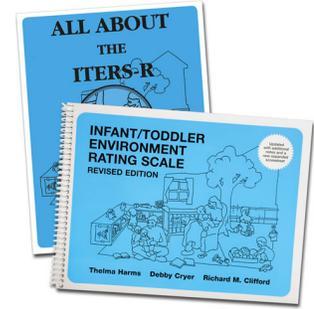


Author and Montana Additional Notes for the ITERS-R

General Notes

Items to be omitted from Montana scoring:

- 33. Provisions for parents
- 34. Provisions for personal needs of staff
- 35. Provisions for professional needs of staff
- 36. Staff interaction and cooperation
- 37. Supervision and evaluation of staff
- 38. Opportunities for professional growth



Review of Montana Notes

August 2018:

- Item 10: Additional language added to existing MT note, note removed from 1.1
- Item 21: Note removed from 1.1

September 2019:

- Item 11: Removed: For sleeping infants, light receiving blankets or sleep sacks are allowed.

Most recent changes are in **orange**

Montana Additional Notes supersede the Author's Additional Notes

For detailed description of the indicators, please refer to the All About the ITERS-R book.

Accessibility

Materials should be stored on low, open, uncrowded shelves. Materials should be stored in bins or containers that clearly show what is inside, such as a see-through container or container label with a picture of what is inside. If materials are stored in containers, they should be without lids. If lids are used, they should be easy to open and close by all children. Containers must not be too heavy that children cannot remove them independently from shelves. Materials must not be stored in such a way that bins must be tipped over rather than removed from the shelf by children or large heavy items stored above the children's heads when playing.

In some items (16, 19, 22, and 30), access is required for at least 1 hour per day. Less time is required for programs operating less than 8 hours per 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.

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

Materials are considered accessible only if it is observed that children freely access and are permitted to use most of the materials. If programs limit the number of children in areas, they must ensure that all children have a reasonable opportunity to access materials for a substantial portion of the day. A reasonable opportunity requires that materials are accessible throughout the day, both indoors and outdoors. If children request access to materials and are prevented from using them, there must be other opportunities to use the same materials in other areas or other times of the day to receive credit. Some materials may not be accessible during the observation. For example, sand and water play may only be available in the afternoon. However, the materials must be available for 1 hour to receive credit for accessible or 1/3 of the day to receive credit for substantial portion of the day. Additional questions may be needed to gain information on other times of the day. Keep in mind that non-mobile infants do not have access to the materials if the materials are not placed

within easy reach of the infant. For programs operating more than 5 hours a day, in order to meet much of the day, there should be no significant extended periods of time where structured activities prevent access to materials. Access must be observed throughout the day.

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. 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.

Hand washing must be completed in these steps:

1. Check to be sure a clean, disposable paper (or single-use cloth) towel is available.
2. Turn on warm water, no less than 60 degrees F and no more than 120 degrees F, to a comfortable temperature.
3. Moisten hands with water and apply liquid soap to hands. Soap should not be anti-bacterial soap. (Montana note)
4. Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for at least 20 seconds. Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, jewelry, and back of hands.
5. Rinse hands under running water, no less than 60 degrees F and no more than 120 degrees F, until they are free of soap and dirt. Leave the water running while drying hands.
6. Dry hands with the clean disposable paper or single use cloth towel.
7. If taps do not shut off automatically, turn taps off with a disposable paper or single use cloth towel.
7. Throw the disposable paper towel into a lined hands-free trash container; or place single-use cloth towels in the laundry hamper; or hand individually labeled cloth towels to dry. Use hand lotion to prevent chapping of hands, if desired.

Much of the Day

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, and 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." 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.

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.

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. 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). 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.”

Levels of quality build expectations from minimal to good to excellent. Consider not only the requirements of the indicator, but the level of quality documented as general practice throughout the observation.

Supervision

Keep in mind that positive interactions from the staff that are regularly scheduled to work in a classroom with the children that are being observed are considered in scoring. Only the negative interactions of other adults can be considered. In addition, the children listed on the classroom roster can't be moved to another classroom during the assessment. If children are transferred during the assessment, the assessment will be called (cancelled) because it is no longer a valid assessment.

Staff must be able to hear children at all times, must be able to see children with a quick glance, and must be able to physically respond immediately, leaving no child unattended. The caregivers focus must be on the children during high-risk activities, such as eating, sand water play, art etc. in order to adequately protect the children.

When children are required to participate in an activity or lose interest during the activity, and are not allowed to leave, participation is considered forced. Children may be encouraged to join an activity, but staff should be respectful of their cues and respond appropriately if any child loses interest.

