

# Reflective Self-Study for Family Child Care Homes: Overview of the Three Step Process



Week 1

The Family Child Care Home (FCCH) provider reviews information about the self-study. Providers should review:

- Instructions and resources provided at [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org) including a webinar that offers additional information about this process.
- The Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R). FCCH providers are encouraged to build familiarity with the requirements of this tool. The FCCERS-R is required to complete step 2.

1

*The FCCH provider will enter the date(s) information was reviewed on the Reflective Self-Study Verification form.*



Weeks 1-4

The FCCH provider completes three Thinking More About worksheets associated with the FCCERS-R.

These worksheets ask the provider to reflect on their current situation and daily practices in these areas:

- Language/Interactions
- Personal Care Routines
- Program Structure

To encourage reflection, we recommend worksheets be completed over a three week period (one per week). Set aside 2-4 hours to complete each worksheet, perhaps 30 minutes per day. When possible, we recommend working with someone else, such as another FCCH provider, an assistant, or a local Technical Assistance Specialist from CCR&R or the Partnership for Children.

2

*The FCCH provider should complete these worksheets before the start of the assessment window.*



Weeks 3-4

The FCCH provider reviews the worksheets, addresses any lingering questions, and thinks about next steps or goal setting based on ideas generated during this process. Set aside ample time for this review and goal setting.

A conversation occurs with the Child Care Consultant to review ideas and questions, and to plan further. Following this conversation, the FCCH provider completes the Reflective Self-Study Verification Form.

3

*All three worksheets and the verification form should be completed before the start of the Modified Assessment window. The FCCH provider will give these documents to the assessor when they visit for the assessment.*

# Reflective Self-Study: Instructions for Family Child Care Homes



This document offers information to help Family Child Care Providers during the reflective self-study process. Specific information and suggestions are provided for each of the required steps for you to consider and use as fits with your program. The Reflective Self-Study should be completed before the start date of your Modified Assessment window.

## What is the Reflective Self-Study, why is it needed now, and how is it different from the self-study FCCHs already have to do?

It is a close look at current practices for individuals who help care for children. Reflection and planning on how to improve practices to offer the highest quality possible to children and families are also parts of this self-study process. It is needed now as part of NC's Temporary Assessment Process and focuses on areas that cannot be observed by assessors due to the current health restrictions.

For the self-study starting at the 2 pt. level FCCH providers choose how and what to focus on related to their program and the FCCERS-R over a 3-month period. For the Reflective Self-Study starting at the 3 pt. level there are specific steps and worksheets that must be completed; it can occur in a 1-month period, but can be longer. Any activities completed for the Reflective Self-Study can be applied to the existing self-study requirement, but simply completing it in 1 month will not satisfy the current self-study requirement starting at the 2-pt. level. So, if you would like to begin the Reflective Self-Study earlier and let it extend over the 3-month period before your consultant submits the assessment request to NCRLAP that is fine, and it can count for both processes if the steps and forms described in the rest of this document are completed. Alternatively, you may want to engage in other self-study activities first, and build on these by completing the Reflective Self-Study once the assessment request is submitted.

Both self-study processes encourage FCCH providers to use the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition (FCCERS-R) to identify how current practices relate to the developmentally appropriate practices considered in the scale's requirements in specific areas. The Reflective Self-Study responses can be used to identify areas of strength and areas needing change. This can provide a foundation for goal-setting. Over time, continued use of such a process provides meaningful documentation of changes that occur to meet goals you set.

## How do I get started on this process?

There is a free webinar for FCCH Providers about the Temporary Assessment Process, that includes specific information about the Reflective Self-Study. This is optional, but highly recommended before getting started, to help build understanding of the process and get tips for getting started on the worksheets. It is free of charge and completion earns one contact hour of training credit. Register and view anytime at [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org).

There is additional information in the remainder of this document, so read it entirely. There are other resources about the Temporary Assessment Process available at [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org). If your Modified Assessment is already scheduled, you will receive much of the available information in the scheduling packet as well.

## I have an assistant or second provider in my FCCH, do they need to be involved?

That is your decision based on the specific role that person has in your program. Including others that work with the children is likely to be helpful in building a shared understanding of expectations and consistency in the practices that are used. Even if others are involved, you are the person who completes and signs the verification form, guaranteeing the process was fully completed.

# Step 1: Week 1



Review information about the process and expectations, including the timeline. Make sure you have materials needed for this process including the FCCERS-R and all three worksheets. When this has occurred, document the date(s) on the Reflective Self-Study Verification Form.

