for assessing students' spelling.
- You may be given a description of a scenario or instructional strategy and then be asked how it is likely to affect a child's spelling development.

- Decoding (i.e., the process of sounding out letters, including letter combinations such as digraphs and blends, sequentially to read a word) and encoding (i.e., the process of writing the letters in a word sequentially according to the sequence of sounds in the word) are reciprocal and complementary processes.
- As children develop the ability to apply phonemic awareness skills and alphabetic knowledge to encode words, they are also reinforcing their ability to sound out words when reading (decoding).
- Conversely, as children practice applying their letter-sound correspondence skills to decoding words, they are also reinforcing their ability to spell words in writing (encoding).

- Learning conventional spellings of English words requires that children **first** grasp the concept that letters represent sounds (the alphabetic principle) and that letters and letter combinations are combined in systematic ways to form words.
- Evidence of children's progress toward grasping these concepts can be seen in their spelling patterns. The spelling development of children who receive effective, developmentally appropriate instruction in spelling typically follows predictable stages that tend to mirror their reading development.
- Again, different researchers may assign different names to these stages, but most agree on the general characteristics of the stages, which include:

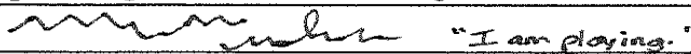
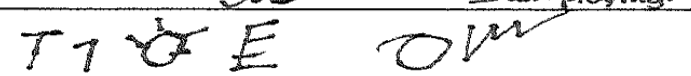
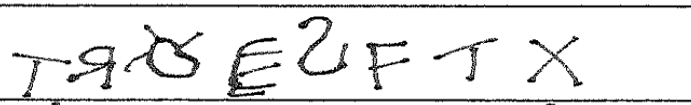
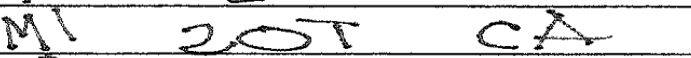
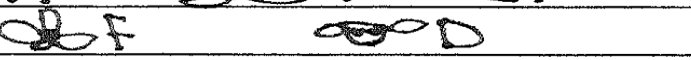
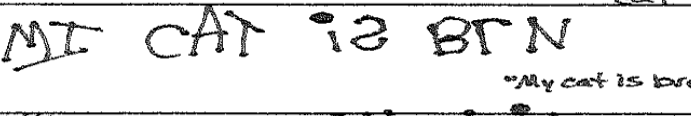
- ***Precommunicative stage*** (typically prekindergarten and kindergarten). Children's scribbles and letter-like marks are intentional, but the marks or letters are random and do not correspond to specific sounds. Children may know how to form some letters, but they may not yet grasp concepts such as letter directionality, distinctions between upper- and lowercase letters, or how to represent word boundaries in writing.

- ***Semiphonetic stage*** (typically middle to end of kindergarten). Children know most letters and show an understanding of the alphabetic principle. They use invented spelling to represent words based on their alphabetic knowledge. In the early part of this stage, they may use a single letter to represent entire words or syllables (e.g., *m* for *me*). During this stage, children often overgeneralize letter names in their spelling. For example, a child might spell the word *why* as *Y* because the name of the letter *y* is pronounced the same as the word *why*. By the end of this stage, children are typically beginning to use short clusters of letters in their writing.

- ***Phonetic stage*** (typically beginning to middle of first grade). Children spell words as they sound, using a letter or letter combination to represent each phoneme in a word. They can accurately spell some single-syllable words with short-vowel sounds that follow a regular CVC pattern (e.g., *sat*) and may use this pattern to represent other words. Their spelling may be unconventional but is systematic and understandable (e.g., *litl* for *little*).

- ***Transitional stage*** (typically middle to end of first grade).Children can correctly spell CVC words that follow a regular short-vowel phonics pattern and they are beginning to demonstrate some accuracy and consistency with the –VCe long-vowel pattern (e.g., *ate*, *like*).

- ***Conventional stage*** (second grade and beyond). Children develop accuracy and consistency applying increasingly complex phonics patterns in their writing. Their spelling knowledge advances hand-in-hand with their decoding knowledge as they learn new phonics patterns, syllabication skills, structural analysis skills, and common orthographic guidelines (e.g., doubling the final consonant of CVC words or dropping the final *e* of CVCe words when adding an ending that begins with a vowel;
thus, *sit* + *ing* becomes *sitting* and *like* + *ed* becomes *liked*). Children also learn the spellings of irregular, grade-level, high-frequency words introduced in the reading curriculum.

	Stage Description			Evidence
Pre-Literate	***Scribble Stage***	Starting point any place on page. Resembles drawing large circular strokes and random marks that do not resemble print or communicate a message		✓
	Symbolic Stage	Starting point any place on page, pictures or random strokes/marks with an intended message	 "I am happy"	✓
	Directional Scribble	Scribble left to right direction, linear, intended as writing that communicates meaningful message/idea	 "I am playing."	✓
	Symbolic/Mock Letters	Letter-like formations, may resemble letters but it isn't representational, interspersed with/numbers, spacing rarely present.		✓
Emergent	***Strings of Letters***	Long strings of various letters in random order, may go left to right, uses letter sequence perhaps from name, usually uses capital letters, may write same letter in many ways.		✓
	Groups of letters	Groupings of letters with spaces in between to resemble words		✓
	Labeling pictures	Matching beginning sounds with the letter to label a picture		✓
	Environmental Print	Copies letters/words from environmental/classroom print, reversals common, uses a variety of resources to facilitate writing		
Transitional	***Letter/word representation***	Uses first letter sound of word to represent entire word, uses letter-sound relationship	 "I went home"	
	First/Last Letter Representation	Word represented by first and last letter sound	 "cat"	
	Medial Letter Sound	Words spelled phonetically, attempts medial vowels, uses some known words, more conventionally spelled words, one letter may represent one syllable, attempts to use word spacing. Writing is readable.	 "My cat is brown."	
Fluent	***Beginning Phrase Writing***	Using all of the above skills to construct phrases that convey as message connected to their illustration		
	Sentence Writing	Construction of words into sentence formations, maybe multiple sentences, writing is readable, may use punctuation, known words spelled correctly, topic focused		
	Six Traits of Writing	Students use the Six Traits of Writing: Conventions, organization, voice, ideas, word choice and sentence fluency		

