



## DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

### **Study Guide** Teacher Aide Written Examination

- This booklet contains SAMPLE QUESTIONS ONLY. Studying this booklet will not necessarily improve your exam score.

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## **PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF THIS STUDY GUIDE**

This guide was developed to help you prepare to take the written exam for Teacher Aide. It contains general exam-taking advice and also provides specific information related to the exam content. This information includes the subject areas covered by the exam, the kinds of questions to expect, strategies for approaching the questions, and sample questions. Though this information cannot guarantee a higher exam score, it can give you direction for your exam preparation that will assist you in doing your best.

## **PREPARING TO TAKE THE EXAM**

### **Before the Day of the Exam**

- Review this guide to get familiar with the content of the exam. Knowing about the topics and kinds of questions that will be in the exam will ensure that you will not be surprised by the content of the exam or the manner in which it is presented. This can improve your ability to demonstrate your job potential.
- Make sure that you know where the exam will be administered and all of the relevant details, such as where to park, where to report for the exam, and what identification is required.

### **On the Day of the Exam**

- Make sure that you are well rested and have eaten. These things will help your concentration during the exam.
- Plan your day to allow plenty of time to get yourself prepared and get to the exam site. Allow enough time to cope with weather, traffic, parking, etc. Hurrying creates anxiety, so do not put yourself in the position of having to hurry.
- Listen carefully to all instructions from the exam administrator. Make sure that you understand the instructions and carry them out correctly. Ask questions at the proper time before the exam begins if you are unsure of any aspect of what you should do during the exam.

## GENERAL EXAM TAKING TIPS

- Use your time carefully. The time limit should provide you with more than enough time if you move through the exam steadily and do not spend too much time on any one question.
- Read the questions and answer choices carefully. Read all of the answer choices before you select an answer.
- If you come to a question that is especially difficult, skip that question and come back to it later if you have time.
- Answer every question. Scores are based on the number of correct answers. You will receive no credit if you leave an answer space blank. It is to your advantage to use your best judgment to make a choice among the answer choices provided.

## THE TEACHER AIDE WRITTEN EXAM

The written exam for Teacher Aide is based upon a job study that identified the most important knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform the job successfully. These areas include:

- your skill in reading, interpreting, and applying written information.
- your knowledge of techniques and concepts that promote effective interaction with others.
- your knowledge of concepts related to working with preschool aged children.

All of the exam questions are presented in a multiple-choice format. Each question is identified by a question number that is followed by a question statement. After the question statement, there are between two and four answer choices. You should read all of the answer choices and then choose the best answer. **Each question has only one correct answer.**

## EXAM SECTION 1: READING WITH UNDERSTANDING

This exam section contains twenty (20) questions designed to assess your ability to accurately read and interpret written information. The exam questions will be based on brief reading passages similar to the type of reading that is encountered on the job, such as work-related information and procedures.

A good strategy to use for this type of question is to read through the entire reading passage, then read each of the questions, and finally refer back to the passage as you answer each question. When reading each question, determine what information the question is specifically looking for by giving careful consideration to each of the words used to convey meaning. Does the question ask about a cause or effect? Does it ask you to identify the correct sequence of tasks or an item of greatest importance?

It is important that you select your answer solely based upon the information provided. The exam questions are designed to assess your ability to correctly interpret what is provided, not to assess your knowledge of the subject area addressed by the reading passage. Examples of these types of questions are shown below. Each question is followed by a brief explanation of the correct answer.

Use the reading passage below to answer the three (3) questions that follow.

### **Dialogic Reading**

Dialogic reading is an interactive method of reading to young children that involves talking with them about a book. The objective of this approach is to engage children in a dialog and keep it going while reading in order to give them the opportunity to learn new concepts and words, practice using words, and form longer phrases and sentences. This can help with vocabulary and language development. To begin dialogic reading, you should show the children the book and then point out key words or ideas that will help them get ready for the story. Read the book from beginning to end, using as much expression and gesturing as you can. While reading, have the children play an active part by asking them to make predictions along the way, answer questions, and point to or comment about pictures, letters, or words. Build upon the initial dialog with subsequent readings of the book that give the children an increased role by letting them tell more of the story each time.

1. According to the reading passage, the goal of dialogic reading is to:
  - A. develop verbal skills.
  - B. promote social engagement.
  - C. maintain ongoing conversation.
  - D. attract and maintain attention.

**Answer:** The correct answer to sample question #1 is response choice "C". It is important to note that the question asks about the goal of the method. The second sentence of the paragraph explains that the "objective" is to "engage children in a dialog and keep it going.". In this context, "objective" means a purpose or goal and "engage in dialog and keep it going" means to maintain a conversation.

2. According to the reading passage, if you engage in dialogic reading with a group of young children, the first thing you should do is:
  - A. tell them why they will enjoy the book.
  - B. hold the book up for the children to see.
  - C. ask them if they have heard the story before.
  - D. explain that you will be asking them questions.

**Answer:** The correct answer to sample question #2 is response choice "B". It is important to note that the question asks about the sequence of actions by requiring identification of what should be done first. The first step, or beginning, of the method is described in the fourth sentence which states "To begin dialogic reading, you should show the children the book..."

3. According to the reading passage, books used for dialogic reading with a group of young children should be:
  - A. action oriented.
  - B. paraphrased rather than read word for word.
  - C. read in bits over the course of several sittings.
  - D. reread to the children in other reading sessions.

