

Additional Notes for Clarification for the ITERS-R

Item

Note

General Notes
for ITERS-R

Number of hours in operation	2 hrs	3hrs.	4hrs.	5hrs.	6hrs.	7hrs.
Approximate minutes required for accessibility	15	25	30	40	45	50

In some items, access is required for at least one hour per day. Less time is required for programs operating less than 8 hours a day, with the amount calculated proportionally based on the ratio of 1 hour for programs of 8 hours or more. Use the following chart to determine the approximate amount of time required for part-day programs.

Weather permitting: The term “weather permitting” is used in several items of the scale with regard to when children can participate in outdoor activities. “Weather permitting” means almost every day, unless there is active precipitation, or public announcements that advise people to remain indoors due to weather conditions such as high levels of pollution, extreme cold or heat that might cause health problems. It is sometimes said, “There is no bad weather; only bad clothes.” Therefore, children should be dressed properly and taken outdoors on most days. This might require that the schedule be changed to allow children outdoor play in the early morning if it will be very hot later in the day. Or it might require that the program ensure that children have boots, and a change of clothes for a day when the grass is wet. After bad weather, staff should check the outdoor area, dry off equipment, sweep away water, or block off puddles, as needed, before children go out. Programs with protected outdoor areas, such as a deck or patio are more likely to be able to meet the requirements for allowing outdoor activity daily, weather permitting.

1. Indoor Space	1.1,3.1, 5.1	In evaluating the adequacy of indoor space, consider the maximum number of children and adults who may use the space on any day, whether there is enough space for furnishings and materials required for basic care and play, and the total amount of space that may be used. Space that appears to be adequate because the basic furnishings and materials for routines and/or play are lacking, or very few children are present, must be considered in terms of how it would work if the basic furnishings, materials, and all the children were present. If a classroom is located in a very large room but staff are only allowed to use a small part of the room, base the adequacy on the amount of space the classroom may use. If the classroom is allowed to use the entire space in a large room and staff choose to use only a small portion of the space, credit can be given only for the portion of space that the staff use.
	1.3	“Poor repair” means there are one or more major repair problems that represent health and/or safety risks.
	3.1	Enough indoor space requires that staff can move around to meet children’s routine care needs (such as having easy access to children in cribs, separating diapering and food preparation areas) and that children are not crowded when they play. There must be enough room for all adults, children, and furnishings in the room without being crowded.
	3.4	It is expected that there will be some messiness from the regular activities of the day. “Reasonably clean” means that there is evidence of daily maintenance, such as floors being vacuumed and mopped, and that big messes, such as food on floor after children have been fed, are cleaned up promptly.
	3.5, 5.3	To give credit for accessibility, the classroom and the bathroom must be accessible to individuals with disabilities. Doorways must be at least 32 inches wide. The door handles must be operated with limited use of hands. The entrance door threshold should be ½ inch high or less and, if over ¼ inch, must be beveled to make it easier to roll over. If there are other obvious impediments to access for individuals with disabilities (such as narrow stalls in restroom, stairs with no ramp or elevator), credit cannot be given. In order for the indoor space used by children to be considered minimally acceptable (3.5), it must be accessible to children and adults with disabilities who are currently a part of the program. For a score of 5, accessibility is required regardless of whether or not individuals with disabilities are involved in the program.
	7.2	Doors to outside count as ventilation only if they can be left open without posing a safety threat (for example, if they have a locking screen door or safety gate to keep children from leaving the room unattended).
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Questions	7.2	Can the ventilation in your room be controlled? If yes, ask: How is this done?

2. Furniture for routine care and play	1.1	Examples of furniture for routine care are: infant seats, high chairs, small tables and chairs for feeding; cribs, mats, or cots for sleeping; diapering table, and storage for diapering supplies. Unless all children are fed at the same time, 1 feeding chair per child is not required.
	1.2	Examples of furniture for play are: infant seats, small tables and chairs, low open shelves or dishpans/baskets/milk crates for toy storage.
	3.2	Sufficient low open shelves and/or other storage for toys are required to get credit for this indicator. There must be enough storage for all accessible toys to get credit for this indicator (without having toys crowded into a small space).
	3.3	Sturdiness is a property of the furniture itself (i.e., will not break, fall over, or collapse when used). If sturdy furniture is placed so that it can be easily knocked over, this is a problem with safety, not the sturdiness of the furniture. Don't be overly perfectionistic when scoring this indicator. If there is only a very minor problem that does not create a likely safety hazard, then give credit for this indicator. For example, if a chair or table is slightly wobbly, but will not collapse, or if a vinyl covered couch is slightly worn, but foam is not exposed, then do not count off for these small things, unless there are a substantial number of small problems.
	3.4	If the vast majority of children are comfortable in the feeding chairs, then credit should be given, even if one child is not as comfortable as the others are.
	5.2, 7.2	Child-sized chairs allow children to sit back in the chair with feet touching the floor (not necessarily flat on the floor). Children should not have to perch on edge of the chair for feet to touch floor. A child-sized table allows children's knees to fit under the table while elbows are comfortably above table surface. Do not consider high chairs or group feeding tables, that toddlers must be put into by an adult, to be child-sized.
	5.3	At least two different provisions to support independence, one in routines and one in play, are required to give credit for this indicator.
	5.5, 7.4	Sometimes teachers use preschool-sized chairs or other furniture (such as very large blocks or cubes) to sit on while feeding children who are in high chairs or at very low tables. Credit can be given if seats are larger than infant/toddler furnishings, and if they seem to work well for the teachers. However, credit for such make-shift arrangements can not be given under 7, where comfortable adult-sized furniture is required. Adult seating should be provided next to child-sized furnishings for care and learning (e.g. diapering/toileting, meals, play activities) so helping adults do not strain their backs while assisting children.
	7.2	"Most" means 75% of the toddlers use child-sized tables and chairs.
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Questions	5.4, 7.3	Do you use any other toys or materials in addition to what I observed? If yes, ask: Where are they stored? Could you please show me?
	7.1	If cots or mats are not visible during the observation, ask: Where are the children's cots or mats stored?

3. Provisions for relaxation and comfort	1.1	Refers to softness provided other than that found in cribs, playpens, or other padded routine-care furnishings.
	3.2	Examples of soft toys are: cloth or vinyl covered foam blocks, cloth dolls, cloth toy animals, cloth puppets, and so forth. Observe that soft toys are within children's reach and that the toys can be used by children.
	3.2, 5.3	Cloth and vinyl books are not counted as soft toys, but counted as books in Item 14, Using books.
	5.1	The cozy area must provide a substantial amount of softness for the children. A thin mat, cushion, or a carpet alone would not meet this requirement. Typically, a cozy area includes a combination of soft furnishings, but a single furnishing, such as a mattress or futon could meet the requirement if it provides the substantial amount of softness needed by children.
	5.2	<p>"Protected" means that the cozy area is away from active play equipment, and has (through placement or a barrier) protection from children who are crawling or walking. It should not be in the center of the room where there is a lot of traffic. Staff should be diligent to ensure that active children do not interfere with a child in the cozy area by jumping on or running into the child who is relaxing.</p> <p>The cozy area can be used for short periods as a group space (e.g., for dancing or circle time), but it should be protected from active play for most of the day. If there are 2 or more cozy areas, each area does not need to meet the requirements of the indicators. However, there must always be 1 area that is not used for active physical play. A combination of all areas can be used to judge whether a cozy area can be used for most of the day.</p>
	5.3	To meet the requirement of "many," there should be at least 10 soft toys, and at least 2 per child if there are more than 5 children.
	7.1	Soft toys found in other areas are not considered in this indicator; only additional soft furnishings used during play count. The soft furnishing must be found in more than one other area. Wall-to-wall carpeting would count, if found in several areas
	7.2, 7.3	To give credit, at least 1 instance must be observed during the observation.

