

Additional Notes for Clarification for the ECERS-3

Be sure to replace older notes with newer notes.

Most recent changes are in orange:

08-15: Administration of the Scale, Explanation of Terms,
Item 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31

07-18: Item 23, 24, 25

11-16: Staff, Item 1, 4, 6, 7, 11, 14, 15, 17, 23, 27, 28, 29

Administration of the Scale. Item 2, page 7:

The three hours must be completed in one continuous block (e.g., 8:00 to 11:00am, 9:00 to 12:00 pm) at one time, and not broken up into smaller portions (e.g., 8:00 to 10:00am and 2:00 to 3:00pm).

Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale, new term 11; insert on page 12:

Accessible. When calculating time accessible count only time that all children have reasonable access. When some children have access and others do not (for example some children are in a teacher required small group or engaged in eating), then the average amount of time those children fail to have access is not counted in calculating time accessible. Exceptions to this rule are that access time may be counted when one or even a small group is involved in toileting, or some children leave the classroom to participate in special activities not offered to the whole group, such as therapy or special classes that parents pay for separately. Start timing only when all children have access and no child is waiting. Clean up time is not considered access time. These requirements hold true for all types of access (e.g., music, art, gross motor, etc.).

Free play, means that the child is permitted to select materials and companions and as far as possible manage play independently. Adult interaction is in response to the child's needs. Situations in which the children are assigned to centers by staff, or staff select the materials that individual children may use do not count as free play. Free play does not mean that all areas of the classroom must be open at one time, with all materials accessible. A more limited number of area choices may be available, since free play takes place if children are allowed to choose where they will play, and with whom, from the choices allowed. The allowed choices must include play areas or interest centers of varied types, where children are allowed to choose what to take from toy storage shelves. Free play is not credited when staff pre-select a material that children are allowed to use in the various play areas or centers, when children are not able to freely access other materials in the play areas/centers if they wish. There must be enough areas open so that children do not have problems with access to materials that interest them.

Addition to the note on Staff in Terms Used Throughout the Scale

Staff: This note applies only to ECERS-3 and not to previous editions of the scale: Under some conditions, a special staff member may be observed working, for part of the observation, with children as a whole group or in smaller groups. For example, all children visit an art room or library, and special teachers work with them. Or a music teacher comes to the classroom and children have a choice of participating in the activities she does with them, or all children are expected to participate as a whole group. In this case, if the staff member works regularly with the children (e.g., once a week or more) consider the adult-child interactions as well as the activities in which the children participate when scoring. Do not consider special guests who visit the classroom, such as firefighters, or another community helper unless they are extremely negative with the children.

In addition, part-time staff members who come and go can be considered, such as "floaters" or other regular staff members who provide extra help or breaks for classroom staff. If they are present for only short periods, do not count their interactions as heavily as those of staff who work with the children for longer periods of the observation. However, if it is required that an interaction is observed a certain number of times, and the part-time floater is observed doing what is needed as evidence for the requirement, then this can be counted.

1. Indoor space	1.2, 3.2	To score "Yes" to 1.2, more than one of the 4 problems must exist in the room. If any one of the issues listed in 3.2 is a problem, score "No" to 3.2.
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2. Furnishings for care, play, and learning	3.1, 3.4	Typographical error. The second and third sentences of the 3.4 note apply to the note for 3.1. They do not apply to indicator 3.4.
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4. Space for privacy	5.3	If no problems are observed as children use spaces for privacy required in 5.1, score this indicator “Yes.”
	7.2	If no issues about having to share materials are observed, score “Yes.”
6. Space for gross motor play	3.1	The space used must be an outdoor space. Only when weather does not permit use of the outdoor space, can an indoor space be substituted.
	1.2,	Consider the whole gross motor space when scoring. To give credit for “somewhat safe,” children should be observed using the space for gross motor freely, with plenty of reasonably safe space to run and use equipment, and without major hazards located in the areas children tend to use most frequently. There may be some major hazards in the space, but these are unlikely to cause a high risk of injury because they are not located in spaces most often used by the children. Children may come into contact with the major hazards occasionally, but not frequently. The major hazards must be very serious, and children must be frequently exposed to them, to score 3.2 “No.” For example, a popular high climber is located over a cement surface or the swings frequently used by children have little if any cushioned fall zone in front and behind them.
	3.2,	
	5.3	
7. Gross motor equipment	3.1,	At the minimal level, either portable or stationary equipment are allowed for scoring. Both are not required. At the 5 and 7 levels of quality, both portable and stationary equipment are required and must also be considered when scoring.
	3.2,	
	5.1,	
	5.2,	
	7.1,	
	7.2	
8. Meals/snack	1.2,	Replace note in scale with the following:
	3.3,	
	5.3,	Since three important health practices are required (washing /sanitizing the eating surface, hand hygiene before and after eating, and serving uncontaminated foods), consider the extent to which each of these required health practices is followed. If there is little or no effort in two of the three health practices, (for example, handwashing is completely ignored, there is no attempt to clean tables, and/or foods are served under conditions that cause extreme contamination), then score 1.2 Yes. For all indicators, there can be minor lapses in following the handwashing procedure (not rubbing for the 20 seconds, but rubbing all hand surfaces thoroughly; not wetting hands first but soap still makes bubbles). However, hands should be cleaned reasonably well. If there is some attempt to complete practices, even if procedures are not done correctly, score 3.3 Yes. If there is a significant attempt to do all procedures, but the practices are completed with many minor errors, score 5.3 Yes. To score 7.1 Yes, all procedures must be done with only a few minor errors. When a flexible snack time is provided, and children come and go throughout a period of time, the same sanitary conditions are required, such as sanitizing the table between uses by different children, handwashing completed. If children use hands to eat, handwashing is required after eating to remove saliva and food.
	7.1	
	3.1	Children should be fed every two to three hours, unless sleeping. One meal or snack should be observed during the three hour observation to score 3.1 “Yes.” In addition, water should be offered between meals/snacks when children have been very active, upon request or if the air is very dry.
9. Toileting/diapering		If diapering is needed, the diapering procedure in <i>Caring for Our Children</i> is required.

