

# Thinking More about Space and Furnishings



## FCCERS-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 space(s) for childcare. Answering the questions and referring to the FCCERS-3 will build familiarity with requirements, while reflecting on current practices and situations.

**Preparation:** Refer to the FCCERS-3 (spiral binding on the top, published in 2019) when completing 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](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 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 FCCERS-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 (others FCCH providers, technical assistance specialists, health consultants, etc.) promotes sharing of perspectives and may draw attention to different details.

**Reminder:** In the FCCERS-3, young infants cannot sit unsupported, older infants can sit up unsupported, young toddlers are 12-17 months, older toddlers are 18-23 months, younger twos are 24-29 months, older twos are 30-35 months, preschoolers are 3 through 5 years, older preschoolers are 4 and 5 years, school-agers are 6 through 12 years, and older school-agers are 9 through 12 years.

Date(s) completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Ages enrolled: \_\_\_\_\_

Worksheet completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Item 1 Indoor space used for child care (p. 16-17)**

Consider the indoor space(s) for the maximum enrollment and staffing of your program:

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 the play area(s) and space(s) for routine care large enough for comfortable use? **Y / N**

If **no** to either, describe any ways furnishings can be rearranged, changed, or removed to provide easier movement and use of the 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 adults, such as by opening screened windows, controlling a fan, etc.? **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** Do messy activities or eating occur over easy-to-clean surfaces? **Y / N** If **no**, could a plastic or other durable barrier be used to protect the carpet/floor?

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

- Stairs: Are there paths to the child care space, a bathroom, and the outdoor space 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 that are easy to open with limited use of hands rather than 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**

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

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

- A space large enough to store all personal belongings/outerwear
- A crib, cot, or mat for each infant/toddler/preschooler
- Use of a highchair for older infants or a chair and space at a table for toddlers/twos/preschoolers/school-age children

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

Is all furniture in good repair? **Y / N**

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

Play \_\_\_\_\_ Routines \_\_\_\_\_

List all soft furnishings accessible in the caregiving space, 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**

Does furniture support personalized care? **Hint:** See indicator 7.2 for examples. **Y / N**

For toddlers/older children, list examples of 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 Arrangement of indoor space for child care (p. 20-21)

Are similar materials organized together in defined areas with open space to play? **Y / N**

Does each age group enrolled have easy access to their materials and spaces? **Y / N**

Are all areas of the caregiving space 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 prevent the provider from seeing other children, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

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**

Is there a cozy area for toddlers/twos/preschoolers/school-age children? **Hint:** See the Notes for Clarification for indicator 5.4 for the definition of a cozy area. **Y / N / NA** If yes, is it protected from active play? **Y / N / NA**

Does the arrangement of the space encourage children to use both play and routine furnishings and materials independently? **Y / N**

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

Consider displays in the space(s) for childcare, including children’s work, hanging display, bulletin boards, and all other materials, including on the walls, doors, ceiling, furnishings, and floor.

Are there many pictures, posters, and/or photographs that are easy for children to see? **Y / N**

Are some within children’s reach? **Y / N**

Does the display include photographs of the children, their families, or pets? **Y / N**

Are the photos on child’s eye-level? **Y / N**

For children over 18 months, is much of their individualized artwork on display? **Hint:** See the Notes for Clarification for indicator 7.2 for more information. **Y / N / NA**

How often are the displays changed? \_\_\_\_\_

In the current display, are there connections to topics of interest, seasons, or children’s activities? **Y / N**

Does the provider often point to and have age-appropriate conversations with children about the display? **Y / N** If **yes**, describe two recent examples that included extended talk/conversations about display: \_\_\_\_\_

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**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? 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:

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

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**Want to find out more?**

Not all FCCERS-3 indicators are covered in this worksheet, so review the FCCERS-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](http://ncrlap.org) website to stay informed about any updates and to continue to build your understanding of the FCCERS-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](http://ncrlap.org).

Look for general information about the assessment process and specific FCCERS-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](mailto:ncrlap@uncg.edu)

When planning for program enhancement, always consider the unique features of the program such as ages and abilities of the children enrolled, the provider(s), 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. (2019). Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale. (Third Edition). New York, NY. Teachers College Press.

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