Sanitizing

Disinfectant and/or anti-bacterial wipes do not count for sanitization purposes. Products that can be given credit as sanitizing solutions are: bleach and water solution; or a commercial product that states on the label or manufacturer's products sheet it kills 99.9% of germs, kills HIV virus, or is an EPA registered product. All commercial products used for sanitizing must be used according to manufacturer's instruction. Play materials that come into contact with bodily fluids must be cleaned and sanitized after each child's use. Toys that do not come into contact with bodily fluids should be sanitized weekly or when visibly soiled (page 106, Caring for Our Children.)

The 2011 edition of 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 approved products for sanitizing and disinfecting; follow the manufacturer's instructions for diluting the bleach solution and for the required contact time. Programs that use a sanitizing and/or disinfecting solution that is not bleach must get approval from their local sanitarian and have proof of approval on-site at all times. Approval must include use for eating surfaces, diapering/toileting, handwashing surfaces, and

sanitizing toys. If approval is not given for all of the above listed instances, then the approval must outline what is approved for use.

Weather

Inclement weather Taken from Caring for Our Children National Health and Safety Performance Standards - Children shall play outdoors daily when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. Outdoor play for infants may include riding in a carriage or stroller; however, infants shall be offered opportunities for gross motor play outdoors, as well.

Weather that poses a significant health risk shall include wind chill at or below 15 degrees F and heat index at or above 90 degrees F, as identified by the National Weather Service.

Air quality conditions that pose a significant health risk shall be identified by announcements from local health authorities or through ozone alerts. Such air quality conditions shall require that children remain indoors where air conditioners ventilate indoor air to the outdoors. Children with respiratory health problems such as asthma shall not play outdoors when local health authorities announce that the air quality is approaching unhealthy levels.

Author and Montana Additional Notes for the ITERS-R

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| 1. Indoor Space | 3.2 | There must be a sound barrier between classrooms; such as a wall. |
| | 5.2 | The natural light 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 the children. |
| | 7.2 | Ventilation should be able to be controlled in all spaces used for children (e.g. through heating/air conditioning systems, windows, opening doors, and ceiling fans etc.) |
| 2. Furniture for routine care and play | 1.1, 3.1 | To give credit, furniture must be used for routine care, and not simply be present – not used for other purposes. When a diapering table is not used, an alternative diapering surface 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. Sleeping provisions for individual use only. Couches and other shared spaces are not acceptable sleeping provisions due to cross-contamination. |
| | 1.2, 3.2, 5.4 | <i>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 7.3.</i> |
| | 3.1 | <i>Credit can't be given for this indicator if clothes in cubbies or the children's bedding is touching due to cross-contamination. If hooks or pegs are used for children's personal belongings, belongings cannot touch (consider if winter clothing would also not touch). If clothing does not touch and belongings are spaced 18 inches or more apart this is considered sufficient and credit can be given. Author Note: When determining whether furniture for routine care is sufficient, consider the sizes of cubbies in relation to what is stored in them to see if they can adequately accommodate all of each child's possessions. Each child enrolled in the group must have an individual cubby that is not shared with anyone else, with space for all possessions to be stored there. This is to reduce the spread of lice and scabies. When children's personal belonging, such as coats, extra clothing, blankets (if stored in cubbies,) are not reasonably well separated, or if cubbies are so full that things fall onto the floor, score 3.1 "No" because the cubbies are not adequate in size based on what must be stored in them. If there is only minor touching of possessions (e.g., protruding sleeves of winter coats touching those of other children, or a small problem with other materials, but this could be solved easily by pushing things into the cubby properly, consider the cubbies adequate. Any touching of children's personal possessions should also be considered in the Health item.</i> |
| | 3.2 | Enough furniture for play means that the children have the developmentally appropriate seating to use play materials and that there are suitable ways of making materials accessible to the children on open storage shelves. Toddlers and twos, who can select toys independently, should have access to materials on low, open shelves. Appropriate seating on small chairs near very low tables is also needed to encourage more sustained play with toys for toddlers and twos. |