10. Health practices	3.2, 5.2	If naptime is not observed, but cots and linens are observed to be stored with minor sanitary problems, (slight problem of contamination, such as a few edges of blankets touching) score 3.2 Yes, and 5.2 No. If there is a major problem with contamination, such as contamination of linens for each cot or floor sides of mats stored touching sleep sides of other mats, score 3.2 No.
	3.3	Some interaction is required. All interaction observed must be either neutral or positive, with at least 2 examples of positive interaction. No negative interactions can be observed to score Yes.
11. Safety practices	5.1	There can be no more than 2 major hazards indoors and 2 outdoors to give credit. If there are more than 2 in either location, credit cannot be given.
13. Encouraging children to use language	1.2, 3.2, 5.2, 7.2	This note is actually for indicators 1.2, 3.2, 5.2, and 7.2.
14. Staff use of books with the children	1.2, 3.2, 5.2, 5.3	Book time is any time a book is read to or used with a child or a group of children. It can be formal or informal.
	5.4	This indicator can be met as staff read to the children or use books with them, formally, or informally, more than once during the observation. When doing these types of activities, they must demonstrate the interest or enthusiasm required in the indicator. The mere reading of a book to a child without showing enthusiasm or enjoyment, suggesting that a child go use a book, or briefly commenting on a child's use of a book as they walk past may not be enough to meet the requirements of the indicator.
15. Encouraging children's use of books	1.2	If this happens twice during an observation, and 75% of the children are not interested, score "Yes."
16. Becoming familiar with print	3.1	The note for 5.1 also applies to this indicator.
	7.3	To give credit this must be observed 3 times during the observation.
17. Fine motor	3.4	To give credit, the materials required in 3.1 must offer the different levels of challenge.
	5.3	To give credit, at least 2 different examples must be observed.
20. Blocks	5.5	To give credit this must be observed twice.
21. Dramatic play	7.2	Replace original note with the following: To score Yes, observe either print or number talk at least once. Both print and number talk are not required to be observed.

22. Nature/science	<p>When scoring sand/water experiences, there should be a sufficient quantity of the sand or water so children can dig, scoop, pour, fill, and empty containers. Materials that cannot be used for digging, measuring, and pouring, such as Styrofoam packing materials, natural objects (e.g., pine cones, acorns, leaves for children to examine), or gelatinous sensory materials (e.g., goop, Jello) cannot be counted as sand/water substitutes. In addition, do not count foods (issue of wasting food) or materials that are hazardous to the children in the group, such as dried kidney beans, materials that children put in nose or ears, etc. Examples of appropriate substitutes would be millet bird seed or sterilized potting soil. Do not count mulch used as ground cover outdoors.</p> <p>3.1, 3.3 Sand and/or water can each be counted for both indicators.</p>
23. Math materials and activities	<p>1.1, 3.1, 5.1 Since the use of unit blocks in construction encourages children to become familiar with size and shape, consider unit blocks as math materials for this item, whether labels are present on the shelves or not. One type of blocks is counted as one math material representing familiarity with shapes. For example, all unit blocks are one example, large hollow blocks are a second example.</p> <p>1.2 If either behavior is observed, score “No.” If neither is observed, score “Yes.”</p> <p>5.3 If staff model showing fingers to represent numbers, this can count as “encouraging children” only if staff obviously encourage children to follow their model, or one or more children are observed copying what the staff does.</p>
24. Math in daily events	<p>1.2, 1.3 Score “No” if no math talk is observed being used during daily events.</p> <p>3.1, 5.1 The terms “routines” or “daily routines” are the personal care routines considered in the items Meals/snacks, Toileting/diapering, and Health practices. They do not include other scheduled daily events, such as whole group or small group times.</p> <p>3.2, 5.2, 7.2 In each of these indicators, the math talk must be about non-math materials, as stated in 3.2. Using math talk in relation to children’s play or clean-up of blocks is not credited here, since blocks are considered a math material and considered in Item 23, Math materials and activities.</p> <p>3.3 For this indicator, any whole group can be considered including routines, transitions, or playing/learning. Additional examples of the math talk might include staff saying to the group, “First we will get our coats; second we will go out and then we can play”, “How many people are allowed in the block center? Three, that’s right.” “Remember we need to rub our hands for 20 seconds as we wash.”</p> <p>7.2 The math talk must occur when children are playing and not involved in transitions or routines.</p>
25. Under-standing written numbers	<p>1.1, 3.1 The two examples must be easily seen by the children and children must be able to clearly see the relationship between the printed number and the quantity it represents.</p> <p>3.1 At least 2 examples are required to score Yes.</p> <p>7.3 The materials are those required in 5.1.</p>