- Early childhood teachers can promote children's spelling development by providing explicit instruction in regular spelling/phonics patterns and in the spelling of high-frequency words that do not follow conventional phonics rules.
- They should also explicitly teach the spellings of common morphological parts of words, such as common suffixes (e.g., *–ed*, *–er*), as well as orthographic guidelines related to the addition of these suffixes.
- When they are selecting words to include in spelling instruction, teachers should emphasize spelling patterns that correspond with phonics patterns and other decoding skills that are being taught (e.g., syllabication, structural analysis).
- Teachers should also select words from grade-level, high-frequency word lists. Other words that may be targeted are words children frequently misspell in their writing and/or key words from texts used in reading instruction.

Spelling

- Some classroom activities that foster children's spelling development include
  - ***Writing in journals using invented spelling.*** Teachers of young children can encourage them to do their best to write words the way they sound.
  - ***Building words using manipulatives such as letter cards, magnetic letters, or letter tiles.*** For example, children can use onset and rime cards to build words that belong to a particular word family (e.g., *at*, *bat*, *hat*, *cat*, *mat*). New spelling/phonics patterns should be practiced once they are taught.
  - ***Sorting words based on spelling patterns*** (e.g., discriminating between CVC and CVCe words such as *hop* and *hope*)
  - ***Making analogies to known words.*** For example, a teacher could prompt a student to think about the spelling of the known word *see* when trying to spell the new word *bee*.
- In addition to administering standardized tests that include assessment of students' spelling skills, teachers can informally assess these skills by asking students to perform various spelling tasks. For example, a teacher can use a traditional approach and ask students to write words or sentences that the teacher dictates. A teacher can give students a word list or written text that contains spelling errors and ask them to identify and correct the errors. A teacher can also analyze samples of a student's writing to evaluate his or her spelling skills.

Apply knowledge of approaches for integrating literacy with other areas of the curriculum and with everyday activities

- You will be expected to be familiar with the early childhood education curriculum and strategies for incorporating literacy development into content-area and fine-arts instruction for young children.
- You may be asked to identify instructional strategies for integrating literacy into the daily routine of an early childhood classroom.
- You may be given a description of an instructional activity or strategy used in a content-area lesson and then be asked how it benefits children's literacy development.

- Just as literacy plays an integral role in daily life in the United States, literacy instruction should play an integral role in the early childhood education curriculum. Integrating literacy instruction with content-area instruction and with everyday activities of the early childhood classroom makes literacy learning authentic and engaging for children.
- They begin to appreciate the value and usefulness of literacy skills for a variety of meaningful purposes. Their literacy development is enhanced through opportunities to apply reading and writing skills in a range of purposeful contexts.
- Early childhood educators should explore ways to integrate literacy with content-area instruction in the context of thematic units and classroom learning centers. Teachers can include a variety of print materials in mathematics, science, and social studies learning centers. Teachers can use relevant children's literature to introduce or support content-area lessons or design content-area activities related to a favorite piece of children's literature.

- Some strategies for integrating literacy with particular subject areas include:
- ***Fine arts.*** Teachers can use art and music activities to develop young children's emergent literacy skills. Children can reinforce their letter recognition skills by forming letters using various art supplies (e.g., pipe cleaners, clay) and writing instruments (e.g., markers, chalk). Singing songs that contain alliteration and rhyming words promotes children's phonological awareness, and memorizing the alphabet song is a preliminary step to developing alphabetic knowledge.
- ***Science and social studies.*** Teachers can include nonfiction books on science and social studies topics in the classroom library. Teachers can use these books for interactive read-alouds, pointing out various features of the texts to support children's development of print concepts. Teachers can include common science and social studies vocabulary on a classroom word wall and use the words in lessons designed to develop students' alphabetic knowledge and spelling skills.
- ***Mathematics.*** Teachers can use common mathematics-related vocabulary, such as the written words for numbers (e.g., *three*, *ten*) in spelling instruction. Teachers can encourage students to apply their knowledge of letter-sound correspondence and spelling by decoding and/or writing simple mathematics word problems.

Demonstrate knowledge of the rationales and strategies for involving families and other professionals in literacy development

- You may be asked to identify effective ways of keeping families informed about ongoing literacy activities.
- You may be asked to identify effective books, games, and activities families can do at home to foster literacy.
- Questions may also ask you to identify ways in which early literacy workshops for parents/guardians can support children's development.

Core Content: Involving Families and Other Professionals in Literacy

- A large body of evidence supports the practice of involving families and community members in children's education, particularly literacy development. Research clearly points to the positive correlation between family involvement and children's school achievement.
- Additionally, research has shown that families' beliefs and attitudes toward literacy and reading have a significant influence on children's literacy development.
- It is vitally important for early childhood teachers to find ways to establish respectful partnerships with families and to solicit family help and support in developing children's literacy skills. It is also valuable to explore ways to involve members of the community in supporting children's literacy development.

