



North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project

Summary of Lowest Scoring Items and Indicators for the FCCERS-R

This document provides a summary of the lowest scoring items and indicators for the FCCERS-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 570 assessments across North Carolina during July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2015. We focused attention on individual items with average scores less than 5 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 FCCERS-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 FCCERS-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.

Item 9 Meals/snacks (average score = 2.69)

- **38%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.2**.
Children under 4 are served foods considered to be choking hazards. Infants' food/bottles are heated in the microwave. Meals or snacks lack one or more of the required meal components. Water is not offered or accessible to children between meals.
- **42%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.3**.
Children or provider recontaminate hands after washing before meals by touching toys, walls, floors, trash can lid, etc. or handwashing does not occur for children or provider before and after a meal, snack, or bottle (for children who hold their own bottle). Tables are not first cleaned, then sanitized and left to air dry for at least 2 minutes. Hands rather than utensils are used to cut up children's foods. Cups and bottles of juice or milk are left unrefrigerated for longer than 1 hour. Infants are fed bottles or baby food which are refrigerated after use and then reserved.
- **46%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.4**.
Children are left alone while eating; provider is in the same room, but is not attentive to children who are eating.

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

Item 12 Safety (average score = 2.94)

- **18%** do not earn credit for indicator **1.1.** (a score of yes at the 1 level results in an item score of 1)
No barrier on edge of changing table or barrier is not at least 6 inches above the surface where children lay during changes; infants put on stomach to sleep; when lifting or assisting infants/toddlers their weight is supported by the upper arm(s) or wrist(s)/hand(s); small toys present that are choking hazards for children under the age of 3 years; unsafe art materials are used or accessible such as broken crayons or foam stickers for children under the age of 3 years; children under 4 years served foods that pose a choking hazard such as whole grapes or hot dog rounds; sanitizer or disinfectant sprayed where children can inhale mist; electrical outlets not covered.
- **47%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.1**
Indoors: No barrier on edge of changing table or barrier is not at least 6 inches above the surface where children lay during changes; infants put on stomach to sleep; when lifting or assisting children, their weight is supported up by the arm(s) or hand(s); small toys present that are choking hazards; unsafe art materials are used or accessible such as googly eyes or foam stickers; food choking hazards such as whole grapes or hot dog rounds; sanitizer or disinfectant sprayed where children can inhale mist; electrical outlets not covered.

Outside: Resilient surfacing is not deep enough or fall zones are not adequate; equipment is too large for age group or is in poor repair with broken or sharp edges; open S-hooks; fence is less than 4 feet tall or there is no fence.

Item 10 Diapering/toileting (average score = 3.05)

- **56%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.1.**
Most of the time sinks 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, the disinfecting solution frequently does not air dry for at least 2 minutes. There are often lapses in the sanitary diapering procedure such as supplies not taken out prior to starting the change, wipes not used for adult/child hands, disinfecting solution not allowed to air dry at least 2 minutes.
- **30%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.2.**
Children's diapers are not changed or visually checked at least every 2 hours.
- **27%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.3.**
Children and/or provider does not wash hands as needed after diapering/toileting before touching other materials or children.

Item 26 Active physical play (average score = 3.15)

- **66%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.2.**
The mulch/sand/wood chips are not deep enough (inadequate cushioning); spacing of equipment is too close (inadequate fall zones); no fence.

Item 11 Health practices (average score = 3.25)

- **16%** do not earn credit for indicator **1.3.** (a score of yes at the 1 level results in an item score of 1)
Children who are sick and need to go home wait for their parents in the cozy area, on the couch, or another area that is used at other times by all of the children. The child's cot is placed in an area where other children play or wait during routine care such as hand washing and toileting.
- **23%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.1.**
Most of the time mouthed toys are not sanitized before being used by other children or are put away with clean toys. Spit up/drool is not properly cleaned up/sanitized. Trash can lid is not hands-free (e.g., push lid).
- **42%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.2.**
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).

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Item 13 Helping children understand language (average score = 3.48)

- **65%** do not earn credit for indicator 3.4.
Provider uses negative language to control behaviors that are age typical and not dangerous (e.g., young children put toys in their mouth). Children are told to stop behaviors they are engaged in, rather than redirecting them to the behavior that is expected. Derogatory statements are made to children, even if a teasing tone is used.

Item 16 Fine motor (average score = 3.71)

- **28%** do not earn credit for indicator 3.1.
Enough fine motor toys are not accessible for the age group(s) enrolled. Children are not able to use materials for at least one hour daily.
- **37%** do not earn credit for indicator 3.2.
Children are prevented from using fine motor materials for long periods and/or provider does not make fine motor materials accessible to non-mobile children. At least half of the required materials are not present in any secondary spaces used by the children.

Item 15 Using books (average score = 3.96)

- **21%** do not earn credit for indicator 3.1.
Fewer than 6 appropriate books or less than 3 for each age group are provided for children to use. Children are prevented from using books for long periods of time and/or non-mobile children do not have access books.
- **25%** do not earn credit for indicator 3.2.
More than 3 books (regardless of the total number of books provided) are in disrepair (e.g., spine of book is tearing and/or detached, for board books there are small pieces of peeling paper than can be further pulled/torn, peeling/ripped pages or covers that affect images or can be further pulled apart, missing flaps, pages scribble on, pages may not turn properly due to bending or separation from spine, etc.).

Item 17 Art (average score = 3.98)

- **37%** do not earn credit for indicator 3.2.
Art materials that are unsafe or otherwise inappropriate for the age group are used with infants/toddlers. Children under 3 can independently reach unsafe art materials.

Item 8 Nap/rest (average score = 4.36)

- **37%** do not earn credit for indicator 3.2.
Spacing of mats/cots is too close, or a solid barrier is not used to provide separation, 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 community play area

Item 31 Schedule (average score = 4.38)

- **18%** do not earn credit for indicator 3.3.
Children are not dressed appropriately for weather conditions and/or not taken outdoors for at least 1 hour every day except when weather poses health risks. For example, outdoor play does not occur when ground/equipment is wet but there is no active precipitation. Provider's personal perception of too hot or too cold is the basis for the decision not to go outside.

Item 21 Math/number (average score = 4.52)

- **19%** do not earn credit for indicator 3.1
The required quantity and types of materials are not provided for each age group enrolled or are not accessible for the required amount of time each day.

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

Item 19 Blocks (average score = 4.75)

- **28%** do not earn credit for indicator 5.1.
The required quantity of blocks and accessories is not provided or at least half of the required materials are not present in secondary spaces used by children. Children are prevented from using materials for long periods.
- **30%** do not earn credit for indicator 5.3.
Block area is too small for meaningful block play. Space for block play is not protected from other types of play/traffic. For example, children/staff walk through block area to access other parts of the room. Other types of materials are stored in same area with blocks and accessories; children accessing these materials walk through the area used for block play or play with blocks and other materials are in the same space.

Item 24 Promoting acceptance of diversity (average score = 4.84)

- **25%** do not earn credit for indicator 5.1
The required quantity and types of materials are not provided for children's use.
- **27%** do not earn credit for indicator 5.2.
There are fewer than 4 different types of props for dramatic play that represent different races/cultures.

Reference

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