

## Additional Notes for Clarification for the FCCERS-R

### Most Recent Changes:

08-09: Much of the Day

06-10: Item 17, 20, 24

09-10: Much of the Day

12-10: Item 3, 16, 25

03-11: Item 17

07-11: Handwashing, Item 8, 9, 10, 11, 17, 19, 25

01-12: Item 8

04-12: General Notes, Item 5, 8, 9, 10, 12

07-12: Bleach/water solution ratio, Item 10

09-12: Item 8

10-12: Handwashing, Item 4, 8, 12

11-12: Bleach/water surface time

03-13: Item 29

06-13: General Notes (bleach solution)

09-13: Much of the Day

11-16: Item 25

**03-22: Item 25**

### 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:

**Much of the day:** In most items, "much of the day" is associated with the children's access to materials typically used indoors (e.g., books, art materials, fine motor or dramatic play toys). It means most of the time that any child maybe awake and able to play. If children are prevented from using materials for long periods by overly long routines when the children have to wait with nothing to do, being kept in groups that they are not engaged in, or being kept in areas where access is not possible, then credit cannot be given for "much of the day." Appropriate group activities in which children are engaged and interested for short periods that match their abilities are permissible as long as they do not significantly affect access to materials throughout the rest of the day. If children (or any child) who are ready to play are prevented from reaching and using materials for a total of 20 minutes during a 3-hour observation, then "much of the day" cannot be given credit. The 20 minutes can be calculated as one 20-minute time period, or may be calculated as a combination of smaller time periods that equal 20 minutes. "Much of the day" should be considered separately for each item where the requirement appears. In some cases credit might be given on one item for much of the day, while not given for another item.

When timing for "much of the day", begin timing when any child has no access to play materials when awake and ready to play. If the time the child does not have access is less than 3 minutes, do not count this in calculating the 20 minute limit. A wait of less than 3 minutes is acceptable. If the time with no access lasts for 3 or more minutes, use the whole time in calculating the 20 minutes time limit. Do not omit the first three minutes of the time without access.

Since it is beneficial for babies less than 12 months to be held, even without access to play materials, do not count time being held as long as the child receives regular interaction from the adult (talked to, shown things, patted) unless the child obviously does not want to be held.

If children are kept outdoors for *extremely long periods* (1/3 of the day or more), thus limiting access to materials typically used indoors, then to give credit for "much of the day", such materials must be provided outdoors as well. Special attention should be paid to individual children who may not have the same access to materials as do the other children. For example, non-mobile children or children who are confined in a playpen may not have the same access to play materials as the other children in a group. For non-mobile infants, all required toys or materials do not have to be accessible at the same time during the whole observation because of problems with clutter. However, there must be clear indications that the required variety and numbers of materials are accessible at various times during the day. A cranky baby who needs close physical contact to be soothed may not be "ready to play" and thus not require access to materials during the "cranky" times.

When children are taken for stroller rides, do not count the time spent riding as part of the 20 minutes when children do not have access to materials for "much of the day" as long as children are generally engaged (one child may be less engaged than others for some part of the ride, but most children should show interest, and no child should show distress), and the actual stroller ride is no longer than 20 minutes. Some children may fall asleep in the stroller, but in this case they are not awake and ready to play, so falling asleep should not count in the timing for much of the day. Sometimes there are delays in putting children into strollers, and after the walk, removing them. If children have to wait for long periods (over 3 minutes with no access to play materials) while waiting in the strollers, then the time waiting should be counted towards the 20 minute limit that will disallow crediting "much of the day."

**Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers, School-agers:** When referring to "very young children," especially with regard to safety, we mean children under 3 years of age. *Play:* "Play," or "play activities," require that children are actively involved, able to use toys or other play materials, and are able to interact with others if they wish. Play activities should not be confused with more passive group times (such as circle times, when children mostly listen to a "teacher" or spend time watching TV or videos), or times when children are required to work on specific non-play tasks, such as coloring alphabet ditto sheets, and did not get to choose to do the activity. Play is characterized by the child being engaged. Routine care times are not counted as play, even if they are done playfully. Play activities can be part of free play, teacher- or child-initiated, either indoors or outdoors, offered with many choices of things to do or with a more limited selection, done individually, in small groups, or in a large group, and can be active or quiet.