Make sure you:

1. Read this document entirely.
2. Review available information about the process, such as an overview, why it is needed, and the timeline. Much of this information is included in this document and additional information can be found in various documents posted at [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org) and included in your scheduling packet. Watching the webinar that was previously mentioned will also provide you with this information.
3. Have access to the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (FCCERS-R) and it is the spiral bound revised edition published in 2007.
4. Have a copy of all three “Thinking More About” worksheets (Language/Interactions, Personal Care Routines, and Program Structure).
5. You may also want to check out information on the North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project (NCRLAP) website ([ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org)) that will also be helpful in learning more about the FCCERS-R or addressing questions as you move through the process.
  - Free webinar about the Temporary Assessment Process, including details about the Reflective Self-Study (earns 1 contact hour upon completion). **\*\*Please note this is optional, but highly recommended. Information is included that will be helpful to providers when completing the worksheets, in addition to understanding more about the process.**
  - Free webinar for the FCCERS-R (earns 1 contact hour)
  - Additional resources, including documents and videos about various FCCERS-R topics.



## Step 2: Weeks 1-4



Complete the three “Thinking More About” worksheets during Step 2 at a rate of approximately one per week. The total time to complete one worksheet is estimated to be around 2-4 hours. The worksheets may be easier or more difficult for different individuals, and you will determine your own pace, while still making sure to complete all of the worksheets before the Modified Assessment window begins.

### Key points:

1. It is important to refer to the FCCERS-R along with the most recent NC Additional Notes, while completing the worksheets.
- We know that current health restrictions may alter some usual practices; therefore, report on what you are currently doing unless a question refers to pre-pandemic practices specifically.
  - The purpose of the Reflective Self-Study is to build understanding of current practices; remember, this is not about a “right answer” but rather an honest reflection of what is done every day. The answers provided will not be evaluated by NCRLAP.
  - At times questions can seem repetitive. This means the topic appears multiple times in the scale and are especially important.
  - The Language and Interactions worksheet is a little longer and more complex. We suggest starting with the shorter Personal Care Routines worksheet to help become familiar with the process. The Program Structure worksheet is a little shorter and may be a nice way to wrap up the process.
  - Since the worksheets are long and cover many topics, working in smaller increments of time rather than trying to complete a worksheet all at once is recommended. This also allows time to think about the topics between work sessions.
    - Working with a Technical Assistance Specialist from your local Partnership for Children or CCR&R, or another FCCH provider can also be beneficial when this is possible.

## Step 3: Weeks 3-4



Review the completed “Thinking More About” worksheets again and think about goals and next steps for improving quality. The process of completing the self-study and the reflection at the end of each worksheet allows you to identify practices that may benefit from change. The worksheets can be used to identify and address changes that are quick and easy, plan for changes that may take more time, or recognize barriers that won’t allow for change. Making note of any questions you have will also be helpful at this time.

During this step, you will have a conversation with your DCDEE Child Care Consultant; they can help review your ideas and worksheets, answer questions, and plan further. They will contact you to schedule a time to talk; make sure to return their call to complete your self-study process.

Goal setting can then occur with short and/or long-term goals in mind. Beyond the space for writing included in each worksheet, you may already have forms for making action plans or goal setting that you would like to incorporate. Additionally, the local CCR&R or Partnership for Children may have ideas or forms that would be helpful to use over time.

To complete Step 3 make sure:

- All 3 worksheets are completed and available for the NCRLAP assessor to collect copies of or to scan when they arrive. These should all be completed prior to the assessment window starting date.
- To speak with your Child Care Consultant.
- To **complete** and **sign** the Reflective Self-study Verification Form and have available for the NCRLAP assessor when they arrive.

**If there are any questions related to the completion of the self-study, please contact NCRLAP toll-free at (866) 362-7527 or by email at [ncrlap@uncg.edu](mailto:ncrlap@uncg.edu)**

*After you have completed the Reflective Self-Study, you may decide to use the worksheets over time to encourage ongoing reflection about day-to-day practices. The worksheets are posted at [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org) for easy download and can be used at any time. Additionally, there are other Thinking More About worksheets that could also be helpful for use over time. These are for the Space and Furnishings and Activities subscales and were not required for this process because these items are part of the Modified Assessment.*

# Reflective Self-Study Verification Form: Family Child Care Home (FCCH)



**FCCH name and ID#** \_\_\_\_\_

Use this form to verify the completion of the self-study.

