

Thinking More about Interaction



ECERS-3

Purpose: This document addresses many of the requirements found in the Interaction 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 ECERS-3 will build familiarity with requirements, while reflecting on current practices and situations.

Preparation: Refer to the ECERS-3 (spiral binding on the top, published in 2015) when completing the questions. To better understand the scale format and structure, review the Scoring System on page 9. 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.

These items consider the many ways in which adults interact with children to promote safety, learning, and close relationships. Positive and supportive responses to children during routines, free play, small and large group activities, and during both planned and spontaneous times, promote social and cognitive development. Modeling and encouraging positive social behaviors build the foundation of children’s social and emotional skills.

Tips:

- If you are confused about a question, look at the Item in the ECERS-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 children experience enriching, positive, and age-appropriate language and interactions. Additionally, this process emphasizes how interactions, social communication, responsive teaching, and guidance contribute to positive relationships for all children.
- 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 28 Supervision of gross motor (p. 68-69)

Are all areas of the gross motor space(s) indoors and outdoors easy to supervise? **Y / N**

Describe plans to ensure all children can be seen and to prevent dangerous situations: _____

Describe interactions between adults and children during gross motor play: _____

Do teachers focus positive attention towards children playing actively? **Y / N**

Do teachers initiate vigorous play? **Y / N** If **yes**, think about opportunities for large muscle movement, indoors and outdoors, and list recent examples:

Are children encouraged to practice new gross motor skills? **Y / N** If **yes**, list recent examples:

Item 29 Individualized teaching and learning (p. 70-71)

Hint: See the definition of “individualized teaching” on ECERS-3 p. 11 before completing this section.

Consider activities and teachers’ interactions with children during free play periods both during the observation period and throughout the day. **Hint:** The “observation period” is defined on p. 7 of the ECERS-3. More information about this requirement can be found in the “Accessibility and time requirements” section of the Thinking More about Learning Activities worksheet:

Are most of the materials that children use open-ended (e.g., different ways to use, encourage creativity, etc.)? **Y / N** If **yes**, does children’s access to materials occur for at least 1 hour during the observation period every morning? **Y / N** And during free play periods throughout the day? **Y / N**

If teacher-directed activities also occur, are they planned to promote children’s success (e.g., appropriate and supportive experiences, responsive to children’s needs and interests, etc.)? **Y / N**

Do children have positive experiences with teaching interactions that are individualized for each child's abilities and interests during free play? **Y / N** Do the teaching interactions include:

- Introducing new words to children in relation to their play
- Expanding on children's ideas
- Asking questions that encourage children to verbalize their reasoning and ideas

Item 30 Staff-child interaction (p. 72-73)

Think about how teachers interact with the children, verbally and non-verbally, including during positive, challenging, and neutral situations:

Do interactions with children include enthusiasm, affection, and/or appreciation? **Y / N**

Do these types of interactions occur frequently throughout the day? **Y / N**

Are there any long periods, during routines, play, preparation, or transition times when positive interactions do not occur? **Y / N** If **yes**, describe when this is and any plans to ensure that interactions with the children can still occur at these times: _____

Are children and adults relaxed and interested in activities/play most of the time? **Y / N**

Are responses to strong emotions sympathetic and respectful, even when the feelings occur during challenging behaviors? **Y / N**

Describe a recent interaction with a child who was angry or upset: _____

Is appropriate physical contact used to show warmth to children? **Y / N** If **yes**, in what ways does this occur? _____

Are there times teachers respond to non-verbal cues from children? **Hint:** See indicator 7.3 on p. 73 for examples. **Y / N** If **yes**, describe a recent example: _____

Item 31 Peer interaction (p. 74-75)

Think about the current social skills of the children in your group. Check the situation that best applies. This group:

- Plays well together and is mostly skilled at navigating conflict
- Mostly plays well but one or two children still need frequent support with conflicts
- Mostly plays well but when conflicts occur, many children need regular support from a teacher
- Is still learning how to navigate play and needs higher levels of supervision and support to promote positive social interactions and cooperative play

Does the schedule provide opportunities for social interactions between children for at least 1 hour during the observation period? **Y / N** And throughout most of the day? **Y / N** If **yes**, how are children's interactions with each other encouraged? _____

Think of a recent conflict between children. Describe how teachers encouraged appropriate choices and assisted children with solving the problem: _____

Do these responses encourage appropriate interactions and behavior (e.g., tell them what to do, instead of what not to do)? **Y / N**

Are children encouraged and helped to solve their own problems with their peers? **Y / N**

Do teachers regularly point out positive social behavior between children? **Y / N**

Are there systems or plans to prevent conflicts from occurring (e.g., system for taking turns with a list and/or timer, enough materials in popular centers, supervision to catch problems before they escalate)? **Y / N** If **yes**, list them: _____

Are children encouraged to work together during play or other daily activities? **Y / N** Describe what occurs and when: _____

Item 32 Discipline (p. 76-77)

Are expectations for children’s behavior adjusted based on their age and developmental levels? **Y / N**

When addressing challenging or unwanted behaviors, are staff consistently positive and supportive? **Y / N**

Describe common guidance strategies: _____

Are children mostly aware of rules and expectations? **Y / N** If children aren’t aware and behaviors continue, how do teachers respond?

Are reasons for rules explained to children? **Y / N**
If **yes**, list recent examples:

Describe two recent examples of teachers pointing out children’s feelings and how a child’s actions affected another child’s response (positive or negative). **Hint:** See indicator 7.1 on p. 77 for examples: _____

Do teachers plan to minimize problems? Consider the following:

Does the schedule provide ample free play that allows children to have prolonged, meaningful play experiences with a variety of different materials/activities? **Y / N**

Is there ample time scheduled for active and energetic play? **Y / N**

Are transitions mostly smooth, with little waiting time or crowding? **Y / N**

Do group times promote active involvement? **Y / N**

Are children actively involved in finding solutions, as appropriate, during conflicts or challenging situations?

Y / N If **yes**, list a few recent examples: _____

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 when asked, 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 interactions:

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 ECERS-3 indicators are covered in this worksheet, so review the ECERS-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 ECERS-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 ECERS-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., Clifford, R., & Cryer, D. (2015). *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale. (Third Edition)*. New York, NY. Teachers College Press.

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