- Some strategies for involving families and other professionals in literacy development include
- ***Keeping families informed about current literacy instruction and class activities*** through informal conversations and phone calls, regular parent-teacher conferences, class newsletters, and informative bulletin boards and other classroom displays
- ***Providing developmentally appropriate at-home literacy activities and projects for children and family members to complete together.*** For example, a teacher can send home a bag with several books from the same series, on the same theme, or by the same author, along with suggestions for questions to discuss while reading the books. When designing such activities, teachers should be respectful of a family's personal circumstances and be sensitive to a family's cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- ***Setting up a lending library or exchange program for books and literacy-related games and activities***
- ***Inviting family members or community members to participate in classroom activities as volunteers, chaperones, or guest speakers***
- ***Offering literacy workshops and resources for families on topics such as typical milestones in literacy development and best practices in reading to children.*** These types of workshops are most effective when they are interactive, responsive to participants' interests and needs, and targeted to a specific topic.

Demonstrate knowledge of phonics and its role in decoding, ways to assess children's phonics skills, and strategies for promoting the development of phonics skills

- This competency requires you to understand the correspondence between written letters and speech sounds and the importance of providing children with phonics instruction that is explicit and systematic. "Systematic" means that phonics instruction should be sequenced according to the increasing complexity of linguistic units.
- Questions on phonics will focus on your understanding of strategies for teaching young children to use their knowledge of letter-sound relationships and their phonemic-blending skills to decode simple words.
- You may be asked to identify the best sequence of steps in an instructional activity or an appropriate assessment strategy.

- Phonics refers to the relationship between phonemes (i.e., sounds in words) and graphemes (i.e., the letters that represent those sounds). English is an alphabetic language, which means that the English writing system is based on the representation of speech sounds by letters and combinations of letters.
- Phonics instruction helps children develop and apply understanding of the alphabetic principle—that is, the understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and speech sounds.
- Phonics instruction provides students with strategies for decoding unknown words in reading and encoding (i.e., spelling) words in writing.
- **The National Reading Panel** has concluded that phonics is best taught systematically and explicitly.

- An effective phonics program begins by teaching students to decode words that follow simple phonics patterns (i.e., VC and CVC [C=consonant; V=vowel]) such as in the words *am* and *mop*, and then progresses incrementally to more complex word patterns (e.g., CVCC, CCVC, CVVC, CVCe) such as in the words *bend*, *spot*, *boat*, and*like*.
- To facilitate students' reading of connected text (e.g., sentences, passages, leveled books), effective phonics programs also introduce students to selected sight words (i.e., high-frequency words that are irregular or contain phonics elements that have not yet been introduced) and common inflected endings (e.g., *-s*, *-ed*, *-ing*), including how to recognize and spell these endings in words that follow different phonics patterns (e.g., CVC, CVCe).

- Finally, as readers progress through the primary grades, they are taught how to decode words containing more advanced or complex phonics patterns (e.g., CCVCCC, CCVVCC , CCCVCe) such as in the words *branch*, *speech*, and *strike*.
- In the context of learning these complex word patterns, students should also be taught to read certain phonics elements (e.g., blends, digraphs, -VCe syllables) as chunks.
- Syllabication is an important strategy for decoding many multisyllable words.
- However, it is important to note here that phonics knowledge and skills provide the essential foundation for children's later development of syllabication.

When planning phonics instruction, early childhood educators should:

- ***Play games and sing songs that encourage understanding of the alphabetic principle***
- ***Provide explicit instruction in each new phonics element and its utility for reading and writing.***
  - For example, a teacher working with beginning readers (e.g., kindergartners) should present letter-sound correspondences explicitly (e.g., "Here is the letter *m*. An *m* makes the sound /mmm/. Listen. /mmm/. Please make the /m/ sound with me. /mmm/. Now, let's think of some words that begin with the letter *m*.").
  - As soon as children have mastered some letter-sound correspondences, they can begin to blend the sounds of letters to decode simple words (e.g., *man*, *mat*). Gradually and systematically, children can be taught more complex letter-sound relationships (phonics elements) such as consonant digraphs, consonant blends, and *r*-controlled vowels, as well as special letter combinations (phonics patterns) such as the long vowel and silent *e* found in CVCe words.
- ***Model how phonics skills are used in reading, emphasizing the sequential blending of letter-sounds in written words.***
  - Once a few letter-sound correspondences have been taught, an early childhood teacher should explicitly teach students how to sound out simple printed words that contain those letters. The teacher should also begin reinforcing this instruction by regularly modeling the skill during daily class reading-related activities. For example, after teaching students the letter-sound correspondences for *a*, *m*, *t*, *s*, and *i*, a kindergarten teacher can guide students in sounding out many decodable words (e.g., *at*, *it*, *sat*,*sit*, *mat*, *Sam*, *Tim*) encountered during teacher read-alouds.
  - Before reading a Big Book that contains the word *sat*, for example, the teacher can point to *sat* in the text, and say, "Here's a word in this story that we can all read together. Let's practice sounding it out." The teacher should point to each letter while blending each sound slowly, "sssaaat." The teacher should then repeat the procedure more quickly, "sat." Finally, as the teacher reads the book aloud, the teacher cues students to sound out *sat* with him/her whenever the teacher encounters it in the story.

