

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge

Training and Scoring Tips for the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale

This document was developed by Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) Anchors to support consistent training and scoring on the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS). It is intended to be used with existing clarifications from Environment Rating Scales Institute (ERSI), where Anchors provided additional, specific clarification about certain indicators. This tool also should be used when training new assessors to guide consistency of interpretation.

SPACE AND FURNISHINGS

Item #	Indicator	Indicator Description (Language from ITERS-R)	Training and Scoring Tips
1. Indoor space	3.1	Enough indoor space for children, adults, and furnishings.	There must be enough room for all adults, children, and furnishings in the room without being crowded.
	5.1	Ample indoor space for children, adults, and furnishings (Ex. children and adults can move around freely; furnishings do not crowd room; space for equipment needed by children with disabilities; spacious open area for children to play).	Ample space is comfortable use of space without children being crowded in two or more areas of the classroom.
2. Furniture for routine care, and play	7.2	Most of the tables and chairs used with toddlers are child-sized.	If mixed sizes of chairs and tables are available and 75% of the toddlers are able to use them, give credit for 7.2.
5. Child-related displays	5.3	Many items displayed where children can easily see them, some within easy reach.	To determine if a display is at child's eye level, look for the halfway point on the wall. Items below the halfway point are easily seen by children. Items above the halfway point are not easily visible at the child's eye level.

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			<p>75% of the items displayed must be where children can easily see them. Of those items, 50% also must be able to be touched by mobile children without assistance.</p> <p>Children should be able to point and talk about the details of their work and/or display.</p>
	General Notes		<p>Consider all displays based on the following definitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child related: Intended for children. • Child created: Any work done by children. • Individualized: Work carried out in the child's own way.

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PERSONAL CARE ROUTINES

Item	Indicator	Indicator Description (Language from ITERS-R)	Training and Scoring Tips
6. Greeting/ departing	3.1	Most children greeted warmly (Ex. staff seem pleased to see children; smile; use pleasant voice).	New staff entering the room, to either take over or share in responsibility for the children, must greet the children in some way, but not necessarily individually. It is sufficient to greet the group as a whole. Also, provider must greet late arriving children.
	3.4	Parents and staff share information related to the child's health and /or safety (Ex. whether child slept well; medication; notified of illness in group; injuries reported).	Information must be shared about every child. Verbal and/or written information is okay.
	5.1	Staff greet each child and parent and provides pleasant organized departure (Ex. conversation on arrival; clothes ready for departure).	The staff member must be located close enough to a child and communicate directly so the child can perceive the greeting as communication. A baby will need the staff member to come close and make direct contact in order to tune in to the interaction. As children become older, the greeting can be done from farther away. The child must obviously perceive the greeting.

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Item	Indicator	Indicator Description (Language from ITERS-R)	Training and Scoring Tips
7. Meals/ snacks	1.2	Food served does not meet nutrition guidelines or is not appropriate (Ex. food that might cause choking; foods/beverages too hot).	Personal dietary preferences of the observer are not to be used in determining the quality of foods served. Sugary and unhealthy foods are still considered within their respective food groups (e.g., cookies = grain). Check menu in addition to observing food served.
	1.3	Basic sanitary procedures usually neglected.	Providers should be marked off at the one level only for serious negligence of sanitation. Programs should be given credit for 1.3 if some attempts are made.
	3.2	Well-balanced age-appropriate food served for meals and snacks.	<p>Food meeting minimum component and quantity requirements must be offered. Children do not need to accept the food to give credit. Refer to nutrition guidelines for infants and toddlers in the United States Department of Agriculture’s Child Care and Adult Food Program (link?).</p> <p>All infants and toddlers who eat solid food should be offered drinking water between feeding and at least once during the observation, including breastfed children (if eating solid food).</p>

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Item	Indicator	Indicator Description (Language from ITERS-R)	Training and Scoring Tips
			Observers need not measure the temperature of each food, but should observe diligence on provider's part to ensure safe temperatures.
	3.3	Basic sanitary procedures maintained at least half of the time.	Table must be sanitized between two children sitting at the same spot. Sanitizer should not be sprayed while children are at the table. Note that sanitation requirements are different from ECERS, requiring basic sanitary procedures being maintained at least half of the time.
	California Modification		Due to water restrictions, water may be turned off while soaping hands. After soaping, the child may turn the water off with paper towel or the staff may control the water to avoid children's recontamination. This is a California Modification adopted and approved by C. Riley of ERSI in May 2015.
	General Notes		If the same sink is used for toileting but is not disinfected, it is marked off in Item. 10, Health practices.
8. Nap	General Notes		Consider space used for napping specific to ITERS. This is spelled out and updated in the notes for clarification.