**This note should be added to the "Explanation of Terms Used throughout the Scale" that begins on page 9 in the FCCERS-R scale:**

*Handwashing:* 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. (For children under 24 months, the original hand washing is still required.) 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.

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1. Indoor space used for child care	5.2	The direct lighting must be in the space(s) used for child care for more than 50% of the time children are allowed to attend. Natural light is not required in spaces used for nap, but those spaces must have enough light to allow adequate visual supervision of children.
	7.1	Ventilation should be able to be controlled in all spaces used for children (e.g., through heating/air conditioning systems, windows, opening doors, ceiling fans, etc).

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2. Furniture for routine care, play, and learning	1.1, 3.1	To give credit, furniture must be used for routine care, and not simply be present—not used or used for other purposes.
	1.2, 3.2, 5.4	To give credit for shelves, they must be used for storing materials that the children can reach and use. Shelves that are used only to store toys/materials that the provider accesses are given credit in 5.4. There should be enough low, open organized storage—shelves, containers, or crates—as long as the storage allows easy access without excessive crowding or rummaging for toys.
	1.1, 3.1	In scoring these indicators, score 1.1 “No” if most of the furniture needed for routine care is observed and used, even though one item may be inadequate to meet the needs of the children or is missing completely. Score 1.1 “Yes” only if many of the furnishings needed are not observed. Generally, the <i>cubbies</i> must be large enough to hold all the possessions of an individual child, without touching other children’s things. If cubbies are large enough to hold possessions, but there is a minor amount of touching of other children’s possessions, (such as coat sleeves touching in winter) then give credit, but consider the contamination issues in the Health item. Each child must have his or her own storage space (such as a cubby, diaper bag or back pack on an individual hook, a laundry basket, or several different personal storage containers that together, hold all his/her things). No shared spaces should be used because of contamination issues. When a diapering table is not used, an <i>alternative diapering surface</i> is considered adequate if the surface is nonporous, and can be cleaned and sanitized. In addition, the surface must be long and wide enough to accommodate the child’s whole body, from head to foot. The diapering surface must minimize the chance for contamination of surrounding surfaces. Such a diapering surface is acceptable only if diapering can be completed without contamination of surrounding areas.
	3.3, 5.1	To give credit for 5.1 when booster seats are used, the seats must allow children to sit safely. However, if booster seats are not steady in the chairs, credit can be given for 3.3 as long as children seem to be able to manage without being in immediate danger. When picnic-tables are used, consider how comfortable they are for the children, and whether children can sit safely. If only one child has difficulty, or if the furniture is used infrequently as compared to the other furnishings being considered for this indicator, do not score “No.” If tables and chairs cause safety risks, consider this in item 12. Safety.
	5.2	To give credit, <b>all</b> furnishings must be well-cared for, including examples provided plus any other care required for other furnishings.
	5.3	When the two provisions that encourage self-help are observed as required, score “Yes” even if many toys are stored out of children’s reach. Consider the lack of access to specific toys in applicable items.
	5.5, 7.3	If age groups are separated (i.e., infants and older children cared for in different spaces) one example of adult furniture is required for each group. If groups are sometimes combined, one example is still required for each group.

