



GA Additional Notes for the ECERS-3

The GA Additional Notes provide supplementary information for the Environment Rating Scales to further define or explain requirements of certain items and indicators to assist in correctly interpreting and scoring items found within the scale.

Participants in Quality Rated should be aware of the following:

- Georgia Additional Notes are not exhaustive. Unless otherwise specified, Quality Rated assessors use all of the following resources when scoring the ECERS-3 scale: the GA Additional Notes for the ECERS-3, the ECERS-3 Additional Notes for Clarification created by the Environment Rating Scales Institute (ERSI) (available at <http://www.ersi.info/index.html>), and the All About ECERS-3 published in 2019.
- The GA Additional Notes are updated (approximately) every 6-12 months and QR assessors conduct assessments using the most current notes. Child care professionals are encouraged to download and use the most current version of the notes from the Quality Rated website.

In April 2012, with permission from Debby Cryer and Thelma Harms, the Additional Notes for Clarification for the ECERS-R, ITERS-R, FCCRS-R, and SACERS were retrieved from the Environment Rating Scale Institute (ERSI) website (<http://www.ersi.info/index.html>) and used for the basis for the GA Additional notes. Since that time, ongoing content of GA Additional Notes has been developed by Quality Rated for intended use in Georgia.

GENERAL GA NOTES FOR THE ECERS-3

Accessible: Children can reach and are allowed to use toys, materials, furnishings, and/or equipment. Toys on open shelves must be within easy reach of the children. No barriers can be present to prevent children from using them. Time counted toward materials being accessible will only be credited when all children have reasonable access and are not compelled to be doing something else. If children are required to participate in teacher-led group activities, these times will not be included in the time count for accessible to other materials, even if these occur as small groups during an otherwise free play or center time schedule. Read the extensive description for *Accessible* in the scale on page 10 and in the ERSI Additional Notes.

Access must occur for 25 minutes within the 3-hour observation period at the 3, 5, and 7 levels when no other time requirement is stated. In many instances, the higher levels (5 and 7) require access for more than 25 minutes and in those cases the time is increased to 1 hour during the 3-hour observation period. All materials required by an indicator must be accessible during the access time required.

Note that if a program uses sedentary materials outside or in indoor gross motor areas, access to these materials will not be included in the time count for accessibility of said materials unless there is time to access them in addition to the minimum time requirements needed for vigorous active play (15 minutes at the 3 level and 30 minutes at the 5 level).

Appropriate: Used in various items to mean safe and suitable for the age and developmental needs of the children in the group being observed. In determining whether the requirements for “appropriate” are being met within the context of a particular indicator, consideration is given to whether the children’s needs for protection, stimulation, and positive relationships are being met in ways that are supportive and meaningful.

Engaged: Children are observed to be interested and paying attention. Although children may be well behaved, look closely to determine whether they are actually engaged in what is going on. Scoring decisions are made based on the children’s level of engagement and whether staff can positively re-engage children if they do lose interest.

Hand sanitizer use: The 2019 edition of Caring for Our Children (page 118) states that hand sanitizers can be used in place of handwashing unless hands are visibly soiled, but handwashing is preferred. However, GA licensing does not allow the use of hand sanitizers in lieu of handwashing; therefore, QR assessors are required to only count handwashing as acceptable when scoring, unless running water is inaccessible, such as on the playground. If hand sanitizer is used during an observation when running water is inaccessible, the product used and how it is used must be considered in scoring. The product must contain 60-95% alcohol, and manufacturer’s instructions must be followed exactly. Very close supervision of children is provided to ensure proper use and to avoid ingestion or contact with eyes and mucous membranes. If the manufacturer’s directions for use are not followed exactly, do not give credit for any time when not followed. If children are not closely supervised when using sanitizer, consider in supervision–related indicators for the item specifically, and in Safety and Supervision. Handwashing or use of a hand sanitizer is required for all ERS observers upon entering the classroom.

Individualized teaching: Does not look like one size fits all. Staff who individualize think about what is best for children and their development, strive to produce real and lasting learning, apply the principles of best practices and child development, and are intentional about everything they do. Individualizing means that staff can enable children to reach goals that are both challenging and achievable and meet their individual needs.

