



## Indoor Play Materials Checklist for ECERS-3



This document is intended to be a guide to the types and quantities of indoor play materials required by the ECERS-3 scale within the Language and Activities subscales. (Please note: It does not include other types of items like indoor furnishings, gross motor equipment, or non-material indicators within the Activity items such as space requirements and interactions. This guide only covers the quantities/types required for each indicator and does not include guidance for Access). Materials should be age-appropriate and in working order. Most items in the scale book provide examples of age-appropriate materials for each item.

Item 15: Encouraging children's use of books			
<i>Only books that are age-appropriate (meaningful for children's independent use) and in good condition (not torn or missing covers, etc.) will be credited. Duplicates of the same book will only be counted as one book.</i>			
Checklist	Description	Relevant Indicator(s)	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 10 books		1.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 15 books		3.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Many books (based on the highest number of children attending at any time)	"Many" means 20 books for 10 children, 30 books for 15 children, plus one additional book for any children over 15.	5.1	

Additional Notes:

### Item 17: Fine motor

*Materials must be complete, functional, and age-appropriate. Sets of toys (e.g. duplos) and duplicates of the same toy will count as one material, but credit can be given for variations (a set of large-sized duplos and a set of small-sized duplos would be considered two materials). In the ECERS-3, any Art materials from Item 18 that promote fine motor skills may be counted in this item as well.*

Checklist	Description	Relevant Indicators	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 5 different materials		1.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 10 different choices		3.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Materials offer different levels of challenge or difficulty	This refers to the materials credited in 3.1.	3.4	
<input type="checkbox"/> One per category (Interlocking building, Art, Manipulatives, Puzzles)	10 or more materials required, with at least one material per category.	5.1	

Additional Notes:

### Item 18: Art

*All materials must be accompanied by paper, as needed, or another surface for use when carrying out artwork. To be credited, art materials must be usable (e.g. paint or markers are not dried out) and safe (non-toxic, no choking hazards) for the children. When drawing materials are used for coloring predesigned pages, such as coloring books, they are credited in the Fine Motor item but not here.*

Checklist	Description	Relevant Indicators	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 1 drawing material	Drawing materials include crayons, nontoxic watercolor markers, pencils, and chalk.	3.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 1 material from each category: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Drawing materials</li><li>○ Paints</li><li>○ Three-dimensional objects</li><li>○ Collage materials</li><li>○ Tools</li></ul>	See the scale book and ITERS/ECERS Materials Guide for examples of each category.	5.1	

Additional Notes:

### Item 19: Music and movement

*Materials must be in good condition and usable without presenting health issues (such as instruments with mouthpieces). A player of recorded music can be credited as 1 music material. Dance props, such as scarves or ribbons, will not be counted as music materials.*

Checklist	Description	Relevant Indicators	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 3 music materials		3.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Many music materials*	At least 10 instruments, with more than one type required. (If used at group times, there must be at least 1 instrument per child participating.)	5.1	

Additional Notes:

## Item 20: Blocks

*The two types of blocks considered in this item are unit blocks (sets of varied shapes and sizes) and hollow blocks (allow children to build larger structures and can be same-size sets or varied sizes/shapes). For ECERS-3, smaller blocks (like table blocks) that have sides less than 2" are not considered here. Blocks must also have smooth sides, so interlocking materials (like duplos) are not considered either.*

*When counting the number of blocks per child, a set of 20-30 unit blocks (depending on size) 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. However, even if these guidelines are met, if children are arguing over blocks due to insufficient quantities then more blocks are needed.*

*"Accessories" should enhance, rather than detract from, the block play (for example, train tracks are generally not an appropriate accessory due to the amount of space used). Accessories must be stored with blocks in a way that gives children the message that they are to be used as part of block play. Types of accessories include (1) small people, (2) vehicles, (3) animals, (4) other accessories such as road signs, fences, trees, and small buildings. The accessories should be in sufficient quantities to prevent sharing issues.*

Checklist	Description	Relevant Indicators	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> At least some blocks (enough for meaningful play)	To receive credit at this level, there must be some amount of blocks accessible.	1.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Enough blocks for 2 children (unit or hollow) AND at least one type of accessory	Please see the general note above for required quantities. At least one type of accessory is required in sufficient quantity.	3.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Enough <u>unit</u> blocks for 3 children AND accessories from 3 categories	Please see the general note above for required quantities. At least three types of accessories are required in sufficient quantities.	5.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Large <u>hollow</u> blocks required	At least one set of hollow blocks in sufficient quantities.	7.1	