- ***Allow opportunities for student practice of the phonics skill in isolation.***
  - To ensure that young children are practicing applying a phonics-based approach to word identification, rather than other strategies such as memorizing a text, teachers may present unfamiliar letter combinations or nonsense words that children cannot recognize. In this situation, teachers should explain to children that the nonsense words are not real words and are being used to practice the skill of "sounding out" letter combinations.
- ***Provide ample opportunities for student application of the phonics skill in context.***
  - Students need to read and write words using the targeted phonics element in the context of connected text (e.g., books, poems, articles). Applying phonics skills in context reinforces the reason why the students are learning these skills—to help them decode and encode words when reading and writing.
  - The early childhood teacher should provide ample opportunities for both guided and independent practice of phonics skills using decodable texts featuring phonics element(s) that have been taught. The teacher should also integrate into instruction meaningful writing activities that provide opportunities for students to practice spelling words that contain recently taught phonics elements.
- ***Provide opportunities for new phonics patterns and phonics elements to become automatic.***
  - Once students have been introduced to a new phonics element or pattern, they should be given multiple opportunities to apply their knowledge in reading and writing, so that their recognition of the pattern or element becomes automatic. Research has shown that the use of decodable texts with beginning readers is highly effective in promoting automaticity.

Demonstrate knowledge of word identification strategies other than phonics (e.g., syllabication, morphology, context cues), ways to assess children's use of word identification strategies, and strategies for promoting word identification skills

Core Concepts:

- Beginning reading instruction focuses on teaching emergent readers to decode single-syllable words containing increasingly complex phonics elements and patterns (e.g., *at, nap, sent, kite, cheap, splash, stretch*).
- After children become proficient at decoding a wide range of single-syllable words, they may still have difficulty decoding low-frequency phonics patterns and multisyllable words such as *napkin, moment, or ribbon*—words that they must break into *orthographic chunks* (word parts) in order to decode using skills they have already mastered.
- For some developing readers, this can be an effortless, intuitive process; for others, longer words can be intimidating. Because accurate, rapid word recognition plays a critical role in reading fluency and text comprehension, children should be provided with explicit instruction in strategies for decoding increasingly complex, multisyllable words.

Syllabication

- Dividing words into syllables helps students chunk letters into familiar combinations, which they can recognize as a unit more quickly than they can sound out each letter.
- Direct instruction promotes children's understanding of how a syllable is defined (e.g., must have a vowel) and how their knowledge of phonics patterns can be applied to syllables in multisyllable words.
- Phonological awareness activities (e.g., clapping once for each syllable as the teacher says a multisyllable word) can provide reinforcement in detecting syllable boundaries (i.e., syllable segmentation).
- Additional direct instruction is needed for children to understand the syllabication rules for their language (e.g., divide between two consonants but keep consonant clusters together). These rules can be taught out of context and then embedded and practiced in meaningful reading and writing activities.

Structural Analysis

- While phonics and syllabication relate to the representation of phonemes (speech sounds) in text, structural analysis relates to the representation of morphemes (units of meaning).
- In English, words can be made up of one or more morphemes. A simple word is made up of a single morpheme that cannot be broken down into smaller meaningful parts. The words *too*, *yellow*, and *elephant* are all simple morphemes (note that a single morpheme may contain more than one syllable).
- A complex word consists of a root and at least one affix (e.g., *elephants* consists of the morpheme *elephant* plus an inflectional morpheme—the plural marker *-s*).
- A compound word is made up of two or more simple or complex words (e.g., *mailbox*, *mailboxes*).
- Deconstructing a word into its morphological parts can be an effective decoding strategy for many English words. It is also a powerful vocabulary-building strategy.

- ***Analogy to known words.*** Children can sometimes use their knowledge of words and their patterns to decode an unfamiliar word that follows the same pattern. For example, children who know the high-frequency word *make* can apply their knowledge of the phonogram *–ake* to decode *bake* and *take* even before they are introduced to the CVCe pattern. Analogy is particularly helpful for decoding words that contain a relatively high-frequency phonogram (e.g., *–ight*, *-ought*) that uses a complex vowel team.

- ***Attending to context cues.*** Children can sometimes determine a word's identity by paying attention to pictures or other words around the unfamiliar word. However, research strongly suggests that poor readers overrely on context as word identification strategy, so teachers should only introduce this strategy after students have demonstrated mastery of alphabetic-based word identification strategies. Context cues are most effective to use as a strategy for verifying the pronunciation and meaning of multiple-meaning words in a text (e.g., *wind*, *bow*, *present*, *record*).

  Research suggests many children use context spontaneously, without direct instruction. Providing opportunities to read, then, may be the best way to foster development of this strategy. Teachers can also directly teach its use through modeling. First, try to decode the word. If the word contains unfamiliar elements, read the rest of the sentence or phrase, then go back and make an educated guess at the word based on both its context and key alphabetic features (e.g., beginning letter[s]).

- ***Nonsense word lists.*** Nonsense word lists are helpful for assessing students' ability to apply specific phonics and syllabication rules. These assessments involve individual children reading nonsense words on a list and then being rated for their accuracy. (Note: It is important to explain to the children that the words are not actual English words.)

- ***Other inventories and word lists.*** Grade-level inventories or word lists that focus on words that contain specific phonics patterns, syllabication types, or morphemes are helpful in assessing individual students' knowledge of and skills of applying these elements. Having individual children read aloud from these inventories or lists allows teachers to assess students' use of syllabication and/or structural analysis skills. It is important that a list includes some words that cannot be decoded accurately using only phonics to determine pronunciation (e.g., *reentry*).

- ***Cloze tests.*** A cloze test consists of a sentence or passage in which targeted words have been systematically eliminated. The child being tested must supply the missing words (e.g., "Sandy was _____, so she went to the refrigerator to get an apple"). Cloze tests can be used to assess children's use of context cues.

