List of Topics Covered in Ed.S. – Early Childhood Education Comprehensive Exam

The exam consists of multiple-choice questions.

Comprehensive Exam Key Concepts

Ed.S. – Early Childhood Education

Literacy, Language, and Reading Instruction

Study Topic	What to Know / Review
Children's Literature & Literary Genres	Characteristics of high-quality children's literature; age-appropriate protagonists, themes, and language; biography and other literary genres.
Language Development & Language Systems	Oral language development; listening and speaking; syntax, semantics, morphology; phonological awareness; promoting language growth through discussion.
Emergent Literacy & Reading Development	Early emergent literacy; beginning phonemic awareness; concepts of print; tracking written words; developmental characteristics of beginning readers.
Word Study, Phonics & Vocabulary	Word sorts; phonics; decoding; word recognition; sight vocabulary; word walls; vocabulary development; pronunciation, structure, and meaning.
Reading Comprehension & Metacognition	Prior knowledge; making connections; constructing meaning; monitoring comprehension; author's point of view; theme; metacognition.
Reading Instructional Strategies	Guided reading; decoding and comprehension support; DLTA; Think-Pair-Share; discussion-based strategies.
Informational Text & Text Features	Informational texts; magazines and trade books; headings, captions, glossaries, and structural/text features.
Writing Development & Conventions	Sentence and paragraph structure; spelling; mechanics; punctuation; written-language conventions.
Literacy Assessment	Ongoing assessment; using results to guide instruction; analytic writing assessment.
Theme & Thematic Instruction	Difference between a topic and a thematic statement; identifying broad conceptual relationships.
Visual & Multimodal Learning	Using visual and verbal information together to support learning and retention.
Multiple Intelligences	Gardner's multiple intelligences and recognizing areas included in the model.
Struggling Learners	Explicit instruction; frequent review; one-on-one support; modeling; choices; appropriate differentiation.

Behavior, Assessment, and Positive Supports

Study Topic	What to Know / Review
Behavior Observation & Data Collection	Direct and indirect observation; variable interval recording; frequency, duration, intensity; selecting measurement strategies.
Functional Behavior Assessment	A-B-C analysis; antecedents, behaviors, consequences; functions of behavior; environmental variables; behavior across settings.
Functions of Behavior	Attention, peer approval, escape/avoidance, rule testing, stimulation, and other reasons for disruptive behavior.
Reinforcement Principles	Positive and negative reinforcement; automatic reinforcement; schedules of reinforcement; intermittent schedules; extinction.
Positive Behavior Support / PBIS	Replacement behaviors; environmental redesign; adult behavior and routines; learning environments; primary prevention.
Rules, Expectations & Classroom Prevention	Positive school-wide expectations; few broad expectations; behavioral, enforceable, positively stated rules.
Praise & Positive Teacher Interactions	Praise relative to reprimands; acknowledging cooperation; teacher movement/proximity; positive greetings.
Environmental Variables & Modifications	Rules, schedules, routines, seating, peer attention, and the role/limits of environmental modifications.
Prompts & Cues	Verbal, tangible, signs, modeling, and other prompting approaches.
Curriculum-Based Measurement	Assessing performance in the curriculum; ongoing academic progress monitoring; instructional adjustment.
Formative Evaluation	Evaluation throughout instruction/intervention; limitations of relying only on pretest-posttest approaches.
Single-Subject Research	Purpose and use of single-subject designs for individual target behaviors.
Behavior Intervention Planning	Reviewing goals and procedures when a behavior intervention plan fails; matching intervention to function.
Maintenance & Generalization	Durability of behavior after intervention withdrawal and transfer across settings.
Intensive Behavioral Needs	Self-injurious behaviors; primary treatment settings; direct intervention.
Social-Emotional Concepts	Anhedonia; anger-management training; identifying antecedents, reactions, and behavioral choices.
IDEA Transition Planning	Postsecondary transition needs and IEP requirements.