4. Room arrangement	1.2, 3.2, 5.2	If there is more than 1 staff member with the group at all times, each one does not have to be able to see the whole space at a glance. However, all children must be within view of 1 of the staff members. Remember that if there are 2 staff members in a room during the observation, but only 1 staff member at other times (e.g., early and late in the day), then this should be considered in scoring the item.
	5.1	Score "Yes" if most of the routine areas are conveniently arranged, with only one or two minor exceptions.
	7.1	To score "Yes," a minimum of three different types of play spaces must be provided for toddlers indoors: an active play area, a quiet play area, and a messy materials play area. For infants, three play areas are needed, including space to move freely and space to play with different types of toys, although an area for messy play is not required.
	7.1, 7.2	Interest areas should make play convenient for the children. Space and play surfaces should be suitable for the type of material being used. For example, blocks need a steady surface; scribbling requires a hard surface under the paper and room for children to move their arms freely. Infants require fewer, more flexible interest areas, while toddlers need a wider variety of play spaces.

Questions	5.1	If cots or mats are not visible during the observation, and the information needed was not acquired during questioning for Item 2, ask: Where are the children's cots or mats stored? Could you please show me?
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5. Display for children	1.2	Score this indicator “Yes” if more than 50% of the display is inappropriate for more than 50% of the group, or if any of the displayed materials show violence or prejudice.
	3.1	When the only display is wallpaper with colorful pictures, or a mural painted on the wall, credit can be given for this indicator, but not for 5.1.
	3.2	Generally appropriate” means that at least 75% of the display is meaningful to the children because it is age and developmentally suitable, and none of the display is violent or prejudicial.
	5.1	“Many” does not require a specific number of items. Score based on the overall impact of what is displayed and ensure that materials are easy for all children to see in all areas of the room, not only in one area.
	5.2	To give credit for hanging objects and mobiles, the materials must be able to move in space. Flat picture-like objects hanging against the wall (e.g., colorful quilts, cut-outs) are not counted for this indicator. Hanging plants can be counted. The hanging display must be visible at some time to all children. Therefore, a cradle gym or mobile located on a crib would not count because it is clearly seen by only one child. Two examples of hanging objects, visible to all children, are required to give credit.
	5.3	To give credit, at least 75% of the items credited in Indicator 5.1 must be displayed where children can easily see them. Of those items that can be easily seen by children, 50% must also be able to be touched by mobile children without assistance.
	5.4	To give credit, at least 1 instance must be observed during the observation.
	7.1	To give credit, the photographs must be of children currently in the group or things familiar to them, and most of the group must be represented. At least two photographs that meet these requirements must be observed where all children can easily see them.
	7.3	At least 30% of the display should be changed monthly. Both staff comments during the interview and dates on displayed materials may be used to determine the indicator score.
	7.4	Any artwork done by toddlers can be counted, including ditto or coloring book pages that toddlers have scribbled on.

Questions	7.3	Do you add or change what is displayed in your room, such as the pictures on the wall? If yes, ask: About how often?
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6. Greeting/ departing	A greeting requires that upon arrival, children perceive that they are acknowledged by staff in a way that is either positive or neutral, but never negative. In other words, children know they are welcomed to the classroom. To be counted, greetings must take place when the child enters the room, and if delayed, it must happen before the parent leaves the child. If a child is asleep upon entry into the classroom, arrival of the sleeping child should be acknowledged to the parent, and the child should be greeted upon awakening.
1.1	"Often neglected" means more than 50% of the time.
1.3	Interpret "parents" as any adults who are responsible for the care of the child, such as grandparents, foster parents, or nannies. "Rarely" means less than 50% of the time.
1.3, 3.3	If children are bused to the center and no parents enter the area used for care, score 1.3 "Yes". If some children are bused, but some parents usually enter the area used for care, score 1.3 "No", and 3.3 "No".
3.1	"Most" means that at least 75% of the children are greeted warmly, and any staff member arriving to work in the room greets at least some of the children.
3.3	All parents must bring their children into the classroom used for most of the child's care. If parents do not leave their children in the child's classroom, they must at least have access to that classroom in order to give credit.
3.4	Information sharing can be done verbally or in writing, but shared information must be understandable by both parents and staff. Some information sharing about the child's health or safety must be included in all observed greetings, in order to give credit.
3.4, 7.2	If children are bused, ask to find out whether parents and staff share information about the children in any way.
5.3	To give credit, the written record must be an accurate reflection of each child's daily feeding, diapering, and sleeping routines, and must be completed by staff as routines occur.

Questions	If neither greeting nor departing are observed, ask: Can you describe what happens when children arrive and leave? Follow up with more specific questions if needed, such as:
1.3, 3.3	Do parents usually bring the children into the room?
3.2, 5.1	What is done to prepare for children's leaving?
5.2	If a child has difficulty letting his or her parent leave or has difficulty leaving the center at the end of the day, how is this handled?
7.1	Do parents ever spend time in the classroom at drop-off and pick-up times?
7.2	Is it possible for staff to talk to parents at pick-up times? If yes, ask: What sort of things are discussed?
7.3	Is a written record of each infant's day given to parents? If yes, ask: May I see an example?

7. Meals/ snacks	1.2, 3.2	<p>To determine nutritional adequacy, refer to nutrition guidelines for infants and toddlers in the guidelines for the USDA Child Care and Adult Food Program or comparable guidelines from other countries. Check menu for the week in addition to observing food served. An occasional instance of not meeting the guidelines—for example, cupcakes for a birthday party instead of the regular snack—should not affect the rating. If no menu is available, ask the teacher to describe meals/snacks served for the past week. If parents provide food, staff must check nutritional adequacy and supplement when needed.</p> <p>Foods that are too hot are not considered appropriate, such as food or bottles warmed in a microwave oven or in water warmer than 120 degrees.</p>
	1.3	<p>Score “Yes” if very little attention is given to all three of the basic sanitary procedures (handwashing, eating surfaces, and uncontaminated foods).</p>
	1.3, 3.3, 5.3	<p>In scoring what you would consider sanitary food service for the children, think of what you would expect in terms of cleanliness in a restaurant. (Would you eat food that had fallen onto the restaurant chair or the seat of the booth, or would you want the waiter to put food into your mouth after putting food into your friend’s mouth?) The issue of spreading germs is the same, but even more serious for infants and toddlers, who have immature immune systems.</p> <p>Basic sanitary procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff wash hands, even if gloves are used, before and after both bottle feeding and preparing and serving food to children. For feeding, the staff must wash their own hands in any situation where their skin may have become contaminated (such as by picking up another child who is drooling or toys that have been mouthed, feeding a child with fingers). • Children who feed themselves (such as with fingers or spoons) have hands washed before and after eating. Re-contamination of hands after being washed for eating should be minimized, for example, by having children sit at table as soon as hands have been washed. • Eating surfaces (such as highchair trays or table top) cleaned and sanitized before and after serving food. • No contaminated food should be fed to the child (e.g., perishable food brought from home that is not refrigerated; food/beverages left in warm water for more than 5 minutes; food that has fallen onto the seat of the highchair, been touched by another child). Utensils, not hands, should be used to cut up food or feed a child. • For milk and juice in bottles to be considered sanitary, they can be un-refrigerated for no longer than 1 hour. • Any food fed with a fork or spoon from a container may not be used for a later feeding. • Food preparation areas must be separate from areas used for eating, play, toilet, animals, hallways, bathing. • For information on proper storage and serving of formula and breastmilk, consult state sanitary guidelines for child care or the Appendix of <i>Caring for Our Children: The National Health and Safety Performance Standards for Out-of-Home Child Care, 2nd edition (2002)</i>. • When there is more than 1 caregiver with a group, the caregiver who prepares food should avoid involvement in changing diapers until after the food has been prepared. • Sinks used for food preparation should be used for no other purpose (e.g. not handwashing or diaper changing clean-up). If the same sink must be used for different purposes, it must be sanitized before food-related use.
	1.4	<p>Infants and young toddlers who can sit up independently and hold their bottles may be allowed to feed themselves.</p>
	3.1	<p>Caloric needs vary greatly from one child to another. Since a snack may turn out to be a meal and the meal not eaten, snacks and meals should be nourishing food. Drinking water should be offered between feedings to children who are consuming solid foods.</p>
	3.4	<p>“Adequate supervision” requires that a staff member is attentive and within arm’s reach of any child who is eating/drinking.</p>
	3.5	<p>A food/beverage substitution made in case of allergies must meet the primary meal/snack nutrient contribution of the food/beverage it replaces. For example, in the case of milk, the substitute beverage needs to be equal in calcium and protein. Therefore, water, juice, or calcium-enriched juice is not a milk substitute since it does not replace the protein, but a vegetarian milk, such as soy milk, is. To get additional information about whether substitutes can be credited, ask staff, “How are substitutions made for foods/beverages children cannot eat?”</p>
	5.1	<p>The number of children in very small groups will depend on the age and abilities of the children. Younger infants should be fed individually. For older infants, a very small group would be no more than 2-3 children. For toddlers and twos, a small group is no more than 6 children. In determining whether the group is appropriately small, observe to find out if the group size allows the positive interaction and support the children would receive in a good setting. However, do not confuse the effects of group size with other issues that might affect whether children’s needs are being met, such as staff characteristics or number of staff present. Infants and toddlers should never be fed in a setting, such as a lunch room, where many groups of children come together to eat.</p>
	5.2	<p>Do not give credit if meal/snack time is a negative experience for any child.</p>
	5.3	<p>Each of the three basic sanitary requirements (handwashing, clean, sanitary eating surfaces, and uncontaminated foods) must be met 75% of the time.</p>
	5.5	<p>NA if parents provide all food for their children.</p>
Questions	1.2, 3.2 1.5, 3.5 7.2	<p>What do you do if parents provide insufficient food for their children or if the food they provide does not meet children’s needs?</p> <p>What do you do if children have food allergies?</p> <p>Do you have a chance to talk with parents about their child’s nutrition? If yes, ask: What sort of issues do you discuss</p>