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| | 3.4 | Consider feeding chairs, if infants and young toddlers are seated in slippery plastic seats with their legs dangling and no foot rest, the seats cannot be considered comfortable or supportive. Also check to make sure the edge of the seat is not cutting into the back of the children's legs. |
| | 5.2 | In order to receive credit, at least two child-sized chairs at an appropriately sized table are required. |
| | 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. Some storage means that there is at least one storage provision for routine care supplies and one storage provision for play materials onsite. |
| | 5.5 | Some adult seating means that there is at least one seating arrangement provided for adults to use during routine care. Credit can be given if seats are observed being used for routine care. |
| 3. Provision for relaxation and comfort | 3.1 | To give credit, there must be at least one soft furnishing provided that is large enough for at least one child to lounge comfortably. |
| | 3.2, 5.2 | Author Note: 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. |
| | 7.1 | Softness in this indicator refers to soft furnishings. Soft toys are not considered to meet this requirement. |
| 5. Display for Children | | Decorative mirrors can be considered as part of the display if they are intentionally placed at the eye level of the majority of the children in care and are meant to be used by the children. |
| | 1.2, 3.2 | If the display depicts violent scenarios or is scary in nature than credit can't be given; for example skeletons chasing someone, characters with fangs. |
| | 5.1 | Since the intent of this indicator is to expose children to varying, identifiable images, and for these images to be present throughout the room for adults to point out and talk about to encourage children's language development, children's artwork (credited in 3.1 and 7.4) is not considered here. Author Note: Labels on shelves indicating where materials are to be stored and center labels or signs do not count as display. |
| | 5.2 | This indicator focuses on the three-dimensional objects hanging in space in the room. A three-dimensional object has height, width, and depth. To score this indicator, "Yes", there must be at least 2 three-dimensional hanging objects in the room for use by all of the children most of the day. |
| | 5.3 | This indicator requires both two-dimensional and three-dimensional items. Some of the two-dimensional items should be in easy reach. Non-mobile children may need to be moved in close proximity to the items displayed. |
| 6. Greeting/ departing | 1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1 | The expectation is that the children are greeted before the parent leaves. It is important for the caregiver to acknowledge that the child is in their care and make them feel welcome. |
| | 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 |

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| | | 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. |
| 7. Meals/ snacks | 1.1, 3.2 | With regard to drinking water being offered between meals/snacks to children, 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. |
| | 1.1, 3.1 | Meals/snacks should be served to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers every 2-3 hours unless children are sleeping. |
| | 1.2, 3.2 | The intent of this indicator is to determine whether the correct components of a meal or snack are being served to children. No analysis of the nutritional value of foods is necessary. Use the Food Guide to determine whether the components are present. The guidelines also require ALL components be served together. Personal dietary preferences of the assessor (e.g., whole grain vs. white breads; fresh vs. canned vegetables, high vs. low sugar or fat content, etc.) are not to be used in determining the quality of foods served. Foods that are perishable should not be left out longer than 1 hour. In the rare case, where children/parents bring food, 75% of meals must meet the USDA Guidelines. Providers may supplement if they choose in order to guarantee 75% compliance. Programs that choose to "offer" rather than "serve" food (i.e. family style serving, school-age multiple choice snacks) carry an additional responsibility to encourage appropriate choices and model good nutritional habits. Combination foods are foods with multiple components that have been packaged together or combined during the cooking process. Combination foods can be counted to meet up to two different components. Scoring consideration of combination foods should be balanced with other items on the menu. Foods that might be served together, but do not meet the definition of combination foods can count for up to 3 components (i.e. hamburgers, sandwiches, cereal and milk with added fruit). When vegetable garnishes are served in sufficient quantities, they may be considered to meet the requirement as a vegetable. Breading on meat products may not be counted. Cooked dry beans, such as kidney or black beans which are considered to be an excellent source of protein, can count as either a protein or vegetable. However green beans, like string or lima beans which aren't considered to be good sources of protein, should only be counted as a vegetable. Milk must be served at every meal excluding snack where the provider can chose to serve 2 of the 4 meal components to the children. |
| 1.3, 3.3 | With regard to the note on handwashing/use of hand sanitizers that has been added to the "Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale," stating that hand sanitizer can be used unless hands are "visibly soiled." Visibly soiled hands result from outdoor/indoor play, contact with bodily fluids, messy play, touching pets, arrival into classroom, or anytime hands are otherwise contaminated. See "Examples of categories when proper handwashing is needed," on page 124 in All About the ECERS-R. Montana does not support the use of hand sanitizer in place of proper handwashing. See also, The 2011 edition of Caring for Our Children (page 113) "Rationale." Hand sanitizer has been proven to be effective only after washing properly with soap and water. Hand sanitizer is labeled "keep out of reach of children" due to its high alcohol content and requires careful supervision and child training on proper use in order to be effective. Hand sanitizer is only permitted when running water is unavailable or impractical such as on a picnic or field trip. Author Note: 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 | |