Interest Center: A well-defined play area set up for a particular kind of play may be classified as an interest center. There are 4 aspects to think about when determining if a play area meets the requirement for being an interest center, and all four must be met for the area to be an interest center:

1. Was the area clearly defined for one type of play, with materials for that type of play accessible, and no other types of play occurring in the space?
2. Were the materials organized and stored by type?
3. Was furniture provided when needed so the materials could be used appropriately and comfortably?
4. Was there enough space for the type of play being encouraged and the number of children allowed in the area at one time?

Some/sometimes/somewhat/occasionally: Denotes a presence in the environment, and at least 1 example usually must be observed unless the indicator guidelines require more examples.

Staff: This may include volunteers and other special staff members who work for part of the observation with the children as a whole group or smaller groups. If children go to a special class or have a special teacher come to their room regularly (i.e. weekly), such as the library visit for story

time, going to a computer or art lab, or having a special music teacher or foreign language teacher come into the room etc., all interactions and activities by these teaching staff will be included in scoring decisions. One-time guest visitors, such as a dentist, firefighter, parent reading, etc. who is not a regular part of the program, would not be included in scoring decisions unless their interactions are extremely negative.

Usually/generally/frequently/often: Denotes the regular or prevalent practice in the environment, meaning that things occur for 75% of the time during the 3-hour observation period and are usually accounted for in the higher levels of quality (5 & 7). Specific numbers may be listed for different items and generally includes a variety of materials.

Weather permitting: Children participate in outdoor activities almost every day, unless there is active precipitation or public announcements that advise people to remain indoors due to weather conditions, such as high levels of pollution and extreme cold or heat, that might cause health problems.

Age Specific Indicators: In all items/indicators where a particular age is specified, such as indicators specifically for 4- and 5-year-olds, the following rule applies: If there is only one child enrolled that meets that age requirement, and the child is less than one month older than the age requirement, then the indicator can still be marked NA; however, if the requirements are met, score it Yes. If the child is more than 1 month older than the age requirement, or if there are two or more children who meet the age requirement, the indicator must be scored; NA is not an option.

SPACE AND FURNISHINGS

ITEM 1: Indoor Space

Indicator 3.1 and 5.1: Based on max number of children allowed.

Indicator 3.2: Adequate ventilation must be present to ensure the space does not have lingering odors or stuffy air; ventilation control is not required until Indicator 5.3.

Indicator 5.2: If dark shades or blinds are closed and most natural light is blocked, score No. If frosted glass, light colored paper, or closed light colored shades or blinds are used and enough natural light is coming in that the room appears light even while the blinds/shades are closed, score Yes. For natural lighting to be considered direct natural light, it must be from a window, door, or skylight within the classroom being observed. Natural light from hallways or neighboring classrooms, even if only a half wall separates the two, do not count.

Indicator 5.3: Ventilation methods must impact ventilation for the whole classroom. Ventilation control cannot be limited only to small, confined spaces within the classroom, such as a bathroom. If windows/doors are used for ventilation purposes, screens are required; additionally, bars or other safety barriers are needed to prevent children falling from windows if children could fall from a significant height and be injured, such as if the classroom is located above ground level.

ITEM 2: Furnishings for care, play, and learning

Indicator 1.1: Score Yes when more than one major problem is observed that severely compromises children's care.

Indicator 1.3: Soft furnishings must be available for children to experience during play and learning; soft furnishings used for routines are not considered here.

Indicator 3.1: Enough for number of children present during the observation.

Indicator 3.4: Must be accessible for 25 minutes.

Indicator 5.3 and 7.2: This furniture must be in the indoor classroom. If easel is not set up for use, do not count. Separate sand and water tables count as 1 item; do not count at all if lid stays closed. All housekeeping/dramatic play furniture together=1 item. Plastic woodworking bench is a dramatic play prop; do not count as a separate furniture item. CAN count: specially designed library bookcase, wooden puppet theater, Lego table used only for Legos, special writing hutch with materials, woodworking bench with real wood materials, train table used only for trains, light table with materials (turned on or child-friendly turn-on), specially made listening center, workstation specifically designed for computer use.

Indicator 5.4: Must be accessible for 25 minutes. Most of the child's body should be touching a soft surface when furnishings are in use.

Indicator 7.1: Toilets and sinks are not routine care furniture. Routine care furniture for care, play, and learning includes tables, chairs, shelves, mats/cots, and cubbies. To be convenient, all routine care furniture is located within the classroom and is easily accessible. Only consider the furniture you observe to be physically present during the observation.