3. Provision for relaxation and comfort	3.1, 5.1	If the home has a soft furnishing accessible during play, and children are obviously free to use it, but no child chooses to do so, give credit for this indicator. If in doubt ask the provider a question about this during the interview. <i>Ask:</i> Which soft furnishings in your home are the children allowed to use?
	3.2, 5.3	When counting the numbers of soft toys, individual pieces belonging to a soft toy that has various pieces, such as a soft stacking ring toy, can only count as one example, even though the individual parts might be what a child uses.
	5.2	The intent of this indicator is that children should not be interrupted or disturbed when using the soft furnishings credited in 5.1. If children walk, or even run, past without disturbing the child, then this is acceptable.
	5.3	Many soft toys do not have to be accessible all at the same time to meet the requirement for much of the day. However at least half of the required number must be accessible during any short periods when all are not accessible.
	7.1	Softness in this indicator refers to soft furnishings. Soft toys are not considered to meet this requirement.
	7.3	The soft furnishings must provide a substantial amount of softness to get credit.
4. Arrangement of indoor space for child care	1.1	To score this indicator, consider all play and routine care spaces used. The indicator's example represents a many-faceted problem with the space arrangement. Score 1.1 "Yes" only when there are very crowded conditions that make routine care and play needs extremely difficult to meet.
	1.3	For a score of 1, restricting children in the use of space must be severe to score "Yes." The score will depend on the appropriateness of the activity, how engaged or enthusiastic the children are, and whether a child can leave if he or she wishes after a reasonable time. No specific amount of time is required to make the decision. When a child is carried, by the provider, in a "snuggly" or other type of infant carrier, consider the developmental level and needs of the child. For a very tiny infant, being kept in a snuggly would be acceptable in terms of use of space as long as the baby seemed to require this type of closeness, while for an older infant it would be overly restrictive. Considered this issue related to accessibility of play materials, but remember that a cranky baby who needs close physical contact to be soothed may not be "ready to play" and thus not require access to materials during the "cranky" times.
		Since <i>Caring for Our Children</i> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition, states that children should not be kept in restrictive devices for more than 15 minutes, consider whether children are kept in restrictive devices such as "exer-saucers", playpens, infant seats, swings, or cribs (when awake) for longer periods, and whether this is a regular practice or observed infrequently. Score Yes, when this is a regular practice, observed for any child several times during the 3 hour observation.
	3.3	Any hazards in the indoor space(s) used for child care should be considered in this indicator as well as in item 12. Safety.
5. Display for children		Labels on shelves indicating where materials are to be stored and center labels or signs do not count as display.
	3.3, 5.3	Score "Yes" to 3.3 if there is a very large piece of work that several children have worked on. However, this would not count to meet the requirements of 5.3 where other displayed work would also have to be observed.
	5.3, 7.2	NA is permitted for these two indicators if there are only children under 1 year of age enrolled in the group.
6. Space for privacy	1.1	If it is impossible for any child to play alone without intrusion by others, (consider both indoors and outdoors) score "Yes."
	3.2	Consider the developmental level of the child(ren) and their impulsivity when determining a score. Momentary lapses in supervision are allowed when scoring as long as children are in a safe space, the provider checks on them frequently, and the children are not involved in high-risk activities.
	5.1	Infants/toddlers do not necessarily need a space "set aside" for them to play alone or with a friend, but to give credit they should be able to play without intrusion from others.

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7. Greeting/  
departing
- 1.1, 3.1 To count as a greeting, the person being greeted must perceive the greeting. Simply saying hello, to a child/parent who does not notice that he or she has been spoken to, does not count as being greeted. There is no specific definition of a “warm” greeting, but the recipient must perceive the interaction as being positive and welcoming. The greeting can be verbal or through welcoming body language, such as a smile that the parent/child responds to, or a hug for a child. Simply taking a child from a parent, without an obvious warm interaction that is perceived by the child, would not count as a greeting, even though the provider might physically hold the child.
  - 3.3 Give credit as long as parents come into any part of the home where children spend any part of the day. The space used by the children for any part of the day must, at least, be visible to the parent. Parents cannot be prohibited from going into any of the child care areas.
  - 3.4 The sharing of child related information must happen as the child is being dropped off at the family child care home. To give credit, it is not necessary to observe the sharing of information by every parent, but it must obviously be the usual practice (at least 50% of the time), and be observed at least once unless no greeting is observed. When only one parent is observed being greeted, the sharing of information must be observed. If two parents are greeted, sharing of information must be observed in one of those greetings. If no greeting is observed, be sure to ask how this aspect of care is handled. The provider should elicit information from the parent if parents do not share information spontaneously.
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8. Nap/rest

Since cribs with sides that drop down are no longer considered safe for children, consider this issue in both the Nap item and the Safety item.