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| | | <p>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.</p> |
| | <p>1.3, 3.3, 5.3</p> | <p>Children and adults must wash hands for ten seconds before rinsing. Antibacterial soap cannot be used.</p> <p>An alternative EPA approved sanitizer cannot be used in place of bleach and water solution for the purposes of sanitizing tables/sinks, high chairs, or other food related surfaces, unless approval from the local sanitarian has been secured and documentation is on site.</p> <p>Eating surfaces; whether inside or out, must be cleaned and sanitized prior to, and following, use for food service. Follow the "2-step" process. Eating surfaces should be: 1) washed with a soap and water mixture to remove gross soil and, 2) sanitized with a bleach-water solution before and after being used for meals/snacks. To allow bleach-water solution to do its job, it should be allowed to sit for at least 10 seconds (preferably longer) before wiping dry or allowing to air dry. For other acceptable sanitizing agents, refer to the general notes. If proper sanitary measures are clearly practiced as part of the child care program, but an occasional lapse does occur, credit can be given. To score adult hand-washing, the lapse equates to the impact it has or is going to have on the children. In the case where snack time is flexible and children come and go throughout a period of time, the same sanitary conditions are required (i.e., table sanitized between children using same places, children's hands washed, etc.). If children finger feed themselves during meals, then children should have hands washed after eating. Recontamination of hands is addressed here. To allow staff to keep their focus on children while they are eating, a separate wipe may be used on each child's hands that have finished eating and may leave the table. When the last child has finished eating, all children should be expected to wash hands (except children without head control). Hands must be washed with soap and running water.</p> <p>Author Note: See the note on handwashing/use of hand sanitizers that has been added to the "Explanation of Terms Used throughout the Scale".</p> |
| | 3.3 | <p>If the same sink is used by either children or adults for both diapering/toileting and food-related routines (including toothbrushing) or for other purposes (to wash toys/other classroom equipment; after wiping nose), it must be sanitized by spraying sink and faucets with a bleach solution after diapering/toileting use.</p> |
| | 3.5 | <p>Credit can be received when information on children's allergies and chronic medical conditions are posted in a confidential manner. In programs where the children spend significant amount of time in more than one classroom, the allergy information should be posted in the classroom in which they spend the majority (over 50%) of their time. However, it is required that any information on a child's food allergies or medical conditions that effect the child's eating habits must be posted in the classroom where the child eats.</p> |
| 8. Nap | | <p>All children over 3 months of age must never be swaddled even if a doctor has given permission. This is a QAD-Licensing requirement.</p> <p>Author Note: 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.</p> |
| | 1.1 | <p>Cribs with manufacturer dates prior to June 29th, 2011 must be replaced. Programs must provide a certificate of compliance to the new crib law from the manufacturer for all cribs in their facility. These will be requested at time of assessment.</p> <p>Nap mats must be at least 2 inches thick.</p> <p>Blankets, pillows, stuffed animals or any other items placed near sleeping infants are not allowed. A sheet is not allowed in playpens but two coverings are required with children over 12 months of age napping in cribs.</p> |

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| | | Author Note: According to the 2011 edition of <i>Caring for Our Children</i> (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. |
| | 1.1, 3.2 | Author Note: Based on the new policy statement in <i>Caring for Our Children</i> (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 such as (toys, bumper pads) should be placed in the crib. <i>Caring for Our Children, 3rd Edition</i> 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 cribs are closer than 24 inches. For 3.2, do not give credit unless there is 3 feet between each sleeping surface. |
| | 1.2, 3.3 | 1.2, Sleeping infants should be checked every 15 minutes by touch. 3.3 If there is a sleeping room, make sure the lighting and arrangement of the room make it possible to provide adequate supervision of sleeping infants. |
| | 3.2 | Children must not be allowed to sleep in swings, infant seats, couches, or strollers because they are shared spaces and not considered sanitary. Two coverings are required for children over 12 months of age - One to cover the type of bedding used and one for the child to have access to in order to cover up with. Bedding should be washed weekly. With the exception of cots, sleeping provisions should be 2 inches thick. Credit for this indicator can't be given if the bedding is stored in such a way that it touches bedding which belongs to other children. |
| 9. Diapering/ Toileting | | For proper sanitary diaper change procedure, refer to the Montana Diaper Change Procedure. For the purpose of the scales, pull-ups are held to the same standards as diapers. |
| | 1.1, 3.1 | When a diapering table is not used, an alternative diapering surface 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. When children are changed standing up while wearing a pull-up or diaper the same rules apply. |
| | 1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1 | Reusable diapers such as cloth diapers must be placed in a separate covered container with waterproof liner when soiled. The container must be emptied (laundered, given to parent, or other disposal) daily and cleaned and disinfected daily. Children and adults must wash hands for ten seconds before rinsing. Antibacterial soap cannot be used. An alternative EPA approved "sanitizer" cannot be used in place of bleach and water solution for the purposes of sanitizing tables/sinks, high chairs, or other food related surfaces, unless approval from the local sanitarian has been secured and documentation is on site. |
| | 1.2, 3.2 | Diapers/pull-ups should be visually checked approximately every 2 hours. |
| | 1.3, 3.3 | With regard to the note on handwashing/use of hand sanitizers that has been added to the "Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale," stating that hand sanitizer can be used unless hands are "visibly soiled." Visibly soiled hands result from outdoor/indoor play, contact with bodily fluids, messy play, touching pets, arrival into classroom, or |

