



NC Additional Notes for the ECERS-R

The NC Additional Notes provide supplementary information for the Environment Rating Scales so that participants in the assessment portion of the North Carolina star rated license may correctly interpret and score items found within the scale. A primary aim for the notes is to further define or explain requirements of certain items to improve interrater reliability or consistency among assessors working with the North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project (NCRLAP).

Participants in the NC star rated license system should be aware of the following:

- NCRLAP began using the Updated Edition of the ECERS-R that has a spiral binding on August 1, 2005 for all assessments completed in North Carolina. For assessment purposes this version replaced the earlier version of the ECERS-R.
- The NC Additional Notes are updated (approximately) every 6 months and NCRLAP 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 www.ncrlap.org.
- NCRLAP assessors use only the NC Additional Notes for the ECERS-R and, due to modifications and additions that occur over time, the NC Additional Notes differ from notes provided by the scale authors at Frank Porter Graham. Participants in the NC star rated license should replace older notes with the current NC Additional Notes.

The NC Additional Notes were compiled and further developed by members of the NCRLAP's management team, especially by our state anchors and anchor advisors. On September 1, 2003, with permission from Debby Cryer and Thelma Harms, the Additional Notes for Clarification for the ECERS-R, ITERS, ITERS-R, FDCRS, and SACERS were retrieved from the Frank Porter Graham website (<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers/>) and used for the basis for the NC Additional notes. Since then, NCRLAP has made modifications and additions to the notes as described below. A complete history of modifications to the notes for clarification prior to September 1, 2003 may be found on the FPG website.

RECENT CHANGES:

Date	Where to find the change
10/2008	<i>40, Formatting and grammatical changes were made to the NC notes for several items, but there were no other additions to provide new scoring information</i>
3/2008	10, 26, 29, 30, 37
10/2007	General notes
4/2007	General notes, 9, 10, 20, 22, 26, 40
10/2006	2, 43
3/2006	9, 11, 20
9/2005	9, 15, 26



GENERAL NC NOTES FOR THE ECERS-R

Accessible: All children in the group should have access to the required materials and activities with appropriate modifications made based on developmental or chronological age differences. To determine whether or not materials are accessible several factors must be considered:

- Location of the materials and the type of storage provision: Materials are placed in spaces used by children daily rather than outside of children's regular play areas (i.e. outside of the classroom or areas within the classroom used for teacher storage, routine care, or an area used only for group times, etc.).
- Materials within the play areas are easy to reach for children in the group. The lids on containers and drawers/doors on cabinets are easy to open for the children in the group.
- Children's ages and knowledge that the materials are intended for their use: How do children know what is stored where? Consider whether the children are observed using the materials. Look for other evidence that indicates the materials are used by the children
- The overall structure of the program determines how much child choice is possible. Consider how much independence children have during play times. Do they select the areas that they play in? If not, how does the classroom system provide access to the specific materials for the required amounts of time? Within centers, are children free to use any of the materials? If unsure of whether or not children have access to a space that is not used during the observation ask staff questions about the space, how frequently it is used, and how materials are made accessible, etc.

If the word accessible appears in more than one indicator at the minimal (3) level, apply the one hour requirement only in the indicator that specifically mentions the time requirements of one hour or the word daily.

Poor repair of materials and books: Materials and books that are in poor repair, meaning that they are not usable as intended, are excluded when determining whether the required numbers or examples for various categories have been provided. However, if there is an inappropriate image accessible to children this is always considered regardless of whether or not a material, picture, or book is in poor repair.

Handwashing:

In certain situations when a sink with running water is not accessible for the group to use, hand sanitizing products may be used in lieu of handwashing. For example, hand sanitizer may be used while staff is supervising children outdoors if hands are washed upon returning indoors. The following requirements must be met; the waterless wash or wipe must be used according to manufacturer guidelines (i.e., labeled as safe for use by children, used only with adult supervision, allowed to dry properly), and the waterless wash must be stored out of reach of children. Please note that this substitution is only acceptable in certain circumstances and that the requirements for adequate handwashing still apply for routine care activities and general classroom use.