ITEM 3: Room arrangement for play and learning

Indicator 3.2 and 5.2: Reading interest center can include a listening center if headphones are used. Do not count the computer as an interest center due to the time limit constraints in Item 27. Math materials may be included in a fine motor interest center if they encourage the use of fine motor skills, and 1 or 2 materials that do not encourage fine motor skills are acceptable if they do not interfere with fine motor play. All required materials listed in the Activities items that require interest centers (books, blocks, dramatic play, nature/science) are not required to credit those areas as interest centers in Item 3. Any interest center that meets the 4 requirements of an interest center, as explained in the General Notes section above and on page 18 in the scale book, will count for Item 3.

Indicators 3.2, 3.4, 5.2, and 5.4: Must be accessible for 25 minutes.

Indicator 5.2: The cozy area can be part of another existing center, such as books, or it can count independently as its own center for this indicator. However, if the cozy area is included as part of another center, such as a book center, that space only counts as one center for this indicator.

Indicator 7.2: If there are no areas requiring special provisions, score No.

Indicator 7.3: Of the interest centers credited in 3.2 and/or 5.2, all must have the amount of space they need for children to play successfully and not be crowded to score Yes. The centers listed in the indicator are examples of centers that often require more space, but this indicator does not require those centers specifically to be available.

ITEM 4: Space for privacy

Indicator 3.1 and 3.2: Refers to informal child-created space for privacy.

Indicator 5.1: Must be accessible for 25 minutes.

Indicator 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 7.2: Refers to teacher-created space for privacy.

Indicator 7.1: Can be any child playing alone, in any situation, not just a child using the designated space for privacy.

ITEM 5: Child-related display

General note: Rugs, wall mirrors, and other furnishings do not count as display. Center signs are not considered for credit in this item, unless they also provide meaningful display information to children, such as large photos of the children or commercial posters showing children playing in the centers. To count as display, items must be displayed from the beginning of the observation; items added during the observation will not be considered. Equipment used to display items for short periods do not count as display, such as a teacher using a felt board to display items in a story or a smart board used during circle time to show the calendar or weather chart. Additionally, for all indicators in this item, except 1.1 and 1.2, consider only displays that are appropriate for the ages of children observed.

Indicator 3.1: “Some appropriate materials” in this indicator means “some age and developmentally appropriate materials.” To give credit here, at least 75% of the displayed materials must be meaningful to the children, photos of children present during the observation must be displayed, and no displays can be inappropriate due to portrayal of violence, frightening images, or negative messaging. Although there is no set number required, more than one display is required due to “materials” (plural) being required. Wall murals that are age and developmentally appropriate can be counted as display; a large, wall-sized mural is enough to give credit here, as it has the impact of multiple displays.

Indicators 5.2 and 7.1: “Related to topics of current interest” means that it should be obvious to the observer that some of the materials displayed are related to a theme, unit, or current topic of study related to what is being discussed on the day of observation. Consider all displays, including children’s artwork.

Indicator 5.4: Cannot be at group time—must be during free play and/or routines. Preparing to go outside is a transition; it is not considered a routine.

ITEM 6: Space for gross motor play

General note: “Major hazards” are 1) likely to result in serious injury to a child, 2) require medical care, and 3) be in popular areas where children frequently encounter them.

Indicators 1.1, 1.3, 3.1, 5.2, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3: Score based on gross motor space observed used during observation.

Indicators 1.2, 3.2, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4: When children do not go outside, score based on gross motor space used during observation and space typically used.

Indicator 3.1: The 15 minutes required here must be observed during the same gross motor time period. The 15 minutes cannot be achieved by adding together multiple gross motor time periods.

Indicator 3.2: Change “no major hazards” to “not many major hazards.” Any major hazards should not be in areas frequently used by children.

Indicator 3.1, 5.1, and 5.2: When weather permits, the space used must be an outdoor space.

Indicator 7.1: To determine hard and soft surfaces, consider the texture children will feel when playing on the surfaces and the type of play allowed by the surfaces observed. To give credit, you need one hard and one soft surface that allow for different types of activities to occur. Grass counts as a soft surface for this indicator.