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9. Diapering/ toileting	1.1	Sanitary conditions of area are not usually maintained (Ex. potty chairs not sanitized; diapers not disposed of properly; diapering surface not sanitized after each use; toilets not flushed).	The sink must be disinfected when it is used for washing after toileting, and before it is used for other purposes (e.g., handwashing before eating). All use of the sink for one purpose can be completed before the sink needs to be disinfected for another use. If disinfecting does not take place, mark “yes” on 1.1. The sink does not have to be disinfected before toileting use.
	1.3	Handwashing often neglected for staff or children after toileting/diapering.	Hand sanitizer should never be used on children under 2 years of age. The 2011 edition of <i>Caring for Our Children</i> (citation?) states that hand sanitizers can be used in place of hand washing if hands are not visibly soiled. Hand sanitizer can be used by children 2 years of age and older as long as manufacturers’ instructions are followed, and very close supervision is provided. If children are not closely supervised, consider supervision-related indicators, as well as Safety practices, Item 11. Sanitizer should be controlled by provider and kept out of reach of children if the label indicates “Keep out of reach of children.”

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Item	Indicator	Indicator Description (Language from ITERS-R)	Training and Scoring Tips
	3.3 California Modification	Provider and children wash hands after toileting.	Due to water restrictions, water may be turned off while soaping hands. After soaping, the child may turn the water off with paper towel or the staff may control the water to avoid children’s recontamination. This is a California Modification adopted and approved by C. Riley of ERSI in May 2015.
	General Notes		Disinfectants are to be used for cleaning anywhere bodily fluids may have contacted surfaces, including changing tables and toileting sinks. Sanitizers are to be used for eating surfaces (e.g., tables). If non-bleach disinfectants are used on eating surfaces, rinsing may be required. Score in accordance with instructions on cleaner.
10. Health practices	General Notes		Water temperature for hand washing does not need to be measured, but should be scored based on children’s perceived comfort. Water and food should be treated as not to be wasted, in a general manner. However, there are no specific indicators where excess or conservation are directly scored in

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			<p>ITERS. Water should be turned off and food should be appropriately handled to avoid contamination or re-contamination.</p>
11. Safety practices	1.1	<p>Four or more hazards that could result in serious injury indoors.</p>	<p>Cleaning solutions and other products or chemicals labeled “Keep out of reach of children” do not have to be locked up or in a separate room, but must not be accessible to children. Step stools and children’s ability to climb to access chemicals should be considered.</p>
	1.3	<p>Inadequate supervision to protect children’s safety indoors and outdoors (Ex. too few staff members; staff occupied with other tasks; no supervision near areas of potential danger; no check-in or check-out procedures used).</p>	<p>Hand sanitizer should never be used on children under two years of age. Children must be closely supervised when using hand sanitizer. It should be controlled by staff and kept away from children if the label indicates “Keep out of reach of children.”</p>

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LISTENING AND TALKING

Item	Indicator	Indicator Description (Language from ITERS-R)	Training and Scoring Tips
12. Helping children understand language	7.1	Staff uses a wide range of simple, exact words in communicating with children (Ex. names many different objects and actions; uses descriptive words).	Observer should be able to have a fairly clear image of what is happening with their eyes closed to meet the requirement of “wide range of simple, exact words.”
	7.3	Staff Talk about many different topics with the children (Ex. talks about feelings; express child’s intentions with words in addition to naming objects and actions).	Provider must talk about at least one thing that is not concrete, such as thoughts, feelings, intentions, etc., to meet “many different topics.”
13. Helping children use language	3.1	Moderate amount of verbal or non-verbal positive response to children’s attempts to communicate throughout the day; little or no ignoring of children or negative response.	For moderate amount of positive response, consider infants carried on the hip but not being directly communicated with. Consider distressed infants. Babies may not always be satisfied, but a teacher must make multiple attempts to meet the child’s needs.

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Item	Indicator	Indicator Description (Language from ITERS-R)	Training and Scoring Tips
	3.2	Some attempts to correctly interpret what the child is trying to communicate throughout the day (Ex. staff try another way to calm crying child if first solution does not work; try hard to understand toddler’s unclear words).	“Some attempts are made to correctly interpret children’s communication” means that teachers attempt to understand are obvious to the child about half the time (e.g., child must be aware the teacher is trying to respond to him/her).
	5.1	Staff generally respond in a timely and positive manner to children’s attempts to communicate (Ex. crying is answered quickly; children’s verbal requests are attended to; respond with interest to children’s communications during play).	Teacher/provider follows through with some direct response to the child 75% of the time. The teacher may not give the child what he/she is requesting, but directly addresses his/her communication.
14. Using books	1.1	Fewer than 6 appropriate infant/toddler books accessible daily for much of the day.	Books must be accessible much of the day (MOD) to all children, including to non-mobile infants. All of the required number of books does not have to be made accessible to non-mobile infants, but it must be observed that different books are made accessible to them.
	3.1	At least 6 appropriate infant/toddler books (but no less than 1 for each child in the group) accessible daily, for much of the day.	Inappropriate and damaged books are not included in the required number of books, but it is not marked off in this indicator if they are present.

