

Tennessee Additional Notes to ECERS-R™-August 1, 2018

Overview

The purpose of the Tennessee additional notes is to improve the interrater agreement among scale users and to provide further interpretation of items and indicators to assist with scoring decisions. In order to fulfill the requirements of Tennessee state law, the Tennessee Anchors wrote these additional notes as the first reference for scale clarification and scoring. The notes follow the intent of scale application as defined by Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford and Debby Cryer, authors of the scale. Some of the information used in the additional notes was adapted from the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale®, Revised, and the All About the ECERS-R. The All About the ECERS-R is a resource for use with the Environment Rating Scales®. It is not required for scoring. These resources can be checked out from a CCR&R office, a TECTA office or they can be purchased online.

Be sure to replace older notes with newer notes. Most recent updates are:

August, 2018: Items 1, 8, 10 and 11

August 1, 2017: General Notes and Items 10, 12 and 28

October 17, 2016: General Notes

August 1, 2016: General Notes and Items 3, 12, 22, 23, 29 and 31

August 1, 2015: General Note and Items 2, 3, 5 and 35

General Notes for ECERS-R

Levels of quality

Levels of quality build expectations from inadequate to minimal to good to excellent. In order to meet the intent of indicators in the higher levels of quality, all levels of quality below must be met. Consider not only the requirements of the indicator, but the level of quality documented as general practice throughout the observation.

Accessibility at the minimal level of quality

This note pertains to Items 3, Furnishings for relaxation and comfort-indicators 3.1 and 3.2; 7, Space for gross motor play-indicator 3.1; 8, Gross motor equipment-indicator 3.1; 15, Books and pictures-indicators 3.1 and 5.2; 16, Encouraging children to communicate-indicator 3.2; 19, Fine motor-indicator 3.1; 20, Art-indicator 3.1; 21, Music-indicators 3.1 and 5.1; 22, Blocks- indicator 3.3; 23, Sand water-indicator 5.3; 24, Dramatic play-indicator 3.2; 25, Nature/science-indicator 3.2; 26, Math/number-indicator 3.2; 34, Schedule-indicator 3.3; and 35, Free play-indicators 3.1 and 3.3. **For materials to be counted as accessible to children, they must be able to reach and use the materials for a period of 1 hour a day in a program of 8 hours or more.** The 1 hour can be provided at one time or as a combination of several periods throughout the day. It is required that the majority of children have a reasonable chance to use the materials at some time if they wish. The focus is on program structure and not individual child's schedules. Less time is required for programs operating less than 8 hours a day, with the amount of time calculated proportionally, based on the ratio of 1 hour for programs of 8 hours or more. For example, if a program operated for 6 hours a day, this would be $\frac{3}{4}$ of a full-day program, so the time required would be $\frac{3}{4}$ of the 1 hour. Use this chart to determine the approximate amount of time needed in programs operating less than 8 hours.

Number of hours in operation	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	5 hours	6 hours	7 hours
Approximate minutes required for accessibility	15	25	30	40	45	50

At the 3 level, materials are considered accessible only if it is observed that children freely access and are permitted to use most of the materials. Ex. Some materials may not be accessible during the observation. Additional questions may be needed to gain information on other times of the day.

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Some

The term “some” occurs most frequently in indicators that represent a minimal (3) level of quality, although occasionally it occurs at higher levels. In determining how much is needed to give credit for “some” in an indicator, consider the requirements in the parallel indicators at the lower and next higher level of quality. For example, if under inadequate “no” materials are required, then “some” would mean “one or more”. In cases where a plural is used with the term “some”, then “more than one” would be required to give credit. When terms such as “very few” or “very little” or “rarely” are used under inadequate, then “some” represents a mid-point between what is required for the one and for the five levels.

Accessibility at the good level of quality/Substantial Portion of the Day/Throughout the Day

Research verifies that children learn through prolonged periods of play that give them opportunities to make choices, discover and explore. To support learning and development, schedules should include meaningful time periods when a variety of materials are accessible to children. A significant portion of this time should occur when most children are present so they benefit from experiences with these materials. If accessibility mainly occurs early in the morning or late in the day, it limits children’s opportunities to practice skills, explore interests, and develop social skills while freely interacting with others.

