Thinking More about Language and Books

ITERS-3

Purpose: This document addresses many of the requirements found in the Language and Books subscale. The focus is primarily on indicators at the 3, 5, and 7 level. It is important to review each item entirely to ensure that no indicator at the 1 or "inadequate" level applies. 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 at 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 in this subscale consider many aspects related to promoting children's understanding and use of language. Using varied and new vocabulary, responding to children's verbal and non-verbal communication, engaging in conversations, as well as using books, all work to expand children's developing language skills. Attention is given to the ways adults introduce new words and ideas, support children in responsive, engaging interactions, read books and talk about the text and pictures, and promote children's use of books.

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 required literacy materials are present as the environment changes over time, and that positive interactions promoting children's language, communication skills, and literacy are a focus each day.
- 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.

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

Worksheet completed by: _____

Item 9 Talking with children (p. 32-33)

Hint: Before answering these questions, review the section, "Interactions: Negative, Positive, or Neutral" on p. 13 of the ITERS-3.

Do staff frequently talk to children during both routine care and play activities throughout the day? **Y / N**

Is the tone used with children consistently positive or neutral? **Y / N** Consider any times when teachers might use phrases that include negative language rather than telling children what they should do. How can the following phrases be reworded to offer positive guidance?

"Uh-uh, not in your mouth" _____

_____

"We don't hit" _____

_____

"We are not playing with blocks now" _____

_____

Is guidance consistently offered in positive terms throughout the day and by all adults? **Y / N**

Thinking about interactions with the children, consider the following questions:

Is communication individualized for each child, such as by being aware of which children need less stimulation or a quieter voice, of attention spans, and of children seeking interaction? **Y / N**

Do teachers use a pleasant tone with children throughout the day? **Y / N**

Is much of the talking personalized and one-to-one between teachers and children? **Y / N**

Is talking to children done in a playful way (e.g., verbal play)? **Y / N** If **yes**, describe at least three recent playful verbal interactions: _____

_____

_____

_____

Item 10 Encouraging vocabulary development (p. 34-35)

Thinking about interactions with the children, consider the following questions:

Do teachers frequently name people, places, objects, and actions? **Y / N**

Do children experience these words in routine care and play, throughout the day? **Y / N**

Do many words get repeated throughout the day for emphasis? Consider when this occurs in routine care and play and provide examples: _____

_____

_____

Does staff talk include references to the past or future, in addition to present experiences? **Y / N** If **yes**, list two recent examples: _____

_____

_____

Do teachers use language to compare and/or contrast? **Hint**: See indicator 5.4 for examples of the type of language considered. **Y / N** If yes, list two recent examples:

_____

_____

_____

_____

After naming an object, do staff ever provide more information/details about it? **Y / N** If **yes**, list two recent examples: _____

_____

_____

_____

Are rotated or new classroom materials and display used to introduce words and ideas? **Y / N** If **yes**, describe a recent example: _____

_____

_____

Item 11 Responding to children's communication (p. 36-37)

Children communicate non-verbally and verbally in many different ways (e.g., babbling, words, crying, pointing, gestures, nodding, facial expressions). Think about all the ways children communicate in this classroom and consider the following questions:

> Do teachers usually understand what children are trying to communicate? **Y / N**
>
> Are teacher's responses to children's communication quick and positive? **Y / N**
>
> Do responses usually address the child's need or interest? **Y / N**

How do adults respond when:

> A child cries while their bottle warms up or a child asks to eat: _____
>
> _____
>
> _____
>
> A child cries after another child stepped on their hand: _____
>
> _____
>
> _____
>
> In addition to responses for children who are upset, are there many interactions for children when content? **Y / N**

Are all responses to children's communication positive, even during more stressful parts of the day? **Y / N**

Do teachers add words to what a child is expressing? **Hint**: See indicator 5.4 for examples. **Y / N** If **yes**, describe two recent examples with different children: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are teachers tuned in to more subtle communication from children (e.g., notice hunger or fatigue signs before crying, end activity for toddlers or twos prior to them disengaging or walking away)? **Y / N**

For verbal children, do staff expand on words or ideas the child says? **Y / N / NA**   If **yes**, list a recent example of what the child said, and the words staff used to respond: _____

_____

_____

_____

Consider the types of back-and-forth communication that occur between teachers and children (even in rooms where children are non-verbal):

> Do teachers initiate conversations with children (e.g., back and forth babble with infants, copy sounds, simple conversations with toddlers, more complex conversations with twos)? **Y / N**

> Does this type of communication happen frequently throughout the day? **Y / N**

> Are children asked questions and do teachers wait for a response (verbal or non-verbal)? **Y / N**

> Does this type of communication happen throughout the day in routines and play? **Y / N**

Are questions/conversations personalized for each child? **Y / N** Describe ways that teachers make interactions personal to each child: _____

_____

_____

Do teachers consistently pause to allow time for children to respond? **Y / N** If children do not or are not able to respond, do teachers respond for them? **Y / N**

Are books are used with children each day? **Y / N** Does this occur informally and not part of a group activity? **Y / N** If **yes**, does this occur frequently throughout the day? **Y / N**

Are there ways teachers make books times more interesting to children? **Y / N**   If **yes**, what are some strategies used? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

If children are not interested in books times, they can: _____
_____
_____

Do teachers read the text and talk about the story or pictures with children during book times? **Y / N** If **yes**, this occurs _____ times in a typical day.

Are children actively involved in the use of books? **Hint**: See the indicator for examples. **Y / N** If **yes**, describe two recent examples with different children: _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Do teachers use their finger to point to printed words as they read? **Y / N** If **yes**, how often does this happen during the day? _____

Item 14 Encouraging children's use of books (p. 42-43)

Refer to the Notes for Clarification and the indicators for information about books in good repair, appropriateness, and the total number of books. Information about time requirements for materials, including books, can be found in the "Accessibility and time requirement" section of the Thinking More about Activities worksheet and the definition of "Accessible" on page 11-12 of the ITERS-3. **Hint**: There should be no long lapses in each child's access to books.

The total number of books accessible to children in the classroom is: _____

     Do almost all books meet requirements for appropriateness and good repair? **Y / N**

     Do the accessible books include both fiction and factual information? **Y / N**

     Are the books are stored and organized for children's easy access? **Y / N**

     Are books rotated? **Y / N** If **yes**, how often? _____

Do mobile children show independent interest in books? **Y / N**

Do non-mobile children show independent interest in books? **Hint**: Think about book location and how teacher facilitate children's access. **Y / N**

Do teachers engage in extended positive interactions when a child uses a book independently? **Y / N** If **yes**, describe a recent example: _____
_____
_____
_____

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 language and books:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

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.