- 1.2 According to the 2011 edition of *Caring for Our Children* (page 99) swaddling of children in child care settings is associated with the risk of serious health conditions, and is not necessary or recommended. Therefore consider the use of swaddling in this indicator.

- 1.2, 3.2 Based on the new policy statement in *Caring for Our Children* (American Academy of Pediatrics, et al.) on SIDS sleep-related infant deaths, blankets are hazardous for sleeping infants under a year of age. In order for sleep provisions to be considered safe for infants, no blankets or any other soft materials (toys, bumper pads, etc.) should be placed in the crib.

*Caring for Our Children, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*, now requires 3 feet between cots, mats or cribs. 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 1.1, score No if at least 75% of the cribs/mats/cots are separated by 3 feet, and no sleeping equipment is closer than 24 inches. For 3.2, do not give credit unless there is 3 feet between each sleeping provision.

- 5.2 Since solid barriers are no longer permissible to separate sleeping children, delete the portion of the indicator that states, “unless separated by a solid barrier.” (See new note for 3.2).

9. Meals/ snacks	1.1, 3.1	Meals/snacks should be served to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers every 2-3 hours unless children are sleeping.
	1.3, 3.3	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.
	1.3, 3.3, 5.3	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, 5.3	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 item where applicable.
	3.2	With regard to drinking water being offered between meals/snacks to children consuming solid foods, score "No" if during the observation water is not offered to at least some of the children who cannot access their own water. Also score 'No' if water is not available to children who can ask for it or get their own.
10. Diapering/ toileting		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 <a href="http://www.ersi.info">www.ersi.info</a> .
		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.
	1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1	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 <u>disinfectant</u> . Be sure all instructions for use are followed. If not do not give credit for disinfecting 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 item 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".
11. Health practices	1.1, 3.2, 5.2	See the note on handwashing/use of hand sanitizers that has been added to the "Explanation of Terms Used throughout the Scale".
	3.4	Over the counter medications, such as pain relief medications, ointments, etc. are included in this indicator, in addition to those available only through prescription from a medical practitioner.
	5.4	Consider all aspects of how a provider models any issues of health practices that are observed. Do not base score on only one aspect of being a good health model. Consider, for example, whether the provider eats healthful foods, practices good hygiene habits in front of the children, wears appropriate clothing for the weather, washes hands when needed.



17. Art	<p>Art materials such as crayons, chalk or play dough may have the warning "not recommended for use by children under 3 years of age." Unless such materials are labeled "Toxic" they may be used with younger children but only under the most stringent supervision (the teacher is within an arm's reach of the child and watches closely). The materials should not be freely accessible to the children. Materials that are less likely to cause safety problems, such as thicker crayons rather than thin ones should be used and the caps to markers should not be accessible. Art materials that smell like food should not be used. Art materials should be offered to children 12 months and older, but if a child <i>only</i> mouths the material, and shows no interest in using it for art, he should be redirected to a more appropriate activity.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>1.1, 3.1, 5.1 Crayons or other drawing materials (e.g., pencils, markers, chalk) are considered art materials in this item if used with plain paper or another plain surface, such as a chalk board. They are not counted as art materials when used with coloring book pages or other pre-determined projects. When used with coloring books, etc, they are considered in item 16. Fine motor but not to meet the requirements for the Art item.</p> <p>In addition to the recognizable edible materials in the existing note, materials that emit food related odors are also not given credit for being art materials (including scented play dough, felt pens and crayons, etc.) because they give children confusing messages.</p> <p>1.2, 3.2 Family child care homes often have mixed age groups, up through school-aged children. Consider the developmental appropriateness of the materials, and the way in which they are used, for the age group using them. Be aware that infants and toddlers should have no access to any materials that pose dangers for them, while older children use the materials. Glitter is considered a safe, appropriate material for preschool- and school-aged children but not for infants/toddlers. Styrofoam packing pieces are not appropriate for use by younger children under 3 years of age, while they are appropriate for older children.</p> <p>3.3 If children are required to participate, but they quickly become engaged in the activity, obviously enjoying it, then score "Yes." Score "No" only if the children are not engaged or enjoying the activity and there is no alternative of leaving and doing something else.</p>
18. Music and movement	<p>1.3 Some traditional children's songs such as Three Blind Mice contain frightening or offensive lyrics. If songs with such lyrics are used with the children, score this indicator "Yes." Music with religious content is considered appropriate as long as it does not contain frightening, violent, or negative content. Be sure to listen to the lyrics in order to judge the appropriateness.</p> <p>3.1, 5.1, 5.2 Music played on the radio, CD player, wind-up swing that plays music, etc. that is managed by the provider counts as only 1 music material. There must be at least one other material that children can reach and use to give credit for 3.1.</p> <p>3.2 Songs initiated by the provider, such as a Clean-up song, or a prayer sung at meals, count to meet the requirement of this indicator.</p> <p>3.3 If children are required to participate, but they quickly become engaged in the activity, obviously enjoying it, then score "Yes." Score "No" only if the children are not engaged or enjoying the activity and there is no alternative of leaving and doing something else.</p> <p>5.2 To give credit for much of the day, the numbers of music materials required in this indicator must be met.</p> <p>7.2 If not observed, ask the provider to explain whether this is done, as she answers the question for 1.1, 3.2, 5.4.</p>