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	3.2	Almost all books are in good repair.	If four or more of the six books are damaged, no credit can be given for this indicator. A book must be complete, with all pages intact and readable.
	5.1	At least 12 appropriate infant/toddler books (but no less than 2 for each child in the group) accessible daily for much of the day.	If inappropriate books are present, it is marked off on this indicator, regardless of the total number of books.

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ACTIVITIES

Item	Indicator	Indicator Description (Language from ITERS-R)	Training and Scoring Tips
15. Fine Motor	3.1	Some appropriate fine motor materials accessible for daily use.	If at least five intact, usable examples of fine motor toys are accessible, give credit for 3.1.
	5.1	Many and varied appropriate fine motor materials accessible for much of the day.	Many refers to no fewer than 10 toys for a group of 5 infants, or 15 toys for a group of 5 toddlers. Varied means toys that require different skills.
	General Notes		Meaningful label could be photo, as long as it works for the group of children to organize materials and support independence. Material has to be made accessible to non-mobile children.
16. Active physical play	General Notes		See clarification notes for safety hazards.
17. Art	1.1	No appropriate art materials provided for use by children.	If materials pose a choking hazard, it also must be scored in Safety practices, Item 11. Art materials that are safe for preschoolers may not be safe for infants/toddlers.

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Item	Indicator	Indicator Description (Language from ITERS-R)	Training and Scoring Tips
18. Music and movement	3.1	Some music materials, toys, or instruments accessible for free play daily, for much of the day (Ex. rattles, chime toys, music box, xylophone, drum.)	Check batteries in battery operated toys (musical toys) to see if things meant to make music actually do. They must work to be counted toward the total number of toys. (check FCCERS lang for edits)
	5.4	Recorded music is used at limited times and with a positive purpose (Ex. quiet music at nap; put on for dancing or singing).	Music being played in the background does not meet the requirement for this indicator. Music must be purposeful.
19. Blocks	3.2	Some accessories for blocks accessible daily.	Accessories for blocks do not need to be stored near the blocks as long as children know they can be used together. Children using the materials as block accessories must be observed to give credit.
	General Notes		Interlocking blocks are fine motor, no matter what size they are.
20. Dramatic play	General Notes		Different: When considering NAs and age group spans, what works will be specific to age. Also requires sets of dolls for comparison.
21. Sand and water play	General Notes		Training tip: Only difference is “or” not “and” (Sand <u>or</u> water, not <u>sand and</u> water).

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	California Modification		If observing and there is a statewide water restriction, then handle this the same way as “air advisory.” Waive the water requirement if there is a water restriction from a government agency with jurisdiction.
23. Use of TV, video, and/or computers	General Notes		Use of an iPad is becoming very common and not as obvious. Ask even if you don't see it there.

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INTERACTIONS

Item	Indicator	Indicator Description (Language from ITERS-R)	Training and Scoring Tips
25. Supervision of play and learning	3.1	Children are within sight, hearing and easy reach of staff with no more than a few momentary lapses (Ex. staff quickly get materials from closet in room; staff call into building from door while supervising children on playground).	Few momentary lapses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few = “5” • Momentary = less than one minute Always wait until the end of the observation before scoring.
	General Notes		Consider just play here. Routine supervision is in diapering, eating, toileting, and rest.
26. Peer interaction	3.1	Peer interaction is possible much of the day (Ex. non mobile infants have supervised play near others; toddlers allowed to form natural groupings).	Evidence of peer interaction for MOD is required.
	3.2	Staff usually stops negative peer interaction (Ex. stop hitting, biting, grabbing toys).	This should be noticed 75% of the time.
	5.1	Staff facilitates positive peer interactions among all children (Ex. place infants where they can watch and react to others; help toddlers find duplicate toys; include child with disability in play with others).	Staff facilitating positive peer interaction must be observed.

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28. Discipline	3.3	Expectations are generally realistic; based on age and ability of children (Ex. sharing is not forced though it may be talked about; children not expected to wait long periods).	While observing, watch for distress and if it creates a problem to determine whether expectations are generally realistic.
	General Notes		Wait until the end of the observation to score.
27. Staff-child interactions	3.1	Occasional smiling, talking, and affection shown to children throughout the day.	“No” on 3.1 triggers “no” on 3.2.
	5.1	Frequent positive staff-child interaction throughout the day (Ex. initiate verbal and physical play; respond when child initiates interactions; show delight in child’s activity).	5.1 Requires many instances/many children.
	General Notes		Wait until the end of the observation to score.

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PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Item	Indicator	Indicator Description (Language from ITERS-R)	Training and Scoring tips
31. Group play activities	3.1	Children never forced to participate in group play activities (Ex. children allowed to leave group when they wish and do something else).	Look for whether alternate activities are in place when group times occur.
	General Notes		ITERS has an “NA” option.
32. Provisions for children with disabilities	General Notes		Only gets rated when there is a child with an Individualized Family Service Plan/Individualized Education Program (IFSP/IEP) or doctor diagnosis (e.g., physical) which would require environmental accommodation.