9. Diapering/ toileting	1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1	<p>The purpose of maintaining sanitary conditions is to prevent the spread of germs in the urine or stool to staff's or child's hands, the diapering surface, containers of supplies, cabinet doors, or any other surface the children and staff might touch. Wearing of gloves for diaper changing is optional, but helpful. A fresh solution of bleach water should be made up daily, 1 tablespoon of household bleach to 1 quart of water (or ¼ cup bleach to 1 gallon of water), or an EPA-registered sanitizer should be used according to the manufacturer's instructions.</p> <p>The following measures are essential to cut down on the spread of gastro-intestinal illness and should be considered when scoring this item:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical separation of diapering area from food preparation area, including separate sinks for each area. If the same sink must be used for more than diapering/toileting, faucet handles and sink should be sanitized with a bleach and water solution after diapering/toileting use. • Staff should prepare for a diaper change before bringing the child to the diapering area by having ready: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Changing table paper (if used) to cover the table from the child's shoulders to heels (in case it becomes soiled and must be folded over to give a clean surface during the change) – Enough wipes for the diaper change (including wiping child's bottom and adult's hands after taking the soiled diaper away from the child's skin) – A clean diaper, plastic bag for soiled clothes, and clean clothes if soiled clothing is anticipated – Non-porous gloves (if they will be used) – A dab of diaper cream on a disposable piece of paper or tissue (if used) – Supplies should have been removed from their containers before starting the diaper change. • The diapering surface should be sanitized after each diaper change (all surfaces must be able to be sanitized—i.e. no quilted pads or safety straps, no containers should be stored on the diapering surface). <i>Sanitizing requires</i> first, cleaning the surface with a soap and water solution and wiping dry, followed by sanitizing with a bleach and water solution that is allowed to air dry for at least 2 minutes, after which it can be wiped dry. • Disposal of diapers in a hands-free covered can (usually one that has a step pedal that lifts the lid) to prevent further contamination of surfaces. • Toys that are played with, or objects that are touched, while children's diapers are being changed must be put aside to be sanitized.
	1.3, 3.3	<p>Handwashing for infants, toddlers, and staff requires that hands be washed with liquid soap and running water for at least 10 seconds (say "Bubble One, Bubble Two, Bubble Three, Bubble Four ... Bubble Ten", or sing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" once).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough handwashing of child's hands with liquid soap and warm running water is required after each diapering is completed. Using wipes or antiseptic waterless washes can not be substituted for handwashing, since these do not effectively get rid of germs. To avoid injury of a child in very unusual circumstances (e.g., a new-born baby with no head control, a very heavy baby with little body control) use of a disposable wipe is an acceptable substitute. • Use of a wipe for the child's and caregiver's hands is needed after placing the soiled diaper, wipes, and gloves (if used) into the hands-free covered container. • Thorough adult handwashing with warm running water and soap is required after each diaper check and after each diaper change as the final step after the diapering surface has been sanitized. This must be done before any other surfaces in the room are touched. This handwashing is usually completed after spraying the diapering surface with a sanitizing solution. If the surface is allowed to dry for 2 or more minutes and then wiped dry, a second washing of hands is not required.
	1.4	<p>"Inadequate supervision " means that staff do not monitor to protect the safety of the children or to ensure that sanitary procedures (such as handwashing) are carried out. Any unpleasant treatment of any child or any lapse in supervision that endangers a child in any way requires a score of "Yes."</p>
	3.2, 3.3, 5.1	<p>"Usually" means that procedures are carried out 75% of the time during the observation and no major problem is observed. In other words, there are relatively few lapses in practice, such as not washing 1 child's hands or not sanitizing diapering surface 1 time.</p>
	5.3	<p>A changing table that is comfortable for staff to use saves staff from back injuries or uncomfortable movements; for example, a table that is 28–32 inches high, with steps for toddlers to use.</p>
	5.4	<p>To give credit, the vast majority of interactions must be positive, with only a few neutral and no negative interactions.</p>
	7.2	<p>Toilets and sinks must be smaller than adult-sized equipment and accessible to at least 75% of the children with no extra adult help or adaptations, unless required by the special needs of a child with a disability.</p>