Sanitation:

Apply the following requirements any time that sanitizer is needed. For chlorine bleach and water solution to be effective it must be allowed to dry for a minimum of 2 minutes and complete air drying is ideal. Other EPA registered industrial sanitizers, disinfectants, or germicides may be used if these products are non-toxic and instructions for use are followed.

Operating hours: In North Carolina, for programs with wrap around care/optional extended day programs that are under one license, use the total day as a basis for time calculations. For programs that operate both 1st and 2nd shift, use the total operating hours that children may



be in attendance until the time that night-time routines (such as dinner preparation, story time, etc) begin, unless the program has a policy that a child may only attend during the hours specific to one shift.

Time requirements: In some items, the indicators that include time requirements are separate from the indicators that describe the required types or quantities of materials. The time requirements apply to the materials described in the other indicator at the same quality level. Therefore the required materials must be provided in order to earn credit for indicators containing time requirements unless exceptions are allowed based on the specific notes for an item.

General references: Materials that are frequently used by NCRLAP to assist in decision making are Caring For Our Children, 2nd edition (used for health, sanitation, and safety issues) and the Handbook for Public Playground Safety, CPSC Publication No. 325 (for gross motor play issues). Links to these resources are found on our website www.ncrlap.org and providers are encouraged to access these.

ITEM 2:

Indicator 5.1: Tables and chairs must meet requirements in each area regularly used by children, including any that are outside the classroom, such as a cafeteria.

Indicator 5.3: In this indicator, the word 'permits' means that adaptive equipment is used during the observation and allows children who need this type of equipment to participate in many activities with other children.

ITEM 4:

Indicator 3.2: Take children's ages and abilities into account. If the only area that presents a challenge is a space designated or created for privacy and the rest of the play area is easy to view, this indicator should not be scored negatively. Instead to avoid considering this issue in two items, note the difficulties associated with supervision in Item 5, Indicator 3.2. If the space creates problems for supervising other spaces in the play area (e.g., due to height or placement) then these issues will be scored in this indicator and may also be considered in item 5 as necessary.

ITEM 7:

NC assessors use the gross motor safety information sheet titled: "NCRLAP's Requirements for Gross Motor Space and Equipment". This document is available at www.ncrlap.org

ITEM 9:

Indicator 1.1 and 3.1: If fewer than four children are observed during arrival use the general note for this item and do not apply the 75% requirement mentioned in the Notes for Clarification on page 23 for these indicators. For example if two of three children are greeted upon arrival credit would be earned for indicator 3.1, but not 5.1.



ITEM 10:

Indicator 1.2 and 3.2: Portions of each required food component must be placed on each child's plate unless meals or parts of meals are served family style, in which case a sufficient quantity of the food served family-style must be available for all children to serve themselves required amounts. Verbally offering a food or beverage that is not within reach of a child is not sufficient.

Indicator 3.3: Consider the following components. Each component should be calculated separately and must be met at least 75% of the time.

- Proper hand washing for adults and children: Includes use of running water and soap for at least 5-10 seconds, followed by drying with an individual paper towel or air dryer.. Hands should not be recontaminated after handwashing before eating. Consider adult and child handwashing separately.
- Sanitary eating surfaces: Must be cleaned with a soapy water solution, wiped dry and then sprayed with the sanitizing solution before and after eating. For bleach/water sanitizing solution to be effective it must be allowed to dry for a minimum of 2 minutes and complete air drying is ideal. Manufacturer instructions for other sanitizers should be followed. Paper towels or a clean cloth, rather than sponges should be used. The same cloth cannot be used to wipe the soapy water and the sanitizing solution. The use of a clean cloth to wipe sanitizing solution from more than one table is acceptable as long as the sanitizing procedure was carried out correctly.
- Uncontaminated foods and beverages: Are served using sanitary utensils and containers. Food is not served directly on table tops. Contaminated foods/beverages are those that can spoil and have been non-refrigerated for more than one hour or that have been dropped on the floor, placed on an unclean surface, etc.

Indicator 3.5: Written instructions from a child's health care professional for food or beverage substitutions are acceptable. For snacks: Two of four nutritional components from the USDA Meal Guidelines must be served. A child with food or beverage allergies may be served any food that counts for a second USDA component as a substitute. For example, if the snack is milk and crackers, a child who is allergic to milk may be served juice and crackers because the child's allergies are considered and the alternative snack still meets USDA guidelines.

