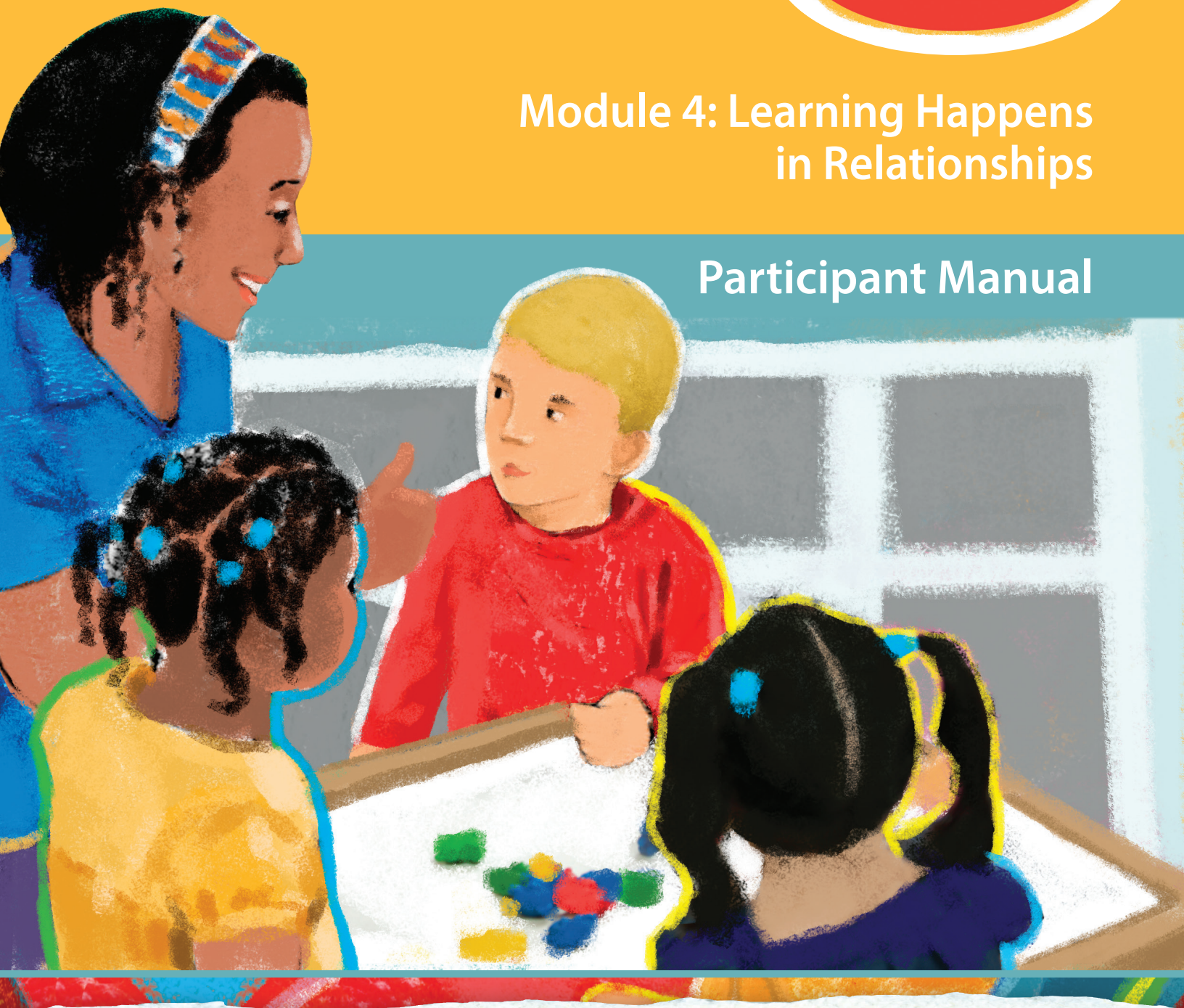


# ECE Credential

Level 1

Module 4: Learning Happens  
in Relationships

Participant Manual



Training brought to you by:



**GATEWAYS TO OPPORTUNITY**<sup>®</sup>  
Illinois Professional Development System

# **ECE Credential Level 1 Training**

## ***Module 4: Learning Happens in Relationships***

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### Participant Manual · Standardized Version

This training is Registry-approved and counts towards DCFS licensed program training hours.