10. Health Practices	<p>Health practices associated with diapering/toileting, meals/snacks, and nap are covered in Items 7, 8, and 9. Therefore, these practices should not be considered in scoring this item.</p> <p>1.3 Valid reasons for exclusion include: (1) fever with a behavior change that indicates that the child is unable to participate in the program; (2) the child requires more care than the caregiver can reasonably provide and still care for the other children; (3) the child has a condition, such as diarrhea, that requires exclusion to protect the other children from being exposed to a transmissible infectious disease. Common colds are most transmissible before symptoms appear and during the early watery discharge phase of the illness. Green and yellow nasal mucus are not signs of transmissible infectious disease.</p> <p>3.1 "Usually" means that there are no major problems with sanitary procedures, only an occasional lapse, such as failing to quickly wipe a child's nose or disposing of a used tissue improperly.</p> <p>3.2 See definition of handwashing on page 7. There are 4 categories of handwashing that must be tracked to score this indicator. These 4 categories are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Upon arrival into classroom, and re-entering classroom after being outside, 2) Before and after water play (if water is shared) and after messy play, such as playing in sand, with paint or glue, 3) After dealing with bodily fluids, such as mucus, blood, vomit, saliva, or making significant skin contact with a child whose skin has open sores or a potentially contagious skin condition, and 4) After touching contaminated surfaces/objects, such as trash cans, pets. To score, observers should be aware of times that handwashing is carried out when needed. <p>This means that the observer should watch (and listen) for the many times when handwashing is needed. For example, observers should listen for coughing or sneezing by the children and staff, or watch for noses that need wiping to see whether the proper handwashing is carried out. A count should be kept on the score sheet to indicate when handwashing has been carried out properly, and when it has been ignored. The required 75% of handwashing must be calculated separately for staff and children, and the percent for each group based on the total handwashing in all categories. If either group washes hands less than 75% of the time when needed, score 3.1 "No."</p> <p>3.4 Only medications that have been prescribed by a physician for a particular child are to be given by staff. Staff give medications only from original container with instructions from a health professional. Score NA if no children are in care who require medications prescribed by a physician.</p> <p>5.1 Children should be dressed so they are neither hot nor cold (e.g., sweatshirts not worn outdoors in hot weather, wet clothes changed on chilly day); children have shade in the play area and use sun protection such as sun screen, hats, and sun-protective clothing when they are outside between 10 am and 2 pm on overcast or sunny days.</p> <p>7.2 Score NA for programs open 6 hours or less per day and if no toddlers are enrolled.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">If toothpaste is used, a pea-sized amount is put on each child's brush from some that has been squeezed from the tube onto disposable paper so that no child's paste is contaminated with another child's brush.</p>
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Questions	<p>1.2 Is smoking allowed in the child care areas, either indoors or outdoors?</p> <p>3.3 Are extra clothes available for the children, in case they are needed?</p> <p>7.3 Do you make any health-related information available to the parents? If yes, ask: Can you give me some examples?</p>
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11. Safety Practices	1.1, 1.2	Minor hazards, which provide low risk of causing serious injury requiring hospitalization or a visit to the doctor, are not considered in scoring these indicators, unless there are six or more observed.
	1.1, 1.2, 3.1	<p>Be sure to note all safety problems on score sheet. The following lists of hazards are not meant to be complete.</p> <p>Some <i>indoor</i> safety hazards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No safety protection on electrical outlets; electrical cords accessible to children • Strings, cords accessible to children • Heavy objects or furniture child can pull down • Medicines, cleaning materials, pesticides, aerosols, and substances labeled “keep out of reach of children” not locked away • Bleach solution used when children will inhale the spray (e.g., while children are sitting at table) • Walkers that a child can move across the floor or beanbag chairs used for infants • Water, or any surface accessible to children, too hot (e.g., is too hot for an adult to touch for at least 30 seconds or measures more than 120 degrees F using a meat thermometer) • Thumbtacks or staples used where children can reach • Crib/playpen slats or mesh sides permit entrapment, (e.g., slats more than 2 3/8 inches apart; a mesh playpen with collapsible sides) • Tripping hazards such as mats or rugs that have foot-catching edges or that slide • Unprotected radiator or heater in use • Open stairwells accessible (e.g., those that have climbable railings or places a child could slip through) • Small objects that can cause choking accessible (e.g., objects less than 1 1/4 inch diameter and 2 1/2 inches long, or spheres less than 1 3/4 inches in diameter) • No 6-inch raised edge as protection from falling off diapering table • Crib mattress that does not fit snugly (e.g., allows 2 or more fingers to be inserted between it and the crib side) • Toys hung across crib of a child who can sit up or get to hands and knees to hang him/herself • Babies put to sleep on stomach or side instead of on their backs • Staff pick up infants/toddlers by arm or hand, putting child at risk for joint injury • Cribs that are difficult for adults to raise and lower the side and do not provide at least 20 inches from the top of the mattress to the top of the crib rail • Styrofoam objects, plastic bags, or latex (rubber) balloons accessible to children • Possibility of unsupervised access to any container of water (e.g., toilets, 5-gallon buckets, wading pool, or fountain) • Since <i>older infants</i> will pull themselves up on anything within reach, all furnishings accessible to them should withstand this without toppling, shaking, or collapsing. If swings and rocking chairs are part of the furnishings in an infant room, they should be placed so that children are less likely to pull up on them than on more stable furniture. If they are placed so that children frequently use them to pull up, they should be counted as a safety hazard. <p>Some <i>outdoor</i> safety hazards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play area not contained by fence or barrier that prevents children from leaving designated safe area • Tools not meant for children’s use are accessible • All dangerous substances (e.g., labeled “keep out of reach of children”) not locked away • Sharp or dangerous objects present • Unsafe walkway or stairs accessible to children • Children can gain independent access to road or driveways • Hazardous trash accessible • Play equipment too high (e.g., more than 1 foot per year of age above fall surface), not well maintained, not stable. Play equipment that poses threat of head entrapment with openings that are between 3 1/2 inches and 9 inches across, or finger entrapment with openings between 3/8 inch and 1 inch. Other dangers include injury from pinch-points, projections, or insufficiently cushioned fall zones.
	5.1	To give credit, there can be no major safety hazards and no more than one minor hazard observed.
	5.2	At least one obvious attempt by staff to prevent safety problems must be observed in order to give credit. However, if all areas are completely safe, and no problems arise, credit can be given.
	7.1	To give credit, the observer must see at least one example of staff helping children to follow a safety rule. The rule must be stated verbally, and staff must take action to help the child follow the rule.
	7.2	At least one example must be observed to give credit.

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- Questions** 3.3 What provisions do you have for handling emergencies?
Specific follow-up questions may be needed, such as:
How would you handle an emergency?
Do you have anyone on staff that is trained in infant/toddler first aid including management of a blocked airway (choke-saving) and rescue breathing?
Is there a first aid kit available for you to use? Can you please show it to me?
Is there a telephone you would use to call for help in an emergency?
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12. Helping children understand language
- While indicators for quality in this item hold true across a diversity of cultures and individuals, the ways in which they are expressed may differ. For example, tone of voice may differ, with some individuals using excited voices while others may be quieter. Whatever the personal communication styles of the staff members being observed, the requirements of the indicators must be met, although there can be some variation in the way that this is done. Because the frequency of language interactions is very important in influencing the development of children’s language abilities, score indicators based on what is observed as a regular practice throughout the observation. Examples of meeting the requirements should occur throughout the observation, not just as single instances.
- 1.2 Noise from an adjacent room should also be considered if it is disruptive.
 - 1.3 Score “Yes” if an unpleasant tone is used or negative things are said three or more times during the observation, even if many, positive verbal interactions are also observed.
 - 3.1 Staff must talk to the children during both care routines and play to give credit.
 - 3.3 No more than two examples of staff using a mildly negative tone can be observed to give credit. Do not give credit if staff ever use an extremely unpleasant or harsh tone with the children.
 - 3.4 The content of staff talk must be encouraging and positive about 75% of the time, and neutral the rest of the time.
 - 5.1 Although there can be variation in the amount of talking done by different staff members, all staff must use a neutral or pleasant tone. Staff talk must be either pleasant or neutral, and no long periods of silence on the part of staff should be observed.
 - 5.4 In determining whether the language is descriptive, ask yourself if you could tell what staff are talking about to children just by listening and not looking.

13. Helping children use language		When determining percent of staff response to children, it is not necessary to calculate an exact percentage. Instead, base score on the prevalent practice.
	1.1	Score "Yes" if staff tend to respond positively to children's attempts to communicate significantly less than half of the time.
	3.1	"Moderate amount" requires a positive response by staff at least half of the time children attempt to communicate, no negative responses to children, and little or no ignoring of children's attempts to communicate.
	3.2	Staff must be observed attempting to correctly interpret what children try to communicate throughout the observation, at least half the time.
	5.1	To give credit, staff immediately give a positive response to children's attempts to communicate at least 75% of the time and there should be no negative responses or lengthy waits for children who are obviously in need. Observe to assure that staff are paying close attention and responding to all children in the group, including those who are not as demanding as others.
	5.2	Many examples should be observed during both care routines and play in order to give credit.
	5.3	To give credit, staff must succeed in correctly interpreting what children mean at least 75% of the time, and successfully act to meet the children's needs with few exceptions.
	7.2	NA permitted when no verbal children are present.
	7.3	At least two instances of staff asking simple questions, waiting for an answer, and answering for children if they cannot answer by themselves must be observed to give credit.

