

Additional Notes for Clarification for the ECERS-R

These notes do not change any of the requirements in the printed scales, they merely add additional information to help in accurate scoring.

Be sure to replace older notes with newer notes.

Most recent changes are in orange:

10-09: Items 4 and 5	09-11: Item 24	11-12: Bleach/water surface time
06-10: Items 20 and 28	01-12: Item 22	01-13: General Notes (addition to handwashing)
11-10: Items 7 and 8	04-12: General Notes, Item 6, 10, 12	06-13: General Notes (bleach solution)
03-11: Item 2	07-12: Bleach/water solution ratio, Item 12	01-14: Item 23
07-11: Handwashing, Item 10, 12, 13, 27	09-12: Item 11	11-16: Item 2, 10, 24

General Notes:

In order to clarify the different but related functions of cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting to remove germs, "Caring for Our Children" states that cleaning means physically removing dirt and contamination using soap, water and applying friction, thus exposing any remaining germs on the dry, clean surface. Sanitizing means reducing germs on an inanimate surface or object to a safe level. Disinfecting means destroying germs on an inanimate surface or object. A sanitizer should be used on food contact surfaces or any object that is mouthed. A disinfectant should be used only on diaper changing tables, toilets, counter tops, door and cabinet handles. Only EPA approved products are acceptable, and all sanitizers and disinfectants must be used according to the instructions on the container in order to be safe.

Caring for our Children has issued a new recommendation for use of a diluted bleach solution for sanitizing and disinfecting because many brand name companies have changed their bleach solution and there is no longer a consistent solution across different brands. The new recommendation advises us to: use only EPA registered products for sanitizing and disinfecting; follow the manufacturer's instructions for diluting the bleach solution and for the required contact time.

Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale:

This note should be added to the "Explanation of Terms Used throughout the Scale" that begins on page 6 in the ECERS-R scale:

Handwashing and hand sanitizer use: The 2011 edition of Caring for Our Children (page 113) states that hand sanitizers can be used in place of handwashing unless hands are visibly soiled. Use can be by adults and children 2 years of age and older. Therefore the use of hand sanitizers is acceptable when scoring these indicators as long as the product contains 60- 95% alcohol, manufacturer's instructions are followed, and very close supervision of children is provided to ensure proper use and to avoid ingestion or contact with eyes and mucous membranes. Be sure to check to be sure that the manufacturer's directions for use are followed exactly, because if not, do not give credit for any time when not followed. You should ask to see the original container with directions for use, if it is not observable. If children are not closely supervised when using the sanitizer, consider in supervision-related indicators for the item specifically, and also in Safety and Supervision.

If hands are visibly dirty, handwashing, according to the required procedure is still required, although the time for rubbing soapy hands together before rinsing is changed to 20 seconds rather than the original 10 seconds. Antibacterial soaps should not be used. Children using shared art or sensory materials must wash hands, or use hand sanitizer according to directions, both before and after use.

Handwashing or use of a hand sanitizer is required for all ERS observers upon entering the program.

The use of some shared art and sensory materials will not require hand washing before use. Moist or wet materials are more likely to spread germs than dry materials. For example, shared crayons would not require hand hygiene before or after use, while having two children share play dough, or finger paint on one surface, would require it. Similarly, hand hygiene would not be required before using shared dry sand (just after), but if water were shared, then hand hygiene would be required both before and after use.

2. Furniture for routine care, play and learning

3.1 When determining whether furniture for routine care is sufficient, consider the sizes of cubbies in relation to what is stored in them to see if they can adequately accommodate all of each child's possessions. Each child enrolled in the group must have an individual cubby that is not shared with anyone else, with space for all possessions to be stored there. This is to reduce the spread of lice and scabies. When children's personal belonging, such as coats, extra clothing, blankets (if stored in cubbies,) are not reasonably well-separated, or if cubbies are so full that things fall onto the floor, score 3.1 "No" because the cubbies are not adequate in size based on what must be stored in them. If there is only minor touching of possessions (e.g., protruding sleeves of winter coats touching those of other children, or a small problem with other materials, but this could be solved easily by pushing things into the cubby properly, consider the cubbies adequate. Any touching of children's personal possessions should also be considered in the Health item.