Substantial Portion of the Day

To meet the requirements for “substantial portion of the day”, many and varied materials should be accessible for one third of the hours of operation.

Throughout the Day

At the good level, accessibility should be provided “throughout the day”. In order to meet “throughout the day” materials should be accessible for one third of the time when most (more than 50%) of the children are present.

- For programs that operate six hours or more, this access to materials should take place for a meaningful period in both the morning and in the afternoon.
- For programs that operate less than six hours, this access to materials could take place in one meaningful play period.

Many and varied materials should be accessible during the *majority of the “throughout the day” time frame*. If children have access to additional materials during other play periods (such as outdoors), but not necessarily many and varied, access to those additional materials can count towards “throughout the day” as long as those choices allow for a meaningful play experience.

Ten Minute Allowance

For any program, credit for “substantial portion of the day” and “throughout the day” can be given if the hours vary by ten minutes or less when calculating accessibility.

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Extended care

For programs that have extended care available for all children:

- Use the hours that all children can attend to determine “substantial portion of the day”.
- Use the hours that most (more than 50%) of the children are present to determine “throughout the day”.

If the program restricts the use of extended care for specific children:

- Use only the hours that all children can attend the core program to determine “substantial portion of the day”.
- Use the hours that most (more than 50%) of the children are present during the core program to determine “throughout the day”.

Accessibility and Transitions

When calculating time for play activities (i.e. gross motor time, free play, access to materials), only the times children are actively engaged can be considered. For example, set up times, clean up times, and transition times without access to materials will not count towards meeting accessibility or time requirements.

Display

Display only counts as materials if it encourages active involvement through child manipulation.

Equipment

DHS licensing rules state that the manufacturer’s safety instructions shall be followed for the use and/or installation of all indoor and outdoor equipment and appliances (1240-04-03-.08). For example, crib, bed and futon mattresses should not be used on the floor to create soft areas.

Assessors will not consider mattresses on the floor towards meeting requirements for soft furnishings, and if seen, assessors will notify DHS licensing and the child care agency staff of the violation (effective October 17, 2016).

Gross Motor

The list of acceptable protective surfacing materials does not include mixed surfacing materials since these materials were safety tested individually.

All equipment and/or play structures present in gross motor areas will be considered when assessing playground safety unless a physical barrier (fence, cones, rope, etc.) is present providing a visual reminder to children that an area is not to be used.

In order to ensure variety, portable gross motor materials, such as balls, hula hoops, or jump ropes, may count for no more than three skills. For example; balls can count for throwing, catching and kicking.

Health

Disinfectant and/or anti-bacterial wipes do not count for sanitization purposes. Products that can meet the requirements as sanitizing solutions are: bleach and water solution; or a commercial product that states on the label or manufacturer’s products sheet it kills 99.9% of germs, kills HIV virus, or is an EPA registered product. All commercial products used for sanitizing must be used according to manufacturer’s instruction.

Proper hand washing requires the use of liquid soap and running water.

Adult and child hand washing will be required upon entering the classroom.

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Rotation

When rotation of materials is required, rotation should occur monthly.

Supervision

With regards to supervision, staff must be able to hear the child at all times, must be able to see the child with a quick glance, and must be able to physically respond immediately, leaving no child unattended. Special attention during high risk activities, such as eating, etc. are required to adequately protect children. The ages and developmental level of the children should also be taken into consideration during these activities to determine the level of supervision needed.

Connected indicators and omitted items

The following indicators are connected indicators. When requirements are not met for the first indicator, then requirements are also not met for the second indicator: 5/5.1 & 5.2, 22/3.1 & 3.3, 5.3 & 5.4, **23/3.1 & 3.2**, 24/3.1 & 3.2, 5.1 & 5.2, 25/3.1 & 3.2, 5.1 & 5.2, 26/3.1 & 3.2, 5.1 and 5.2.