19. Blocks	1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1	Because the intent of this item is to allow children to build sizable block structures, an acceptable set must have enough large blocks to make this possible. Only consider block sets in which the majority of blocks are at least 2 inches in length/width. Consider smaller block sets to meet requirements in item 16. Fine motor. Although the definition of blocks in All About the ITERS-R states that blocks must have smooth sides, alphabet blocks or blocks with minor raised edges on the sides can be accepted as blocks as long as they meet the size requirement, are not interlocking and can easily be stacked.
	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 7.1	Since this item is scored NA for groups where all children are under 12 months of age, when mixed groups of children under and over 12 months of age are observed, do not consider the access infants have to the blocks/accessories. Consider only the toddler aged children when scoring.
	3.2	At least 5 examples of accessories are required, and not all of the same type (people, vehicles, animals).
	5.1	To determine whether the requirement for “many” blocks is met, double the number of blocks required for “some” in indicator 3.1. “Many accessories” requires enough for each age group to play without undue competition. Consider ages and abilities of children when determining whether there are many. Many blocks do not have to be accessible all at the same time to meet the requirement for much of the day. During any short period when all are not accessible, at least half of the required number must be accessible.
	5.3	The requirement for enough space depends on number of children, ages, what you would expect them to be able to build. Obviously, preschoolers need enough space to build substantial independent structures, while toddlers, who tend to stack blocks, would need less space. Watch to see if conflict arises due to space limitations.
20. Dramatic play	5.1	To meet the requirements of “many and varied”, some dress-up clothes, such as hats, dresses, handbags, jackets, or skirts are required when toddlers and/or preschool-aged children are enrolled in the group. For a small group of younger children (toddlers and two year olds), 5 items would be considered “some”, while for a larger group of younger children, or any group of preschoolers, 10 items are required.
	5.2	Many dramatic play materials do not have to be accessible all at the same time to meet the requirement for much of the day. During any short period when all materials are not accessible, materials for at least one theme must be accessible, and the materials should be sufficient to allow children to carry out play in a meaningful way.
	7.1, 7.2	The term <i>provided</i> is interpreted as <i>accessible</i> .
21. Math/number	5.2	The many and varied materials credited in 5.1 do not all have to be accessible at the same time to meet the requirement for much of the day. During any short period when all are not accessible, at least half of the required number must be accessible for each age group of children.
22. Nature/science	1.1, 3.1, 3.2 5.1	Displayed pictures/photographs are considered only if easily seen and reached by the children.
	5.1	Many nature/science materials do not all have to be accessible at the same time to meet the requirement for much of the day. During any short period when all are not accessible, at least half of the required number (with at least two of the four categories) must be accessible.
23. Sand and water play		Do not score NA if mixed age groups include children under 18 months of age, in addition to older children who are not over 6 years of age.
	3.2	The note for clarification given for this indicator applies to mixed age groups that include infants or toddlers.