Additional Notes:

### Item 21: Dramatic Play

*Dramatic play occurs when children use materials to act out roles and manipulate figures such as small toy people in a doll house. In doing so, children use materials in their own way, practice many skills, and attempt to understand what happens in their world.*

Checklist	Description	Relevant Indicators	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> Enough materials for 2 children to be happily engaged		1.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Some dramatic play materials and furniture to act out family roles	Examples include dress-up clothing, dolls, and housekeeping props.	3.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Many and varied dramatic play materials, including baby dolls, child-sized furniture, play foods, cooking/eating utensils, and dress-up clothes (for both boys and girls)	There should be a wealth of materials for children to use in their pretend play, including the specific materials listed. The amount of materials should be plentiful for the number of children allowed to play in the area.	5.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Four contrasting examples of diversity in materials are observed	Examples include dolls of different races or cultures, play foods of different cultures, and play items representing equipment used by people with disabilities.	7.1	

Additional Notes:

## Item 22: Nature/science

*This item looks for materials that promote nature and science learning through a variety of categories. The nature/science categories are: (1) living things, (2) natural objects, (3) books/picture games, (4) tools, (5) sand/water with toys.*

Checklist	Description	Relevant Indicators	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> At least some nature/science materials		1.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 5 nature/science materials <u>from 2 categories</u>		3.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sand or water with appropriate toys accessible.	Kinetic sand is an acceptable substitute. Toys for sand/water must promote digging, scooping, pouring, filling, and emptying containers.	3.3	
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 15 materials with some from <u>each of the 5 categories</u>	This also includes a requirement of at least 5 nature/science books. Sand/water can be counted as one of the 15 materials.	5.1	

Additional Notes:

### Item 23: Math materials

*This item looks for math-focused materials accessible in the classroom. The three categories of materials are: counting/comparing quantities, measuring/comparing sizes and parts of wholes (fractions), and familiarity with shapes. Books and display items are not considered “materials”, but unit blocks and hollow blocks of various shapes and sizes can be credited.*

Checklist	Description	Relevant Indicators	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 3 appropriate math materials		1.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 2 different math materials from each of the 3 categories	Although some math materials might fit into more than 1 category, do not assign any material to more than 1 category.	3.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 10 math materials total, with at least 3 different materials from each of the 3 categories		5.1	

Additional Notes:



### Item 25: Understanding written numbers

*This item focuses on materials with print numbers on them, to promote children's learning of the meaning of numbers. Books can count for these indicators as long as they meet the stated requirements, but display items are not considered "materials".*

Checklist	Description	Relevant Indicators	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> At least one example of print numbers in display with corresponding pictures	This indicator looks for items in the display that show 1:1 correspondence of print numbers with that number of objects/pictures.	1.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> At least one toy or material with print numbers	Examples include toy telephones, cash registers, number stencils, etc.	1.2	
<input type="checkbox"/> At least two examples of print numbers in display with corresponding pictures	(See note at 1.1) Two examples are required here, with sets counting as one example (e.g. 1:1 center labels to determine the number of children allowed are one example).	3.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> At least two different examples of toys/materials with print numbers		3.2	
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 3 different materials that show the meaning of print numbers	1:1 correspondence in materials (such as a puzzle set with numbers on one piece and corresponding dots on the matching piece).	5.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 5 different materials that show the meaning of print numbers	These materials must also show 1:1 correspondence.	7.1	

Additional Notes:

### Item 26: Promoting acceptance of diversity

*This item looks for examples of race, culture, age, ability, and gender diversity in materials. Please refer to the scale book for more detailed information on how diversity examples are credited. Although display items are considered in this item, photographs of enrolled children are not.*

Checklist	Description	Relevant Indicators	Notes
<input type="checkbox"/> At least one example of racial or cultural diversity	Only examples of racial and/or cultural diversity are credited here.	1.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> At least three examples of racial or cultural diversity	(See note at 1.1)	3.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> At least two different types of dramatic play props representing different races or cultures	The “types” of props mentioned here include dolls, play foods, and ethnic dress-up clothing. Materials credited here cannot be counted towards the requirements at 5.2.	5.1	
<input type="checkbox"/> At least 10 easily-visible examples of diversity, with at least one each in books, display, and play materials.	The examples credited here can include race, culture, age, ability, and gender diversity.	5.2	

Additional Notes:

Please note: This resource was created in early 2025 based on the current ERSI guidelines. Resources will be updated as promptly as possible if guidance changes, but observation scores are always based on what is observed and the most recently-published sources.