14. Using books	1.1, 3.1, 5.1	Examples of appropriate books: sturdy vinyl, cloth, or hard-page books with pictures suitable for infants and toddlers. Books may be home-made or commercially produced. Books for older children or adults do not count to meet the requirements of this item.
	1.2	Score "Yes" if more than 50% of the accessible books are in poor repair.
	1.3	Score "Yes" if staff are not observed using books with children and if staff report that books are used less than three times a week with children.
	3.1	Count only complete books with covers and all pages to give credit for the indicator. Books that are not appropriate for the children in the group (e.g., too difficult, too easy, frightening, violent) cannot be counted as any of the 6 required books.
	3.1, 5.1.	The number of books required is based on the maximum daily attendance permitted in the classroom, not on the number of children present on any particular day.
	3.2	Good repair means that the book has an intact cover and the pages are not torn, scribbled on, or missing. Minor problems (small tears, slight scribble, chew marks) that do not interfere with the use of the books are acceptable. For almost all books to be in good repair requires that no more than 3 books accessible to the children can be in poor repair. Books that are not in good repair cannot be counted to meet the requirements for the number of books listed in 1.1, 3.1, and 5.1.
	3.3	To score "Yes," at least one instance must be observed, or staff report using books daily at another time indicated on their schedule.
	5.1	To give credit, none of the books can be violent or frightening.
	5.2	A wide selection includes books about people of varying races, ages, and abilities; animals; familiar objects; familiar routines.
	5.3	At least 1 instance must be observed to give credit for this indicator.
	5.4	This must be observed to give credit. Do not give credit if any book time, for example, a large group story time, is not warm and interactive, even if other, less formal times with books meet the requirement.
	7.1	An area cannot be considered a book area if many toys and materials other than books are included.
	7.2	Several instances must be observed throughout the observation.
	7.3	To give credit, books must be added or changed at least monthly.

Questions	7.3	Do you add to or change the books that are put out for the children to use? If yes, ask: How often do you do this? What kinds of books are added?
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15.Fine motor	1.1	Score “Yes” if there are fewer than three intact, usable examples of fine motor materials accessible for some time during the day.
	1.1, 3.1, 5.1	<p>Examples of appropriate fine motor materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants—grasping toys, busy boxes, nested cups, containers to fill and dump, textured toys, cradle gyms. • Toddlers—shape sorting games, large stringing beads, big pegs with peg boards, simple puzzles, pop beads, stacking rings, nesting toys, medium or large interlocking blocks, crayons.
	3.1	To give credit, at least five intact, usable examples of fine motor toys must be accessible during some part of the 3-hour observation. “Generally” means 80% of fine motor materials.
	5.1	“Many” means no fewer than 10 toys for a group of 5 infants or 15 toys for a group of 5 toddlers, and at least 1 additional toy for each child over that number in each age group. The observer should carefully examine materials to ensure they match the children’s abilities – challenging but not frustrating, and give credit only for such materials. “Varied” means materials that require different skills (such as grasping, shaking, turning, pushing, pulling, poking, putting together, using thumb and forefinger together, scribbling). Materials should also vary in color, size, shape, texture, sound, and action.
	7.1	To give credit, materials must be rotated at least monthly.
	7.2	To give credit, there must be at least two examples of materials of different levels of difficulty.

Questions	7.1	Do you have any additional fine motor materials that you use with the children?
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16. Active physical play		Active physical play requires that the children be active in order to develop their gross motor skills. Taking children for rides in strollers, swinging them in swings, or having them play in the sandbox should not be counted as active physical play. Non-mobile babies should be allowed to move freely to the extent that they are able, for example on a blanket or other safe surface. Children who can crawl or walk should be given developmentally appropriate opportunities to practice gross motor skills. In this item, the terms “equipment” and “materials” are used interchangeably
	1.1	If neither indoor nor outdoor space is used for active physical play, score 1.1 “Yes”.
	1.1, 1.2, 3.3 5.5	Appropriate indoor and outdoor spaces and equipment/materials must be safe for infants and toddlers. For example, cushioning surfaces in fall zones must be adequate; equipment should not allow falls from high places; no sharp edges, splinters, protrusions, or entrapment hazards.
	1.2, 3.3, 5.5	Examples of appropriate materials and equipment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants—outdoor pad or blanket, crib gym for younger infants, small push toys, balls, sturdy things to pull up on, ramps for crawling • Toddlers—riding toys without pedals, large push-pull wheel toys, balls and bean bags, age-appropriate climbing equipment, slide, balance board, cushions or rugs for tumbling, tunnels, large cardboard boxes
	3.1	If any child is confined to a space that severely restricts active physical movement for long periods (e.g., 30 minutes or more), do not give credit. For example, score “No” if a child is kept in a swing, infant seat, or large group activity with no option for using the active play space for long periods.
	3.2	Children should be dressed properly and taken outdoors to play except on those <i>relatively few</i> days of very bad weather.
	5.1	The outdoor space must be easily accessible to the adults and children currently a part of the program. Access should be considered for both typically developing children and those with disabilities, if enrolled. Access requirements will differ based on abilities of children enrolled and of adults who are part of the regular program. Two-year olds do not need to be separated from preschoolers to give credit, unless safety or access to appropriate active physical experiences, due to the presence of older children, is an issue. Programs operating for at least 8 hours/day must have 1 hour of access to outdoor active physical play space daily. Less time is required for programs operating less than 8 hours a day. See Explanation of Terms, p.7, for time required for shorter programs.
	5.2	If there are 2 or more active play areas used with the children, score this indicator based on the average of what children experience. For example, if the indoor play area is small and crowded and it is used substantially more than an uncluttered, spacious outdoor space, do not give credit. If the opposite is true, then credit should be given.
	7.1	At least one firm and one soft play surface must be accessible daily outdoors.
	7.2	Only one example of protection from the elements must be observed, but the protection must match the most prevalent adverse conditions caused by the elements in the local area.
	7.3	To meet the requirement for a “variety of skills,” there should be 7-9 different skills that are obviously encouraged by the equipment/materials children can use. Consider both stationary and portable equipment.
Questions	1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1	Are any areas used by this group for active physical play, including space indoors and outdoors? If yes, and not observed, ask: Could you please show me these areas? How often are they used, and for about how long?

17. Art	<p>Mark this item NA if all children in the group are younger than 12 months of age. However, if art activities are used with infants, then the item must be scored and specified indicators (3.1, 5.1) will be scored NA.</p>
1.1, 3.2	<p>Examples of appropriate art materials: crayons, water color markers, brush and finger paints, play dough, collage materials of different textures. Only the simplest materials should be used with younger toddlers. Other materials should be added as children gain skills and ability to use materials appropriately.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">All materials must be non-toxic and safe. Score this item based only on the art materials used with the children. Edible materials (such as chocolate pudding, dried pasta, pop corn, and so forth) cannot be counted as art materials because they give a misleading message about the proper use of food. The possible health (sanitary issues), safety (e.g., choking hazards), and supervision consequences of using food in art should be considered in Items 10, 11, and 25.</p>
1.2	Score "Yes" if <i>any</i> toxic or unsafe art materials are ever used by children, even if most materials used are non-toxic and safe.
3.1	"Some" means at least one usable example (e.g., crayons with paper).
3.3	There must be at least two other activities available that children can choose to do without a negative response from the staff.
5.1	"Younger toddlers" are children 12-23 months of age; "older toddlers" are children 24-30 months of age.
5.2	To give credit, all art activities used with children should encourage individual expression.
7.1	To give credit, "younger toddlers" must be offered at least three different art materials at some time during the week. "Older toddlers" must have access to more than three different materials on a weekly basis, and there must be variation within each material. To score, consider art materials accessible during the observation, children's art on display, and staff report.

Questions	1.2, 3.2	Are art materials used with the children? If yes, ask: What materials are used? Can I see these art supplies? Are edible materials ever used for art?
	3.1, 5.1	How often are art materials used with the children?
	7.1	How do you choose what art materials to offer the children?

