



North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project Summary of Lowest Scoring Items and Indicators for the FCCERS-R

This document provides a summary of the lowest scoring items and indicators for the FCCERS-R, as used for the assessment portion of the NC Star Rated License. The items are listed in order by overall average score. To prepare this document we analyzed data collected by our staff who conducted 327 assessments in Family Child Care Homes across North Carolina from September 1, 2017 - August 31, 2019. We focused attention on individual items with average scores less than 5.0 and on indicators which were most frequently used to determine the lowest scoring item's average score. Similar to our previous reports, the lowest scoring items primarily relate to health and safety such as issues with outdoor safety practices, sanitary conditions for toileting and diapering, meals and snacks, and nap/rest.

While we recognize that the health and safety issues are very important, we do not want to underemphasize the importance of other aspects of high quality environments that will be critical to children's long-term development. We encourage programs to carefully consider all sub-scales, items, and indicators of the rating scale. When preparing for an assessment, it is important to note that this document should not be used to replace the FCCERS-R or any of the NC Additional Notes that further clarify the meanings of specific indicators. This document is intended only to highlight problem areas, but does not provide a comprehensive description or explanation of the common concerns or include every situation that can affect scoring.

To read more about the common issues of the FCCERS-R, ways to overcome the lower scoring items/indicators, as well as learn more about the assessment process and best practices for child care, visit the NCRLAP website: www.ncrlap.org for several resources such as videos, webcasts, and worksheets.

Common reasons why credit is not earned for the lower scoring items and indicators.

Item 9 Meals/snacks (average score = 2.7)

- **33%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.2**.
Meals or snacks lack one or more of the required meal components. Water is not offered or accessible to children between meals/snacks. Children under 4 are served foods considered to be choking hazards. Infant food/bottles are heated in the microwave.
- **38%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.3**.
Children or provider recontaminate hands after washing before meals by touching toys, walls, floors, trash can lid, etc. or handwashing does not occur for children or provider before and after a meal, snack, or bottle (for children who hold their own bottle). Tables are not first cleaned, then sanitized and left to air dry for at least 2 minutes. Hands rather than utensils are used to break up children's foods. Cups and bottles of juice or milk are left unrefrigerated for longer than 1 hour. Bottles or baby foods are refrigerated after use and then served again.
- **41%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.4**.
Children are left alone while eating or the provider is in the same room, but is focused on other activities while children are eating.

Item 12 Safety (average score = 2.99)

- **49%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.1**
Indoors: There is not a barrier on the edge of the changing table or the barrier is not at least 6 inches above the surface where children lay during changes; infants are put on stomach to sleep; when lifting or assisting infants/ toddlers, their weight is supported up by the arm(s) or hand(s); small toys are present that are choking hazards; unsafe art materials are used or accessible to children under 3 years of age, such as small crayons, glitter, googly eyes or foam stickers; food choking hazards are observed such as whole grapes or hot dog rounds; sanitizer or disinfectant is sprayed where children can inhale mist; electrical outlets are not covered.

Outdoors: Resilient surfacing is not deep enough or fall zones are not adequate; equipment is too large for age group or is in poor repair with broken or sharp edges; there are open S-hooks or there is no fence.

Common reasons why credit is not earned for the lower scoring items and indicators.

Item 10 Diapering/toileting (average score = 3.14)

- **52%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.1**.
Most of the time sinks are not disinfected between dual uses or are not disinfected at the right times (e.g., after diapering/toileting handwashing or before other types of handwashing) or the disinfecting solution is wiped immediately. There are often lapses in the sanitary diapering procedure such as supplies are not taken out prior to starting a change or wipes are not used at the correct time during the diapering process for adult/child hands, disinfectant does not air dry for at least 2 minutes.
- **31%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.2**.
Children's diapers/pull-ups are not changed or visually checked at least every 2 hours.
- **34%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.3**.
Children and/or provider do not wash hands as needed after diapering/toileting before touching other materials or children. Provider washes hands before cleaning and disinfecting the diapering table instead of after.