26. Promoting acceptance of diversity	3.2, 5.3	<p>Replace the existing note with the following:</p> <p>If stereotyping or violence is shown with regard to any group, such as some “Cowboy and Indian” toys, then Indicator 3.2 should be scored No. Gender stereotyping should be considered here. Look for problems that would be easily obvious to the children. It is not necessary to search avidly for negative examples. Portrayals of men/boys doing traditionally male activities and women/girls doing traditionally female activities are acceptable for this indicator. However, do not give credit for 3.2 if gender stereotyping is portrayed negatively in any way. To give credit for the “non-traditional gender roles” diversity type, in 5.3, some evidence of non-gender stereotyping must be easily visible to balance the traditional roles shown. Examples of non-stereotyping in gender roles means showing males and females doing similar activities, such as both doing construction, both engaged in sports, or both caring for babies. For 3.2, when historic cultural traditions are represented, the images must be balanced with non-traditional modern representations. For example, if traditional African cultures are represented in materials, then current representations must also be included.</p>
	5.1 5.2	<p>To give credit for materials, children must be able to easily experience them for at least one hour during the observation. For example, if the materials are located in play areas or interest centers, children must be able to play with them for the required amount of time. Pictures in the display must be easily viewed and displayed in spaces children access during the observation.</p>
27. Appropriate use of technology		<p>The American Academy of Pediatrics released new guidance for the use of technology with young children. This guidance is provided for parents at home with their children, not for early childhood programs. Many children are often exposed to large amounts of technology at home, and it is not in their best interests to add to that in early childhood programs. Therefore, the ERS item is to be interpreted as written, with the earlier additional note.</p> <p>3.3 If electronic media is used with children for less than 5 minutes, and all children are interested and engaged, this indicator can be scored Yes, even though there may not be an alternate activity accessible. For example, if children all enjoy dancing for a few minutes to a program shown on a smart board, and no alternative is accessible, score Yes. However, this should not occur more than once during the observation or for longer periods of time.</p>
28. Supervision of gross motor		<p>If classrooms are combined during gross motor times, consider the experiences of all children and the supervision of all staff.</p> <p>If scoring this item when space is being shared with other groups, consider all staff and all children of about the same ages as those being observed.</p>
29. Individualized teaching and learning	5.1 5.2 7.2	<p>To give credit there must be many materials/activities accessible for an hour of the observation and most must be open-ended.</p> <p>“Staff sometimes circulate” means that staff do not remain in one or two places throughout free play. Instead they move about occasionally to interact and teach children playing in different areas. However, they do not need to frequently move about the room, as would be required to provide much individualized teaching during free play. A few children may not receive any interaction. For 7.2, no children should be ignored while in indoor free play, and many should be interacted with in outdoor free play.</p>
30. Staff-child interaction	1.4 3.1	<p>If activities with whole group are observed for at least 2 ½ hours of the 3 hour observation, score 1.4 Yes. In addition, 3.1 may be scored Yes, even if 1.4 was scored Yes.</p>
	3.3	<p>Although staff might appear to be neutral in their interactions, and sometimes mildly negative with children, as they attempt to manage out-of-bounds behavior, to score Yes, they must show interest in children’s activities, get along well with children , usually appear relaxed. If staff frequently appear irritable, disinterested or detached, or show extreme negative behavior with any child, score 3.3 No.</p>
31. Peer interaction	1.1	<p>“Most of the time” means for at least 2 ½ hours of the 3 hour observation.</p>