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| | <p>anytime hands are otherwise contaminated. See "Examples of categories when proper handwashing is needed," on page 124 in All About the ECERS-R. Montana does not support the use of hand sanitizer in place of proper handwashing. See also, The 2011 edition of Caring for Our Children (page 113) "Rationale." Hand sanitizer has been proven to be effective only after washing properly with soap and water. Hand sanitizer is labeled "keep out of reach of children" due to its high alcohol content and requires careful supervision and child training on proper use in order to be effective. Hand sanitizer is only permitted when running water is unavailable or impractical such as on a picnic or field trip.</p> <p>Author Note: <i>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, not turning off faucets with a paper towel). However, hands should be cleaned reasonably well. If handwashing is usually ignored completely, score 1.3 Yes. If attempts to complete handwashing usually occur when needed, even if incomplete, score 1.3 No and 3.3 No. If there is a significant attempt to complete handwashing as required, even if some procedures are not done absolutely correctly, score 1.3 No and 3.3, Yes.</i></p> |
| 10. Health Practices <i>MT note additional language added. Note removed from 1.1</i> | <p><i>For proper Handwashing procedure, refer to the MT Handwashing Process</i></p> |
| 1.1, 3.1 | Before walking on surfaces that infants use specifically for play, adults and children shall remove or cover shoes they have worn outside the play area used by that group of infants. These individuals may wear shoes and shoe covers that are used only in the play area for that group of infants. (Caring for Our Children page 236-237) |
| 1.1, 3.2 | Author Note: <i>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, not turning off faucets with a paper towel). However, hands should be cleaned reasonably well. If handwashing and other sanitation issues are usually ignored completely, score 1.3 Yes. If attempts to complete handwashing usually occur when needed, even if incomplete, score 3.3 No. If there is a significant attempt to complete handwashing as required, even if some procedures are not done absolutely correctly, score 3.3, Yes.</i> |
| 1.1, 3.2, 5.2 | See Item 9 note for 1.3, 3.3 on handwashing/use of hand sanitizers Children and adults must wash hands for ten seconds before rinsing. Antibacterial soap cannot be used. |
| 3.1, 5.4 | If outdoor sand area is not covered during the time that the program is not open , mark off for exposure to animal feces. |
| 3.2 | If the same sink is used by either children or adults for both diapering/toileting and food-related routines (including toothbrushing) or for other purposes (to wash toys/other classroom equipment; after wiping nose), it must be sanitized by spraying sink and faucets with a bleach solution after diapering/toileting use. When combining all categories to determine 75%, priority should be given to hand-washing when dealing with bodily fluids (blood and mucous). |
| 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. |
| 5.1 | Caregivers must have spare clothing for children to use. Sunscreen and sun protection should be provided as needed regardless of time of day. Care should be taken to wash children's faces and wipe their noses. |
| 5.3 | 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, |

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| | | practices good hygiene habits in front of the children, wears appropriate clothing for the weather, washes hands when needed. However, if a significant health issue arises mark off at 5.4. |
| | 7.2 | Toothbrushes need to be labeled with child's name and stored in toothbrush storage device with bristles not touching and not touching any contaminated surface. Devices should be washed and sanitized or replaced when they become visibly dirty. |
| 11. Safety Practices | | <p><i>For a more detailed listing of Playground Safety Hazards, refer to the Montana Playground Safety Sheet.</i></p> <p><i>If sand/water play practices are observed that puts the children's safety at risk discount where applicable.</i></p> <p>Foods that are too hot are not considered safe; such as food or bottles warmed in the microwave oven or in water warmer than 120 degrees. Bottles can't be heated in microwave ovens due to the fact that they do not heat evenly and can leave the children at risk to burns.</p> <p>If outlet receptacles are tamper resistant they must be labeled TR from the manufacturer in order to be considered tamper-resistant. Otherwise outlet plugs are sufficient.</p> <p>Author Note: <i>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.</i></p> |
| | 1.1 | <p>Cribs with manufacturer dates prior to June 29th, 2011 must be replaced. Programs must provide a certificate of compliance to the new crib law from the manufacturer for all cribs in their facility. These will be requested at time of assessment.</p> <p>Lofts and climbing ramps are considered indoor climbing equipment. Scores are based on hazards present such as; height, entrapment issues, fall zones, insufficient cushioning, how it is used, ages of children, and supervision.</p> |
| | 1.1, 3.1 | <p>The water used by the children should be checked. The temperature should be considered even if the children can't turn the water on themselves as a distracted adult could turn the wrong faucet on.</p> <p>Spraying bleach water, or other chemicals over the children's heads, such as sanitizing table, is a safety hazard.</p> <p>If staff pick up infants/toddlers up by arm or hand, it puts them at risk for joint injuries.</p> |
| | 1.1, 3.1, 5.1 | <p>Indoor space for gross motor play and equipment is not held to the same standards as outside; however, safety as the primary focus should be insured. Consider the placement of equipment as well as the surface under equipment where children might fall. If indoor children's climbing equipment is used, mats or carpet are required to be placed under the equipment if it is over 12 inches in height. This is in reference to equipment specifically for climbing.</p> |
| | 1.3, 3.2 | <p>Sleeping infants should be checked every 15 minutes by touch.</p> |
| | 3.1 | <p>Lofts and climbing ramps are considered indoor climbing equipment. Scores are based on hazards present such as; height, entrapment issues, fall zones, insufficient cushioning, how it is used, ages of children, and supervision.</p> |
| 12. Helping Children Understand Language | 3.1 | <p>To score "Yes" there can be no child obviously ignored with little or no positive response from the provider at all. Some children may receive less positive response, but all must get some.</p> <p>A moderate amount of such responses means throughout the observations, some positive verbal and non-verbal responses are observed, very few of staff ignoring or respond or responding negatively score yes if staff respond regularly, although not necessary frequently or consistently.</p> |
| | 7.2 | <p>In order to receive credit, the requirements for this indicator should be a general practice. Examples must be observed periodically during the observation.</p> |
| 13. Helping Children Use Language | 3.1 | <p>To score "Yes" there can be no child obviously ignored with little or no positive response from the provider at all. Some children may receive less positive response, but all must get some.</p> |