Items to be omitted from TN scoring: #38, #39, #40, #41, #42, #43.

Specific Notes for ECERS-R

1. Indoor Space

5.1 This indicator refers to indoor play spaces.

5.2 The window or sky light should be located directly in the classroom where children spend much of their day.

5.3 If the classroom restroom does not meet ADA requirements, an additional restroom that does meet requirements and can be used by other children is sufficient. The restroom should be in close proximity.

7.2 Ventilation control must be in the classroom for credit to be given.

2. Furniture for routine care, play and learning

3.1 Placement of the storage furnishings should allow children to reach them independently. Even if permission is needed to use the furnishing (i.e. the cubbies are in the hallway), if all children have their own provision and can use the furnishing without assistance, this is sufficient at the minimal level.

3. Furnishings for relaxation and comfort

1.1, 3.1, 5.1 and 7.1 Standard bed-sized pillows or larger are considered furnishings. Smaller pillows count as materials. To count as a furnishing, rugs/mats should be large enough to permit at least one child to stretch out and lounge comfortably.

5.1 Both furnishing(s) and materials should be gathered together in the designated space to create a cozy area. The cozy area should provide a substantial amount of softness that allows children using that area to completely escape hard surfaces.

4. Room arrangement for play

1.2, 3.2 If there are two staff members in the room during the observation, but only 1 staff member at other times, this should be considered in scoring the item.

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5. Space for privacy

7.2 This indicator requires more than just having a center limited to a specific number of children. Evidence of staff intentionally setting up special activities for one or two children should be observed. This indicator carries a higher expectation than general monthly rotation; therefore, activities should be changed more than once a month.

6. Child related display

Display should be meaningful for children. To meet the requirements of the display item and indicators as well as the requirements of other agencies, consider the quality of the display. The requirements may be met with fewer thoughtfully chosen pieces that incorporate several meaningful components (ex. one poster may include diversity and current themes, etc.).

7. Space for gross motor play

For a more detailed listing of Playground Safety Hazards, refer to the Tennessee Playground Safety Sheet found at www.tnstarquality.org.

When there are more than 5 minor hazards or if there are 2 serious hazards outdoors, credit cannot not be given at the one level. If there are no serious hazards and no more than 5 minor hazards, credit can be given in the three level. Lack of protective surfacing, equipment spacing, etc. may be considered as major hazards depending on the measurements and whether or not serious injury could result.

1.2, 3.2 Indoor space for gross motor play and equipment is not held to the same standards as outside; however, safety as the primary focus should be insured. Consider the placement of equipment as well as the surface under equipment where children might fall. If indoor children's climbing equipment is used, mats or carpet are required to be placed under the equipment if it is over 12 inches in height. This is in reference to equipment specifically for climbing.

3.1 To give credit, the space must be accessible daily for at least 1 hour in an 8 hour program, prorated appropriately for shorter programs (see chart in general notes).

8. Gross motor equipment

For a more detailed listing of Playground Safety Hazards, refer to the Tennessee Playground Safety Sheet found at www.tnstarquality.org.

When there are more than 5 minor hazards or if there are 2 serious hazards outdoors, credit cannot not be given at the one level. If there are no serious hazards and no more than 5 minor hazards credit can be given in the three level. Lack of protective surfacing, equipment spacing, etc. may be considered as major hazards depending on the measurements and whether or not serious injury could result.

5.1 Stationary equipment that is used by several children at one time and is the only option, means that the children can use it without crowding or long waits.

5.2 This requires daily access to at least 7-9 skills; however, on days with inclement weather there should be at least 3-5 skills.

To stimulate a variety of skills, more than one type of equipment should be accessible on inclement weather days.

7.1 Stationary and portable equipment are required for daily use either inside or outside.

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9. Greeting/departing

5.3, 7.3 If all children are bused, 5.3 should be scored NA; however communication is expected for indicator 7.3. This communication may be verbal or written. A score of NA is not allowed for indicator 7.3.