ITEM 7: Gross motor equipment

General note: Even when an indicator does not mention appropriateness, consider only appropriate equipment.

Indicators 1.1, 1.3, 3.1, 5.3, 5.4, 7.1, and 7.3: Score based on gross motor equipment used and/or accessible during observation.

Indicators 1.2, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 5.2, 7.2: If children do not go outside, score based on gross motor equipment used during observation and observable equipment typically used.

Indicator 1.2: “Most” means 75%.

Indicator 3.1: “Some” means portable OR stationary equipment.

Indicator 3.2: Change “both portable and stationary” to “portable OR stationary.” On the CPSC playground sheet, beneath the Age-appropriate Equipment chart, note the list of equipment that is not appropriate for specific age groups. This equipment is never appropriate and is considered “extremely dangerous” for this indicator.

Indicators 5.1 and 5.2: These indicators both apply to appropriate equipment only; score identically.

Indicator 7.2: Any observed sanitation problems with helmets should be considered in the Health item at Indicator 7.1, not in this indicator. Refer to the Note for Clarification on page 26 of the scale book for additional guidance for helmet use.

PERSONAL CARE ROUTINES

ITEM 8: Meals and snacks

General Note: When a meal or snack is not observed during the 3-hour observation, you do not need to stay to observe the meal/snack. Score indicators 1.2, 3.3, 5.3, and 7.1 based on the other sanitary practices observed during the observation. Score all remaining indicators as unmet since the schedule, interactions, and language did not take place during the 3-hour observation. **If bleach is used for sanitizing tables and food surfaces, it must remain on the surface for at least two minutes before being wiped off, unless the product label specifies a different contact time.**

Indicator 1.1, 3.2, and 5.2: USDA guidelines will be credited only by evidence observed during the observation. Items that are required by the food program to have nutrition labels to determine the adequacy of guidelines met will not be credited. As such, breaded meats, including chicken nuggets and fish sticks, will only be credited for proteins since adequacy of the breading to count towards grain requirements cannot be determined by observation. If a planned snack is observed in addition to a meal, then nutritional component requirements must be met for both. If an extra, unplanned snack is offered to children, nutritional components are not required to be met. Unplanned snacks do not occur daily, and they are typically snacks provided to tie one or more children over until lunch can be served or as part of an occasional learning activity. Food served for celebratory occasions, such as birthday parties or holiday celebrations, is not required to meet the USDA guidelines for meals or snacks.

Indicator 1.1: Can consult posted menu to determine if USDA standards “not usually followed;” if menu not posted, score on what is observed. “Not usually followed” means food served for 50% of children is unacceptable.

Indicator 1.2: If no attempts are made in any category, score Yes.

Indicator 3.2: Credit given if the appropriate food is offered, even if child refuses an item.

Indicators 3.2 and 5.2: For snacks, to help prevent choking, water or another healthy beverage must be offered if two food options are chosen.

Indicator 3.3: If an attempt is made in any of the categories, score Yes.

Indicator 5.1: If children experience flexibility during the 3-hour observation and can easily and independently get water when thirsty without having to request it, then score Yes.

Indicator 5.2: Components can be on table or verbally offered at same time as other components to give credit.

Indicator 5.3: Attempts should be made in all categories when needed, and there should be much effort made to complete procedures correctly. However, perfection is not required to meet the requirements of “usually,” so a few lapses in procedural steps or neglecting the procedures for one or two children are allowable.

Indicator 5.4: One example is required for 3-year-old children. Two examples are required for 4-5-year-old children. Related tasks such as throwing out plates and discarding milk count as one example.

Indicator 5.5: “Some” means at least 2 conversations.

Indicator 7.2: There can be no negative interactions observed.

Indicator 7.3: Give credit for actively teaching proper meal handwashing.

ITEM 9: Toileting/diapering

Indicator 1.2: If no attempts are made in any category, score Yes.

Indicator 3.2: The Assessor must check the bathroom for supplies at least twice during the observation. There should be enough toilet paper, water, soap, and paper towels easily accessible and within reach of children throughout the observation, so that the children are not dependent on teachers.

Indicator 3.3: If an attempt is made in any of the categories, score Yes.

Indicator 3.4: Teachers should be aware of all children using toilet and provide some supervision. If the bathroom door is closed, teachers must be able to supervise by listening. If the teachers do not demonstrate awareness of every child using the restroom and/or a solid door is closed and teachers cannot supervise through hearing, score No.