Demonstrate knowledge of the role of sight words in reading, ways to assess children's mastery of common irregular sight words, and strategies for promoting sight word recognition

- You will be required to demonstrate an understanding of how to encourage the automatic recognition of certain words.
- You will be expected to understand the importance of accurate, rapid recognition of specific words for fluency and comprehension of connected text.
- Some questions will require you to identify effective instructional strategies or steps to follow in teaching children to recognize words by sight.

- Children can learn some sight words in the context of meaningful reading. As words become familiar, they are read automatically. Reading and rereading texts provides the exposure that leads to familiarity. With each reading, a child becomes increasingly able to recognize words in the passage until the time that he or she can immediately recognize all the story's words. These words, then, become a part of the child's sight-word vocabulary.

  Word walls and other displays that present words out of context can also help children learn sight words. Teachers need to make sure that children understand the meaning of the words and aren't just recognizing the letter patterns. Pictures can be associated with high-frequency content words, for example.

- Teachers may need to use direct instruction to teach children to recognize certain kinds of words by sight. For example, function words often represent abstract concepts and/or indicate relationships with other words in a sentence. Examples include prepositions such as *on* and *in,* pronouns such as *she* and *they,* auxiliary verbs such as *have, am,* and *are,* and articles such as *the* and *an*. Effective activities for teaching function words include cloze tasks and fill-in-the-blanks and freewriting tasks. For example, teachers can provide a small set of function words and a series of sentences with words missing (e.g., "This is ____ book"). For additional practice, the teacher can ask children to write sentences containing the target words.

  Teachers may also need to provide direct instruction for words containing irregular or advanced letter-sound correspondences (e.g., the pronunciation of the first vowel in *none* is irregular; the vowel team in *right* is advanced). When introducing such words, the teacher should draw attention to the phonically regular portions of the words (e.g., all but the second letter in the word *many*) as well as the irregular portions. Guided and independent practice can include having students practice reading word lists and decodable texts aloud, as well as a host of other activities related to the current sight-word curriculum.

Demonstrate knowledge of the role of fluency in reading comprehension, ways to assess children's reading fluency, and strategies for promoting reading fluency

- You will be required to demonstrate an understanding of the role of fluency in reading, key indicators of fluency, and how to assess and promote fluency.

  Questions on the role of fluency will focus on your understanding of its importance in reading comprehension. Questions will also center on key indicators of fluency (i.e., accuracy, rate, and prosody), strategies for assessing fluency, and methods for promoting fluency.

- Fluent reading is accurate, at a natural pace, and mimics speech in its phrasing and expressiveness. Fluency is only possible if a reader can recognize many words in a text without conscious effort (i.e., automatically) and can apply word analysis skills to unfamiliar words accurately and efficiently. Automaticity and strong decoding skills allow the reader to focus attention on the meaning of a reading passage, which is key to reading with appropriate phrasing, expression, and comprehension.

Figure 6.1: Developmental Continuum of Oral Reading Fluency

PreK	K	1	2	3	4
Four-year-olds begin to develop an understanding of fluency—accuracy, speed, and prosody—as they listen to teachers read aloud.	Children participate in fluent reading as they join in to recite refrains while teachers read aloud big books and charts.	Children learn to recognize many high-frequency words and decode others; they reach a reading speed of 50 words per minute.	Children's oral reading becomes more accurate, rapid, and expressive; their reading speed reaches 80 wpm by the end of the year.	Most third graders reach the fluency milestone where they can accurately and expressively read aloud 100 words per minute.	Fluent fourth graders can read most books successfully, but dysfluent readers struggle with grade-level reading materials.

- Accurate, rapid, and effortless word identification at the single word level (i.e., automaticity) is a prerequisite for fluent reading. To promote students' automatic word recognition and proficiency in decoding, teachers should monitor students' acquisition of these skills until accuracy is achieved and then provide students with practice applying the skills well beyond the point of accuracy.

  Fluency also entails reading in phrase-length chunks and reading with expression, or prosodic reading. Prosodic reading relies on the reader's active engagement in comprehending a text and his or her knowledge of print conventions that signal phrasing in a written text. The prosody of fluent reading is similar to that of a person's oral speech—reading aloud sounds as effortless as talking.

- Because fluent readers need not make a conscious effort to decode every word, they can direct their attention to the meaning of the text. Less fluent readers, however, read either at a reasonable rate but inaccurately or very slowly and with limited comprehension. They may be devoting attention to the meaning of the text at the expense of attending sufficiently to the printed words; or they may read slowly and laboriously, focusing their attention on decoding the words accurately but with insufficient cognitive resources left for constructing meaningful phrases or attending to the overall meaning of the text. Some less fluent readers can recognize words automatically but nevertheless have not learned specific prosodic reading skills—they may ignore periods or other punctuation marks, read in a monotone, or place equal emphasis on every word.

- Important components of effective fluency instruction include:
- ***Modeling fluent reading.*** Teachers can model fluent reading when reading aloud. Family members or other students who are skilled readers can also serve as good models.
- ***Providing explicit instruction in fluency.*** Teachers can read aloud a Big Book or another shared text and think aloud about prosodic aspects of the reading performance (e.g., interpreting punctuation in the printed text, reading phrases in chunks, using emphasis to express meaning). They should stress that reading at a conversational rate and with good phrasing, intonation, and expression supports reading comprehension. Students can also benefit from listening to and then rereading along with recordings of stories while following along in the printed text.
- ***Providing differentiated instruction to address children's weaknesses in key components of fluency.*** Children who have assessed needs in core decoding skills (e.g., phonics, sight words, syllabication, structural analysis) will require explicit differentiated instruction and/or targeted interventions to promote their mastery of these skills. Accurate, rapid word identification is prerequisite for the development of reading fluency, and fluency is foundational to reading comprehension.