Item 11 Health practices (average score = 3.27)

- **17%** do not earn credit for indicator **1.3**. (A score of yes at the 1 level results in an item score of 1).
Children who are sick and need to go home wait for their parents in the cozy area, on the couch, or another area that is used by other children.
- **21%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.1**.
Most of the time mouthed toys are not sanitized before being used by other children or are put away with clean toys. Trash can lid is not hands-free.
- **48%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.2**.
Child and/or adult handwashing does not occur as needed (e.g., arrivals, re-entry, sand/water play, messy play, after wiping noses, after contamination).

Item 26 Active physical play (average score = 3.5)

- **58%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.2**.
The mulch/sand/wood chips are not deep enough (inadequate cushioning); spacing of equipment is too close (inadequate fall zones); no fence.

Item 13 Helping children understand language (average score = 3.68)

- **56%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.4**.
Provider uses negative language to control behaviors that are age typical and not dangerous (e.g., young children put toys in their mouth or reach for one another). Children are told to stop behaviors they are engaged in, rather than redirecting them to the behavior that is expected. Derogatory statements are made to children.

Item 16 Fine motor (average score = 3.89)

- **28%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.1**.
Enough fine motor toys are not accessible for the age group(s) enrolled. Children are not able to use age appropriate materials for at least one hour daily. If enrolled, school age children do not have the required numbers and/or types of age appropriate fine motor materials.
- **34%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.2**.
Children are prevented from using fine motor materials for long periods and/or provider does not make fine motor materials accessible to non-mobile children. At least half of the required materials are not present in any secondary or additional spaces used by the children.

Item 17 Art (average score = 4.05)

- **34%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.2**.
Art materials that are unsafe or otherwise inappropriate for the age group are used with infants/toddlers. Children under 3 can independently reach unsafe art materials.

Common reasons why credit is not earned for the lower scoring items and indicators.

Item 15 Using books (average score = 4.23)

- **24%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.2**.
More than three books, regardless of total number of books provided, are in disrepair (e.g., spine of book is tearing and/or detached, for board books there are small pieces of peeling paper that can be further pulled or torn, for any books there are peeling or ripped pages or covers that affect images or are easy to grasp and tear further, missing flaps, pages scribbled on, pages may not turn properly due to bending or separation from spine, etc.).

Item 21 Math/number (average score = 4.23)

- **26%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.1**
The required quantity and types of materials are not provided for each age group enrolled or are not accessible for one hour daily. If enrolled, school age children do not have at least two age appropriate number and shape materials that are more challenging than the materials provided for the younger children.

Item 31 Schedule (average score = 4.41)

- **19%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.3**.
Children are not taken outdoors for at least one hour every day, weather permitting. For example, outdoor play does not occur when ground/equipment is wet but there is no active precipitation. Provider's personal perception of too hot or too cold is the basis for the decision not to go outside.

Item 24 Promoting acceptance of diversity (average score = 4.7)

- **28%** do not earn credit for indicator **5.1**
The required quantity and types of materials are not provided for children's use. At least three materials (other than the four required in indicator 5.2) that show diversity are not accessible.
- **29%** do not earn credit for indicator **5.2**.
There are fewer than four different types of props for dramatic play that represent different races/cultures.

Item 8 Nap/rest (average score = 4.73)

- **31%** do not earn credit for indicator **3.2**.
Spacing of mats/cots is too close or a solid barrier that extends the entire length of the sleep surface is not used to provide separation. Mats/cots are stored with bedding touching. Children nap with soft toys/pillows from a community play area.

Item 19 Blocks (average score = 4.85)

- **22%** do not earn credit for indicator **5.1**.
The required quantity of blocks and accessories is not provided or at least half of the required materials are not present in secondary or additional spaces used by children. Children are prevented from using materials for long periods of time.
- **32%** do not earn credit for indicator **5.3**.
Block area is too small for meaningful block play. Space for block play is not protected from other types of play/traffic. For example, children/staff walk through block area to access other parts of the room. Other types of materials are stored in same area with blocks and accessories; children accessing these materials walk through the area used for block play or play with blocks and other materials are in the same space.

Reference

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