To earn credit for the self-study portion of the Temporary Assessment Process, each of the following steps must be completed:

**Step 1:** Introductory information reviewed on: \_\_\_\_\_ (enter date)

**Steps 2:** Check box if the worksheet is completed (check  all boxes).

- Completed worksheet: **Personal Care Routines**
- Completed worksheet: **Language and Interactions**
- Completed worksheet: **Program Structure**

**Steps 3:** Check box if the activity is completed (check  all boxes).

- Reflective review process completed by provider
- Conversation with Child Care Consultant for review and future planning
- Prepare documents to give to NCRLAP (3 worksheets & this document)

**After completing these steps, please sign your name.**

FCCH Provider Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Your signature indicates to NCRLAP and DCDEE that the self-study process was fully completed according to the instructions.*

# Thinking More about Personal Care Routines



## FCCERS-R

**Purpose:** This document addresses many of the requirements found in the Personal Care Routines subscale. The focus is primarily on indicators at the 3, 5, and 7 level. It is important to review each item entirely to ensure that no indicators at the 1 or “inadequate” level apply. Answering the questions and referring to the FCCERS-R will build familiarity with requirements, while offering a chance to reflect on current practices and situations.

**Preparation:** Refer to the FCCERS-R (spiral bound edition published in 2007) when completing the questions. To better understand the scale format, and structure, review the instructions for scoring on pages 7-8 in the FCCERS-R and the definitions of common terms on pages 9-11. It will also be helpful to refer to a copy of the most current NC Additional Notes (available at [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org)). There are many questions, so completing them all will likely take several reflection/review sessions.

The items included here consider family child care routines for arrival and departure, resting, eating, toileting/diapering, health practices, and the environment's safety. These considerations and practices help maintain sanitary conditions to prevent illness for children and providers, and provide a safe environment for children to learn. Additionally, they consider opportunities during routine care to promote independence, support learning, and build relationships for each age group enrolled.

### Tips:

- If you are confused about a question, look at the item in the FCCERS-R and check any Notes for Clarification or NC Additional Notes to identify the specific indicator and requirement to which it refers.
- Describe the current practices that occur when answering the questions. Remember, this is not about a “right answer” but rather a way to build understanding about what occurs every day. In the reflection section at the end, it can be helpful to add ideas about future plans or changes.
- Using the worksheet on an ongoing basis can help verify that routines continue to maintain sanitary practices and safety concerns are addressed. Also, it helps ensure that children have opportunities to learn and have positive interactions during routines, as well as in play. When considering routines like handwashing, meal preparation, toileting/diapering, and nap, it is most helpful for all adults in the program to have a common understanding of requirements.
- Answering the questions with someone else (co-teachers, administrators, technical assistance specialists, etc.) promotes sharing of perspectives and may draw attention to different details.
- Reminder: Infants are children birth-11 months, toddlers are children 12-30 months, preschoolers are 31 months – Kindergarten, and school-age is children in 1<sup>st</sup> grade and older.

Date(s) completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Ages enrolled: \_\_\_\_\_

Worksheet completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

### Item 7 Greeting/departing (p.22)

Describe the procedures for arrivals and departures: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do greetings occur for each parent and child? **Y / N**

Do all parents enter the caregiving area during arrivals and pick up? **Y / N**

What is discussed with parents during arrival?

What is discussed with parents during departure?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are a variety of topics included, such as information about children routines, health or safety, activities they enjoyed, or new skills, upcoming plans, etc.? **Y / N**

If a child has trouble separating from their parent at arrival or has trouble leaving the program, how is this handled? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If infants are enrolled, are parents given information about their routine care? **Y / N / NA** How does this occur? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do parents ever spend time at the program? **Y / N**

**During the pandemic 2021:** If parents don't enter the building because of pandemic restrictions, are there ways they are encouraged to feel part of the program? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Item 8 Nap/rest (p.23)

Does the nap schedule seem to meet children's needs (e.g., they rarely cry or are tired much earlier than nap time, most rest easily)? **Y / N**

If a child is tired before the scheduled nap time or is not sleepy then, what options are offered? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

For programs with mats/cots: Are nap provisions stored so that sleep surfaces and different children's items are not touching each other or the floor? **Y / N**



When children are resting, cribs, pack and plays, mats, and/or cots are placed at least \_\_\_\_\_ feet apart or are separated by a solid barrier that extends the full length of the sleep surfaces. **Y / N**

If infants are enrolled, are safe sleep policies being followed (e.g., back to sleep, no blankets, or other items in the crib)? **Y / N / NA**

Describe supervision practices during nap and any interactions that occur to help children relax:

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If infants are enrolled, consider how they are supervised during their naptimes. Do they sleep in close proximity to the playroom, or any locations used by the other children while they rest, like the kitchen? Can they be easily heard? Can they be seen or checked on easily? \_\_\_\_\_

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Describe the transition to nap and any changes that are made to create a restful environment:

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### ITEM 9 Meals/snacks (p. 24–25)

There are \_\_\_\_\_ meals and \_\_\_\_\_ snacks each day.

