

# Thinking More about Personal Care Routines



## ECERS-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 to the classroom. Answering the questions and referring to the ECERS-R will build familiarity with requirements, while offering a chance to reflect on current practices and situations.

**Preparation:** Refer to the ECERS-R (spiral bound edition published in 2005) when completing the questions. To better understand the scale format and structure, review the instructions for scoring on pages 5-6 in the ECERS-R and the definition of common terms on pages 6-7. 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 preschool classroom routines for arrival and departure, eating, resting, toileting/diapering, health practices, and safety of the children’s environment. These considerations and practices help maintain sanitary conditions to prevent illness for children and teachers, and provide a safe environment for children to learn. Additionally, they consider opportunities during routine care to promote independence, support learning, and build relationships.

### Tips:

- If you are confused about a question, look at the item in the ECERS-R and check any Notes for Clarification and/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.
- 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, and nap, it is most helpful for all adults in the classroom 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.

Date(s) completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom name/age group: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### ITEM 9 Greeting/departing (p. 22-23)

Do parents enter the classroom during arrival and departure? **Y / N**

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

What is discussed with the parents during arrivals and departures? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there ways children are helped to become involved in activities after they arrive? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

When other staff enter the classroom to offer assistance, do they consistently greet the children? **Y / N**

At the end of the day before they leave, are children still busy with activities? **Y / N**

### ITEM 10 Meals/Snacks (p. 24-25)

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

Does the meal/snack schedule meet the requirements based on your program's operating hours?

**Hint:** see the Notes for Clarification on page 25. **Y / N**

Does the meal/snack schedule seem to meet the children's needs (e.g., they do not ask for food earlier and tend to eat much of what they are served)? **Y / N**

If the program provides meals/ snacks, look at the menu for this week and the USDA meal guidelines. Are all the required food components present for each meal or snack? **Y / N / NA**

For classrooms with special food considerations, such as allergies or family preferences, consider the following, or circle **NA** and move to the next set of questions:

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**

For table sanitation, before and after meals/snacks:

Are they cleaned with soapy water and wiped dry with a single use paper towel or clean cloth? **Y / N**

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 and snacks? **Y / N**

Do teachers and staff wash hands before and after meals/snacks? **Y / N**

If applicable, are children with disabilities included at table with the other children? **Y / N / NA**

Think about the transition process before and after meals/snacks, how long do children wait to wash their hands or at the tables before/after eating? \_\_\_\_\_

What strategies are used to help the transitions go smoothly? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does anyone sit with the children and have conversations with them? **Y / N** If **yes**, describe some recent examples, including the topics discussed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How are children's self-help skills promoted during meals/snacks? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 11 Nap/rest (p. 26–27)**

Does the nap/rest schedule seem to meet the children's needs (e.g., they are rarely 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? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

Are nap provisions stored in an area that is convenient and easy to access? **Y / N**

When children are resting, mats or cots are placed at least \_\_\_\_\_ feet apart or are separated by a solid barrier that extends the full length of the sleep surfaces.

Is the room made conducive to nap/rest (e.g., dim lights, quiet music, etc.)? **Y / N**

Describe the teachers' role in supervision and any interactions that occur to help children relax:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 12 Toileting/diapering (p. 28–29)**

Are basic provisions provided for toileting routines (e.g., toilet paper, soap and running water, individual paper towels)? **Y / N**

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

For children wearing diapers or pull-ups, describe the system in place that ensures changes or bathroom visits every 2 hours: \_\_\_\_\_

Diaper/pull-up procedures (skip the next questions if not applicable):

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

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

Are the teacher’s and child’s hands cleaned with a disposable wipe before the child is redressed in their clean diaper/pull-up and clothing? **Y / N**

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

If a diapering surface (e.g., mat or changing table) is used:

Is it cleaned with soapy water and wiped dry with a single use paper towel or clean cloth? **Y / N**

Is it sprayed with disinfectant? **Y / N** The disinfectant is allowed to stay on the surface for at least \_\_\_\_\_ minutes before it is wiped off.

Regarding handwashing, do children wash hands after toileting or diapering routines? **Y / N**

Do staff wash hands after assisting with toileting/dressing or after completing the diapering process? **Y / N**

For classrooms with a separate sink used only for handwashing related to toileting/diapering handwashing, is it consistently used in this manner throughout the day? **Y / N**

When one sink is used for different types of handwashing, is there a process to disinfect the sink(s) used for handwashing after toileting/diapering before other types of handwashing occur? **Y / N**

Describe how children are supervised during toileting/diapering, including the types of interactions that occur: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are the toileting provisions convenient to the classroom? **Y / N**

Are the sink(s) and toilet (if used) low enough to be used by most of the children? **Y / N**

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

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**ITEM 13 Health practices (p. 30-31)**

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

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
- 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 / NA** Is it kept out of reach of children and only used with supervision? **Y / N / NA**

In addition to handwashing, what other actions are taken to reduce the spread of germs? **Hint:** see the Notes for Clarification on page 31 for examples, also consider the design of the trashcan and lid and how often mouthed toys are removed and cleaned: \_\_\_\_\_

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Year round, are children dressed appropriately for conditions indoors and outdoors? **Y / N**

What considerations are made for different seasons, weather conditions, and everyday activities (e.g., smocks, clothing, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is done if children's faces or hands get messy or their clothing becomes wet or soiled at school? \_\_\_\_\_

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Describe how teachers model and teach children good health practices: \_\_\_\_\_

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Are there ways children are taught to manage their health practices independently? **Y / N** List examples: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**ITEM 14 Safety practices (p. 32–33)**

List provisions for emergencies **Hint:** see page 32 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 for children under 3; food choking hazards for children under 4)

**Outdoors**

- 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 completely fenced, or fence height is less than 4 feet

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

Were any additional safety concerns noted that may require action/modification? **Y / N** If **yes**, describe:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe the teachers’ role in supervision, both indoors and outdoors: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe ways teachers monitor and take action to prevent or avoid possible hazards: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do teachers remind children of the reasons for safety rules and expectations each day? **Y / N** If **yes**, describe examples: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do children usually follow safety rules? **Y / N**

**Reflection for future planning:** After completing this worksheet, it can be helpful to go back and think more about the answers. Were there any questions that were answered “no” instead of “yes?” If so, this could help identify areas to work on. It can also be helpful to break bigger topics into smaller steps so that changes and progress can be easily recognized. Hopefully this worksheet was a helpful beginning to an ongoing self-study practice and suggest continuing with an action plan after completing the reflection questions below.

List areas where strengths were noted in personal care routines:

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List areas where improvements could be made or there are new ideas to think about:

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Are there any issues you will work to change right away? Describe how so:

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Are there issues that will take more time to change? What are these and what resources may be needed?

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## Want to find out more?

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 ECERS-R and the assessment process.

- Look for general information about the assessment process and also specific ECERS-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 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 Partnerships, or other child care agencies.

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### References:

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

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