18. Music and movement	1.1	Examples of materials for use in music/movement experiences: record/tape/CD player; variety of records, tapes, CDs; music boxes; musical toys and instruments; safe, home-made musical instruments such as shakers made of plastic bottles filled with sand or pebbles, with caps securely fastened. Score "Yes" if children do not have a music/movement experience at least once a day
	1.2	Score "Yes" if loud music is on for most of a 3-hour observation.
	3.1	"Some" means at least two safe musical materials, toys, or instruments are accessible.
	3.3	To give credit, there must be more than one alternative activity available for children to choose that children are allowed to use during group music activities.
	5.1	"Many" means at least 10 musical toys/instruments, but no less than one toy per child based on maximum daily attendance permitted. Music materials that are unsafe (e.g., with sharp edges or small removable parts) are not counted to meet the required number. Any safety concerns should also be considered in Item 11, Safety.
	5.2	To give credit, this indicator must be observed at least once during the observation.
	5.4	Credit cannot be given if music is used for long periods (e.g., 20 minutes) as background sound, even if it was originally put on for a specific purpose, such as for children to dance to.
	7.1	To give credit, at least two music toys or instruments must be rotated monthly.
	7.2	To give credit, at least three different types of music must be used regularly. For any music to be counted as an example of a type it must be appropriate for children, e.g. no violent or sexually explicit content.
	7.3	One instance must be observed to give credit.

Questions	3.2, 5.3	Do you use any music with the children? If yes, ask: How is this handled? How often is this done?
	7.1	Do you have any other musical toys or instruments that the children can use? Could you please show me?
	7.2	What types of music are used with the children? Can you give me some examples?

19. Blocks		Mark this item NA if all children in care are younger than 12 months of age.
	1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 7.1	Examples of materials for block play: soft blocks; light-weight blocks of various sizes, shapes, colors; large cardboard blocks; accessories such as containers to fill and dump, toy trucks or cars; and animals. Note that interlocking blocks, such as Duplo, are considered under Item 15. Fine motor, and are not counted here.
	3.1, 3.2	Programs operating for at least 8 hours/day must have 1 hour of access to blocks and accessories daily. Less time is required for programs operating less than 8 hours a day. See Explanation of Terms, p. 7, for time required for shorter programs.
	3.1, 5.1, 7.1	A “set” of blocks means a group of blocks that is designed to be used together. In determining whether a number of blocks can be considered a “set” they must be of the same type and composition. They may differ in shape, size and color, but must obviously be designed to be used as a group. Different types of blocks cannot be combined to give credit for one set.
	3.2	“Some” means at least five accessories of different types. To give credit, accessories must be stored near the blocks, or, if not, they must be observed being used with blocks during block play.
	7.2	Variety” means at least five materials from each of the following categories: transportation toys, people, and animals, resulting in a total of at least 15.
	7.3	To give credit, this indicator must be observed at least once during the observation.

20. Dramatic Play	1.1, 3.1, 5.1	Examples of materials for dramatic play: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants—dolls, soft animals, pots and pans, toy telephones • Toddlers—dress-up clothes; child-sized house furniture; cooking/eating equipment such as pots and pans, dishes, spoons; play foods; dolls; doll furnishings; soft animals; small play buildings with accessories; toy telephones
	3.1	To give credit, two or more dolls and two or more soft animals must be accessible to children.
	5.1	For infants, “many” requires 3–5 of the examples on the list of materials. For toddlers, “many and varied” means two or more of each of the examples of toys mentioned in the materials list. There may be fewer of one type of toy and more of another, as long as most are represented. However, no more than two types can be missing, and there must be more of other types if one or two types are missing.
	7.1	To give credit, there must be dolls representing at least three different races and at least two other examples of materials that show diversity, and all props must be associated with a positive image of the group represented.
	7.3	To give credit, this indicator must be observed at least once during the observation.

21. Sand and water play		<p>Mark this item NA if all children in care are younger than 18 months of age. The possible health, safety, and supervision consequences of using sand or water with children under 18 months of age should be considered in Items 10, 11, and 25.</p> <p>In addition to sand, other fine-grained materials that can easily be used for digging and pouring, such as sterilized potting soil or very finely shredded mulch may be counted. Materials that pose a danger to children of this age, such as dried beans, small pebbles, styrofoam chips, corn meal, and flour, cannot be counted as a substitute for sand.</p> <p>Water play can be provided by using materials such as a running hose, sprinkler, dishpans, or a water table.</p> <p>Sand and water play require action on the part of the staff to provide appropriate materials for such activity. Allowing children to play in puddles or dig in dirt on the playground does not meet the requirements for this item.</p>
	3.2	Score “No” if there are any instances observed of children drinking water used for play, eating sand, throwing sand or water in a way that hurts or endangers anyone, or children falling on slippery floors in sand/water play area. If sand or water play is not observed, base score on supervision of other activities observed, and teacher response during interview.
	3.3	“Some” means at least two toys for children to use with sand/water play.
	3.3, 5.2	Examples of toys for use with sand and water are: kitchen utensils, shovel and bucket, small cars and trucks, floating toys, plastic containers.
	7.2	Give credit if staff report that different activities are used with sand or water at least once a week.

Questions	1.1	Do the children use sand or water? If yes, ask:
	3.1, 5.1, 7.1	How often is this done?
	3.3, 5.2	Are any toys used for the sand and water play? Could you please describe them or show me?
	7.2	Are there any other activities or materials used with sand or water in addition to what I saw today? Could you tell me about them?

22. Nature/science	3.1	“Some” means at least two nature/science pictures, books, or toys.
	3.2	Programs operating for 8 hours/day or more must have 1 hour of access to nature/science materials daily. Less time is required for programs operating less than 8 hours a day. See Explanation of Terms on p. 7 for time required in shorter programs. To count as accessible, children must be able to reach and use the books/toys, and easily see the pictures.
	3.3	The intent of this indicator is that children are given opportunities to interact with nature. This can occur either by taking children outside to see or experience natural things such as trees, grass, and birds, or by providing experiences with nature indoors, such as through living plants, an aquarium, classroom pets, and watching birds at a window feeder. “Some” means that more than one opportunity exists daily.
	5.1	To give credit for this indicator, the outdoor experiences children have must include living plants and/or animals.
	5.3	To give credit, at least 1 instance must be observed during the observation.

Questions	5.1	How often are children taken outdoors? Could you describe any experiences they have with nature when they are outdoors?
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23. Use of TV, video, and/or Computer		<p>Since infants and toddlers learn primarily through interactions and hands-on experiences with the real world, use of TV, video, and computer is not required. If TV, video, and computers are not used, score the item NA. If not observed, ask about the use of TV, video, and computers as they are often shared by several classes and may not be evident during the observation time.</p> <p>Since new audiovisual media products are constantly being developed, consider all audiovisual materials or equipment used with the children, even if not named explicitly. For example, DVD materials and electronic games would be considered in scoring. Use of radio programs is also considered here.</p>
	1.1	Score "Yes" if any inappropriate material is ever used including materials containing violent, frightening, or sexually explicit content.
	1.3, 3.3	Use with children under 12 months of age results in a score of 1. Any use with toddlers should be limited.
	5.2	Three or more alternative activities must be accessible while TV or computer is used.

Questions	1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1	Are TV, videos, computers, or other audiovisual materials used with the children? If yes, ask: How are they used? How do you choose the materials?
	1.2	Are TV, videos, computers, or other audiovisual materials used with the children? If yes, ask: How are they used? How do you choose the materials?
	3.3	How often are TV, video, or computers used with the children? For what length of time are these available?
	5.3	How do you supervise when children watch TV or use the computer?
	7.1	Do any of the materials encourage active involvement by the children? Please give some examples.
	7.2	Do you use TV, video, and computer materials that relate to classroom topics or other things that the children are interested in? Please explain.

24. Promoting acceptance of diversity		<p>When assessing diversity in materials, consider all areas and materials used by children, including displayed pictures and photos, books, puzzles, games, dolls, play people used with blocks, puppets, music tapes or CDs, computer software, videos.</p>
	1.1	To score "No," there must be at least two examples of materials that show racial or cultural diversity, that are obvious to the children, in the room used most of the time by them. Children of many races shown on one poster is counted as one example; two baby dolls of different races also counts as one example.
	3.1, 5.1.	If materials are difficult to find or observe, do not give credit for 3.1 and 5.1.
	5.1	To give credit, the observer must find a total of 10 different examples, some in the books, some in pictures, and some in materials (excluding dolls that are required in 5.2). All examples must be easily experienced by children. These ten examples must include at least four of the five types of diversity (races, cultures, ages, abilities, and gender) listed as examples in the indicator.
	5.1, 5.2	Small dolls, used for example with a doll house or for block play, count as dolls for these indicators. Puppets count as materials, but not as dolls.
	7.2	To give credit, the representation of various cultures in accessible materials throughout the classroom must be observed, and staff must report at least one routine or special activity that reflects awareness of cultural diversity if such an activity was not observed during the observation.

