



North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project Summary of Lowest Scoring Items and Indicators for the ECERS-R

This document provides a summary of the lowest scoring items and indicators for the ECERS-R, as used for the assessment portion of the NC Star Rated License. To prepare this document we analyzed data collected by our staff who conducted 2,261 assessments in 1,849 facilities across North Carolina during July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2015. We focused attention on individual items with average scores less than 5.0 and on indicators which, according to the scoring rules, were most frequently used to determine the lowest scoring item's average score. Similar to our previous reports, the lowest scoring items primarily relate to health and safety such as issues with outdoor safety practices, sanitary conditions for toileting and diapering, meals and snacks, and nap/rest.

While we recognize that the health and safety issues are very important, we do not want to underemphasize the importance of other aspects of high quality environments that may, in the long run, be critical to children's long term development. We encourage programs to carefully consider all of the sub-scales, items, and indicators of the rating scale. When preparing for an assessment, it is important to note that this document should not be used to replace the ECERS-R or any of the NC Additional Notes that further clarify the meanings of specific indicators. This document is intended only to highlight problem areas, but does not provide a comprehensive description or explanation of common concerns.

To read more about the common issues of the ECERS-R, ways to overcome the lower scoring items/indicators, as well as learn more about the assessment process and best practices for child care, visit the NCRLAP website: www.ncrlap.org for several resources such as videos, webcasts, and worksheets.

Common reasons why programs do not earn credit for the lower scoring items and indicators listed in order by overall average score.

14. Safety practices (average score = 3.18)

- 75% do not earn credit for indicator 3.1.
 - Outdoors:
The mulch/sand/wood chips are not deep enough (inadequate cushioning), spacing of equipment is too close (inadequate fall zones), open S-hooks on swings, or materials/equipment present with broken or sharp edges, or no fence.
 - Indoors:
Uncovered electrical outlets present, choking hazards in classrooms with children under 3 years (e.g., certain art materials, small toys), children under 4 years served foods that pose a choking hazard, and sanitizer or disinfectant sprayed while children are nearby.

7. Space for gross motor play (average score = 3.68)

- 55% do not earn credit for 3.2.
The mulch/sand/wood chips are not deep enough (inadequate cushioning), spacing of equipment is too close (inadequate fall zones), no fence, or lack of ASTM 1292 documentation for manufactured surfacing.

10. Meals/snacks (average score = 4.05)

- 33% do not earn credit for indicator 3.3.
Children or staff may contaminate hands after washing before meals by touching toys, walls, floors, trash can lid, etc. or handwashing does not occur for children or staff before and after a meal or snack. Tables are not first cleaned, then sanitized and left to air dry for at least 2 minutes.

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17. Using language to develop reasoning skills (average score = 4.18)

- **20%** do not earn credit for indicator **5.1**.
Staff do not talk about logical relationships with children during hands-on experiences with materials.
- **80%** do not earn credit for indicator **5.2**.
Staff do not help children explain their thought process as they solve problems by asking questions or making statements that stimulate further information from the child about his/her reasoning as it relates to learning concepts specified in the Note for Clarification on page 37.

22. Blocks (average score = 4.35)

- **67%** do not earn credit for indicator **5.1**.
There is not enough space or blocks to build three sizeable, age-appropriate structures.
- **27%** do not earn credit for indicator **5.3**.
Materials other than blocks and accessories are stored/used in the block area such as music instruments, gross motor toys, large interlocking blocks, or dramatic play props (beyond basic block accessories). Block area is not out of traffic.
- **78%** do not earn credit for indicator **5.4**.
The schedule experienced by children does not allow for use of a special block area for at least 1/3 of the time that the child care center is open. When indicators 5.1, 5.2 or 5.3 do not earn credit, this indicator does not earn credit.

12. Toileting/diapering (average score = 4.41)

- **33%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.1**.
Sinks used for diapering/toileting related handwashing are not disinfected between dual uses or are not disinfected at the right times (e.g., after diapering/toileting handwashing and before other types of handwashing). When sprayed on sink basins and faucets the disinfecting solution does not air dry for at least 2 minutes. When completed, the diapering procedure does not follow the required steps.

13. Health practices (average score = 4.54)

- **32%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.1**.
Child and/or adult handwashing does not occur as needed (e.g., arrivals, re-entry, sand/water play, messy play, after wiping noses, after contamination).

11. Nap/rest (average score = 4.55)

- **30%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.2**.
Spacing of mats/cots is too close or a solid barrier is not used between cots/mats, or a barrier is used that does not extend for the entire length of sleeping surfaces. Mats/cots are stored with bedding touching. Children nap with soft toys/pillows from a classroom play area.

2. Furniture for routine care, play, and learning (average score = 4.66)

- **76%** do not earn credit for indicator **5.1**.
Chairs and/or tables used for meals or snacks in a classroom or cafeteria are too high for the children (e.g., feet do not touch or barely touch the floor; tables are chest high or higher).

37. Provisions for children with disabilities (average score = 4.93)

- **24%** do not earn credit for indicator **5.3**.
Staff do not communicate, either verbally or in writing, with parents of children with special needs daily or almost daily. Meetings with parents are not scheduled twice annually to discuss the child's goals, progress, and/or ongoing needs.

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27. Use of TV, video, and/or computers (average score = 4.96)

- **24%** do not earn credit for indicator **5.4**.
Staff do not engage with children as they watch TV/video or use a computer program beyond providing basic assistance to get started, resume a program, etc.

Reference

Harms, T., Clifford, R., & Cryer, D. (2005). *Early childhood environment rating scale*. (Revised edition). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.