Are all children served a meal or snack at least every 3 hours unless they are sleeping? **Y / N**

Does the meal/snack schedule seem to meet the children’s needs (e.g., they don’t cry/ask for food earlier and are ready to eat at meal/snack times)? **Y / N**

Are children who eat mostly solid foods offered water to drink between meals/snacks? **Y / N**

If **Yes**, when does this occur? \_\_\_\_\_

Now look at the menu for this week and the USDA meal guidelines. Are the required food components present for each meal or snack? **Y / N**

For children with special food considerations, such as allergies or family preferences, consider the following:

Is this information posted in spaces where children eat, so that all adults who work with children are aware? **Y / N** If **Yes**, where is it located? \_\_\_\_\_

What food substitutions are made? \_\_\_\_\_

Do substitutions meet USDA guidelines OR is a doctor’s note provided that specifies what should be served? **Y / N**

Are tables and high chairs (if used) cleaned with soapy water and wiped dry with a single use paper towel or clean cloth? **Y / N** Then are they sprayed with sanitizer? **Y / N** The sanitizer is allowed to air dry or stay on the surface for at least \_\_\_\_\_ minutes before it is wiped off.

Proper handwashing includes the use of running water and soap.

Do children wash hands before and after meals/snacks and/or holding their own bottles? **Y / N**

Do adults wash hands before and after meals and snacks or any food/bottle preparation? **Y / N**

Are meals/snacks prepared ahead to reduce wait times for children? **Y / N** If **No**, do children have interesting activities to keep them busy during meal/snack preparation? **Y / N** Describe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Regarding supervision while children are eating/drinking:

Are there ever times when children are not visually supervised while eating/drinking? **Y / N**

Does someone stay close to/sit with the children while they eat? **Y / N**

Are young children consistently seated or held while eating/drinking? **Y / N**

What types of interactions occur during meals/snacks? Describe some recent examples: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is the menu provided for parents? **Y / N** Does the provider work with parents to support children's eating habits? **Y / N**

## ITEM 10 Diapering/toileting (p. 26–27)

Diaper procedures (skip the following questions if not applicable):

Are all diapering supplies prepared before the child is brought to the diapering area? **Y / N**

Is the soiled diaper properly removed and disposed of in a hands-free, covered trash can? **Y / N**

Are the provider's and child's hands cleaned with a disposable wipe before the child is redressed in their clean diaper and clothing? **Y / N**

Consider the sanitary steps taken if any child's diaper/pull-up is changed in a standing position, rather than on a diapering table. Are there procedures in place to reduce the spread of germs during these types of changes? **Y / N** Hint: Think about preparation of supplies, placement and disposal of soiled diapers, and how much involvement there is in the process of cleaning the child.

Does diapering occur on a non-porous surface that can be cleaned and disinfected (e.g., not cloth, no straps)? **Y / N**

After a diaper change, is the changing table/mat cleaned with soapy water and wiped dry with a single use paper towel or clean cloth? **Y / N** Is it then sprayed with disinfectant? **Y / N** The disinfectant is allowed to air dry or stay on the surface for at least \_\_\_\_\_ minutes before it is wiped off.

If potty chairs are used, are they cleaned and disinfected after each use? **Y / N / NA**

Regarding handwashing:

Do children wash hands after diapering or toileting routines? **Y / N**

Does the provider wash hands after assisting with toileting/dressing or as the last step of the diapering process? **Y / N**

Is there a sink used only for diapering/toileting handwashing and no other purposes? **Y / N** If **No**, is there a process to disinfect any sink(s) used for handwashing after diapering/toileting before other types of handwashing occur? **Y / N**

Does the schedule for diapering/toileting seem to meet children's needs (no extended periods between diaper changes, no accidents related to the schedule)? **Y / N**

For children wearing diapers or pull-ups, describe the system used to make sure that diaper changes or bathroom visits occur every 2 hours? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the provider's role in supervision and interactions with children during diapering/toileting:

\_\_\_\_\_

Are provisions for diapering/toileting convenient for adults and children (e.g., close to play room, diapering surface is at a comfortable height, steps to sink and changing table)? **Y / N**

Describe how children's self-help skills are promoted during toileting: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **ITEM 11 Health practices (p. 28–29)**

Is smoking prohibited in all areas used for child care? **Y / N**

Consider what happens if a child becomes sick while in care. Are they separated from the group? If so, is this an area that is not used by other children during the day? Describe what occurs: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does handwashing occur for both children and adults at the following times:

- Upon arrival
- After being outdoors
- After messy play with materials that are moist, sticky, or leave residue
- Before and after water play
- After contact with bodily fluids and removing mouthed toys
- After touching potentially contaminated surfaces, like trashcan lids or pets

If hand sanitizer is used, does this ONLY occur when soap and running water are not available, such as when outdoors? **Y / N** Is it kept out of reach of children and used with close supervision? **Y / N**

In addition to handwashing, what other actions are taken to reduce the spread of germs (Hint: see examples in the text on page 28, also consider the design of the trashcan and lid and how often mouthed toys are removed and cleaned): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do all children have a change of clothes available? **Y / N**

Do any children receive medication or use diapering cream? **Y / N** If **Yes**, describe procedures for having and administering medications while children are in care: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe actions for modeling and teaching children good health practices: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are there ways children manage their health practices independently? **Y / N**

Do toddlers and older children brush their teeth? **Y / N/ NA** If **yes**, are toothbrushes stored so they do not touch and can air dry? **Y / N**

Do you have access to a health consultant? **Y / N**

**ITEM 12 Safety Practices (p. 30–31)**

Are there provisions for emergencies and what are they (Hint: see page 30 for examples)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Check for safety hazards in all indoor and outdoor spaces used by children. Are any of the following common hazards present? Please note this is not a complete list of possible hazards.

**Indoors**

- Uncovered electrical outlets or loose electrical cords
- Items labeled “keep out of reach of children” accessible
- Disinfectant or sanitizer sprayed when children are nearby
- Choking hazards (e.g., toy sets with small pieces, broken crayon pieces) or food choking hazards

**Outdoors** Hint: *Refer to the document NCRLAP’s Requirements for Gross Motor Space and Equipment for specific measurements.*

- Not enough cushioning under gross motor equipment
- Fall zones are not large enough around gross motor equipment
- Equipment spacing is too close
- Outdoor space is not fully fenced or fence height is less than 4 ft.



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**Want to find out more?**

Not all FCCERS-R indicators are covered in this worksheet, so review the FCCERS-R carefully and seek out other resources, as needed, since relying on these questions alone to prepare for an assessment will not be sufficient. We encourage you to review other resources found on the nclap.org website to stay informed about any updates and continue to build your understanding of the FCCERS-R and the assessment process.

- Look for general information about the assessment process and also specific FCCERS-R resources. These resources may offer ideas about what to focus on or supplement ideas you were already considering.
- Check out the answers to Frequently Asked Questions or send a new question to nclap@uncg.edu.
- Register for free online training webinars. Some are live webinars; others are pre-recorded and offer training credits (contact hours). Call 1-866-362-7527 or register online at nclap.org.

When planning for program enhancement, always consider the unique features of the classroom and facility such as ages and abilities of the children enrolled, the number of teachers in the classroom, and overall goals and/or philosophy. Programs may also seek advice from their DCDEE Child Care Consultant, local CCR&R and/or Smart Start Partnership, or other child care agencies.

North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project 915 Northridge St. Greensboro, NC 27402 Website: nclap.org Email: nclap@uncg.edu Toll-free: 1-866-362-7527	
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**References:**

Harms, T., Cryer, D., & Clifford, R. (2007). Family child care environment rating scale. (Revised edition). New York, NY. Teachers College Press.

NC Additional Notes (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.nclap.org>.

# Thinking More about Language and Interactions



## FCCERS-R

**Purpose:** This document addresses many of the requirements found in the Listening and Talking and Interaction subscales. The focus is primarily on indicators at the 3, 5, and 7 level. It is important to review each item entirely to ensure that no indicator at the 1 or “inadequate” level applies to the program. Answering the questions and referring to the FCCERS-R will build familiarity with requirements, while offering a chance to reflect on current practices and situations.

**Preparation:** Refer to the FCCERS-R (spiral bound edition published in 2007) when completing the questions. To better understand the scale format and structure, review the instructions for scoring on page 8 in the FCCERS-R and the definitions of common terms on pages 9-11. It will also be helpful to refer to a copy of the most current NC Additional Notes (available at [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org)). There are many questions, so completing them all will likely take several reflection/review sessions.

The items included here consider many aspects that relate to promoting children’s development and building relationships. Responsive interactions for all children, including those with disabilities, is key. There is much focus on the provider’s language and interactions with children throughout the day. This includes during various routines, as well as different types of activities, such as those that are social, instructional, planned, and spontaneous. Attention is given to warm and respectful interactions, and promoting social skill development. The important work that family child care providers do to supervise and guide children for safety and teaching purposes is recognized.

