

FCCERS-R: Tips & Clarifications

ITEM 2 – FURNITURE FOR ROUTINE CARE, PLAY, AND LEARNING

Question: What are some good strategies for storing children’s belongings? It’s hard to find the space in a home setting.

Answer: For Item 2, Furniture for routine care, play, and learning, programs must have enough space to store children’s belongings. Hooks need to be spaced far enough apart that clothing does not touch from one child to another. Cubbies need to be large enough to fit children’s possessions.

The notes on page 17 of the FCCERS state that space is needed “individual provisions.” Preschoolers and older children need “easy access to storage.” It is important to make sure hooks are not too close together and that cubbies are not too small. To understand what is needed, you will need to explore the additional FCCERS notes provided on the ERSI website:

“Cubbies must be large enough to hold all the possessions of an individual child, without touching other children’s things. If cubbies are large enough to hold possessions, but there is a minor amount of touching of other children’s possessions (such as coat sleeves touching in winter)...contamination can occur. Each child must have his or her own storage space, such as a cubby, diaper bag or back pack on an individual hook, a laundry basket, or several different personal storage containers that together, hold all his/her things. No shared spaces should be used because of contamination issues.”

Page 17 also provides ideas about making sure furnishings are accessible and convenient to children, and that there are steps near sinks, low open shelves for accessible toy storage and special storage for school-age children’s school belongings. Cubbies should be located for ease of access to providers and families, and for older children.

ITEM 4 – ARRANGEMENT OF INDOOR SPACE FOR CHILD CARE

Question: What are some tips for supervising children when the home location often has children playing in different areas, and differing locations for self-care or the location of the bathroom make supervision challenging?

Answer: For Item 4, Arrangement of indoor space for child care. At times, programs don’t meet indicator 3.2 for arrangement of space to allow for adequate supervision of children without major

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difficulties. Consider how your room arrangement, location of the bathroom, and sleeping rooms impact other areas for visual supervision.

It will be helpful for you to walk through your home at a time the children are not present and check out your line of vision from one space to another. What could be arranged differently to make supervision more effective? When children are using multiple rooms or infants sleep out of view, this should be corrected. Look for ways to set up your space so older children can be uninterrupted by the younger children. For example, they can use protected space for homework or completing puzzles. Space arrangement can help you maximize engagement and supervision.

ITEM 6 – SPACE FOR PRIVACY

Question: What do I need to know and do to assure that children have a designated space for privacy?

Answer: Indicator 5.1 states that programs must have space set aside for one or two children to play, protected from intrusion by others. This private area should not be used for other purposes, and should be available at all times, even if children choose not to use it. See the notes on page 21: The intent of space for privacy is to give children relief from the pressures of group life. A place where one or two children can play protected from intrusion by other children, yet still supervised by the provider is considered space for privacy.

Private space can be created by using physical barriers such as book shelves, by enforcing the rule that children may not interrupt one another. In addition, you can limit the number of children working at a table placed in an out-of-traffic area. You may provide a cardboard box with a large cut out window for easy supervision, a small outdoor play house, a table, easel, or computer limited to one or two children at a time. You have many options for private space that will support the children in your care.

ITEM 13 AND 14: LISTENING AND TALKING AND HELPING CHILDREN USE LANGUAGE

Language items are especially important for the growth and development of young children. You are encouraged to read these sections frequently and to aim for the higher levels of communication at the 5 and 7 levels.

For Listening and Talking:

- 5.1 Talk to the children frequently throughout the day during both routines and play.
- 5.2 Provide talk is meaningful to children and focuses on things children are experiencing.
- 5.3 Verbal communication is personal.
- 5.4 Provider uses descriptive words for objects and actions in communication with children.

- 7.1 Provider uses a wide range of exact words in communication with children for objects and actions.
- 7.2 Provider talks about many topics, including feelings, intentions, and ideas.
- 7.3 Provider adjusts the complexity of language to match children’s abilities.

For Helping Children Use Language:

- 5.1 Responses in a timely and positive manner to children’s attempts to communicate and follows through with support.
- 5.2 Frequently encourages children to communicate throughout the day.
- 5.3 Encourages children to communicate with one another.
- 5.4 Has many turn-taking conversations with children.
- 7.1 Adds more words and ideas to what children say.
- 7.2. Ask children questions to encourage more complex answers.
- 7.3 Maintains a good balance between listening and talking.
- 7.4 Links older children’s talk to writing.

ITEM 17 – ART

Question: It can be challenging to provide art materials for children of differing ages. What are some tips to ensure safe materials that can be creative and enjoyable for all children?

Answer: For Indicator 3.2, all art materials used with children are nontoxic and safe. Be sure to check that all materials are safe – with nothing that is a choking hazard, such as small crayons, marker caps, pom poms, and glitter.