**Answer:** The correct answer to sample question #3 is response choice "D". For this question, the key information to note is that the question focuses on the books. In reading the passage, there are three sentences that refer to the books. By re-reading these sentences, it becomes evident that response choice "D" is the correct answer because one of these reading passage sentences recommends "subsequent readings" to build upon the dialog from the first reading. The other response choices are incorrect because they either are not mentioned in the reading passage or are in contradiction to the passage.

## EXAM SECTION 2: COMMUNICATION SKILLS

This exam section contains twenty (20) questions that evaluate your knowledge of techniques and concepts that promote effective interaction with others such as how to communicate clearly, effectively persuade or motivate others, and resolve conflict.

Each question will present a situation and ask that you select the most effective response, given the circumstances. In some instances, the questions will relate specifically to communication with preschool aged children. Other questions will be geared towards interactions with adults such as parents and co-workers

For this type of question, it is important to remember to view the question from the perspective of how a government agency would want its employees to respond to its customers and clients in the environment in which the work takes place. Examples of the types of questions in this exam section are shown below. Each question is followed by a brief explanation of the correct answer.

4. If you must talk with a parent about a behavior problem that a child is having, it is usually most helpful to begin the communication by:
  - A. acknowledging that all children make mistakes.
  - B. emphasizing the need for discipline and structure.
  - C. identifying the appropriate behavior expected at this age.
  - D. sharing something positive such as a strength or accomplishment.

**Answer:** The correct answer to sample question #4 is response choice "D". This approach will set a positive tone that should result in the parents being more open to your comments. It shows the parents that you appreciate their child and are attentive to the full range of the child's behavior and not just problems. The other response choices may cause the parents to feel defensive and, as a result, less open to what you have to say.

5. When a parent who needs to take his/her child to a mid-morning doctor's appointment does not follow the proper procedure for removing the child from pre-school, your interaction with this parent will be most effective if your initial approach is based upon the assumption that the parent:
  - A. believes that the procedure is foolish or unnecessary.
  - B. has found a more efficient way of handling the pick-up.
  - C. does not adequately understand the procedure or its purpose.
  - D. does not believe that it is necessary for him/her to follow the procedure because he/she is a parent.

**Answer:** The correct answer to sample question #5 is response choice "C". The helpful approach to a parent who is assumed to be unaware of the procedure will include information about what the procedure is and why it is important to the safety and operation of the pre-school. The other response options assume that the parent is purposefully violating the procedure. The parent who is approached like he/she got caught doing something wrong is likely to become defensive, embarrassed, or hostile. None of these emotions contribute to an effective interaction or understanding.

6. Which of the following is important for helping a pre-school aged child to understand that you care and are listening when they are speaking to you?
- A. Repeat back to them what they have told you.
  - B. Get down to the child's level and make eye contact.
  - C. Interject questions related to what the child is speaking about.
  - D. Pay attention to the child's body language while they are speaking.

**Answer:** The correct answer to sample question #6 is response choice "B". It is important to pre-school aged children to have direct eye contact in order to know that you are truly listening to them. The other response options are more focused on increasing your understanding of what the child is communicating, rather than providing assurances to the child that you are listening.

### **EXAM SECTION 3: WORKING WITH PRESCHOOL CHILDREN**

This exam section contains twenty (20) questions that assess your knowledge of how to work effectively with preschool aged children. Questions are focused on the type and level of knowledge required to work as a Teacher Aide and are, therefore, related to activities in the day-to-day work. This includes topics such as toilet training, child safety, and basic child behavior and development concepts.

Examples of the types of questions in this exam section are shown below. Each question is followed by a brief explanation of the correct answer.

7. At what age should a child begin toilet training?
- A. Twelve months old.
  - B. Eighteen months old.
  - C. Twenty-four months old.
  - D. There is no specified age.

**Answer:** The correct answer to sample question #7 is response choice "D". Every child has a unique experience with toilet training. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children not be pushed at a particular age, but rather, begin training when they demonstrate readiness. The Academy offers resources online that address a range of health and safety issues.

8. When teaching preschool aged children new skills, it is best to handle their failed attempts by:
- A. praising the effort rather than the outcome.
  - B. asking them how they feel about the outcome.
  - C. praising the outcome regardless of its correctness.
  - D. withholding any evaluative comments until they master the skill.

**Answer:** The correct answer to sample question #8 is response choice "A". Children seek and need encouragement, but research has shown that too much praise can lead to fear of failure. Conversely, too little positive feedback may result in frustration and an unwillingness to try. Praising the effort provides the right amount of encouragement without creating unrealistic expectations.

9. How often should mixed-use tables at a pre-school facility be cleaned and sanitized?
- A. Before each use.
  - B. At the end of each day.
  - C. Weekly.
  - D. Bi-weekly.

**Answer:** The correct answer to sample question #9 is response choice "A". It is very important to prevent the spread of illness. Preschool aged children tend to spread germs because they frequently touch their noses and mouths, put things in their mouths, and spend time on the floor. Therefore, it is important to clean and sanitize tables that are used for a variety of uses, such as crafts and meals, before each use in order to ensure that they are germ-free.

### **ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE**

If you feel that you would benefit from more practice, your local library or relevant Internet web sites may have reference materials that can be helpful. This is true for all of the subject areas covered by the Teacher Aide written exam.