Questions	7.2	Are there any activities used to help children become aware of diversity? If yes, ask: Can you give some examples?
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25. Supervision of play and learning		For this item consider both indoor and outdoor supervision. To score this item for outdoor supervision where several groups are being supervised together, consider: all teachers supervising gross motor activities; all children of similar age/abilities as those in group you are observing; numbers of adults and children; whether adults are supervising the most hazardous areas/activities adequately. Since supervision of the various personal care routines is handled in the individual items, it is not considered here (see Items 7. Meals/snacks, 8. Nap, and 9. Diapering/toileting).
	1.1, 3.1	A “momentary lapse in supervision” means that staff are in the space used by the children but cannot see, hear, or reach children, or are not attending to children for a period of less than one minute. No momentary lapses in supervision can occur when the risk of danger is high. If there are only a few momentary lapses in supervision, do not score Indicator 1.1 “Yes.” However, if there are many momentary lapses, one lapse when the risk is high, or one lapse in supervision of over one minute, where staff cannot easily see, hear, and reach a child at all, score Indicator 1.1 “Yes.”
	3.1	“Few” means no more than five momentary lapses during a 3-hour observation. However, not even one momentary lapse in supervision can occur when risk of danger is high, such as while children are on a diapering table, using climbing equipment or participating in water play.
	5.3	It must be evident that a significant amount of time throughout the observation is spent in playing with the children and showing interest in and appreciation of children’s play. If the vast majority of staff time is taken up in routine care, credit cannot be given, even if staff play with the children for some portion of the observation.

26. Peer interaction	1.2.	If no negative peer interaction is observed, score this indicator “No.”
	3.2	Staff must stop mildly negative peer interactions at least 75% of the time to give credit and all major problems in which children are being hurt. In addition, the intervention cannot ever be harsh to give credit. If no negative peer interaction is observed, score this indicator “Yes.”
	5.2	To give credit, no staff member can be observed modeling negative social skills with the children or with other adults.
	7.1	At least 2 instances must be observed during the first three hours of observation to give credit for this indicator.
	7.2.	At least 1 instance must be observed during the first three hours of observation to give credit for this indicator

27. Staff-child interactions		While the indicators for quality in this item generally hold true across a diversity of cultures and individuals, the ways in which they are expressed may differ. For example, direct eye contact in some cultures is a sign of respect; in others, a sign of disrespect. Similarly, some individuals are more likely to smile and be demonstrative than others. However, the requirements of the indicators must be met by staff, although there can be some variation in the way this is done.
	3.1	To give credit, the required interactions need not occur frequently, but must occur regularly, during both routines and play, and all children should be recipients of these interactions.
	3.2	Sympathetic response means that staff notice and validate a child’s feelings, even if the child is showing emotions that are often considered unacceptable, such as anger or impatience. The feelings should be accepted, although inappropriate behaviors, such as hitting or throwing things, should not be allowed. A sympathetic response should be provided in most, but not necessarily all, cases. If children are able to quickly solve minor problems themselves, then teacher response is not needed. The observer needs to get an overall impression of the response of the staff. If minor problems persist and are ignored or if staff responds in a negative manner, give no credit for this indicator.
	5.1	To give credit, the required interactions must occur frequently, during both routines and play, and all children should be recipients of these interactions.
	5.2	“Usually,” in this indicator, means most of the time for each child and for each staff member. The overall tone throughout the observation should be pleasant in both routines and play. Any stress or upset should be resolved quickly.
	5.3	Physical warmth must be used appropriately to give credit. This means the contact is pleasant and not intrusive to the children or likely to result in any problems.
	7.2	“Usually,” in this indicator, means most of the time for each child. Consider both verbal and non-verbal communication when scoring.

28. Discipline	5.3.	"Attention" means showing enjoyment or interest in what children do. Praise for good behavior is not required as part of the attention given.
	7.1	To give credit, at least one example of an explanation of how a child's behavior affected another person must be observed during the 3 hour observation to demonstrate that it is a regular part of discipline practice. If there are no negative effects of children's actions observed, explanation of positive effects are acceptable to give credit.
	7.2	To give credit, at least one example of staff helping children learn to use communication rather than aggression to solve problems must be observed. If no aggression is observed, give credit if staff help children use either nonverbal or verbal communication skills with one another in other interpersonal interaction.

Questions	1.1	Do you ever find it necessary to use discipline? Please describe what methods you use.
	7.3	What do you do if you have a child whose behavior is extremely difficult to handle? Do you ever ask for help from others? If yes, ask: Can you give some examples of who might be asked?

29. Schedule		"Schedule" means the sequence of daily events experienced by the children. Base score on the actual sequence of events observed rather than on a posted schedule.
	1.1	"Daily events" refers to time for indoor and outdoor play activities as well as routines such as meals/snacks, nap/rest, diapering/toileting, and greeting/departing.
	1.2	This indicator is true (score "Yes") if any one of the routine care needs (feeding, nap, or diapering/toileting) is not carried out 75% of the time for all children, or if most of the routine needs of any one child are consistently ignored.
	3.2	To give credit, the schedule experienced by the children must provide play opportunities where all children are actively involved for much of the day. Passive group gatherings where children are required to listen to the teacher or watch TV, and non-play tasks such as coloring ditto sheets are not given credit. Routines, even if they are done playfully, are also not given credit.
	5.1	If the schedule for routines causes difficulties or distress for any child, do not give credit.
	5.2	Balance depends on ages of children, their needs and moods, and the weather. All children should have some outdoor time daily, weather permitting. Outdoor time can include quiet, as well as active, experiences.
	5.4	Score "No" if children have to wait with nothing to do for more than 3 minutes, or if the waiting time results in obvious distress or problems for children.

Questions	5.1	What do you do if a toddler seems tired before naptime or hungry before mealtime? Is flexibility possible in nap or meal times? If yes, ask: How would that be handled?
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30. Free play	“Free play” means that the child is permitted to select materials and companions and, as far as possible, to manage play independently. Adult interaction is in response to child’s needs. Non-mobile children will have to be offered materials for their free choice and moved to different areas to facilitate access.
3.1	Programs operating for at least 8 hours/day must have 1 hour of free play daily. Less time is required for programs operating less than 8 hours a day. See Explanation of Terms on p. 7 for time required for shorter programs.
3.1, 5.1	See “Explanation of Terms” on page 8 for definition of “weather permitting.”
3.2	Score No only when supervision is extremely lax.
7.1	At least 2 instances must be observed during the observation.
7.2	To give credit, new materials or experiences must be added to the free play opportunities at least once a month.

Questions	7.2 Do you have any additional play materials for children to use? If yes, ask: How often do you change the materials in the room?
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31. Group play activities	This item refers to play and learning activities, and not to routines. Score this item “NA” if group play activities are never used. If no group play activity is observed, but there is evidence that such activities are used with the children (e.g., circle time is listed on the displayed schedule, a group activity is shown on a lesson plan), score the item based on information obtained by questions asked during the staff interview. Group play activities are staff-initiated and have an expectation of child participation. This item does not apply to the less formal group activities that usually occur during free play in which children participate in groups because they are interested in doing the same activity at the same time. Examples of these less formal group activities include a few children looking at a book with a teacher or a few children playing close to one another, doing solitary play with blocks with a teacher supervising.
1.1	“Must often participate” means that children are routinely forced or strongly encouraged to take part in a group activity on a daily basis, even though they show signs of wanting to leave the group, being bored or frustrated, interested in something else, or unhappy. Score “Yes” if this situation is observed during the observation, or if there is evidence (such as the posted schedule or teacher report) that such activities are used with children daily, or almost daily. Score “No” if all children participate in an observed group activity with interest, engagement, and obvious enjoyment.
1.3	Score “Yes” if it is observed that any staff responds negatively towards any child who does not wish to participate in a group play activity, or who does not meet staff expectations for compliant behavior while in a group play activity.
3.3	Positive and acceptant behavior must be observed 75% of the time, with neutral behavior accounting for any other interactions with the children.
5.2	Suggestions for group size are provided in the example for this indicator. However, a group size that works successfully will depend on the characteristics of the children in the group and the nature of the activity being done. If any child is bored, unhappy, or not interested and engaged, due to group size, score “No.” If all children are happily interested and engaged, score “Yes,” because obviously the size of the group matches the type of activity and the needs of each child.
5.3	To give credit, there must be at least 2 interesting play options available to any child who chooses not to participate in any group play activity.