Families, Communities, Diversity, and Inclusive Education

Study Topic	What to Know / Review
Family Engagement & Home-School Partnerships	Family literacy; interactive home learning; two-way communication; family feedback; teacher outreach; outcomes of family engagement.
Family Structures & Diversity	Blended, binuclear, extended, multigenerational, kinship-care, single-parent, and two-parent families; changing demographics.
Culturally Responsive Family Engagement	Cultural differences in school involvement; barriers to participation; avoiding assumptions; respecting cultures of origin.
Multilingual & Immigrant Families	Home-language preservation; identity and belonging; language barriers; interpreters/translators.
Funds of Knowledge	Home and community knowledge, productive skills, social skills, and asset-based views of families.
Family Advocacy & Empowerment	Advocacy with legislators; family leadership; empowering low-income families; Head Start.
Community Partnerships & Resources	Reciprocity; local people and organizations; neighborhood resources; school-community collaboration.
Place-Based Learning	Interdisciplinary learning connected to local places, communities, and environments.
Special Education & Inclusion	People-first language; least restrictive environment; general education teacher role; referral and services.
Exceptional Learners	Giftedness and recognition of exceptional strengths and abilities.
Assistive Technology	Technology supports for visual impairments, including large print, talking calculators, and speech output.
Virtual Family Engagement	Supporting family engagement in virtual instruction; access issues; communication about successes and challenges.
Student Rights & Religion	First Amendment considerations and student religious expression in public schools.
Homework & Family Communication	Research on homework and student success; homework forms as opportunities for family feedback.

Educational Research: Foundations, Design, and Data Collection

Study Topic	What to Know / Review
Research Foundations & Terminology	Qualitative versus quantitative research; participants versus subjects; basic research terminology.
Research Paradigms	Positivist and interpretivist paradigms; hypotheses and methodological approaches.
Research Questions & Proposals	Feasible research questions/hypotheses; rationale and aims; methodology; ethics; feasibility; timelines.
Academic Sources & Literature Searches	Selecting appropriate scholarly sources; learning from previous methods, problems, and recommendations.
Literature Reviews	Purpose; critical analysis; thematic organization; logical development of literature.
Research Ethics & Informed Consent	Ethical principles; informed consent; withdrawal rights; data storage; children's participation and agency.
Observation Methods	Event/time sampling; target-child observation; participant observation; quantitative observation; observational studies.
Interviews & Focus Groups	Structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews; focus groups and multiple perspectives.
Questionnaires	Design and limitations, including limited depth of responses.
Action Research Foundations	Improving practice; collaborative nature; improvement and change.
Ethnographic Research	Observation as a primary research tool in ethnography.
Research With Children	Ethical and developmentally appropriate methods; children's voice and agency.
Drawings & Play as Research Tools	Using drawings as discussion prompts; avoiding adult overinterpretation; using play to understand children's thinking.
Research Journals & Reflexivity	Documenting researcher thoughts and feelings during the research process.

Educational Research: Data Analysis, Action Research, and Reporting

Study Topic	What to Know / Review
Preparing Data for Analysis	Reference codes; organizing and labeling data; transcription; ensuring access to all collected data.
Qualitative Data Analysis	Summarizing/describing findings; coding; identifying themes and patterns; interpretation; theoretical saturation.
Quantitative Data Analysis	Transforming raw data into numerical form; coding and organizing quantitative data.
Descriptive Statistics	Percentages; mean/average; mode.
Coding & Reliability	Applying codes consistently and understanding the effect on reliability.
Content Analysis	Qualitative and quantitative analysis of document/content data.
Interpretivist Analysis	Using patterns to develop deeper understanding of why things happen.
Action Research	Improvement and change; action research spiral; praxis; theory-practice relationship; qualitative/quantitative tools; limitations.
Literature Search & Review	Using previous research to frame the study and understand methods; purpose of the literature review.
Methodology & Methods Reporting	Describing how the study was carried out, participants, selection, methods, ethics, and scholarly support.
Results & Discussion	Organizing findings logically; narrative/sequential presentation; relating findings to prior research and methodology.
Introduction & Conclusion	Rationale in the introduction; revisiting research question, aims, and major findings in the conclusion.
References & Scholarly Writing	Including cited materials in the reference list and organizing them alphabetically.
Generalizability & Limitations	Localized findings and limits on generalizing action research.