Indicator 5.2: Attempts should be made in all categories when needed, and there should be much effort made to complete procedures correctly. However, perfection is not required to meet the requirements of “generally,” so a few lapses in procedural steps or neglecting the procedures for one or two children are allowable.

Item 7.1: Sink must be exclusively used for toileting/diapering only to credit it here.

ITEM 10: Health

General note: Children using shared art or sensory materials must wash hands, both before and after use.

Indicator 7.1: Visibly dirty toys/materials and lack of sanitizing between face masks and/or helmets used by multiple children should be considered at this indicator.

Indicator 7.2: Health practices observed must be completed correctly.

ITEM 11: Safety practices

General note: When weighing hazards, consider: 1) likelihood of injury, 2) supervision, 3) way space is used, and 4) seriousness of possible injury.

Indicator 1.4: If children are allowed to leave classroom on their own without supervision, score Yes.

Indicator 7.1: “Few” = 3 or less

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

ITEM 12: Helping children expand vocabulary

Indicator 1.3, 3.3, 5.3: Do not over-prioritize the word “introduce” in these indicators. These indicators relate more to how teachers use words related to what children are doing. Read the description of what’s required on page 36 in the scale book.

Indicator 5.1: Listen for much descriptive language (adjectives, adverbs) used throughout the day.

Indicator 7.1: Must observe this to be the prevalent practice of the classroom. Less common words should be used often.

ITEM 13: Encouraging children to use language

Indicator 1.3: “Few” means less than 3.

Indicator 3.3: There is no required number for “some,” but conversations must be observed intermittently throughout the observation.

Indicator 3.4: With ESOL students, look for much encouragement for child to name objects; teachers make a real effort to communicate with the children in both their first language and English.

Indicator 3.5: Environment should “flow” and be conducive to conversation (example: few disruptions with directives).

Indicator 5.2: “Many” requires that the conversations observed occur frequently as the regular practice throughout the observation, and no child can be completely ignored.

ITEM 14: Staff use of books with children

General note: Books or stories without pictures count if children can respond to it as a book reading (i.e., eBooks, story on paper, Bible story, etc.)

Indicator 3.2: Every book time should be set up with the basics to promote children’s engagement, considering children’s comfort, children’s ability to view the book, scheduling and length of the book time, minimizing distractions, age-appropriate book content and length, and number of children participating. If a lack of any of these basics causes many problems for children not being able to pay attention to the book, score No.

Indicator 3.2, 3.3, 5.2, and 5.3: Consider all times books are used and/or read.

Indicator 3.3: Determine across multiple book times if several occur; score based on the majority of children’s engagement during most book times. “Majority of children” = 75%.

Indicator 5.4: Teachers must consistently demonstrate a positive, enthusiastic attitude towards books each time books are used, and teachers must use and/or read books more than once with children.

Indicator 7.3: Observe twice at 2 different times.

Indicator 7.4: Observe books used as a resource or evidence they have been used recently, such as evidence heard in conversation or seen in display.

ITEM 15: Encouraging children’s use of books

Indicators 1.1, 3.1, 7.1, 7.2: Must be accessible 25 minutes.

Indicators 1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1: Consider only appropriate books.

Indicator 3.4: The books referenced here are the books required in 3.1. If 3.1 is a No, 3.4 is also scored No.

Indicator 5.1: Based on max number of children allowed.

Indicator 5.2 and 5.4: Any time would count if the child independently chose to use the books; the book use cannot be credited when a teacher prompted, gave a child a choice between books and something else, suggested, or required book use.

Indicator 5.3: A defined reading interest center can include books on c.d. or tape, if headphones are used. Puppets and soft animals can be in the book area and will not result in a discount, unless they are observed to be used in a way that prevents successful book reading from occurring in the center.

Indicator 5.4: At least one example of a teacher showing extended interest is required.

ITEM 16: Becoming familiar with print

Indicator 5.2: Must write or point to print and draw child's attention to it giving some explanation for why or how it is used. Examples: 'Let's write your name on it so we'll know it's yours;' 'This cubby/chair/cot has your name/number, so we'll know it's for you to use;' 'This menu shows us what we're having for lunch. Today, we are having...;' etc.