When considering children's storage space (e.g., cubbies), determine whether children's coats would fit without spilling out or touching another child's possessions, even if the observation takes place when coats are not being used. Also consider whether all children's possessions that are put into cubbies fit (such as blankets, sheets, extra clothes) without spilling out. However, if children do not use their cubbies well, not pushing possessions into the space properly, so things fall out, consider whether the furniture would hold everything if used correctly. Consider the problem of things spilling out of cubbies in Health and Nap (if appropriate)

4. Room arrangement for play

1.2, 3.2 A room arrangement that is divided into interest areas or centers, using shelves or other furniture, can be given credit as being "not difficult to supervise visually" as long as teachers move about the spaces used by the children so that they can see each child frequently enough to ensure that each child is safe, and so that they can interact with children when needed. Credit can be given even though they may not see all children at all times. However, the ages, abilities, and impulsiveness of the children must be considered when scoring. Older, less impulsive children require less visual supervision than younger or more impulsive children. In addition, slight problems with the room shape, for example, a slight extension, (not a full L- shape) of the room, or the existence of pillars, that create small blind areas are acceptable as long as they are well-supervised frequently enough to meet children's needs. To score, observe the relationship between the teachers' supervision and the room arrangement to see if children are adequately supervised visually.

5. Space for privacy

3.2 Any space for privacy that a child uses is considered easily supervised by staff if the space is open enough to allow visual supervision. It is not required that the teachers can see the space(s) at all times, as long as teachers move about the room and can see the spaces for privacy used by the children frequently enough to ensure that each child is safe. To score, observe the relationship between the teachers' supervision and how spaces for privacy are used to see if children are adequately supervised. The ages, abilities, and impulsiveness of the children must be considered when scoring. Older, less impulsive children require less visual supervision than younger or more impulsive children.

6. Child-related display

Labels on shelves indicating where materials are to be stored and center labels or signs do not count as display.

7. Space for gross motor play

3.1 In the note for this indicator, replace "In programs operating for less than 4 hours per day, at least ½ hour is required." with the following: In programs operating less than 8 hours a day, see Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale, on page 7 to determine amount of time required for part day programs of less than 8 hours.

8. Gross motor equipment

3.1 In the note for this indicator, **Delete** "For programs of 4 hours or less, at least half an hour of access is required. (See chart provided in Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale on p. 7 to determine approximate amount of time required for part-day programs of more than 4 hours)."
Insert: In programs operating less than 8 hours a day, see Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale, on page 7 to determine amount of time required for part day programs of less than 8 hours.

10. Meals/ snacks	1.1 3.1	Children should be fed every two-three hours unless sleeping. During a 3 hour observation, at least one meal or snack should be observed.
	1.3, 3.3	See the note on handwashing/use of hand sanitizers that has been added to the "Explanation of Terms Used throughout the Scale".
	1.3, 3.3	An alternative EPA approved "sanitizer" may be used in place of the usual bleach and water solution as part of the table washing procedure or for high chair trays, and other food related surfaces. Check the label of the original container and look for the designation as an EPA <u>sanitizer</u> . Be sure all instructions for use are followed such as the time required to be on the surface or whether to rinse after use. If not do not give credit for cleaning the surface. Safety issues regarding the use of the alternative sanitizer, such as not rinsing the residue if required or not keeping out of the reach of children, should be considered in the supervision-related indicators of this item if applicable, and in the Safety and General supervision items where applicable.
		Since three important health practices are required (eating surface washing /sanitizing, hand hygiene before and after eating, and serving uncontaminated foods), consider the extent to which each of the required health practices is followed. If there is little effort in 2 of the 3 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 1.3 Yes. 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 a significant attempt to complete all practices, even if some procedures are not done absolutely correctly, score 3.3, Yes. If there is a minimal attempt to do all procedures, but the practices are completed with many serious errors, score 3.3 No.
11. Nap	1.2, 3.2, 5.3	<i>Caring for Our Children, 3rd Edition</i> , now requires 3 feet between cots/mats. Solid screens or other barriers, such as crib ends or toy shelves, are not acceptable because they would need to extend from floor to ceiling to prevent air borne contamination from one child to another, and would disrupt supervision. For 1.2, score No if at least 75% of the mats/cots are separated by at least 18 inches. For 3.2, do not give credit unless there is at least 18 inches between every sleeping provision. 5.3 requires 3 feet between each sleeping surface with no exceptions (e.g., shelves or screens as dividers).
12. Toileting/ diapering		For information on changing children in "Pull-ups" or other disposable underwear, or with soiled clothing, see the 2011 edition of <i>Caring for Our Children</i> , pages 108-109. In the most recent <i>Caring for Our Children</i> , 3rd edition, pages 106-108, there are changes to the diapering procedure to use when scoring. First, non-absorbent paper is required that extends from the child's shoulders to beyond the feet. The diapering surface must be disinfected, but does not have to be washed first, as long as the paper is used and the surface is not visibly soiled. If paper is not used, then the surface must be cleaned (a wipe is permitted for this) and then disinfected, whether visibly soiled or not to be counted as correct when scoring. Second, a soiled diaper should be left under the child, while the child is cleaned. Then it should be folded over and disposed of properly. For the complete current diapering procedure, see <i>Caring for Our Children</i> , or look for the new handout on www.ersi.info . 1.1, 3.1 An alternative EPA approved "disinfectant" (not sanitizer) may be used in place of the usual bleach and water solution. Check the label of the original container and look for the designation as an EPA disinfectant. Be sure all instructions for use are followed. If not do not give credit for sanitizing the surface. Safety issues regarding the use of the alternative disinfectant, such as not rinsing the residue if required or not keeping out of the reach of children, should be considered in the supervision-related indicators of this item if applicable, and in the Safety and General supervision items where applicable. 1.3, 3.3 See the note on handwashing/use of hand sanitizers that has been added to the "Explanation of Terms Used throughout the Scale".
13. Health practices	1.1, 3.1	See the note on handwashing/use of hand sanitizers that has been added to the "Explanation of Terms Used throughout the Scale".
20. Art		Dot markers (also called Bingo markers, or dot paints) are counted in the "tools" category of art materials. They do not allow the control provided by the materials in the drawing category, nor do they fit the paint category, in terms of how they can be used.
22. Blocks	3.1, 3.3, 5.1, 5.2, 7.1	There are 3 types of accessories (transportation, people, animals) required for this item, although there can be other types made available to children as well. Within each type, there are subtypes. For example, animals may include subtypes of zoo and farm animals. For 3.1 and 3.3, only one type is required. For 5.1, two of the types are required. For 5.2, the two types must be stored separately, although subtypes can be stored together (ex., all animals in one container; all people in another). For 7.1, at a minimum, all three types must be represented.

