

Thinking More about Activities



FCCERS-R

Purpose: This document addresses many of the requirements in the Activities subscale. The focus is primarily on indicators at the 3, 5 and 7 level. It is important to review the entire item to ensure that no indicators at the 1 or “inadequate” level apply 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 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). There are many questions, so completing them all will likely take several reflection/review sessions.

The items included here consider many aspects related to children’s play. The focus is on required types and quantities of materials used, the amount of time dedicated to play, any barriers that prevent children from using materials, and the interactions that occur while children are engaged in play with learning materials. Free play with a variety of appropriate materials and choices fosters positive developmental outcomes for young children. In addition, the language and support that early educators provide related to play activities is essential in building relationships and fostering learning opportunities for children. Since the FCCERS-R considers each child’s individual experience, you may need to take extra steps to ensure that *all* children get to play with various materials and in different areas of the program.

Tips:

- If you are confused about a question in the worksheet, 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 the required types and categories of materials are present over time, and that each child’s needs are being met as the environment changes, children develop new skills, or different children are enrolled.
- Answering the questions with someone else (other FCCH providers, assistants, 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-agers are children in 1st grade and older.

The number of children currently enrolled in the program is _____.

Are there: Infants **Y / N** Toddlers **Y / N** Preschoolers **Y / N** School-age **Y / N**

How many children usually attend each morning? _____ And each afternoon? _____

Much of the day (MOD)

This concept is extremely important in the FCCERS-R and affects many items. The phrase, “much of the day” relates to children’s access to materials and times when they are prevented from using materials. Please refer to the FCCERS-R page 10 for the definition and description of requirements regarding the term “much of the day.” As you complete the worksheet, look carefully at items 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 26 and think about each child’s experience throughout the entire day to make sure there are no long periods when the various materials or spaces are not accessible. In addition, two items in the Space and Furnishings subscale, and an item in the Program Structure subscale, include requirements related to much of the day. These are items 3, 6, and 32 so keep these areas in mind as you think about this topic as well.

To determine if there are barriers to any child’s access to materials, it may be helpful to think about the following:

- Other than routine care times, such as meals/snacks, naps, and diapering/toileting, or outdoor play, are there any other times of 20 minutes or more when children cannot use the materials in any of the items mentioned above? **Y / N** Hint: Think about any long transitions or group times that last for more than 20 minutes.
- Are furnishings that limit children’s physical activity/movement and access to materials used? **Y / N** Hint: This includes seating devices, such as bouncy seats or swings and activity centers like exersaucers. Think about how often these are used and for how long.
- Are there times of the day that only certain materials or spaces are used? **Y / N** Hint: If so, think about how long this lasts and if preventing access to other types of materials is really necessary.
- Does each child have many opportunities to experience various types of play and learning materials throughout the day, without long times of limited or no materials and interaction? **Y / N** Hint: Think about non-mobile children, as well as those who are mobile.

ITEM 15 Using books (p. 34–35)

Hint: Refer to the Notes for Clarification for a definition and limits on the number of books in poor repair, the overall number of books that are required, and examples of books that are appropriate for different ages.

For each age group enrolled fill in the number of accessible age-appropriate books in good condition:

Infants/toddlers: _____ **NA** Preschool/kindergarten: _____ **NA** School-age: _____ **NA**

Evaluate the condition of the books that are accessible to children. Look for repair issues such as torn or separated spines, missing flaps, scribbles, or torn covers. The number of books with repair issues is _____.

Repair issues are addressed in the following ways: _____

Is there a wide selection of books for each age group enrolled that includes the required topics listed in the Notes for Clarification? **Y / N** List the topics that are included: _____

Can all children use books for much of the day? **Y / N**

List any barriers to individual children's access throughout the day and possible solutions. Hint: Think about each child's daily experience and look back at the questions on page 2: _____

How often are books read? _____ If children are not interested, they can: _____

Does informal reading occur daily? **Y / N** Books are also used by the provider at these times throughout the day: _____

Describe typical interactions that occur between the provider and children during book times: _____

Are books stored for convenient use by each age group? **Y / N**

Children are encouraged to use books or read in the following ways: _____

Are books for each age group rotated? **Y / N** If Yes, how often? _____

ITEM 16 Fine motor (p. 36-37)

List the fine motor materials that are currently used. Some materials may be appropriate for more than one age group. The required number of materials can be found in the Notes for Clarification.

Infants (if enrolled)	Toddlers (if enrolled)

Preschool (if enrolled)			
Interlocking building toys	Manipulatives	Art materials	Puzzles

School-age (if enrolled)			
Interlocking building toys	Manipulatives	Art and craft materials	Puzzles

Can each child use fine motor materials for much of the day? **Y / N**

List any barriers to individual children’s access throughout the day and possible solutions. Hint: Think about each child’s daily experience and look back at the questions on page 2: _____

Are fine motor materials in good repair and kept well organized throughout the day? **Y / N** How so? _____

Describe recent conversations with children as they used fine motor materials: _____

Did these conversations help children develop their fine motor skills? **Y / N**

How often does this occur? _____

Are fine motor materials rotated? **Y / N** If Yes, how often? _____

ITEM 17 Art (p. 38-39)

* Answer these questions for toddlers 12 months and older; however, if art materials are used with younger children, then the questions will also apply.