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## **Acknowledgments**

Thank you to all current and former contributors to this training. The ECE Credential Level 1 was created in 2006 to assist Early Care and Education Professionals in demonstrating a statewide commitment to quality care. The invaluable contributions in the creation and updates to this credential training have enabled the ECE Credential Level 1 to remain an integral piece in the Gateways to Opportunity Professional Development System.

# ECE Credential Level 1 Training *Module 4: Learning Happens in Relationships*

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# Learning Objectives

Following this training, participants will be able to:

- Identify ways to help children develop positive attachment and a positive sense of self
- Name specific elements of a lesson plan that address the needs of individual children and promote developmentally appropriate practice
- Recognize the importance of the child care environment (both indoor and outdoor) and its impact on learning
- Name ways in which an environment can be adapted to support children with special needs

# Self-Reflection

Name or topic of your last module: \_\_\_\_\_

Reflect upon the last module you attended and answer the following. If this is your first module, you are not required to complete this section.

**What new skills have you started practicing or what changes have you made as a result of the training?**

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**What has worked? What hasn't?**

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**What resources did you use from the training?**

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**What other knowledge did you gain as a result of the training?**

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# **Part 1: The Learning Relationship**





This module will focus on relationships and the learning that occurs when quality, healthy relationships are present in children’s lives. We will also focus on the indoor and outdoor environment of the child care setting. These components have a significant impact on how children learn and develop.

As we go through this module, think about the physical space you are observing and how it can be an effective “third teacher” to the children in that setting. Also, think about how the relationships you (or the child care providers) form with the children in your child care setting may help the children begin a firm foundation for life long learning.

## Attachment

What is attachment?

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### Four Types of Attachment

Attachment	Caregiver Behaviors	Child Behaviors
<b>Secure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reacts quickly and positively to child’s needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distressed when caregiver leaves</li> <li>• Seeks comfort from caregiver when distressed</li> </ul>
<b>Insecure-avoidant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unresponsive, uncaring</li> <li>• Dismissive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No distress when caregiver leaves</li> <li>• Does not make contact with caregiver when stressed</li> </ul>
<b>Insecure-ambivalent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responds to child inconsistently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distress when caregiver leaves</li> <li>• Not comforted by caregiver’s return</li> </ul>
<b>Insecure-disorganized</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abuse, neglectful or responds in a frightening way</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No attaching behaviors</li> <li>• May appear dazed, confused, or apprehensive</li> </ul>

# Connecting Through Child Care

*From the Connecting Through Child Care series produced by Civitas, funded through the McCormick Tribune Foundation*

Directions: Respond to the questions below.

## **Observe each child and respond to his/her needs.**

- How do you get to know each child in your care, and how do you use what you have learned?
  
- What information do you seek from families, and what information do you share with them?

## **Create a predictable environment with consistent routines.**

- Where could you add routines or predictability in your care with children?
  
- How do the children respond to transition?

## **Understand when and how a child develops.**

- How do you tailor your activities to meet the different developmental needs of the children in your care?

Children learn who they are through their interactions with their families and with you. When you see the children in your care as individuals and get to know them as individuals, you in turn learn more about who you are as a caregiver as well.