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| | | A moderate amount of such responses means throughout the observations, some positive verbal and non-verbal responses are observed, very few of staff ignoring or respond or responding negatively score yes if staff respond regularly, although not necessary frequently or consistently. |
| | 7.2 | In order to receive credit, the requirements for this indicator should be a general practice. Examples must be observed periodically during the observation. |
| 14. Using Books | | Simply moving non-mobile infants near books is not considered using books with children. |
| | 1.1, 3.1, 5.1 | Author Note: To give credit for much of the day, the numbers of books required in these indicators must be met. |
| | 3.4 | Author Note: 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. |
| | 7.1 | Book area includes an accessible arrangement for offering books to children with a convenient place nearby and be out of traffic to use books independently. |
| 15. Fine Motor | 3.1 | "Some" for this item is defined as at least five examples of fine motor toys. The toys must be age-appropriate, intact, and functional. In addition, the material should have enough pieces to allow the type of activity for which it was designed. |
| | 3.1, 5.1 | Author Note: When deciding how many fine motor toys to count as accessible to the children, consider the developmental level of all the children in the classroom, and whether each toy presented is complete enough to be used to add to the children's' fine motor development. The developmental expectations for how children will be able to use specific toys will also have an effect on scoring. For example, for the youngest infants who are limited to grasping or batting at things, individual objects (rattles, small soft animals, etc.) can each count as one example. However, as an exception to this rule, individual pieces belonging to a set of objects that make up one toy can only count as one example, even though the individual parts might be what a child uses. Thus, all the individual rings of a stacking ring toy or links from a set of linking toys will count as only one example, even if the various rings are included in a bin of grasping toys for infants. When determining the number of pieces required for a functional set (stacking rings, links, interlocking blocks, pop beads, peg boards with pegs), developmental expectations for productive use must also be considered. Obviously, any puzzle must have all its pieces to be a functional set because there is one right way to complete the puzzle and all pieces are needed. However, even for the more open-ended materials such as those listed above, developmental expectations must be considered in determining what a functional set must include. For example, for a 9-12 month old to use pop beads, only three or four beads would be required as the minimum number of beads in a set. However, to count as a set for older children more pop beads would be required because older children are more likely to connect larger numbers of beads. |
| | 5.1 | Author Note: Because the intent of this indicator is to give children many fine motor toys and within the many toys, a variety of experiences, a set of materials (such as interlocking blocks or links) that has been divided into smaller individual sets with fewer pieces, each in its own container, can count as no more than two sets, even though the one large set might have been divided into more than two sets. Each smaller set must function in keeping with the purpose of the toy and be suited to the developmental abilities of the children in the group. |
| | 5.2 | Means each fine motor material stored with all its pieces in the area designated for use so children know where to find materials for the activity and it is easy to put away. |
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| 16. Active Physical Play | 1.1, 3.1 | Indoor space for gross motor play and equipment is not held to the same standards as outside; however, safety as the primary focus should be insured. Consider the placement of equipment as well as the surface under equipment where children might fall. If indoor children's climbing equipment is used, mats or carpet are required to be placed under the equipment if it is over 12 inches in height. This is in reference to equipment specifically for climbing. When there are more than 3 minor hazards or if there is 1 serious outdoor hazard than credit cannot not be given at the one level. If there are no serious hazards and no more than 3 minor hazards credit can be given in the three level. Lack of resilient surfacing, equipment spacing, etc. may be considered as major hazards depending on the measurements and whether or not serious injury could result. If it is observed that children are using playground equipment that is required to be on a resilient surface and the surfacing is covered with ice and snow credit can't be given due to the serious safety risk. |
| | 1.2 | Lofts and climbing ramps considered indoor climbing equipment. Scores are based on hazards present such as; height, entrapment issues, fall zones, insufficient cushioning, how it is used, ages of children, and supervision. |
| | 3.1 | Author Note: Based on recommendations from the 2011 version of <i>Caring for Our Children</i> (page 66) change the time limit in the note for this indicator from 30 minutes to 15 minutes. No child should be kept restrained in a seat or other restrictive device for more than 15 minutes except for a reasonable time while actively eating, or being fed. |
| | 3.2 | Lofts and climbing ramps considered indoor climbing equipment. Scores are based on hazards present such as; height, entrapment issues, fall zones, insufficient cushioning, how it is used, ages of children, and supervision. To give credit for some space, the space used must be large enough to permit children to move freely according to their abilities and needs. The space should not be limited due to clutter or crowding that may restrict movement. |
| | 3.3 | Some appropriate materials/equipment used daily means that there are enough provisions so that children do not have to wait with no other appropriate gross motor material or equipment option. |
| | 3.2, 5.1 | "Except in very bad weather": Health experts are unanimous on the importance of fresh air and the negative health consequences of children spending too much time in closed, indoor settings. If a child is well enough to be at the center, the child is generally assumed to be well enough to go outside. Except in extreme weather, children are expected to go outside every day. Very young children have difficulty regulating their core temperature making them more susceptible to heat stroke in the summer and cold in the winter. Therefore, Montana guidelines for infants are more restrictive than they are for older children but the importance of fresh air remains the same so infants need to go outside to get some fresh air for brief periods. Children 2 and up will go outside if the temperature is 25 degrees or above as long as conditions are safe, e.g. if ice is not a danger. When it is very cold outdoor play times can be shortened. The basic rule of thumb is one minute for each degree. If the temperature permits, the children can go outside in snow but not in freezing rain or sleet. The importance of appropriate clothing and outerwear should be considered rather than restricting outdoor play. "Weather-permitting" or "Inclement weather" policy taken from <i>Caring for our Children</i> national health and safety performance standards. See general note on weather. |
| | 5.4 | To receive credit, there should be some appropriate gross motor materials/equipment for each child to use while engaged in active physical play. |
| 17. Art | | Author Note: 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 |