- ***Providing children with opportunities to develop automaticity.*** A great deal of practice helps young children develop automaticity.

  - **Readers at beginning stages of reading development**

    - ***Reading multiple decodable texts.*** Beginning readers develop automaticity best when they are given ample opportunity to practice reading texts containing phonics patterns and sight words that have already been taught. Reading the words in multiple contexts ensures that students are practicing the decoding skills they have learned and are not just memorizing a given text. It also builds their automatic recognition of the words. In addition, reading a wide range of decodable texts provides positive reading experiences for beginning readers, which helps build their self-confidence as readers and promotes their enthusiasm for reading. Until children develop automaticity in decoding, fluency practice should be oral to ensure children are developing accurate reading.

  - **Readers at more advanced stages of reading development**

    - ***Reading multiple texts written at their independent reading level and (if supported instructionally) at their instructional reading level.*** To build children's automaticity with more complex words, teachers can begin transitioning individual children to more challenging texts once a child has developed automaticity in basic decoding skills and sight words. Fluency practice at this stage can also transition from oral reading to silent reading; however, teachers must continue to hold students accountable for comprehension of the texts they have read. If assigning texts for fluency practice that are written at students' instructional reading level, the teacher needs to ensure that the practice will be effective by engaging them in appropriate prereading activities to support fluent reading (e.g., preteaching new vocabulary, providing explicit instruction in new sentence structures, activating prior knowledge related to the topic).

- ***Providing children with opportunities to practice reading using scaffolded fluency activities.*** A variety of guided oral reading techniques can provide assistance to children in developing fluency, especially prosodic reading.

    - **Choral reading.** All students, directed by the teacher or another skilled reader, read aloud together.
    - **Echo reading.** The teacher or another skilled reader reads aloud a text sentence by sentence or line by line (in poetry) using appropriate rate, phrasing, and intonation, and students chorally imitate his or her performance.
    - **Repeated reading.** Students read aloud a passage up to four times. After each reading, the teacher or a skilled partner offers suggestions of areas for improvement (e.g., accuracy, rate, rhythm, intonation, phrasing). Note: Research has shown repeated reading to be very effective in building reading fluency and comprehension with respect to the text being read, but it does not promote automaticity. For effective strategies for building automaticity, see above.
    - **Paired reading.** One student reads a text silently and then reads it aloud to a partner. The listener offers constructive feedback, and the reader reads the text a second time.
    - **Buddy reading.** An upper-grade student or a more proficient reader takes turns reading aloud with a less skilled reader or listening to the less skilled reader read aloud and then offering constructive feedback and discussing what is happening in the text.
    - **Reader's theatre.** Students read a script from appropriate-level children's literature. Emphasis is on preparing to read with prosody in a dramatic performance of the text. Repeated practice in rehearsals helps children build fluency with respect to the text in the context of a purposeful, authentic task.

- Early childhood teachers can use the three key indicators of fluency to help them select appropriate assessment strategies and monitor students' progress in fluency development.***Accuracy*:** Assessing a child's ability to identify words in a text correctly. For example, a teacher asks an individual student to read a short passage aloud and counts the child's reading errors (e.g., words mispronounced or omitted, repetitions, substitutions). The passage should be long enough that even fast readers will not finish it in a set time (e.g., one minute). At the end of the set time, the student should stop reading. The child's accuracy is calculated as a percentage (i.e., ratio of correct words to total words). Teachers can also use standardized lists of high-frequency words (e.g., the Dolch list of sight words) to test for reading accuracy.
- ***Rate*:** Assessing a child's ability to read at a rate appropriate for comprehension. Rate, like accuracy, can be assessed by counting the words children read aloud during a set time. Older children can record their rate as they read silently by circling the word they are reading when time is called. Table 6.4 shows typical oral reading rates for grade-school children.
- ***Prosody*:** Assessing a child's ability to read in phrases and with expression that both supports and reflects comprehension of the text.

Demonstrate knowledge of the role of vocabulary development in reading, ways to assess children's vocabulary development, and strategies for promoting vocabulary development

Vocabulary

- You will be required to demonstrate an understanding of vocabulary development as a key factor in reading development and of how to promote children's vocabulary development.

  Questions on the role of vocabulary development will focus on whether you understand its importance to reading comprehension and concept development. Questions will also test your knowledge of assessment strategies related to vocabulary development, such as asking children to provide oral definitions or to select synonyms and antonyms for given words. Questions will also test your knowledge of strategies and activities for promoting vocabulary development, such as the presentation of words in multiple contexts and the use of semantic maps, vocabulary notebooks, and dictionaries.

- Because a **child's vocabulary is the best predictor of later reading comprehension, vocabulary development plays a critical role in effective reading programs.** Early childhood educators can use a variety of instructional activities to encourage vocabulary growth. For example, teachers can expand and extend younger children's vocabularies through frequent teacher read-alouds and engaging children in meaningful discussions, field trips, and hands-on activities. Primary-grade children can benefit from these same types of activities in addition to more explicit instruction. Exposure to a wide variety of spoken and printed words and meaningful practice using those words is critical at all ages.

  Research confirms that effective vocabulary instruction in the elementary and upper grades includes both the teaching of specific vocabulary words (word study) and the teaching of strategies that students can use independently to determine and verify the meaning and pronunciation of new words encountered during reading (e.g., structural analysis, contextual analysis).