ITEM 11:

Indicator 1.1: All programs operating for longer than 4 hours must have some predictable, scheduled time for preschool children to rest daily with younger children being likely to need a longer period of time for this. It is not required that children sleep, only that they are encouraged to rest or otherwise relax based on their ages and individual needs.

ITEM 12:

For proper sanitary diaper change procedure, see *Caring for Our Children*, 2nd edition, standard 3.014, pages 93-95.



Indicator 1.1 and 3.1: Sinks and sanitation: Any sink that is used for hand washing after diapering or toileting must be sanitized BEFORE the sink is used for ANY other type of handwashing. This practice prevents the germs that are associated with diapering and toileting from being spread to other classroom materials and surfaces.

Therefore, if a sink is used to wash hands after completing a diapering/toileting routine then the sink basin and faucet must be sanitized before:

- Other types of hand washing occur at the same sink (e.g., hand washing before eating a snack or meal, after wiping a nose, after using play dough or cleaning up from easel painting, when an additional teacher or child arrives, etc)
- Any classroom materials or toys are cleaned in the same sink
- Brushing teeth in that sink
- Providing drinking water from that sink

It is NOT required that sinks be sanitized between different uses or users if:

- A sink is used only for hand washing after diapering or toileting
- Separate sinks are generally used, but some routines (diapering and mealtime) occur in immediate succession. In this case children and staff should use a paper towel to turn off the faucet or leave the water running between children to minimize the need to touch the faucet or basin.

ITEM 15:

Indicator 5.4: A collection is not be considered appropriate for preschool and kindergarten children if most of the collection is intended for school age children (e.g., chapter books, books with large amounts of text, advanced content, and/or many small pictures),

Violent (i.e., involving aggressive physical force), frightening (e.g., dreadful, shocking, terrifying), or sexually provocative content is considered inappropriate for preschool or kindergarten children who, compared to older individuals, may be unable to understand it and become confused, fearful, or engage in unsafe behaviors based on what they have seen. Because most children in preschool and kindergarten cannot read, a distinction is made between inappropriate images and inappropriate text. Credit should not be given if ANY accessible book or language material contains inappropriate images. By contrast, printed text should be considered only if the provider is observed reading inappropriate content to children or if a child capable of reading is observed reading the inappropriate text (see also item 16, indicator 3.3).

Occasionally there are books that are important to the provider and/or parent (e.g., some therapeutic books, some books that teach morality or lessons) that are of use even though they would not be appropriate to leave out for children's independent use. When using these books, providers should ensure that children are not exposed to inappropriate content by keeping the book out of children's reach and by rewording or not showing developmentally inappropriate content when reading to children.



ITEM 20:

Indicator 5.2: Art materials may be used in other curricular areas. All uses of art materials, whether or not labeled "art," should be considered.

ITEM 22:

Indicator 7.3: Must occur weekly

ITEM 23:

Indicator 5.1: Opportunities for both types of play must occur weekly to earn credit for this indicator.

ITEM 24:

Indicator 7.3: These materials should be used daily, or almost daily

Indicator 7.4: Either field trips or resource visits are considered.

ITEM 26:

Indicator 5.1: Remove the word "four" from the second sentence in the Note for Clarification for this indicator on page 53. Enough materials from all five of the categories should be present.

Indicator 5.2: To include outdoor math materials in time calculations, there must be examples from at least two categories for children's use during outdoor time daily.

ITEM 27:

Indicator 5.2: Score this indicator N/A only if computers are used very infrequently (less than once a month) or if the computer is currently not working. Otherwise score this indicator based on how children are allowed to use the computer when in use. If not observed ask questions of staff to determine whether or not requirements of this indicator are met.



ITEM 29:

This indicator considers large muscle activities and the use of gross motor equipment that occurs during the times of day that are considered to be gross motor times. If less active or sedentary activities are also provided as a part of gross motor time, the supervision of these activities is considered in Item 30.

ITEM 30:

In addition to classroom activities this item also considers activities such as book reading or use of fine motor toys that occur outdoors and transitions between the indoor and outdoor environments.

