

Thinking More about Learning Materials and Play



FCCERS-R

Purpose: This document addresses many of the requirements that relate to various learning materials, areas, or activities. The focus is primarily on higher level indicators at the 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, and requirements at the 3 or “minimal” level are met. Not all FCCERS-R indicators and items are covered here, so relying only on these questions to prepare for an assessment will not be sufficient.

Preparation: Refer to the FCCERS-R 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. In addition, a copy of the most current NC Additional Notes (available at ncrlap.org) should be used with each item, when answering the questions. There are many questions, so it will likely take several reflection/review sessions to complete them all.

The items included here consider many aspects of the family childcare program pertaining to children’s play. The focus is specifically 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 is critically important in fostering 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:

- Using the worksheet on an ongoing basis can help verify that the required types and categories of materials are present over time, as the environment changes and children’s ages increase.
- When documenting materials in the program, look at what is provided for children’s independent use. Having additional materials for rotation may help meet some requirements for indicators at the highest level of quality, but these are not considered in scoring indicators that require access.
- Consider all materials in the entire play area that fit into a specific category. Not all materials have to be in a single area. For example, some math materials might be with games, and others might be included with nature/science materials. Some areas do have specific considerations for having materials organized together, like the block or cozy areas.
- If you are confused about a question in the worksheet, look at the item and notes and try to identify the requirement it relates to.
- This document is likely to be used by FCCH providers and technical assistance specialists. Answering the questions with someone else promotes sharing of perspectives and may draw attention to different details.

Answer the questions based on the specific schedule and materials in the program. Use the FCCERS-R and NC Additional Notes as you go to help increase understanding of the requirements.

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 go through the questions, look carefully at items 3, 6, 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.

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 certain materials are used, but not other materials? **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 3 Provisions for relaxation and comfort (p. 18–19)

Describe the soft furnishings and provisions (other than soft toys) accessible in your caregiving areas:

There are _____ soft toys available for children’s use. Hint: Check the Note for clarification for the number required based on enrollment.

Can each child use the soft toys and furnishings for much of the day? **Y / N**

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

ITEM 6 Space for privacy (p. 21)

Describe any areas in the program that are limited for use by 1-2 children at a time:

Are there any barriers to easy visual supervision of these areas from other child care areas? **Y / N**

Can each preschool and school age child use a space for privacy for much of the day and can infants and toddlers play without interruption? **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 following activities are set up in the space(s) for privacy:

ITEM 15 Using books (p. 34–35)

The number of children enrolled is _____, so the required number of age appropriate books in good repair is _____. Hint: Refer to the Notes for clarification for a definition and limits on the number of books in poor repair.

For each age group enrolled there are at least _____ age-appropriate books:

Infants/toddlers **Y / N**

Preschool/kindergarten **Y / N**

School-age **Y / N**

Is there a wide selection of books that includes the required topics listed in the Notes for Clarification? **Y / N**

List the topics that are included:

Can 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:

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

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 FCCERS-R.

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 kept well organized? **Y / N** How so?

The following sorts of things are discussed as children use fine motor materials;

How often does this occur? _____

ITEM 17 Art (p. 38–39)

* If all children are younger than 12 months and art is not used the item can be marked N/A; however, if art materials are used with children of any age, then the item must be scored.

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

The types of materials used with toddlers are:

Are all art materials used with the children safe and non-toxic? **Y / N**

If children are not interested in completing an art activity, they can:

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

Drawing materials	Paints	Three-dimensional materials	Collage materials	Tools

Can each preschool and school-age child use art 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’s creativity is encouraged in the following ways:

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

ITEM 18 Music and movement (p. 40)

Does informal singing occur daily? **Y / N** What other types of music activities are done and how often?

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:

If children are not interested in a music activity, they can:

The following music materials are accessible for the children:

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

Infants/toddlers **Y / N**

Preschool/kindergarten **Y / N**

School-age **Y / N**

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:

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.

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

If required, based on current enrollment, can each child use blocks 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:

The following interactions with children occur in the block area:

ITEM 20 Dramatic play (p. 42–43)

List the dramatic play materials currently accessible for children’s daily use. The required number of materials can be found in the FCCERS-R.

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

If enrolled, are there dress-up clothes for: Toddlers? **Y / N** Preschool: **Y / N**

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:

Children’s dramatic play is enhanced in the following ways:

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 FCCERS-R.

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:

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

Beyond group time, does this occur during play times? **Y / N** During routines? **Y / N**
 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. The required number of materials can be found in the FCCERS-R.

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

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:

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

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:

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. If all of the children in the classroom are under 18 months of age the item is marked N/A.

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

Indoor and/or outdoor water play:

Indoor and/or outdoor sand play:

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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)

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

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

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

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 to verify that enough are accessible.

Accessible <u>books</u> show diverse people, including different:	<u>Pictures and/or other displayed materials</u> show diverse people, including different:	<u>Various 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>

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

* If television and computer are not used with the children, this item can be marked as non-applicable. It is not required to provide these materials for the children; however, if either the television and/or computers are used, then the item must be scored. Technology use related to home work or other school work for school-age children does not impact scoring for this item.

There are _____ children who are older than 2 years old.

Is screen time offered to children who are under 2 years old. **Y / N** 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: toddler _____ preschool/school-age _____

Computer/tablet: toddler _____ preschool _____ school-age _____

Children who are not interested can:

Children's screen time is enhanced by:

Screen time is connected to other 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? 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?

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 9-12 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, either because they are not put there, or they are not interested? Are there ways to utilize these spaces better or make them more interesting?

Want to find out more?

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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Toll-free: 1-866-362-7527

Resources:

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

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