32. Provisions for children with disabilities		This item should be used only if a child with an identified disability is included in the program. Otherwise, score this item NA
	3.2.	“Minor modifications” to allow the children to attend may include limited changes in the environment (such as a ramp), schedule, or activities, or adding periodic visits by a therapist to work with the children.
	5.3	To give credit, daily (or almost daily) informal communication is required, and formal meetings should take place at least twice a year
	7.1	Credit can be given when either specialists or classroom staff carry out the prescribed intervention within the regular activities classroom.

Questions		Could you describe how you try to meet the needs of the children with disabilities in your group?
	1.1, 3.1	Do you have any information from assessments on the children? How is it used?
	1.2, 3.2	Do you need to do anything special to meet the needs of the children? Please describe what you do.
	5.2	
	1.3, 3.3,	Are you and the children’s parents involved in helping to decide how to meet the children’s needs? Please describe.
	5.3	
	5.1,7.1	How are intervention services such as therapy handled?
	7.3	Are you involved in the children’s assessments or in the development of intervention plans? What is your role?

33. Provisions for parents	3.1, 5.2	Materials must be easily understood by all parents. For example, translations provided in languages other than English, if necessary.
	3.3	At least two different types of possibilities must be offered to give credit.
	7.2	Credit can be given if no referrals have ever been required or made, but, during the teacher interview, staff show that they are well informed and willing to provide this service.

Questions	1.1, 3.1,	Is any written information about the program given to parents? What is included in this information?
	5.2	
	1.2,3.3,	Are there any ways that parents can be involved in their child’s classroom? Please give some examples.
	5.4	
	3.2, 5.3	Do you and the parents share information about the children? How is this done? About how often?
	3.4	What is your relationship with the parents usually like?
	5.1	Are parents able to visit the class before their child is enrolled? How is this handled?
	7.1	Do parents take part in evaluating the program? How is this done? About how often?
	7.2	What do you do when parents seem to be having difficulties? If answer is incomplete, ask: Do you refer them to other professionals for help?
	7.3	Do parents take part in making decisions about the program? How is this handled?

34. Provisions for personal needs of staff	3.4	A minimum of 15 minutes should be provided for a break daily for staff who work an 8-hour day.
	5.2	Storage is considered convenient only if it does not require the staff to leave the classroom or neglect the care of the children to get their belongings.
	5.3	These requirements are based on an 8-hour work day and should be adjusted for shorter periods. Breaks of 15 minutes in the morning and afternoon, and an hour midday lunch break are required for any staff who work at least 8 hours per day.
	5.5	To give credit, the facility and at least one adult restroom must meet the requirements for accessibility stated in the <i>Notes for Clarification</i> for Item 1, Indoor space.

Questions	1.2, 3.4, 5.3	Do you get time off during the day when you can be away from the children? If yes, ask: When does this happen?
	3.3, 5.2	Where do you usually store your belongings, such as your coat or purse? How does this work out?

35. Provisions for professional needs of staff	1.1	The phone does not have to be located in the classroom, but it must be readily accessible. If the phone is in another building, on another floor, or in a locked office, and not readily accessible, then this indicator is scored "Yes."
	3.1	To give credit for this indicator, there must be a phone in the classroom for emergency calls or brief conversations with parents. A cell phone is acceptable if it is accessible.
	5.2	To be given credit for this indicator, the office must be on site, open during program hours, and provide administrative services for the program.

Questions	1.1, 3.1	Do you have access to the telephone? Where?
	1.2, 3.2, 5.1	Do you have access to any file and storage space? Please describe.
	1.3, 3.3, 5.3, 7.2	Is there any space you can use for parent/teacher conferences or for adult group meetings when the children are present? Please describe.
	5.2, 7.1	Is there an office for the program? Please describe.

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36. Staff interaction and cooperation	7.3	Score if 2 or more staff members work with the group being observed, even if they work with the same group at different times. Score this item NA if there is only 1 staff member with the group. Credit can be given if classroom staff report that the administration encourages some social event at least two times a year.
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Questions	1.1, 3.1, 5.1	Do you have a chance to share information about the children with the other staff members who work with your group? When and how often does this happen? What kinds of things do you talk about?
	7.1	Do you have any planning time with your co-teacher(s)? About how often?
	7.2	How do you and your co-teacher(s) decide what each of you will do?
	7.3	Does the program ever organize events that you and other staff participate in together? Could you give me some examples?

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37. Staff continuity	1.1.	If there is not at least one stable person who cares for the children for more than 50% of each day, and children must adjust to many caregivers on a daily or weekly basis, score "Yes."
	1.4.	"Frequent" means at least 75% of the time substitutes are used.
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Questions	1.3, 3.3, 5.3	How is the transition to a new group handled?
	1.4, 3.4, 5.4, 7.3	How frequently are substitutes needed? Who are the substitutes for staff? How are they prepared to be substitutes?
	7.2	May a child stay with the same staff or group for more than a year?

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38. Supervision and evaluation of staff	1.1	Score this item NA only when the program is a 1-person operation with no other staff. Get information to score this item by asking questions of the person being supervised, not the supervisor. In cases where classroom staff state that they do not know the answers to your questions, ask their supervisor.
	3.2	Feedback may be verbal or in writing and may be fairly general at the minimal level of quality.
	7.1	Give credit if staff participate in self-evaluation at least annually.
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Questions	1.1,3.1, 5.1, 5.2	Is your work supervised in any way? How is this done?
	1.2, 3.2, 5.2, 7.3	Are you ever given any feedback about your performance? How is this handled? How often?
	5.4	If improvement is needed, how is this handled?
	7.1	Do you ever take part in self-evaluation?

39. Opportunities for professional growth		Get information to score this item by asking questions of the classroom staff. If the staff members state that they do not know the answers to your questions, ask the supervisor.
	3.1	Basic orientation must take place within 6 weeks after the start of employment including, at a minimum, emergency, health, and safety procedures, in order to give credit.
	3.2	In-service training, which all classroom staff are required to attend, must be provided at least once a year in order to give credit.
	3.3	Staff meetings, in which all classroom staff are expected to attend, must be held at least two times a year by the director and/or administrative staff in order to get credit.
	5.2	In-service training, which all classroom staff are required to attend, must be provided at least two times a year, either on-site or in community workshops.
	5.4	"Some" means that at least 25 books, pamphlets, or AV materials in good condition are available to staff.
	7.2	"Current materials" means that most of the books have been published within the last 10 years and journals and magazines from the past 2 years. Books, such as the works of Piaget and Erikson, are exceptions, since they are classics on which many of our current ideas are based.
	7.3	AA/AS degree = Associate of Arts or Science (2-year degree) CDA credential = Child Development Associate (1-year program) GED = General Equivalency Degree (high school equivalency)

Questions	1.1,3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.2	Is any training provided to staff? Please describe this training. What is done with new staff?
	1.2, 3.3, 5.3	Do you have staff meetings? About how often? What is usually handled at these meetings?
	5.4, 7.2	Are there any resources on-site that you can use for new ideas? What is included?
	7.1.	Is there any support provided so you can attend conferences or courses? Please describe what is available.
	7.3	Are there any requirements for staff with less than an AA degree to continue their formal education? Please describe the requirements.