### Tips:

- If you are confused about a question, look at the item in the FCCERS-R and check any Notes for Clarification or NC Additional Notes to identify the specific indicator and requirement to which it refers.
- Describe the current practices that occur when answering the questions. Remember, this is not about a “right answer” but rather a way to build understanding about what occurs every day. In the reflection section at the end, it can be helpful to add ideas about future plans or changes.
- Using the worksheet on an ongoing basis can help verify that children experience enriching, positive, and age-appropriate language and interactions. Additionally, this process emphasizes how interactions, social communication, and guidance practices contribute to building positive relationships with all children.
- Answering the questions with someone else (an assistant, technical assistance specialist, etc.) promotes sharing of perspectives and may draw attention to different details.

Date(s) completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Age groups: \_\_\_\_\_

Worksheet completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Item 13 Helping children understand language (p.32)**

Does the provider talk to children during both routine care and play activities? **Y / N**

Consider any issues with background noise. Have these been minimized so that children are able to hear language? **Y / N**

Is the tone used with children consistently positive or neutral? **Y / N**

Consider any times when phrases are used that include negative language (“Don’t, uh-uh, no-no”), rather than telling children what they should do (e.g., “Books are to look at” when a toddler mouths a book). How can these phrases be reworded to offer positive guidance about what should be done instead? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Consider the provider’s interactions with children. Is the language about things the children are interested in or playing with? **Y / N** Is communication individualized for each child, such as by using simpler language with younger children, or adapting communication for children with disabilities? **Y / N**

Are words used to label and describe many objects, actions, feelings, and experiences? **Y / N**

If **yes**, give some examples:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do these types of examples occur throughout the day? **Y / N**

Do these types of examples occur during both play and routines? **Y / N**

Are interactions playful or fun (e.g., rhymes, simple songs, back and forth babbling, repetitive words/sounds, etc.)? **Y / N** If **yes**, describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Item 14 Helping children use language (p.33)**

Children communicate verbally and non-verbally in many different ways (e.g., babbling, words, crying, pointing, gestures, nodding, facial expressions). Think about all of the ways children communicate and consider the following questions:



Does the provider usually understand what children are trying to communicate? **Y / N**

Are responses handled in a positive and timely manner? **Y / N**

Do responses usually address the child's need or interest? **Y / N**

What types of responses are typically used? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe strategies used to limit wait times before meals or nap for children who are hungry or tired, and also for children who are upset/crying: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

During routine care activities or when playing with children throughout the day, does the provider describe what is occurring and their own actions? List examples: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are the children encouraged to communicate with one another? How does this occur?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

For verbal children, does the provider expand on words and ideas the children say? **Y / N** List examples:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the type of questions the children are asked: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Does the provider encourage and/or model back-and-forth conversation with children by responding or repeating sounds and/or words, then waiting for the child to respond? **Y / N**

Is there a good balance between provider language/input and children's language/input? **Y / N**

Are there activities to link older children's talk with written language? How/when does this occur?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ITEM 27 Supervision of play and learning (p. 56)

Consider the following challenges related to supervision. Check any that occur at any time, and think about how supervision practices are adapted to accommodate different situations:

- Areas of the playroom(s) or gross motor space that may be difficult to visually supervise
- Any times the provider leaves the room, for example to complete routine care or access materials or supplies
- Play or routine times when a provider works with one child or a small group of children

Describe plans to make sure all children are properly supervised throughout the day: \_\_\_\_\_

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What happens when a problem, such as a conflict or a minor accident occurs? \_\_\_\_\_

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Think about how the provider participate in play activities with the children and describe some recent interactions that have occurred during play activities: \_\_\_\_\_

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What happens when children are having difficulty becoming engaged or using materials? \_\_\_\_\_

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How is supervision adjusted to meet the different needs of each child in the group? Consider younger children or those that are more active vs. children who are older or more independent. \_\_\_\_\_

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Is there a balance between children's independent play and provider input into their activities? **Y / N**

## ITEM 28 Provider-child interaction (p. 57)

Is appropriate physical contact often used to show warmth throughout the day? **Y / N** If **yes**, in what ways does this occur? \_\_\_\_\_

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Consider how the provider interacts and relates to children and check all that apply:

- The provider seems to enjoy spending time with the children.
- There is much smiling and talking throughout the day.
- Most, if not all adult responses are warm and responsive.
- Interactions are sensitive to each child's feelings and reactions.
- Interactions remain positive even in challenging situations.

Recognizing that each child in the group will have a variety of feelings, moods, and needs each day, describe how the provider adjusts responses to be sensitive to each child. \_\_\_\_\_

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### ITEM 29 Discipline (p. 58)

When establishing expectations, are children's ages and developmental levels considered, with adjustments made as needed? **Y / N**

If different age groups are enrolled, give examples of how expectations vary for younger vs. older children. Hint: Think about the types and structure of different activities or aspects of the daily schedule.