Indicator 7.2: Must be observed to occur with two different children.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

ITEM 17: Fine motor

Indicator 3.3 and 3.4: Pertains to materials credited in 3.1.

Indicators 3.4 and 5.1: Must be accessible 25 minutes.

Indicator 7.2: Almost all fine motor materials must be stored with labels on shelves; if non-clear containers are used, they must have labels also. The label storage system must be meaningful for children, and the system must be used as required.

ITEM 18: Art

General Note: No credit given for coloring predesigned pages, coloring book sheets, ditto sheets etc. (scored in Fine Motor). Food is not an art material; any activities conducted with food are not credited as art activities.

Indicator 1.2, 3.2, 5.2: Individual expression means that children can use art materials in their own creative way. This is evidenced by children having choices about the topic, which materials to use, and/or how they want to complete the art work. If teachers assign the topic for the artwork, the art materials to be used, and the way in which they must be used, individual expression has not been allowed.

Indicators 1.2, 3.2, 5.2, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3: When considering displayed art, only consider displays inside the classroom. Displays outside the door, down the hallway, etc. cannot be considered.

Indicator 1.3: If teachers never interact with children as they use art materials, or if children never choose to use art materials and the teacher does not encourage their use, score this as Yes.

Indicator 3.3: Teacher involvement required here goes beyond setting up the materials or giving directions. Teacher involvement needs to occur while children are using the materials, and the verbal or nonverbal interaction should support the active use of art materials and be related to the art the child is creating.

Indicator 7.1: Complex art materials generally involve multiple steps in their use.

ITEM 19: Music and movement

Indicator 1.2: To score Yes, the background music would need to be loud, observed to interfere with other activities, and on for more than half of the observation.

Indicator 3.2: Only discount if background music interferes with other activities, including when reading or singing unrelated music is observed.

Indicator 3.4: Children are generally engaged every time, unless they are allowed to engage in another alternate activity they are interested in.

Indicator 5.1: Do not count dance props, such as scarves or ribbons, as music materials.

Indicator 5.2: The requirements for 5.2 can take place indoors or outdoors, with individual children or groups, but it must be done informally during free play and not be a pre-planned teacher-directed group.

Indicator 5.2/5.3: Movement and dance activities must include large muscle use; fingerplays do not count.

Indicator 7.1: If children show disinterest, at least two alternate activities that children are interested in must be accessible.

ITEM 20: Blocks

Indicator 1.2: If children do not play with blocks, teachers must be observed verbally encouraging block play.

Indicator 3.1: Either unit OR large hollow blocks are acceptable; 1 type of accessory in sufficient quantities to prevent sharing issues.

Indicator 3.1 and 5.1: A set of 20-30 unit blocks (depending on size of blocks) is typically enough for 1 child to build a sizeable independent structure.

A set of at least 10 large hollow blocks is typically enough for 1 child to build a sizeable independent structure. However, even if these guidelines are met, if children are arguing over blocks/accessories due to insufficient quantities, score No.

Indicator 5.1 and 7.1: Must be accessible 25 minutes.

Indicator 5.3: Three types of accessories in sufficient quantities are required. Unit blocks are required.

Indicator 5.5: Teacher conversations credited here must be about the children's block play. Conversations about other subjects and play occurring only with block accessories do not count.

Indicator 7.1: Cannot be in same space as unit blocks, unless the space is sufficiently large enough to be able to adequately build with the large blocks without interfering with the use of the unit blocks.

ITEM 21: Dramatic play

Indicator 3.2, 3.3, and 5.3: Must include the children's use of dramatic play props and not just be imaginative conversations that sometimes occur while children play outside (pretending to be a princess in a castle, etc.)

Indicator 5.1: Must be accessible 25 minutes. Wealth of props does not need a 2nd theme. Additionally, baby dolls, or other large dolls, that children can pretend to be adults with, are required. Smaller dolls, such as Barbies, do not meet the requirement. The amount of materials should be plentiful for the number of children allowed to play in the area at one time.

ITEM 22: Nature/science

Indicator 1.2 and 3.2: Any talk about nature/science with children will count for 1.2, but at 3.2 the talk needs to be more than a mention. At 3.2, teacher's talk about nature/science should be intentional for the purpose of drawing children's attention to nature/science.

Indicator 3.3: At least 3 toys must be accessible.

