

# Thinking More about Space and Furnishings



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

**Preparation:** Refer to the FCCERS-R (spiral bound edition published in 2007) when completing the questions. To better understand the scale format and structure, review the instructions for scoring on page 8 in the FCCERS-R and the definitions of common terms on pages 9-11. 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 the many ways the space is a foundation for children’s experiences in the program. 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 FCCERS-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 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 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.
- This document is likely to be used by providers and technical assistance specialists. Answering the questions with someone else (other FCCH providers, 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 used for child care (p.14-15)

Consider the indoor 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**

Is it easy to access spaces needed to meet the routine care needs of children? **Y / N**

If **no**, describe ways furnishings can be rearranged, changed, or removed to address these issues:

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Are there provisions for:

Sound absorption: Is the noise level controlled, so that it is not hard to hear conversations? **Y / N**

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

Ventilation: Is there good air circulation? **Y / N** Can it be adjusted as needed by opening screened windows or using a fan? **Y / N**

Consider accessibility to the home, the child care space, and a bathroom for individuals with disabilities:

- Stairs: Are there ways into the child care space 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 any concerns with cleanliness or repair issues that need to be addressed such as peeling paint or cracked floor tiles? **Y / N**

Do areas used for eating or messy activities have easy-to-clean surfaces? **Y / N**

### Item 2 Furniture for routine care, play, and learning (p.16-17)

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

- A separate cubby for personal belongings
- Use of a highchair for older infants or a chair and space at a table for toddlers/preschoolers/school-age children enrolled
- A crib, cot, or mat for each of the infants/toddlers/preschoolers enrolled

Is all furniture in good repair? **Y / N** Are there routines for cleaning/maintaining the furnishings? **Y / N**

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

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

List examples of furnishings that promote children's self-help skills for the ages/abilities of children enrolled:

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Does the provider have comfortable seating for use in routines and activities? **Y / N**

Are chairs suited to children's size, or adapted for their easy use? **Y / N**

When toddlers/preschoolers/school-age children are seated check to see:

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 children for whom the chairs are child-sized: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children for whom the table(s) are child-sized: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

### **ITEM 3 Provision for relaxation and comfort (p. 18)**

List the soft furnishings (other than soft toys) accessible in the caregiving areas and consider whether they provide a nice place for children to relax and be comfortable: \_\_\_\_\_

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Do the furnishings provide much softness for children? **Y / N** **Hints:** These furnishings should not be placed near any play materials that would promote active or noisy play. See the Notes for Clarification for examples of what is considered enough softness.

Are areas that include softness protected from active play, either by being physically separated and/or provider intervention if active play occurs? **Y / N**

There are \_\_\_\_\_ soft toys for children's use. **Hint:** Check the Notes 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** **Hint:** See the definition of much of the day on FCCERS-R page 10 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 caregiving space? **Y / N**

Are any of the soft furnishings child-sized? **Y / N**

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

**ITEM 4 Arrangement of indoor space for child care (p. 19)**

List the area(s) with open space where children can play: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are all areas of the caregiving space easy to supervise? **Y / N** If **no**, list supervision challenges (high shelves, corners, or routine care areas that prevent the provider from being able to supervise for extended periods, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is the space for child care cleared of any breakable objects or hazards? **Y / N**

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

Is the space arranged for convenient and independent use during play and routine care? **Hint:** see the indicators for examples. **Y / N**

Does the arrangement allow different types of activities to occur at the same time? **Y / N**

Does material storage include grouping similar types of materials together? **Y / N**

Are materials organized for easy access by children in or near the space where they will be used? **Y / N**

**ITEM 5 Display for children (p.20)**

Consider all materials on display, including children’s artwork, hanging display, bulletin boards, parent information, and all other materials. List displays the children can see: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are some of the displays listed within children’s reach? **Y / N**

List the artwork done by the children (N/A for infants): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Are at least 2 pieces of children’s work displayed for each child who is 12 months and older? **Y / N**

Talking about the display takes place \_\_\_\_\_ times per day. When does this occur? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The display includes photographs of the children, their families, or their pets at child’s eye-level. **Y / N**

Is there more individualized art work than projects that look similar? **Y / N**

How often is the display changed? \_\_\_\_\_

## ITEM 6 Space for privacy (p.21)

List any areas in the child care space that are always limited for use by 1-2 children at a time:

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What strategies are used to maintain the limits of 1-2 children in these areas? \_\_\_\_\_

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Can children using these areas be easily seen from all other parts of the child care space? **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? **Hints:** See the definition of much of the day on FCCERS-R page 10.

There is also more information about this concept in the Thinking More about Activities worksheet. **Y / N**

List any barriers to individual children's access throughout the day and possible solutions. Hint: Think about each child's daily experience. \_\_\_\_\_

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The following activities are set up in the space(s) for privacy: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Reflection for future planning:** After completing this worksheet, it can be helpful to go back and think 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 space and furnishings:

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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?

Not all FCCERS-R indicators are covered in this worksheet, so review the FCCERS-R carefully and seek out 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](http://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. 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 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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### References:

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>.