- Some effective word study strategies include ***Explicit explanation and examples.*** When introducing children to a new vocabulary word, a teacher should not only provide a definition of the word but also extend children's understanding through a variety of strategies (e.g., providing synonyms and/or antonyms of the word, providing examples of how the word could be used in various sentences).
- ***Presentation of words in multiple contexts.*** Children need to hear and use new words in many settings (listening, speaking, reading, writing) to fully integrate the word into their active vocabularies.
- ***Vocabulary notebooks.*** A notebook is a space for a child to record new words. Children may write the word, a definition, or a sentence containing the word, draw a picture, or provide other information that helps the child review and retain the word's meaning.
- ***Semantic maps.*** A semantic map is an illustration, a drawing that encourages children to recall and record related knowledge about a vocabulary word. Semantic maps encourage children to make connections between categories related to the new word. For example, the teacher can choose a word from a book that the children will read or have already read (e.g., *transportation*). Children then brainstorm words related to the new word, such as *car*, *truck*, *bus*, *train*, *airplane*, *rocketship*, *bicycle*, *boat*, *ship*, and *canoe*. Children can then construct the map by categorizing the words (e.g., *on the ground*, *in the air*, *on the water*) and labeling the categories.
-

- Strategies that students can use independently to determine and verify the meaning and pronunciation of new words encountered during reading include***Structural analysis.*** Beginning in the primary grades, children should be explicitly taught the meanings of common English prefixes and derivational suffixes such as *re-*, *un-*, *-ness*, *-ful*, and *-less*. Structural analysis—applying knowledge of roots and affixes by breaking up morphologically complex words into their component parts and analyzing the meanings of those parts—is one of the most powerful vocabulary-building tools children can learn.

- ***Use of reference materials.*** Reference aids, such as a dictionary or a thesaurus, are valuable tools in vocabulary development, especially in later grades. Teachers should provide younger children with explicit instruction and meaningful practice in the use of these resources.

- ***Contextual analysis.*** Sometimes, the meaning of a new word encountered during reading can be deduced by analyzing semantic and syntactic clues in the text. Teachers can model the use of this strategy with younger children. Readers can sometimes also use the pictures in a story to find clues to a word's meaning, but this strategy becomes less and less useful in later grades, so early childhood teachers are advised not to encourage children to become too dependent on this strategy.

- Other direct and indirect methods for teaching vocabulary include ***Teacher read-alouds.*** Early childhood teachers can and should regularly read aloud age-appropriate fiction and nonfiction to children, using texts slightly above the children's current reading level. Read-alouds provide meaningful contexts in which to introduce and reinforce new words. Teachers can explain definitions directly and use the reading and discussions about the text to contextualize the word's meaning.
- ***Independent reading.*** Once children have learned how to read, they should be encouraged to engage in regular independent reading. Research has shown that there is a strong correlation between the amount a student reads daily and the student's academic achievement.
- Strategies for assessing vocabulary include ***Asking children to provide oral definitions.*** For example, a primary-grade teacher might state, "We just heard the word *root*. Tell me what that word means when we are speaking about a plant." A kindergarten teacher, working with a child in the block area might say, "I see you've lined up blocks, placing *short* blocks next to *longer* blocks. Tell me what *short* means."
- ***Asking children to use given words in an appropriate context.*** A teacher might ask a student to use a word in an original sentence, to give examples of the word, and/or to explain how or when to use the word.
- ***Asking children to select synonyms and antonyms for given words.*** Synonyms are two words with the same or very similar meanings. Antonyms are words with opposite or conflicting meanings. For example, a teacher can present a word and ask children directly, "What's another word that means the same thing?" or could have them select synonym or antonym word pairs from a list of words.

Demonstrate knowledge of various comprehension strategies (e.g., previewing, self-monitoring, self-correcting, rereading), factors that affect reading comprehension, ways to assess children's use of comprehension strategies, and strategies and resources for promoting skills in this area

Comprehension

- This competency requires an understanding of how to assess and support construction of meaning from text.
- Questions on reading comprehension strategies will focus on your knowledge of developmentally appropriate instructional strategies.
- You may be asked to identify steps in a sequence of instruction.
- You may also be asked to identify an effective assessment tool for a particular learning objective.

Table 6.6: Comprehension Strategies		
Strategy	**What Readers Do**	**How it Aids Comprehension**
Activating background knowledge	Readers make connections between what they already know and the information in the text.	Readers use their background knowledge to fill in gaps in the text and enhance their comprehension.
Connecting	Readers make text-to-self, text-to-world, and text-to-text links.	Readers personalize their reading by relating what they're reading to their background knowledge.
Determining importance	Readers notice the big ideas in the text and the relationships among them.	Readers focus on the big ideas so they don't become overwhelmed with details.
Drawing inferences	Readers use background knowledge and clues in the text to "read between the lines."	Readers move beyond literal thinking to grasp meaning that isn't explicitly stated in the text.
Evaluating	Readers evaluate both the text itself and their reading experience.	Readers assume responsibility for their own strategy use.
Monitoring	Readers supervise their reading experience, checking that they're understanding the text.	Readers expect the text to make sense, and they recognize when it doesn't so they can take action.
Predicting	Readers make thoughtful "guesses" about what will happen and then read to confirm their predictions.	Readers become more engaged in the reading experience and want to continue reading.
Questioning	Readers ask themselves literal and higher-level questions about the text.	Readers use questions to direct their reading, clarify confusions, and make inferences.
Repairing	Readers identify a problem interfering with comprehension, and then solve it.	Readers solve problems to regain comprehension and continue reading.
Setting a purpose	Readers identify a broad focus to direct their reading through the text.	Readers focus their attention as they read according to the purpose they've set.
Summarizing	Readers paraphrase the big ideas to create a concise statement.	Readers have better recall of the big ideas when they summarize.
Visualizing	Readers create mental images of what they're reading.	Readers use the mental images to make the text more memorable.