24. Promoting acceptance of diversity	5.1	<p>All of the materials, including books, pictures and other materials, must be located in the major spaces used by the children for much of the day. This does not require that all the materials are present at the same time. Some may be in one place, while others are in another space. Flannel board pieces, showing diversity, are given credit as materials if children can reach and use them. Flannel board pieces that children can only look at, as part of the display, are given credit as pictures.</p> <p>Photographs of the children in the group and their families are given credit in Item 5. Display for children, indicator 7.1 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.</p>
	5.1, 5.2	No credit can be given twice for any materials considered in 5.1 and 5.2.
	5.2	An example of diversity requires that there is a contrast between two props. For example, one white doll, contrasted with one African American doll represents one example, as does one play food item of a taco contrasted with a play food item of beans with rice. Four examples must be observed (each consisting of two props). Once an item is counted in one example, it cannot be counted in contrast with another prop to form a second example. Dolls are required as at least one of the examples. Small toy people used with doll house or blocks can be used to meet the doll requirement.
25. Use of TV, video, and/or computer		<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>If a child spends a very brief time using screen time (less than 2 minutes) and this is a rare occurrence during the observation, mark the item NA.</p>
	1.4, 3.3	Since the American Academy of Pediatrics states that children under the age of two should not be allowed to view television, due to persuasive research indicating negative effects for these youngest of children, change the age listed in these indicators from 12 to 24 months. In addition, media screen time is limited for children 2 years and older to not more than 30 minutes total, once a week. Computer use time should be limited to no more than 15 minutes per day with the exception of school-aged children completing homework assignments, or children with disabilities who require assistive computer technology. No media screen time should be allowed during meals/snacks.
26. Active physical play	1.1, 3.1	When outdoor space is not used (for example because of bad weather) score 1.1 “No” if any space is used indoors, such as for dancing, exercising, or marching.
	1.2, 3.2	Score 1.2 “Yes” only when the complete space is very dangerous, with little room for children to move freely without facing major hazards. <i>Generally safe</i> means that no major safety hazard is observed or only a few minor safety hazards are observed. If there are specific hazards in a space that also has a large amount of safe space for children to participate in active physical play, score 1.2 “No”, and 3.2 “No.”
	3.3	“Some” means that the children can use the material/equipment without having to wait with no other gross motor material or equipment option.
29. Discipline	3.3	If the basic play needs of children in any age group are rarely met, resulting in children spending long periods with nothing interesting to do or to learn, score 3.3 “no.”
	5.2	Since “time out” or threats of “time out” are not considered positive methods of discipline, these should rarely be used with any child, and a more positive problem solving method should be used, such as talking through the problem with older children to find an acceptable solution, or pleasant redirection with short explanations for younger children. No “time out” should be used for children under the age of two years.
30. Interaction among children	1.1	When age groups are separated and never mix, (e.g., infants cared for in one room with one provider and older children cared for in another space with a second provider) consider this indicator NA if there is only one child in a space. Ideally, two separate observations would be done when there are two separate groups. See page 7, Instructions for using the FCCERS-R, under 1.
	3.1	No specific amount of time is required for the interactions to be encouraged. Observe to see whether encouragement is a regular practice, depending on the ages of the children, their moods, etc. Some encouragement should be seen for at least part of the observation, with more time required for children who are older.

32. Free play      3.2 Consider relative dangers, developmental level of the child, and ease of quick access to the child when deciding whether supervision is extremely lax. For example, allowing a toddler to play outdoors, unsupervised for 10 minutes of the observation would be considered extremely lax supervision of free play, even if other parts of free play were supervised well.
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33. Group time 1.1, “Whole group” refers to all the children who are required to do the same activity. The term “whole group” applies even when some children, such as a baby or school-aged  
1.4, child” are exempt from participating in the required activity.  
3.3
- 5.3 Alternate activities must be accessible for *any* child who does not wish to participate.