For toddlers (if enrolled), art materials are used _____ days per week. Art activities are set up in the following ways: _____

If children are not interested in completing an art activity, they can (Hint: Is there more than one alternative activity?): _____

The types of materials used with toddlers are: _____

Are all art materials used with the children safe and non-toxic (e.g., no choking hazards or irritants)? **Y / N**

For preschool and school-age children (if enrolled), list the art materials currently used. The required number of materials and examples can be found in the Notes for Clarification.

Drawing materials	Paints	Three-dimensional materials	Collage materials	Tools

Can each preschool and school-age child use drawing materials for much of the day? **Y / N / NA**

List any barriers to individual children’s access throughout the day and possible solutions. Hint: Think about each child’s daily experience and look back at the questions on page 2: _____

How often do activities occur when children follow a plan rather than using individual expression? _____

Children’s creativity is encouraged in the following ways: _____

The use of art materials is facilitated in the following ways: _____

Are the children able to choose art materials and use them in their own way? **Y / N**

ITEM 18 Music and movement (p. 40)

The following music materials are accessible for the children: _____

For each age group enrolled there are at least _____ music materials:

Infants/toddlers **Y / N / NA** Preschool/kindergarten **Y / N / NA** School-age **Y / N / NA**

Can each child use music materials for much of the day? **Y / N**

List any barriers to individual children’s access throughout the day and possible solutions. Hint: Think about each child’s daily experience and look back at the questions on page 2: _____

What other types of music activities are done and how often? _____

If children are not interested in a music activity, they can (Hint: Is there more than one alternative activity?): _____

Does informal singing occur daily? **Y / N** When does this occur? _____

When recorded music is used, is this for limited times with a specific purpose? **Y / N** Hint: Is music turned off when the activity or routine ends?

The following types of music are used: _____

Children are encouraged to be creative during music activities in the following ways: _____

ITEM 19 Blocks (p. 41)

*Blocks are required for children between the ages of _____ and _____.

List the type and number of blocks and accessories that are currently accessible. Some materials may be appropriate for more than one age group. The required number of materials can be found in the Notes for Clarification.

Toddlers (if enrolled)	Preschool/younger school-age (if enrolled)

Can toddlers and older children use blocks and accessories for much of the day? **Y / N**

List any barriers to individual children’s access throughout the day and possible solutions. Hint: Think about each child’s daily experience and look back at the questions on page 2: _____

Describe the block area (Hint: think about how much space there is, whether the location prevents interruptions, and organization): _____

Consider the storage. Are block and accessories organized by type? **Y / N**

Describe recent interactions with children in the block area: _____

ITEM 20 Dramatic play (p. 42–43)

Describe recent interactions that occurred between the provider and children during dramatic play:

List the dramatic play materials currently accessible for children’s daily use. The required number of materials can be found in the Notes for Clarification. Some materials may be appropriate for more than one age group. The required number of materials can be found in the Notes for Clarification.

Infants (if enrolled)	Toddlers (if enrolled)
Preschool (if enrolled)	School-age (if enrolled)

If enrolled, are there age-appropriate dramatic play furnishings and dress-up clothes for:

Toddlers? **Y / N / NA** Preschool: **Y / N / NA** School-age: **Y / N / NA**

Can each child use dramatic play materials for much of the day? **Y / N**

List any barriers to individual children’s access throughout the day and possible solutions. Hint: Think about each child’s daily experience and look back at the questions on page 2: _____

The dramatic play materials are organized in the following ways: _____

Dramatic play items representing diversity include: _____

List the outdoor dramatic play materials accessible outdoors for toddlers and older children: _____

ITEM 21 Math/number (p. 44–45)

List the math materials that are currently accessible daily. Some materials may be appropriate for more than one age group. The required number of materials can be found in the Notes for Clarification.

Infants (if enrolled)	Toddlers (if enrolled)
Preschool (if enrolled)	School-age (if enrolled)

Look at the lists. Are there enough number and shape materials for each age group enrolled? **Y / N**

Can each child use math materials for much of the day? **Y / N**

List any barriers to individual children’s access throughout the day and possible solutions. Hint: Think about each child’s daily experience and look back at the questions on page 2: _____

Are all math/number materials in good condition and well organized? **Y / N**

Math/number concepts are talked about in the following ways during free play: _____

Math/number concepts are talked about in the following ways during routines: _____

Are math/number materials rotated for each age group? **Y / N** If Y, how often? _____

Math/number activities are planned and implemented for preschool and school age children, such as:

How often? _____

ITEM 22 Nature/science (p. 46-47)

For preschool and school age children (if enrolled) list the nature/science materials that are currently accessible for daily use. Some materials may be appropriate for more than one age group. The required number of materials can be found in the Notes for Clarification.