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| | | <i>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 only mouths the material, and shows no interest in using it for art, he should be redirected to a more appropriate activity.</i> |
| | 1.1 | Any appropriate art material can be credited for this indicator. Score this item "Yes" only if there are no art materials provided. |
| | 1.1, 3.1, 5.1 | Author Note: 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 15. Fine motor but not to meet the requirements for the Art item. |
| | 1.1, 3.2 | Author Note: 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. |
| | 3.3 | Author Note: 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. |
| | 5.2 | To give credit for this indicator, the majority of art activities used with the children should encourage individual expression. |
| 18. Music and Movement | 1.1 | Any music counted as a "type" for this indicator must be appropriate for use with children, in that the music contains no violent or sexually explicit material or language that is unacceptable according to typical societal standards. |
| | 3.1 | For Montana scoring purposes, some means at least two materials for each age group enrolled. |
| | 3.1, 5.1 | 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. |
| | 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. The musical experience must be appropriate in nature. No frightening or explicit lyrics should be observed. 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. |
| | 3.3 | Author Note: 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. |
| | 7.3 | If not observed, ask the provider to explain whether this is done. |
| 19. Blocks | | Interlocking blocks; such as Duplo's are not considered here. They are considered under Fine Motor. Author Note: There has been some inconsistency about the dimensions of blocks to be considered for this item, with some requiring that the blocks are "at least" 2 inches for the majority of sides, and others requiring "more than" 2 |