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Describe how the provider addresses challenging or unwanted behaviors: \_\_\_\_\_

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Describe approaches to addressing conflicts between children: \_\_\_\_\_

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Are guidance strategies usually positive? **Y / N**

If guidance strategies are not effective and the behaviors continue, what happens next? \_\_\_\_\_

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Are children's positive behaviors recognized with comments or other positive attention? **Y / N**

Think about how the program is set up (e.g., daily schedule, space and arrangement, types of materials) and how these different aspects can impact behaviors. Consider these questions:

Does the layout of the child care space reduce interruptions and discourage running? **Y / N**

Is there a separation between active and quiet areas to help reduce distraction? **Y / N**

Are transition strategies used to reduce waiting times and keep children engaged? **Y / N**

If **yes**, list some strategies used: \_\_\_\_\_

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Is there a variety of interesting choices in all areas to keep children busy and engaged? **Y / N**

If **no**, list ideas for any areas where additional/different materials could encourage more use of an area or reduce conflict: \_\_\_\_\_

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Are there duplicates of popular materials or a system used to help children with turn-taking? **Y / N**

Does the daily schedule have ample free play time that allows children to have extended, meaningful play experiences? **Y / N**

Is the provider often involved in facilitating children's play (e.g., children are not often alone in play areas or waiting while routine care occurs for others, children are not alone in a swing or bouncy seat for a long time, etc.)? **Y / N**

Is there ample time scheduled for active and energetic play? **Y / N**

Especially for younger children, are routine care needs met in a timely, individualized manner?

Are the effects of children's actions explained to them? (hint: see page 58 for examples) **Y / N**

If **yes**, give examples: \_\_\_\_\_

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Describe how children are supported in using communication when social problems occur: \_\_\_\_\_

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Are there professionals to help if there is a child with very difficult or unusual behaviors? **Y / N**

If **yes**, list options: \_\_\_\_\_

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### ITEM 30 Interactions among children (p. 59)

How are the children encouraged to interact with each other? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Thinking More about Program Structure



## FCCERS-R

**Purpose:** This document addresses many of the requirements for items found in the Program Structure subscale. The focus is primarily on indicators found at the 3, 5, and 7 level. It is important to review each item entirely to ensure that no indicator at the 1 or “inadequate” level applies to the program. Answering the questions and referring to the FCCERS-R will build familiarity with requirements, while offering a chance to reflect on current practices and situations.

**Preparation:** Refer to the FCCERS-R (spiral bound edition published in 2007) when completing the questions. To better understand the scale format and structure, review the instructions for scoring on page 8 in the FCCERS-R and the definitions of common terms on pages 9-11. It will also be helpful to refer to a copy of the most current NC Additional Notes (available at [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org)). There are many questions, so completing them all will likely take several reflection/review sessions.

The items included consider many aspects related to maintaining awareness about how program structure contributes to children’s opportunities to explore, learn, and become increasingly independent. There is a focus on the ways program structure creates a predictable sequence of events that include regular routines, significant opportunities for complex play, smooth transitions, ample time for interactions with adults and peers, responsive group activities, and inclusion of children with disabilities. These aspects provide a strong foundation for fun and enriching experiences, and strong relationships.

### Tips:

- If you are confused about a question in the worksheet, look at the item in the FCCERS-R and any notes to identify the specific indicator and requirement to which it refers.
- Describe the current practices that occur when answering the questions. Remember, this is not about a “right answer” but rather a way to build understanding about what occurs every day. In the reflection section at the end, it can be helpful to add ideas about future plans or changes.
- Using the worksheet on an ongoing basis can help verify that the program structure is supportive and developmentally appropriate. This process also emphasizes how specific aspects of program structure support providers in offering experiences that are positive and enriching.
- Answering the questions with someone else (an assistant, technical assistance specialists, etc.) promotes sharing of perspectives and may draw attention to different details.

Date(s) completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Age groups: \_\_\_\_\_

Worksheet completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Item 31 Schedule (p.60)**

Do children experience a similar schedule each day? **Y / N**

Consider the daily schedule. Is it flexible and does it meet the needs of each child (e.g., children play, eat, nap, and are diapered/visit the toilet based on their own needs, routine care is scheduled to occur without much crying or other issues)? **Y / N**

Does play occur for at least one hour indoors every day? **Y / N**

Does play occur for at least one hour outdoors, every day, weather permitting? **Y / N** (Hint: See Terms Used Throughout the Scale on page 11 of the FCCERS-R for a definition of “weather permitting” and/or refer to the Child Care Weather Watch Chart at [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org)).