Question: What kind of alternative activities should be available to children during art activities? What’s the difference encouraging children to participate when it is an important activity – and telling them they can “do whatever they want” during that time? Do you have some tips about this balance?

Answer: It often feels easier to “make children do an activity all at the same time.” However, it is important that children are able to choose to participate, and that there are alternative activities. For example, you might offer open-ended art activities at the same time that children may engage in fine motor activities, such as puzzles and geo-boards. You’ll also want to be sure they have access to reading and dramatic play. In other words, the art activity should be just one of many choices for children.

See page 39 for ideas. Types of art materials include drawing materials, such as paper with crayons, nontoxic markers, and pencils; paints; three-dimensional materials such as play dough, clay, wood gluing, or carpentry; collage materials; and tools, such as safe scissors, staplers, hole punches, and tape dispensers Match the items to the needs of your specific children and keep things simple for toddlers.

ITEM 19 – BLOCKS

Question: When working with children of multiple ages, what should be provided in the block area? Do you have guidance about how to make the most of block play?

Answer: For Indicator 5.2, most blocks and accessories should be organized together and sorted by type. Sort and store blocks and accessories by like type. There should be enough blocks present so that children can build sizeable structures.

Question: How much space do I need to provide for children so that they can play with blocks?

Answer: For Indicator 5.3, enough space should be provided for block play so that children can play freely. This space should be out of traffic and have a surface that supports building.

Read the notes on page 19. Sets of blocks should be stored separately by type. Books should be stored on a book shelf or in a basket, and dramatic play materials are stored together. All these materials must be stored so that children can use them independently and have space and surfaces suitable for the type of material being used.

ITEM 25 – USE OF TV, VIDEO AND/OR COMPUTER

Question: How can I be sure I make the most of media time for older children yet protect the viewing and exposure time for younger children? Do you have suggestions for managing media use?

Answer: For Indicator 1.4 television, video and/or computer should never be used with children under 24 months of age. Please see the notes on the ERSI website for this clarification.

For Indicator 3.3, time allowed for children older than 24-months, including television, video, or computer must have appropriate content and be limited to 30 minutes PER WEEK. No children of any age may watch media, screens, or computer during meals and snacks.

When children do use video or computer, be sure there are at least three interesting alternatives for free choice while some children use the screen. A good time for older children is when younger children are napping. Screen content considered “good” for children includes educational stories (e.g., stories read aloud), music, dance, and exercise. Videos that promote learning about animals, phonics, science, or other learning areas are also suitable. See 7.1.

When children watch television or use a screen, adults should be actively involved – meaning that they sit with the children and talk with them about what they are viewing. See 5.3 and 7.2

ITEM 27 – SUPERVISION OF PLAY AND LEARNING

Question: What are tips for supervision? How can I arrange the room, diaper station, and other aspects of spaces where children play to ensure careful and consistent supervision?

Answer: For Indicator 5.1 children must be supervised consistently and carefully at all times, and children of all ages and abilities should be supported. Be sure that the arrangement and location of the bathroom and diapering station allow you to visually supervise children at all times.

Page 56 gives some ideas about how to supervise. Supervise the most hazardous areas and activities closely. Participate in activities with children. Consistently supervise all children adjusted for age and ability. For example, younger children are more impulsive and should be supervised more closely. Be sure to stay within sight of infants and toddlers at all times. Stay outdoors with children at all times. Be sure that supervision is positive and expectations are clear. Make sure that you can see, hear, and reach children at all times.

ITEM 31 – SCHEDULE

Question: What are guidelines for indoor and outdoor play times?

Answer: For Indicator 3.3, at least one indoor and one outdoor play period (weather permitting) should occur daily. See page 60.

In Illinois the term "weather permitting" means temperatures between 25 and 90 degrees, taking into consideration the wind chill. For example, if the temperature is 30 degrees, but only 18 degrees with wind chill, it is not expected that children will have outdoor play time. In cold weather and especially between 25 and 30 degrees, children should be monitored to ensure they are well-dressed. In warm temperatures and especially at 90 degrees, adults should monitor children carefully to ensure that they have appropriate sun protection and hydration.

Question: What are some strategies I can use to minimize transition times and to keep children engaged?

Answer: For Indicator 5.3, there should be no long period of waiting during transitions. A "long period of waiting" means waiting during transitions from one activity to another for three or more minutes. To minimize waiting, Item 7.1 gives some ideas. Most transitions between daily events are smooth and brief.

Examples: Play materials are ready for the next activity and are set out before the activity begins. Children are allowed to eat right after handwashing without waiting. Provider keeps children actively involved with songs, finger plays, stories, and conversations to avoid troublesome behaviors.