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| | | <i>inches. To ensure reliability across assessors, blocks are now interpreted as having to be at least 2 inches for the majority of sides, rather than more than 2 inches. 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.</i> |
| | 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 15. Fine motor. |
| | 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 7.1 | Author Note: <i>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.</i> |
| | 3.2 | "Some" for this item is defined as at least five accessories of different types. Types of accessories include people, animals or vehicles. For young toddlers who like to fill containers with blocks and dump them, containers are also considered accessories. |
| 20. Dramatic Play | 5.1 | These materials should be accessible for much of the day. 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. |
| | 5.4 | Some child-sized furniture means a functioning piece of play furniture that children can easily reach and manage to play independently. Child-sized furniture used for toddlers may be smaller than furniture normally used by preschoolers. |
| 21. Sand and Water Play <i>Note removed from 1.1</i> | 3.1, 5.1, 7.1 | <i>Do not score NA if children under 18 months of age participate in Sand and Water Play activities. Consider the potential implications under Health, Safety and Supervision Items if children under 18 months participate in Sand and Water play activities.</i> If outside sand is not covered in the winter time, then not considered accessible due to accumulation of snow and ice on the sand. If sand is not covered during the time that the program is not open, then also take off in Item 10: Health for exposure to animal feces. |
| | 3.1, 3.3 | If 3.1 is scored "No" because there are no provisions for sand/water, then 3.3 must also be scored "No." |
| | 3.3 | Provisions are to be accessible for the children in order to have meaningful play with these items as they relate to sand and water. |
| | 5.2 | For Montana, variety means 3-5 types, based on size of table, # of children using the table. Reference the intent of the requirement for variety in the "All About" book. |
| 22. Nature/Science | | In Montana, for all pertinent indicators, natural live elements are okay; such as farm and ranch animals etc. if it is part of their regular routine. |
| | 1.1, 3.1 | Displayed pictures/photographs are considered only if easily seen and reached by the children. |
| | 3.1 | The materials should be realistic and developmentally appropriate for the children in care. |

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| | 3.2 | If credit cannot be given for 3.1, then credit cannot be given for 3.2. |
| | 5.1 | Displayed pictures/photographs are considered only if easily seen and reached by the children. |
| | 5.2 | Some means that children have daily experience with either living plants or animals located in the room where the children play the majority of the day or in an indoor area that children visit daily. In order to receive credit, living things (plants, animals, etc.) must be easily seen by the children. If these items are stored out of the view of children (on top of a shelf, behind a cabinet, etc.) the teacher must make these accessible by bringing them down to the children's eye level. There must be clear evidence that this occurs on a daily basis and that the intent is for children to have meaningful experiences with living things. |
| 23. Use of TV, and/or Computer | | If the assessor observes movies/videos being used that have violent or otherwise inappropriate material, discount the appropriate indicator. Otherwise, ask about the program's/provider's policy concerning use of TV and videos. No longer base your determination on what you see stored in the room. Do not reference movie/program names or ratings on summary reports. If audio/visual materials are used less than once a month while children are interested, mark this item NA. Author Note: <i>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.</i> |
| | 1.3 | The time children "use" the computer includes the time that the children watch other children use the computer. |
| | 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, total 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. All media activities must be educational and or active. The time children "use" the computer includes the time that the children watch other children use the computer. |
| | 5.1 | To be considered "good for children," materials for computer and TV viewing must be appropriate and educational. |
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| 24. Promoting Acceptance of Diversity | 5.1 | 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. 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. The requirements for accessibility should be met for much of the day. |
| | 5.1 | Author Note: <i>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, some picture examples, 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.</i> |
| | 5.2 | The requirements for accessibility should be met for much of the day. |
| | 7.1 | We will accept family and classroom pictures but we want to see that whatever is being displayed is meaningful to Montana children and that the display is well thought out and intentional. |

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| 27. <i>Staff-child Interactions</i> | 3.4 | Some is defined as extra touches that are added for the purpose of showing children they are valued and appreciated during routines or in play. This should be a normal part of practice and should occur throughout the day. |
| 28. <i>Discipline</i> | 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." |
| 30. <i>Free play</i> | 3.2 | <p>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 would be considered extremely lax supervision of free play, even if other parts of free play were supervised well.</p> <p>Some supervision to protect children's safety and to facilitate play means that staff are present in the area being used by children and are usually paying attention to them as they play. To facilitate play means that staff help children access toys and materials and help children who become upset or uninvolved.</p> |
| | 5.1 | Time spent outdoors and indoors should be significant enough that children become engaged in meaningful free play. Length of time may vary depending on the ages of the children and their needs. |
| 32. <i>Provisions for Children with Disabilities</i> | | ECERS 37, ITERS-R 32, FDCRS 35 and 40, and SACERS 44 should be scored NA unless a child with a disability that has been diagnosed through a formal assessment procedure and receives (or is eligible for) early intervention services is enrolled. Across all four scales, the following aspects should be considered when scoring: modifications, parent involvement, inclusion, and use of assessment information. Look for the extent of modifications needed to the schedule or classroom to include the child in daily activities, parent and staff communication regarding the child's assessment information and ongoing therapy, and the use of assessment information into planning throughout the day. Some parents may not share all information with staff for various reasons. Consider the levels of quality when determining if staff and parents have shared enough information to meet the child's needs. Even if staff put significant effort into asking about a child's needs, if parents share no information, the child's development is compromised. |
| | 3.3 | Some involvement of parents and staff can take place through formal meetings, informal conversations, phone or written communications. Goals must take place through these communications. |
| | 3.4 | Some involvement means a child with disabilities sometimes participates with others in the class and other times may not. The child may be segregated from the other children at some times, but not at all times of the day. |