Table 6.7: Comprehension Activities	
Activity	**Description**
Dramatizations	Children assume roles as characters and dramatize story events. The teacher narrates the story or reads it aloud as younger children act it out, but with more experience children can add dialogue and tell the story as they dramatize it.
Grand conversations	The teacher and children talk about the story, sharing their ideas and asking questions. Sometimes children draw pictures or write in reading logs and then share their work during the conversation.
Hot seat	One child assumes the role of a character from the story and is interviewed by classmates. Several children can assume the roles of all characters and discuss the story while classmates observe the interactions.
Open-mind portraits	Children use pictures and words to show what a character is thinking at the beginning, middle, and end of a story. They choose characters and then draw a portrait of the character's face and cut it out. They attach additional pages and describe the character's thoughts at pivotal points in the story.
Reading logs	Children write entries and draw pictures about books they're reading. Sometimes teachers provide prompts; at other times, children choose topics they're interested in exploring. They often write about connections, make predictions, draw inferences, construct summaries, and evaluate their reading.
Story boards	Children sequence the illustrations that have been cut from a picture book and use them to retell the story. Children can also use "nonfiction" boards from an informational book to identify the big ideas.
Storytelling	Children retell a story, sometimes using illustrations, props, or puppets to guide them. They also can retell the story from a particular character's viewpoint.
Text sets	Children read related books, including other versions and sequels and books by the same author or on the same topic. They can also examine online resources including author Web sites, interactive storybooks, and games.
Word sorts	Children sort a pack of word cards related to a story according to characters, beginning-middle-end, or other categories. They work with partners or in small groups and talk about the story as they sort the cards.
Writing	Children write books and other compositions about stories they've read. They retell the story, often writing the beginning, middle, and end in chapters. They also craft scripts for reader's theatre, create sequels, and write poems.

Apply knowledge of strategies and resources for promoting children's development and application of skills for communicating through writing (e.g., writing in various formats and for various purposes, applying conventions of standard English, using effective writing processes)

Children's Writing Development

- ***Using pictures and/or scribbles to represent ideas.*** Young children begin drawing and using scribbles to represent ideas around age three; prior to this, they may scribble on paper without the intent to represent something. Children who make intentional drawings or scribbles are usually willing to "read" them to a listener. These early efforts indicate that the child is aware of the relationship between written symbols and meaning, even though he or she does not yet understand the alphabetic principle.
- ***Using letter-like symbols.*** Between the ages of three and four, children typically begin producing intentional marks that have some of the characteristics of letters of the alphabet. Often the marks are written in strings with breaks between them, in imitation of words on a page. By age four, most children recognize that specific, individual symbols are combined when writing.
- ***Copying letters and familiar words.*** Children begin to copy letters and words written by a teacher or seen in the environment before they learn to write letters and words independently. Most children first learn to copy their own names and then to write them from memory. They may also learn to write words for familiar objects or words from favorite books. At this stage, they may not yet recognize that letters correspond to particular sounds.
- ***Invented spelling.*** Children typically begin to develop an awareness of the alphabetic principle and to learn letter-sound correspondences in preschool and kindergarten. Children devise idiosyncratic ways to spell words by matching sounds to known letters. As their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences grow, their spelling continues be unconventional but becomes increasingly understandable.
- ***Conventional spelling.*** By the early grades, children will typically have developed a vocabulary of familiar words that they spell correctly. Standard spelling is usually encouraged in the classroom, although invented spelling may continue to be acceptable in some situations.
- ***Writing sentences and multi-sentence compositions.*** By first grade, many children take the initiative to write and are able to create multisentence compositions. Narrative writing is typically the focus of children's early attempts at composition. By third grade, most children can write fluently on a range of familiar topics. Children also begin around this age to develop the skill of revising their writing.

Effective teachers help children learn to think of writing as a tool for purposeful communication by engaging children in authentic writing activities. Examples include:

- ***Thank-you notes.*** A teacher leads children in writing a class thank-you note on a large sheet of paper to send to a guest speaker (e.g., a firefighter who came to demonstrate fire safety rules). This strategy demonstrates one of the many purposes for writing in everyday life.
- ***Picture labels.*** A teacher asks a child to dictate or write a caption for a picture he or she has drawn. This strategy promotes children's understanding of writing as a means of communicating a message and helps children make the connection between spoken and written language.
- ***Morning message.*** A teacher writes a short, meaningful message each morning on a piece of chart paper, reading the message aloud as he or she writes. This strategy models the composition process and helps children make the connection between spoken and written language.
- ***Language experience story.*** Using the whiteboard, a teacher transcribes the story of a shared experience (e.g., a nature hike) as it is told by the various members of the class, then leads the children in reading their story aloud. This strategy helps children make the connection between spoken and written language. Furthermore, children are able to see how their own spoken words appear in writing. The teacher can also use this strategy to promote children's understanding of the writing process by guiding them in revising and editing the story.
- ***Journal writing.*** Each child writes in his or her own special notebook on topics of personal interest and choice. Typically, children are encouraged to focus on meaning rather than on writing conventions during journal writing. This strategy develops children's ability to use writing for personal expression and promotes their writing fluency.

DONE!