10. Meals/ snacks

1.2, 3.2 The intent of this indicator is to determine whether the correct components of a meal or snack are being served to children. No analysis of the nutritional value of foods is necessary. Use the Food Guide to determine whether the components are present. The guidelines also require ALL components be served together. Personal dietary preferences of the assessor (e.g., whole grain vs. white breads; fresh vs. canned vegetables, high vs. low sugar or fat content, etc.) are not to be used in determining the quality of foods served.

Foods that are perishable should not be left out longer than 1 hour.

Regardless of source or ages served, 75% of all children must receive meals and snacks that meet USDA guidelines. Educators may supplement if they choose in order to guarantee 75% compliance. Combination foods are foods with multiple components that have been packaged together or combined during the cooking process. Combination foods can be counted to meet up to two different components. Scoring consideration of combination foods should be balanced with other items on the menu. Foods that might be served together, but do not meet the definition of combination foods can count for up to 3 components (i.e. hamburgers, sandwiches, cereal and milk with added fruit). When vegetable garnishes are served in sufficient quantities, they may be considered to meet the requirement as a vegetable. Breading on meat products may not be counted. Cooked dry beans, such as kidney or black beans which are considered to be an excellent source of protein, can count as either a protein or vegetable. However green beans, like string or lima beans which aren't considered to be good sources of protein, should only be counted as a vegetable.

Foods served should be appropriate for the ages and abilities of children.

To meet the requirements of an accurate menu, more than just the food components should be listed. For milk, it is permissible to list “milk” without identifying the specific type of milk. An accurate menu reflecting the specific type of foods served should be posted where it can be easily seen by families.

For Tennessee scoring purposes, consider only foods served on the day of the assessment when determining if meal guidelines are met.

1.3, 3.3 Eating surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized prior to, and following, use for food service. Follow the “2-step” process. Eating surfaces should be: 1) washed with a soap and water mixture to remove gross soil, and 2) sanitized with a bleach-water solution before and after being used for meals/snacks. To allow bleach-water solution to sanitize a surface, it should be allowed to air dry or remain on the surface for at least 10 seconds (best practice is 2 minutes) before rinsing away or wiping dry. For other acceptable sanitizing agents, refer to the general notes of the Tennessee Additional Notes. A fresh paper towel must be used for each step. One paper towel should be used to clean all surfaces and a second clean paper towel should be used to sanitize all surfaces. Cloth towels may be used in place of paper towels. If cloths are used for cleaning or sanitizing food prep surfaces, they may not be re-used for other purpose during the day and should be set aside for laundering.

If foods are served on a paper towel, they must be dry (example, crackers, cheerios, cookies, etc.); otherwise a plate, bowl, or cup should be used.

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If proper sanitary measures are clearly practiced as part of the child care program, but an occasional lapse does occur, requirements would still be met. Occasional lapses for children equates to 75% of the time. Children's hands should be washed before and after eating. To score adult handwashing, the lapse equates to the impact it has or is going to have on the children. In the case where snack time is flexible and children come and go throughout a period of time, the same sanitary conditions are required (i.e., table sanitized between children using same places, children's hands washed, etc.). Recontamination of hands is addressed here.

To allow staff to keep their focus on children while they are eating, a separate wipe may be used on each child's hands as they leave the table. However, all hands must be washed as soon as staffing allows. Hands must be washed with soap and running water at least 75% of the time.

3.5 The list of food allergies and dietary restrictions must be located in the room where children eat. This information does not have to be publicly displayed; however, directions for finding this information must be publicly displayed in the room where children eat.

7.1 One example should be observed for younger children (older two and three year olds) and three examples for older children (four and older).

11. Nap

3.1 Consider whether any child experiences discomfort as a result of being tired and nap is not permitted within a reasonable amount of time.

3.2 Two coverings are required for children over 12 months of age - One to cover the type of bedding used and one for the child to have access to in order to cover up. Bedding should be washed weekly.

Children over the age of 12 months who have been transitioned from a crib, playpen, or port-a-crib shall be provided an individual cot or a 2" mat.

