

Thinking More about Space and Furnishings



ITERS-3

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-3 will build familiarity with requirements, while reflecting on current practices and situations.

Preparation: Refer to the ITERS-3 (spiral binding on the top, published in 2017) when completing the questions. To better understand the scale format and structure, review the Scoring System on page 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 the many ways the space is a foundation for children’s experiences in the classroom. Appropriate furnishings and space for activities support children’s behavior and development. There is a focus on various aspects of the space, including arrangement, accessibility, furnishings, and displayed materials, all of which form the physical environment where quality child care takes place.

Tips:

- If you are confused about a question, look at the Item in the ITERS-3 and check any Notes for Clarification and/or NC Additional Notes to identify the specific indicator and requirement to which it refers.
- Describe current practices when answering 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 the space and furnishings support children’s positive experiences. This information 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, health consultants, etc.) promotes sharing of perspectives and may draw attention to different details.

Reminder: In the ITERS-3, young infants are birth-5 months who cannot sit unsupported, older infants are 6-11 months who can sit up without support, young toddlers are 12-17 months, older toddlers are 18-23 months, younger twos are 24-29 months, and older twos are 30-35 months.

Date(s) completed: _____ Classroom name/age group: _____

Worksheet completed by: _____

Item 1 Indoor space (p. 16-17)

Consider the classroom space for the maximum number of children and teachers:

Is it adequate, with enough space for furnishings and people? **Y / N** Is it ample (e.g., not crowded, easy to move around, with plenty of space to play and complete daily routines)? **Y / N**

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

If **no** to either, describe any ways furnishings can be rearranged, changed, or removed to provide easier movement and use of space: _____

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 reduce the noise volume (carpets, soft furnishings, etc.)? _____

Lighting: Is there natural light (windows or skylights)? **Y / N** If **yes**, can it be controlled with blinds or curtains that allow for light during play and dimmed light during rest/nap? **Y / N**

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

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

- Stairs: Is there a route to the classroom and a bathroom without stairs? **Y / N**
- Doorways: Are openings at least 32 inches wide? **Y / N**
- Door handles: Do all doors (or gates, if used) have lever handles or options for easy opening with limited use of hands (no round knobs or slide latches)? **Y / N**
- Thresholds: Are all thresholds under ½ inch high? If between ¼ - ½ inch high, are they beveled? **Y / N**

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

Item 2 Furnishings for care, play, and learning (p. 18-19)

Is all furniture in good repair? **Y / N** If enrolled, do children with disabilities have all needed adaptive furniture? **Y / N / NA**

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

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

Are there enough low/open shelves or other storage so materials are easily accessible to children and not crowded? **Y / N**

Is there adult seating in the classroom for use in working with children? **Y / N**

List all soft furnishings accessible in the classroom, making sure to include only those that are clean and in good repair. **Hint:** Soft toys are considered in other items. List only soft furnishings here: _____

Are there enough soft furnishings to provide softness in at least two areas? **Y / N**

Is there furniture used to promote children's self-help skills? **Y / N / NA** If **yes**, list examples. **Hint:** Consider routines and play, and if infants and older children are enrolled, whether this is true for both age groups:

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

While toddlers/twos are seated (if enrolled), check to see:

Can their feet touch the floor easily (not just their toes) while seated all the way back in their chair? **Y / N**

Number for whom the chairs are child-sized: _____

Can they place their arms on the table top without raising their elbows? **Y / N**

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

For toddlers/twos, list examples of classroom furniture that is designed for specific types of play (e.g., dramatic play kitchen, sand or water table, easel). _____

Are there at least two examples? **Y / N / NA**

Item 3 Room arrangement (p. 20-21)

Are all areas of the classroom easy to supervise at a glance? **Y / N** If **no**, list supervision challenges (shape of the room/corners, high shelves, or routine care areas that cause adults to turn their back to the children, etc.): _____

Are similar materials organized together in defined areas with open space to play? **Hint:** See the Notes for Clarification on p. 20 for the definitions of a play area and an interest center. **Y / N**

If infants are enrolled, list play areas:

If toddlers/twos are enrolled, list interest centers:

Are there are least two different areas? **Y / N**

Are there at least three different centers? **Y / N**

Consider routine care areas and check all that apply:

- Space for personal belongings is in the classroom
- Cribs/cots/mats are stored for easy access
- Bottles and any food preparations are done in a space convenient to feeding
- Diapering supplies and extra clothing are stored near the changing table

If enrolled, are children with disabilities able to use all play areas? **Y / N / NA**

Are all the quiet centers separated from active centers? **Y / N** Does the space include pathways to move around the room without disrupting activities? **Y / N**

For toddlers and twos, is there a cozy area? **Hint:** See the Notes for Clarification on p. 20 for the definition of a cozy area. **Y / N / NA** Is it protected from active play? **Y / N / NA**

Item 4 Display for children (p. 22-23)

Consider the classroom display, including children’s work, hanging display, bulletin boards, and all other materials, including on the walls, doors, ceiling, furnishings, and floor.

Are there many simple, colorful items displayed in different areas of the classroom? **Y / N**

Displays the children can easily see include: _____

Are some within children’s reach? **Y / N** Is the display within reach protected from tearing/damage? **Y / N**

For older toddlers/twos, is their artwork on display? **Y / N / NA**

For children two and older, are there photographs of the children, their families, or pets? **Y / N** If **yes**, are these on the children’s eye level? **Y / N**

How often are the classroom displays changed? _____ In the current display, are there connections to topics of interest, seasons, or children’s activities? **Y / N**

Mobiles or hanging objects are in the following areas: _____

Do teachers often point to and talk with children about the display throughout the day, everyday? **Y / N** If **yes**, describe two recent examples that included extended talk about display: _____

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”? Were there any questions where you struggled to provide written examples, or where the specific interactions considered do not occur daily, throughout the day? 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 tool in an ongoing self-study practice and will be useful in continuing with an action plan after completing the reflection questions below.

List areas where strengths were noted in space and furnishings:

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

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

Are there issue that will take more time to change? What were these and what resources/support may be needed?

Want to find out more?

Not all ITERS-3 indicators are covered in this worksheet, so review the ITERS-3 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 on the ncrlap.org website to stay informed about any updates and to continue to build your understanding of the ITERS-3 and the assessment process.

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.

Look for general information about the assessment process and specific ITERS-3 resources. These resources may offer ideas about what to focus on or to supplement ideas you were already considering. Check out the answers to the Frequently Asked Questions or send a new question to ncrlap@uncg.edu

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 TA Specialists, a Child Care Health Consultant, or other child care agencies.



References:

Harms, T., Cryer, D., Clifford, R., & Yazejian, N. (2017). *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale. (Third Edition)*. New York, NY. Teachers College Press.

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