What conditions prevent outdoor play from occurring and how are decisions made about when outdoor play will occur?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is there active gross motor play every day, including indoors when weather prevents outdoor play? **Y / N**

Each day, are there opportunities for activities the children choose independently and activities the provider plans? **Y / N**

What is done to reduce waiting or keep children engaged during transitions?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Does this prevent transitions when children must wait for more than 3 minutes at a time without activities? **Y / N** If **no**, what other strategies could be helpful?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Item 32 Free play (p.61)**

Hint: Only times when children can choose both the materials they use and peers to interact with, are considered free play.

Each day does free play occur: Indoors? **Y / N**      Outdoors, weather permitting? **Y / N**

Does free play occur both indoors and outdoors, for much of every day? **Y / N** Hint: Refer to the definition of “much of the day” on pg. 10.



Think about any situations when children are limited in what they can do (e.g., group times, time in infant seats/swings/exersaucers, or using a room/ area with few play materials at certain times of the day):

Are these times limited to 20 minutes or less? **Y / N**

During free play times both indoors and outdoors, consider the supervision that occurs. Does it (check all that apply):

- Protect children's health and safety?
- Facilitate children's play by helping with materials, offering other materials to support play, etc.?
- Provide educational interactions related to their play such as finding solutions and problem solving, adding information and new ideas, encouraging children to talk more about their activities?

During times children are playing, are there many types of materials and equipment for them to use? **Y / N**

Is this true both indoor and outdoors? **Y / N**

Are there materials to rotate or add for the children during free play times? **Y / N**

How often is something added or rotated? \_\_\_\_\_

Do any of the new or rotated materials relate to the current topics of interest or themes? **Y / N**

If **yes**, give some examples:

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### Item 33 Group time (p.62)

Hint: This item considers large and small group provider directed activities, self-selected small group play, and individual play.

If they occur, list the times and lengths of typical whole-group or circle time activities:

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What happens if a child does not want to join or tries to leave during the group activities? Describe alternate activities, any instructions, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

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Describe typical interactions with children during the group activities:

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Does the provider adjust group activities based on children's interest? Describe:

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Are group times set up to be successful? For example, do group times (check all that apply):

- Occur where there is enough space to prevent crowding?
- Include engaging, age appropriate content for all children expected to participate (e.g., not too academic for younger children, concepts are not simplistic for older children)?
- Offer children opportunities to participate, rather than only listen or respond to a few questions?
- Continue only as long as children are interested?

Are most play activities done in small groups or individually as children choose, rather than as a whole group? **Y / N**

Does the provider have educational interactions with children, small groups, and the whole group throughout the day? **Y / N** If **yes**, describe:

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### ITEM 34 Provisions for children with disabilities (p. 63)

Only complete the questions in this section if there is a child with a diagnosed disability and completed assessment, or if there is a child receiving services, such as speech therapy. If there are multiple children with special needs, respond to the questions keeping each child in mind.

Does the provider have information from/about each child's assessment(s)? **Y / N**

Is each child able to fully participate in the classroom experiences? **Y / N**

Describe anything special that is done to help each child participate fully:

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If professionals recommend specific activities or experiences for the child, does the provider implement these? **Y / N** If **yes**, describe:

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Do parents and the provider exchange information about a child's special needs? **Y / N** If **yes**, what topics are discussed?

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Are parents and the provider involved in joint goal setting for the child's experiences at the program? **Y / N**

How often does communication with parents occur informally and how is this done?

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## Want to find out more?

Not all FCCERS-R indicators are covered in this worksheet, so review the FCCERS-R carefully and seek out resources, as needed, since relying on these questions alone to prepare for an assessment will not be sufficient. We encourage you to review other resources found on the [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org) website to stay informed about any updates and continue to build your understanding of the FCCERS-R and the assessment process.

- Look for general information about the assessment process and also specific FCCERS-R resources. These resources may offer ideas about what to focus on or supplement ideas you were already considering.
- Check out the answers to Frequently Asked Questions or send a new question to [ncrlap@uncg.edu](mailto:ncrlap@uncg.edu).
- Register for free online training webinars. Some are live webinars; others are pre-recorded and offer training credits (contact hours). Call 1-866-362-7527 or register online at [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org).

When planning for program enhancement, always consider the unique features of the program such as ages and abilities of the children enrolled, the number of providers, and overall goals and/or philosophy. Programs may also seek advice from their DCDEE Child Care Consultant, local CCR&R and/or Smart Start Partnerships, or other child care agencies.

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### References:

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