Children should be assigned an individual mat or cot. If they are not assigned, then the provision should be sanitized in between each use.

3.2, 5.3 An alternative to meeting the space requirements is to provide solid barriers. In order to receive credit as a solid barrier, the barriers must run the length of the sleeping provision.

3.2 All sleeping provisions should be 15 inches or more apart and at least 75% of the sleeping provisions must be 18 inches or more apart.

5.3 All sleeping provisions should be 30 inches or more apart and at least 75% of the sleeping provisions must be 36 inches or more apart.

12. Toileting/ diapering

1.1, 3.1 For proper sanitary diaper change procedure, refer to the Tennessee Diapering Process. The Tennessee Diapering Process may be found at www.tnstarquality.org. To allow bleach-water solution to sanitize a surface, it should be allowed to air dry or remain on the surface for at least 10 seconds (best practice is 2 minutes) before rinsing away or wiping dry. For other acceptable sanitizing agents, refer to the general notes of the Tennessee Additional Notes.

If children are not potty training, the expectation is for them to be changed on an acceptable changing surface.

3.1 Sanitary conditions should be maintained at least 75% of the time. Each sanitary procedure should be considered separately.

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1.3, 3.3 If the educator's hands are washed prior to wiping the bleach solution from the diaper changing surface, and the solution has been allowed to sanitize the surface for at least two minutes, then a second hand washing is not required.

3.4 A thorough visual check (both front and back inside of diaper) should occur approximately every two hours.

13. Health Practices

3.1 While combining all categories to determine 75%, priority should be given to handwashing when dealing with bodily fluids (blood and mucous). Consider the impact upon the children.

3.1 Adult and child hand washing will be required upon entering the classroom.

7.2 Evidence of tooth brushing should be observed in order to give credit.

14. Safety Practices

For a more detailed listing of Playground Safety Hazards, refer to the Tennessee Playground Safety Sheet found at www.tnstarquality.org.

When there are more than 5 minor hazards or if there are 2 serious hazards outdoors, credit cannot not be given at the one level. If there are no serious hazards and no more than 5 minor hazards, credit can be given in the three level. Lack of protective surfacing, equipment spacing, etc. may be considered as major hazards depending on the measurements and whether or not serious injury could result.

1.1, 3.1 Indoor space for gross motor play and equipment is not held to the same standards as outside; however, safety as the primary focus should be insured. Consider the placement of equipment as well as the surface under equipment where children might fall. If indoor children's climbing equipment is used, mats or carpet are required to be placed under the equipment if it is over 12 inches in height. This is in reference to equipment specifically for climbing.

15. Books and Pictures

5.1 In order to meet requirements for varying abilities, these should be depicted with people. Animal representations, such as animals with glasses, do not count for diversity.

5.2 Some is defined, as being used daily and that there are at least two materials in addition to books accessible daily.

5.3 Since young children cannot read, the book area should be designed for children to view books by seeing the fronts of the books. If only the spines are showing, credit cannot be given.

5.4 Violence in books and pictures is not appropriate for preschool children because they can't distinguish between fantasy and reality. Score no if 25% or more of books accessible to children show violence that is graphic.

5.5 Informal reading is defined as an educator reading to 1, 2 or a small group of children outside of a structured, organized reading time. Informal reading must be observed at least once to meet requirements for this indicator.

16. Encouraging children to communicate

3.1 Four instances must be observed during the observation during group time and free play.

3.2 There should be enough materials to encourage communication without competition and conflict due to scarcity.

5.2 Required materials should be accessible for a substantial portion of the day.

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7.2 In order to meet requirements for this indicator, some evidence must be observed. Consider the ages and abilities of the children.

18. Informal use of language

3.1 At least two examples of conversation must be observed during the observation.

20. Art

7.2 Art activities related to other classroom experiences should allow children to do art in their own ways, while considering a topic being discussed and experienced in the class.

21. Music/ movement

3.3 Children must be able to do at least one movement activity at least once per week.

5.2 Variety can be considered in songs sung in the classroom in addition to tapes, records, and/or CDs. All words to music that is played, sung, or chanted should be appropriate for children; discount here if it is not.