Collections of natural objects	Living things	Books, pictures, games, toys	Nature/science tools

Are there books, pictures, or play materials for all age groups that represent nature realistically? **Y / N**

Can each preschool and school age child use nature/science materials for much of the day? **Y / N**

List any barriers to individual children’s access throughout the day and possible solutions Hint: Think about each child’s daily experience and look back at the questions on page 2: _____

Children are exposed to the natural world in the following ways:

Indoors: _____ Outdoors: _____

Daily experiences are used to teach about nature/science in the following ways: _____

Are all nature/science materials in good condition and well organized? **Y / N**

The children are taught respect for nature in the following ways: _____

For preschool and school-age children, nature/science activities are planned and implemented such as:

How often? _____

ITEM 23 Sand and water play (p. 48–49)

There are _____ children enrolled who are 18 months of age or older. Answer these questions if at least one child is 18 months of age or older.

Describe the following, including provisions, frequency, and sand/water toys:

Indoor and/or outdoor water play:

Indoor and/or outdoor sand play:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Successful sand and/or water play is ensured by: _____

How often are these activities changed to provide children with different sensory experiences? List some recent examples: _____

ITEM 24 Promoting acceptance of diversity (p. 50–51)

Circle the categories of diversity that are present in each column. Hint: The required number of materials can be found in the FCCERS-R. It may be helpful to list specific examples in the open space below to make sure that enough are accessible.

Accessible <u>books</u> show diverse people, including different:	<u>Pictures</u> and/or <u>other displayed materials</u> show diverse people, including different:	Accessible <u>play materials</u> show diverse people, including different:
<p>Races</p> <p>Cultures</p> <p>Ages (infant-elderly)</p> <p>Abilities</p> <p>Non-stereotypical male and female gender roles</p>	<p>Races</p> <p>Cultures</p> <p>Ages (infant-elderly)</p> <p>Abilities</p> <p>Non-stereotypical male and female gender roles</p>	<p>Races</p> <p>Cultures</p> <p>Ages (infant-elderly)</p> <p>Abilities</p> <p>Non-stereotypical male and female gender roles</p>

Diversity in dramatic play is promoted with the following materials and props: _____

Diversity is included in play activities and daily routines in the following ways: _____

Special activities to promote diversity are planned and implemented, such as: _____

If a child or adult shows prejudice, the following actions are taken: _____

ITEM 25 Use of TV, video, and/or computer (p. 52-53)

* Only answer these questions when either television and/or computers are used. Technology use related to home work or other school work for school-age children is not considered.

Is screen time offered to children who are under 2 years old? **Y / N / NA** Hint: Refer to the NC Additional Notes for indicators 1.3, 3.3

Television/video programs used: _____

Computer/tablet programs used: _____

The total amount of time children can watch/use these programs (other than homework for school-age children) is:

TV/video: two's _____

preschool/school-age _____

Computer/tablet: two's _____

preschool _____

school-age _____

Children who are not interested can: _____

Are all programs educational, culturally sensitive, and appropriate (nothing scary, showing physical conflict, or lacking in educational content): **Y / N**

How does the provider interact with children when they have screen time? _____

Screen time is connected to children's interests, activities, or themes in the following ways:

ITEM 26 Active physical play (p. 54-55)

List the outdoor gross motor equipment currently used: _____

Are all gross motor spaces and equipment safe and age-appropriate? **Y / N** Hint: Is there enough cushioning under and around equipment? Is the area completely fenced? Are the connectors at the tops and bottoms of swings closed?

The gross motor equipment encourages the following skills. Hint: think about the different age groups enrolled and skills used for each age group: _____

The active physical play area(s) and gross motor materials are used for _____ minutes a day.

The following conditions prevent the group from playing outdoors: _____

When outdoor gross motor play does not occur, what activities occur indoors? Is there gross motor equipment that can be used inside? _____

List the surfaces available in the outdoor space: _____

Is there protection from the elements outdoors? **Y / N**

Other Considerations:

Are there varied activities and materials for each different age group that is currently enrolled? **Y / N**

Are there examples of ways activities or areas are modified to allow participation by different age groups (or used exclusively by certain age groups, etc.)? _____

If you have infants and toddlers enrolled, have you checked recently for choking hazards in all of the play areas? **Y / N**

If there are 7-12 year olds enrolled, are there interesting materials for them, that are different from materials used by younger children? **Y / N**

Are there areas of the child care space that are used infrequently by the children? Are there ways to utilize these spaces better or make them more interesting? _____

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 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. For example, there are videos with accompanying supplements, the NC Additional Notes, and many documents and webcasts about different topics. 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.
- 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 by clicking on "Training" tab and then "Register for an event." Select the event and enter your information. You will receive instructions via email before the event.

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:

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

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