Indicator 5.1: You do not have to observe “collections” of items—for example, 5 different natural objects are acceptable.

Indicator 5.3: Must see or hear staff comment or interact with children to count. For example, just seeing a recycling bin would not be enough evidence. Teachers model concern for the environment when they act within their classroom to call children’s attention to preserving natural resources or protecting nature.

Indicator 7.2: Could be an outdoor garden if all components of the indicator are observed.

ITEM 23: Math materials and activities

Indicator 1.1: “Few” means less than 3 appropriate math materials.

Indicator 1.3: “Most” means more than half.

Indicator 3.3: Does not have to include the use of materials. To give credit here, 75% of the children must be engaged during 75% of the math activities observed. When math activities are done during group times, do not include children who are permitted to leave group times to do something else of interest to them.

Indicator 5.4: Any material or activity in which the primary purpose is math learning can be used in meeting the requirement, except books and posters which are not credited here. Staff interaction about the use of the material must be math focused.

Indicator 7.3: Must observe being done during the 3-hour observation. Displays already posted do not count.

ITEM 24: Math in daily events

General note: “Daily events” include routines, transitions, and non-math focused play and activities.

Indicator 1.1 and 3.1: Only the use of math words that are easy for children to understand and relate to their real-life experiences count.

Indicator 3.3: Just rote counting with no practical event associated is scored No.

Indicator 7.2: Must take place during individual or group informal play times in non-math areas; play in math areas and/or during planned math groups are not considered here. Credit is based on the question asked; the child does not have to answer.

ITEM 25: Understanding written numbers

Indicator 1.1/3.1: Rugs are furnishings, and they do not count as display, even if they have numbers on them.

Indicator 1.3: Most observed examples of children reading or writing numbers must be inappropriate to score Yes.

Indicator 3.1: Must be at eye level to children. Two different types of examples. Sets count as one type of example. For example, center labels to determine the number of children allowed is one type; each center label is not counted separately.

Indicator 3.2: Two different types of examples. Sets count as one type of example.

Indicator 3.2, 5.1, and 7.1: Must be accessible at least 25 minutes.

Indicator 5.1/7.1: Look for examples of 1:1 correspondence in materials. Books are included in materials here.

Indicator 7.3: The materials are those required in 5.1 and/or 7.1. Observe for two different children at two different times.

ITEM 26: Promoting acceptance of diversity

General note: Diversity in this item refers to differences found in groups of people. As such, only human examples count for all categories of diversity. Representations of animal, mermaid, and/or non-human cartoon characters (Arthur, Clifford, Bernstein bears, etc.) do not count.

Indicator 1.2, 5.2, and 5.3: When crediting non-traditional gender role materials, a contrast with a traditional gender role material is not required.

Indicator 5.3: May be pictures, books, or play materials.

Indicator 7.1: At least one activity that intentionally teaches about diversity must be observed during free play or group times, such as foreign language vocabulary use, reading and discussing a book about diversity, talking about different cultural menus/foods, etc.

ITEM 27: Appropriate use of technology

General Note: “Electronic media” includes any device used that has a screen with moving images, pictures, or print, including toys that are designed to imitate electronic devices.

Indicator 1.3: Any comment about what a child is doing at a computer counts as staff involvement (example: simple tech assistance, comment about a character, etc.). However, just turning the computer on and loading the program is not enough.

Indicator 3.3: Alternate activities provided must interest the children.

INTERACTION

ITEM 28: Supervision of gross motor

General note: If another adult provides instruction or assistance such as a sports coach or lifeguard, include their interactions as staff, although the actual teachers should be weighed more heavily in the score.

Indicator 1.3: If less than 10 minutes of gross motor play is observed, score Yes. There is no 2-minute leeway for this indicator.

Indicator 3.3: At least two examples must be observed.

Indicator 5.3: Teachers must be actively involved with children using gross motor equipment.

ITEM 29: Individualized teaching and learning

General note: Refer to definition of “individualized teaching” on page 2 of this document and page 11 in the scale book.

Indicator 3.1 and 3.2: “Some” means one or more.

Indicator 3.2: Must be accessible for at least 25 minutes.

Indicator 3.3: Teaching is based on children’s individual interests and abilities. “Some” means that it occurs about half the time children are in free play and with multiple children, but every child doesn’t have to receive.