22. Blocks

3.2 Some means that the space, although not necessarily large, does allow the children to successfully balance, build and create structures in their block play. The space size would allow two children to build successfully without undue interference from one another or from others.

5.1 At least two types of accessories are required for this indicator.

5.2 Centers should be organized to encourage independent use. Interest areas should be well defined and have accessories within the block area, so that the child doesn't have to go to other places in the room to find accessories.

5.4 If two or more block areas are present, all may be considered in calculating accessibility for a substantial part of the day. However, the block area meeting the criteria for a special block area must be the primary source for block play. The other block areas may be outdoors or in another indoor space.

7.3 Some block play available outdoors means that the children have opportunities for more active block play without the space and noise restrictions associated with being indoors. A large number of blocks are not required but there should be enough blocks so children can explore, build and experiment without difficulty. The outdoor blocks should be accessible daily. These blocks should be observed.

23. Sand/water

Since moldable sand cannot be easily poured, it is not an acceptable substitute for sand. Moldable sand is considered a three dimensional art material.

3.1 Provision means that staff have made accessible the equipment and materials needed for children to be able to play in sand and/or water (or an appropriate substitute) in a meaningful way.

3.2 There must be at least two or more toys for children to use with sand or water (or an appropriate substitute) during the sensory activity.

5.1 Provisions should be a regular part of the program. Both should be included at least monthly.

5.2 For Tennessee purposes, variety means a minimum of 3 different types of items accessible for sand and water play.

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5.3 Change the word “available” to “accessible”. To meet requirements, the materials must be accessible daily for at least 1 hour in an 8 hour program, prorated appropriately for shorter programs (see chart in general notes).

7.1 Sand and water provisions must be accessible daily. This requirement could be met with a minimum of two provisions, one inside and one outside. However, more may be needed if the provisions are not appropriate for both types of play.

24. Dramatic play

3.1 There should be enough dramatic play materials for children to be able to carry out meaningful pretend play. “Some” requires enough materials for several children to use at one time. This may vary with the age and ability of the children in the group with more required for older children. Classrooms with more children will require more materials than classrooms with fewer children.

5.1 Opportunities for both boys and girls to fully participate in dress-up should be encouraged; although gender specific clothing is not the only type of dress-up that meets the requirement of this indicator. Examples might include fantasy costumes, community helper uniforms and unisex clothing. Dress-up provides opportunities for both boys and girls to experiment with roles, act out common scenarios and process emotions.

25. Nature/science

3.1 There should be more than one developmentally appropriate (useable for play or exploration) games/materials/activities accessible to children from two of the nature/science categories.

3.1, 5.1 If collections are being considered as one of the categories, unique natural materials (turtle shells, snake skin or bird nests) count as a collection even if only one is accessible. However, more than singular items should be observed.

26. Math/ numbers

5.1 "Many" means approximately 3-5 of each type. However, this can vary, as long as all five types are represented.

5.2 Requirements for 5.1 must be met in order to give credit for 5.2.

27. Use of TV, video and or computers

7.1 Software encouraging creativity must be an option that is used regularly, at least, once a week or more frequently.

28. Promoting acceptance of diversity

3.3 If no prejudice is observed, and the observer sees plenty of evidence that such behavior would be very unlikely, give credit.

5.1 At least three different books, three different pictures, and three different types of materials should be accessible. Types of materials can include items such as puzzles, puppets, fine motor materials, blocks, etc. In order to meet the requirement for 3 different types, materials from three examples should be present (i.e. 1 puzzle, 1 set of puppets and 1 set of lacing cards). Multiple materials of one type (for example 3 puzzles) would not receive credit.

5.1 In order to promote equal opportunity in gender roles, there should be at least one example of a male and a female performing the same work role. This example can be represented in books, pictures, and/or materials. Example: male and female chef or male and female educator.

5.1, 5.2 Required materials should be accessible for a substantial portion of the day. Additional sets of dolls/people figures can be given credit at 5.1 if not credited at 5.2.