23. Sand and water	5.3	In the note for this indicator, replace "For programs of 4 hours or less, the requirement of 1 hour is changed to ½ hour." with the following: In programs operating less than 8 hours a day, see Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale, on page 7 to determine amount of time required for part day programs of less than 8 hours.
24. Dramatic play	5.1	<p>Female dress-ups can include dresses, skirts, women's blouses, shoes, and hats, and purses. Male dress-ups can include men's shoes and hats, neck ties, vests, and blazers. Some colors are traditionally associated with either men or women. For example, it was unusual, and often unacceptable, to see men wearing the color pink, jewelry or flowery clothing. Women were not known for wearing ties. Today, however, things are changing. The intention of requiring both traditionally female and male items is to let both boys and girls see how it feels to wear all these things, without regard to their gender.</p> <p>Occupational dress-up clothing associated with men or women from an historical point of view, such as fire fighter, police officer or construction worker for men, or nurses and teachers for women, can also be counted as gender-specific dress-ups. Having these items accessible to children gives all children the opportunity to try out different familiar roles, in which both boys and girls can be, for example, nurses, construction workers, teachers, chefs, or fire fighters. We count such community helper dress-ups because certain work roles in our society have been restricted by gender, in terms of who was hired and encouraged to climb the career ladder successfully. Although some progress has been made in this area of discrimination, there are still problems. For example, women still face difficulties as police officers, military staff, or fire fighters. Men are unusual as early child care and education teachers. Therefore, we want to ensure that both boys and girls can try out roles of all possible careers, so they have a belief that they will be able to take on any career they may want to in the future.</p>
	5.2	To score this indicator Yes, indicator 5.1 must have been scored Yes.
27. Use of TV, video, and/or computers	3.3	Due to recommendations in the 2011 version of Caring for Our Children, pages 66-67, time allowed for children to view television, video, DVD and use the computer ("media screen time) has been changed. Time is limited for children in ECERS groups to not more than 30 minutes total, once a week. Computer use time should be limited to no more than 15 minutes per day for children in a program of any length with the exception of children with disabilities who require assistive computer technology. No media screen time should be allowed during meals/snacks.
28. Promoting acceptance of diversity	5.1	Photographs of the children in the group and their families are given credit in Item 6. Child related display, indicator 5.1 and not as "pictures showing diversity" in this item, even if the children and their families in the class photos show diversity of race, culture, abilities or gender roles. In order to be given credit for this indicator, many (at least 3-5) pictures that have been selected intentionally by staff to clearly show diversity, are displayed so they are easy for children to see in the space used by the children most of the time.