ITEM 34:

Indicator 5.4: Modify the first sentence of the Note for Clarification for this Indicator on page 63 of the ITERS-R as follows: Add the words "more than" in front of the number three.

ITEM 36:

Indicator 5.1: If whole or large group activities are included, then the requirements of the indicator apply to any group time observed. If group times are not a part of the program, give credit for this indicator.

ITEM 37:

Requirements in this item apply to each child with an identified disability/special need or medical condition requiring special consideration.

Indicator 3.1: Upon enrollment or upon learning about a recent diagnosis, staff should seek basic information about the child's identified disability, medical condition or other special need. Staff should have that information within 30 days. In circumstances where staff report that a parent is reluctant to share this information, staff should be able to explain what continued follow up attempts are occurring including providing explanations about the importance of having this information. This indicator does not require that staff have actual copies of any assessments or developmental plans. The information may be provided by parents/guardians, other staff or specialists who have specific knowledge regarding the child's needs.

Indicator 3.3: Both parents and staff must contribute to developing goals for the child. This may occur informally or during specific meetings. The phrase "goals" in this indicator does not refer specifically those outlined in an IFSP or IEP, but also includes more generalized developmental outcomes.

Indicator 5.1: If not observed staff must provide examples of ways that they communicate with specialists and then implement the ideas.



Indicator 5.2: If a child spends much of his/her time away from the group requirements of this indicator are not met.

Indicator 5.3: Verbal or written communication with parents is required daily or almost daily.

Indicator 7.1: This indicator refers to intervention services provided by specialists who are not the child's primary teachers/care providers, unless the classroom staff has received specific instruction from a specialist on necessary intervention techniques.

ITEM 38:

Information to score this indicator should be obtained during the teacher interview and should be based on the teacher's understanding of the program practices and policies. For staff that has not completed a thorough orientation (has been employed less than 6 weeks) this information may be provided by the supervisor if staff is unsure of answers to questions.

Indicator 5.3: Information about children must be shared by both parents and program staff. There must be a combination of methods used by staff to facilitate home-school communication including both formal and informal strategies, at least one of which encourages parents to share information

Indicator 5.4: There should be at least three different ways for parents to participate in the program, including at least one option for families who do not have flexible work schedules. For example, parents are encouraged to provide materials for activities or there is an at-home reading program in place.

ITEM 39:

Information to score this indicator should be obtained during the teacher interview and should be based on the teacher's understanding of the program practices and policies. For staff that has not completed a thorough orientation (has been employed less than 6 weeks) and is unsure of answers to questions this information may be provided by the supervisor.

ITEM 40:

Information to score this indicator should be obtained during the teacher interview and should be based on the teacher's understanding of the program practices and policies. For staff that has not completed a thorough orientation (has been employed less than 6 weeks) and is unsure of answers to questions, this information may be provided by the supervisor

Indicator 3.1 *Staff must have access to a phone that is provided by the program.*

Indicator 5.3: The conference and meeting spaces may have dual uses as long as each space is readily available when needed. The group meeting space must be comfortable for adults and the space for individual conferences must be comfortable and private.



ITEM 41:

Some information to score this item will be based on teacher report of how communication between classroom staff is handled during times not observed, but much of this item is observable and will be scored accordingly.

Indicator 7.1: This must occur when staff are not responsible for the children.

ITEM 42:

Information to score this indicator should be obtained during the teacher interview and should be based on the teacher's understanding of the program practices and policies. For staff that has not completed a thorough orientation (has been employed less than 6 weeks) and is unsure of answers to questions this information may be provided by the supervisor.

Indicator 5.2: In addition to verbal review of the evaluation, staff must have access to the written information (e.g., are provided with a copy of the evaluation or are able to access their employee file).

Indicator 7.1: This should occur as a matter of program policy.

ITEM 43:

Information to score this indicator should be obtained during the teacher interview and should be based on the teacher's understanding of the program practices and policies. For staff that has not completed a thorough orientation (has been employed less than 6 weeks) and is unsure of answers to questions this information may be provided by the supervisor.

Indicator 7.2: Internet access for staff is considered as a resource material since many early childhood periodicals and curriculum resources may be obtained on-line; however, internet access alone does not meet the requirement of this indicator. Other items such as those described in the note for clarification are required.