

Thinking More about Space and Furnishings



ITERS-R

Purpose: This document addresses many of the requirements for items found in the Space and Furnishings subscale. The focus is primarily on indicators at the 3, 5, and 7 levels. 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 ITERS-R will build familiarity with requirements, while offering a chance to reflect on current practices and situations.

Preparation: Refer to the ITERS-R (spiral bound edition published in 2006) when completing the questions. To better understand the scale format and structure, review the instructions for scoring on pages 5-6 in the ITERS-R and the definitions of common terms on pages 7-8. 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 the many ways the space is a foundation for children’s experiences in the classroom. Appropriate furnishings and space for children’s activities support children’s behavior and development. There is a focus on various aspects of the space, including arrangement, accessibility, displayed materials, and furnishings to support play, learning, and relaxation, all of which form the physical environment in which quality child care takes place.

Tips:

- If you are confused about a question, look at the item in the ITERS-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 and actual 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 space and furnishings function to support children’s positive experiences. It can help identify barriers in the child care environment for use in planning modifications.
- 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 1 Indoor Space (p. 10-11)

Consider the classroom space:

Is the space ample (e.g., furnishings do not crowd the space, it is easy to move around)? **Y / N**

Are the play areas large enough for the type of play intended in each space? **Y / N**

Can teachers easily access spaces needed to meet the routine care needs of children? **Y / N**

Are there provisions for:

Sound absorption: Is the noise level controlled, such that it is not hard to hear conversations? **Y / N** If **No**, what steps could be taken to absorb sound or otherwise reduce the volume?

Lighting: Is there natural light? **Y / N** If **yes**, can it be controlled, such as with blinds or curtains? **Y / N**

Ventilation: Is there good air circulation? **Y / N** Can ventilation be controlled by classroom staff, such as by opening screened windows, controlling a fan, etc.? **Y / N**

Consider accessibility to the building, classroom, and a bathroom for individuals with disabilities:

- Stairs: Are there paths to the classroom and a bathroom without stairs? **Y / N**
- Doorways: Are the openings at least 32 inches wide? **Y / N**
- Door handles: Do all doors include handles that are easy to open with limited use of hands rather than knobs or slide latches? **Y / N**
- Thresholds: Are all thresholds under ½ inch high and beveled if between ¼ and ½ inch high? **Y / N**

Are there concerns with cleanliness or any repair issues that need to be addressed such as peeling paint or cracked floor tiles? **Y / N**

ITEM 2 Furniture for routine care, play, and learning (p. 12-13)

Does each child enrolled have (check all that apply):

- A cubby for personal belongings
- A crib, cot, or mat for rest/nap
- Use of a chair and space at a table or a highchair for older infants and toddlers

Are there enough low, open shelves or other furnishings to store classroom materials so that they are easily accessible to children? **Y / N**

Is there enough furniture for children’s use in play? **Y / N**

Is all furniture in good repair? **Y / N**

Is there furniture used to promote children’s self-help skills? **Y / N** If Yes, list examples (Hint: consider routines and play, and if both infants and toddlers are enrolled whether this is true for both age groups)

If enrolled, are chairs for toddlers sturdy, comfortable, and supportive? **Y / N / NA**

While toddlers are seated check to see (skip these questions if toddlers are not enrolled):

If their feet can touch the floor easily (not just their toes) while seated back in their chair, without scooting forwards.

If the table is a comfortable height and children can place their arms on the table top without raising their elbows.

Number of toddlers for whom the chairs are child-sized: _____

Number of toddlers for whom the table(s) are child-sized: _____

Is there convenient storage for additional materials and supplies? **Y / N**

Do adults have comfortable seating for each type of routine care? **Y / N**

Is it easy to access routine care furniture, such as nap provisions and cubbies? **Y / N**

ITEM 3 Provision for relaxation and comfort (p. 14)

List the soft furnishings (other than soft toys) accessible in the classroom: _____

Are enough soft furnishings gathered together to create a cozy area? **Y / N** Hint: In a cozy area, there should not be any play materials that would promote active or noisy play. See the Notes for Clarification for examples of a cozy area. Describe the cozy area and consider whether it is a nice place for a child to relax and be comfortable: _____

Are cozy areas protected from active play, by being physically separated in the space and by teacher intervention if active play occurs? **Y / N**

The classroom includes _____ soft toys for children’s use. Hint: Check the Notes for Clarification for the number required, based on the number of children enrolled.

Can each child use the soft toys and a cozy area for much of the day? **Y / N** Hint: See the definition of much of the day on ITERS-R page 6-7 and there is also more information about this concept in the Thinking More about Activities worksheet.

Are there soft furnishings in more than one area of the classroom? **Y / N**

If enrolled, are non-mobile children placed in the cozy area? **Y / N / NA**

List the types of activities that occur in spaces that include soft furnishings:

ITEM 4 Room arrangement (p. 15)

List the play areas with open space where children can play:

If enrolled, are children with disabilities able to use most of the spaces independently? **Y / N / NA**

Are all areas used by children easy to supervise? **Y / N** If No, list supervision challenges (high shelves, corners, or routine care areas that cause adults to turn their back to the children, times when one teacher is present, etc.)?

Are routine care areas arranged for convenience (Hint: See the indicator for examples)? **Y / N**

Are all of the quiet centers separated from active centers? **Y / N**

Does toy storage allow mobile children to easily get their own materials and for teachers to make materials easy to access for non-mobile children? **Y / N**

Do the play spaces allow for different types of experiences (e.g., active, quiet, messy)? **Y / N**

Are similar materials gathered together in interest areas? **Y / N**


Are all areas set up to discourage children and adults from moving through play areas as they move around the classroom? **Y / N** If No, list areas where play is sometimes interrupted: _____

Want to find out more?

Not all ITERS-R indicators are covered in this worksheet, so review the ITERS-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 ITERS-R and the assessment process.

- Look for general information about the assessment process and also specific ITERS-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.
- 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.

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: ncrlap.org Email: ncrlap@uncg.edu Toll-free: 1-866-362-7527	
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References:

Harms, T., Clifford, R., & Cryer, D. (2006) *Infant/Toddler Childhood Environment Rating Scale (Revised Edition)* New York, NY. Teachers College Press.

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