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5.2 At least three different examples of diversity are required. Examples include varied foods, clothing, utensils, textiles, skin tones, abilities, varied ages, etc. These examples cannot be represented by just one type of prop (all examples represented by dolls or all examples represented by puppets).

7.1 One example during routines and one example during play must be observed.

7.2 Activities should be provided at least 4 times a year.

29. Supervision of gross motor activities

If gross motor play is not observed during the regular observation period, credit cannot be earned at indicator 3.2. This indicator requires at least two positive instances of gross motor related staff-child interaction be observed. Effective August 1, 2014

5.3, 7.1, 7.3 To give credit, these must be observed at least once.

7.2 This must be observed.

30. General supervision

3.1 Discount if children are not adequately supervised while eating.

31. Discipline

Discipline is defined as teaching children to exercise self-control. Discipline is ideally proactive, and reactive only when needed. The proactive steps taken to teach self-control and prevent misbehavior are part of effective classroom management. One element of classroom management is developmentally appropriate expectations for the children. This means that the expectations should be based upon the children, their ages and abilities, their experiences, and best practice about how children grow and learn. When discipline is reactive, it should be a positive teaching interaction between an adult and child. Lack of observed discipline encounters typically indicates effective classroom management strategies resulting in positive discipline.

3.1 Discount if the educator uses harsh punishment, threatens, or physically disciplines any child.

3.1 Time out is not considered developmentally appropriate for children under the age of three.

7.2 If not observed, the indicator should be scored yes if staff provide examples. These opportunities should occur at least once a week.

33. Interactions among children

3.3 Positive peer interaction must be observed occasionally during the observation.

7.2 If not observed, the indicator should be scored yes if staff provide examples of opportunities for children to work together to complete a task. These opportunities should occur at least once a week.

34. Schedule

3.2 The posted schedule should include times and reflect all hours that children are in care regardless of the caregiving areas used. The written schedule must be posted in the room the children use for the majority of the day.

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35. Free play

3.3 “Some” toys, games and equipment means enough for children to use in free play without undue competition. There must also be enough materials accessible so children can make choices about what to play with. A game has pieces and/or equipment, rules (established or child created), goals, completion, challenge and strategy. Two games are required.

5.1 Time spent outdoors and indoors should be significant enough that children become engaged in meaningful free play. Length of time may vary depending on the ages of the children and their needs.

5.3 Ample and varied toys and equipment, and at least three games are required throughout the day. In order to receive credit, most items in the activity subscale should meet the requirements for many and varied.

36. Group time

3.1 “Some” play activities requires that children are not kept together as a whole group most of the day.

3.2 Opportunities require that children have the chance to participate in one or more self-selected groups at least one time during the day. Requirements are not met if the staff determines the makeup of the small groups.

5.3 If children are required to use the restroom at the same time or wash hands as a whole group before/after meals, look for other opportunities when children may handle routines on an individualized basis. General practice should indicate that individualized routines regularly occur as needed.

37. Provisions for children with disabilities

ECERS-R™ 37, ITERS-R™ 32, FCCERS-R™ 34, and SACERS-Updated™ 42 should be scored NA unless a child with a disability that has been diagnosed through a formal assessment procedure and receives (or is eligible for) early intervention services is enrolled. Across all four scales, the following aspects should be considered when scoring: modifications, parent involvement, inclusion, and use of assessment information. Look for the extent of modifications needed to the schedule or classroom to include the child in daily activities, parent and staff communication regarding the child’s assessment information and ongoing therapy, and the use of assessment information into planning throughout the day. Some parents may not share all information with staff for various reasons. Consider the levels of quality when determining if staff and parents have shared enough information to meet the child’s needs. Even if staff put significant effort into asking about a child’s needs, if parents share no information, the child’s development is compromised.

3.3 Involvement can take place through formal meetings, informal conversations or phone or written communications.

3.4 Involvement means a child with a disability/special need sometimes participates with others in the class, and at other times may not. The child should sometimes (but not necessarily always) participate in play as well as routine care activities.

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