Indicator 5.1: Can take place indoors and/or outdoors.

Indicator 5.2 and 7.2: Higher level teaching interactions must be observed, such as the addition of more difficult words, expansion of children’s ideas related to play, or asking questions that encourage children to explain reasons and ideas related to their play.

Indicator 5.3: Any interaction that moves a child to learn counts.

Indicator 7.1 and 7.2: One hour of indoor free play must be observed.

ITEM 30: Staff-child Interaction

General note: Ignoring is considered a negative interaction.

Indicator 5.3: For “generally” to be true, it must be the prevalent classroom practice, and many children must experience.

ITEM 31: Peer interaction

Indicator 3.1: “Some time” = at least 40 minutes of free play, indoors or outdoors.

Indicator 5.1: As stated in the indicator, peer interaction must be evident for at least half of the observation, 1.5 hours. During that time, at least an hour must be observed to take place in free play specifically.

Indicator 7.3: Evidence seen in displays or elsewhere in the classroom must represent a recent activity completed; evidence that is dated several weeks/months prior to the observation and/or which are obviously old and faded will not be credited.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

ITEM 33: Transitions and waiting times

Indicator 1.2: “Usually” means more than 2 examples are observed and it’s a regular practice during transitions for teachers to be unprepared.

Indicator 1.4: Score Yes when groups of children are required to wait 10+ consecutive minutes during a transition between two events in the day and almost all the children are not engaged meaningfully in an activity. There is no 2-minute timing leeway for this indicator.

Indicator 5.1: “Usually” means 75% of the time. A few minor problems in transitions are allowable if they do not occur frequently and are quickly handled by teachers, but credit cannot be given if any chaotic transitions are observed.

Indicator 7.1: Whole-group transitions should be unusual compared to the number of times children are able to transition between daily events individually or in small groups.

Indicator 7.2: Score No when any child is required to wait 3+ consecutive minutes during a transition with nothing to do. There is no 2-minute timing leeway for this indicator.

ITEM 34: Free play

General note: Time counted toward free play can start when most children are dismissed to free play. For example, time is not discounted for slow eaters or when a teacher may be talking to a couple of children who on their way to free play got into a conflict.

Indicator 3.2: Should be scored Yes unless supervision during free play is extremely lax or staff are very uninvolved with children during all or much of the observed free play time.

Indicator 5.3: Ample and varied materials/equipment accessible during all free play observed, indoors and outdoors, for the max number of children allowed at any time. The materials must provide a wealth of variation.

Indicator 7.1: At least two different types of materials/activities related to the theme/current topic of interest are required in at least two different play areas, and they must be accessible for at least 25 minutes.

ITEM 35: Whole-group activities for play and learning

Indicator 3.2: Whole-group activities provide the basics to support engagement by considering: 1) the comfort of the child, 2) access to information provided, 3) how teachers present information to the children, and 4) length of group time. If you observe more than one group time, consider them all but give more weight in scoring to the longer group times.

- If most children tend to be engaged throughout most group times observed and many (but not necessarily all) of the basics to support engagement are observed, score this indicator Yes.
- If many of the basics to support engagement are not provided, score this indicator No, even if children are somewhat engaged.
- If a group time was initially set up with the basics but the group time began to fall apart, credit can be given as long as teachers responded appropriately and did not force the group to continue when children did not re-engage quickly.

Indicator 3.3: Some active involvement is required for all group activities observed.

Indicator 5.2: Must be observed for all children who need it. If action taken by teacher is done with a negative message, for the child who is having difficulty or for the other children, score No.

Indicator 5.3: Must be observed during at least one group time.

Indicator 7.2: If more than one whole-group time is observed, and at least one is carried out in smaller groups, score Yes. If the max number of children in attendance is very few, then the whole group size would not need to be reduced, and this indicator would be scored Yes. "Very few" means no more than 6 three-year olds, 8 four-year olds, or 10 five-year olds; if mixed ages are present, use requirements for the age of the youngest child present in the group.

Indicator 7.3: For credit here, there can be no negative message attached to making a choice to not participate. If children do not try to leave a large group, but they are not actively engaged and the teacher does nothing to try and re-engage them or offer them the choice of leaving, then leaving is not considered an option. If all children are obviously engaged and no one wants to leave, score Yes.