## Why Attachment Matters

Attachment is essential for the foundation of a healthy personality

- To attain full \_\_\_\_\_ potential
- To develop a conscience
- To cope with \_\_\_\_\_/frustration
- To develop relationships
- To handle \_\_\_\_\_ and fear

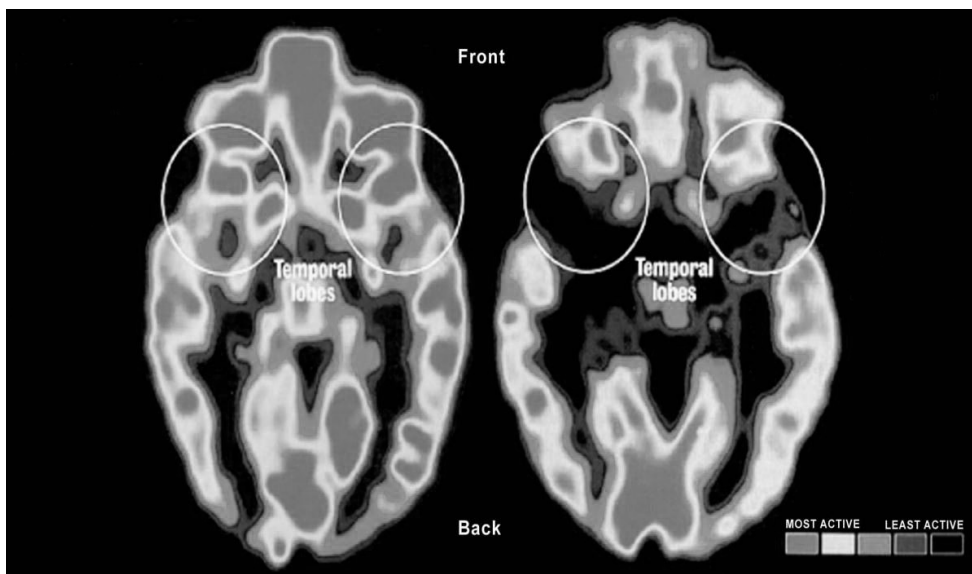
Healthy attachments are critical in the birth to three age range. To encourage attachment and build stable relationships, those caring for children birth to three take on various program philosophies. Many have multi-age group settings, while some have children change rooms based on birthday or development.

## Attachment and Loss

Broken attachments in the care environment are high.

- Teacher turnover can be as high as 40%
- Children may “move up” in a care setting
- Parents often under-estimate the importance of attachments in the care setting and may switch providers/schools often

Children (even infants) experience a sense of loss. Detaching and re-attaching can cause stress, lack of trust, and other difficulties in forming healthy relationships. What happens with a piece of tape that we use over and over again? Each time it is used, it loses some of its ability to attach. Children are the same.



Normal 3-year-old brain  
(left)

Three-year brain of a child  
who has suffered extreme  
neglect (right)

# Video—Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development

Notes:

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## Forming Relationships

Age	How to Get to Know the Child
6 weeks	
6 months	
3 years	
6 years	

## Indicators of Healthy Emotional Development

The capacity to:

- trust
- \_\_\_\_\_
- take pleasure in ourselves and others
- feel \_\_\_\_\_

Source: PITC and Kadija Johnston, L.C.S.W

Not only are these indicators of healthy development, they are also indicators that children can build healthy attachments with other children and adults.

## All Children Need

- Nurturance
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Security
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Focus
- Encouragement
- Expansion



## Quality Relationships

Establishing relationships and forming bonds with the children in your care is the foundation of a quality program.

While infants and toddlers may not “remember” a teacher a year later, it is the experiences and quality interactions that come from each experience which set the course for future relationships.

- Many see child care and early learning as a “service.”
- Child care and early learning is about \_\_\_\_\_.
- There is a need to see each child in the care environment as an individual.
- When you care for children, you educate. When you \_\_\_\_\_ children, you care.

## Video—Building Relationships: Fostering Connections

Notes:

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# **Part 2: The Learning Plan**





A quality child care provider does not just rush through the day and hope that learning will happen spontaneously. It takes a plan. In this section, we will introduce the learning plan. In particular, we will focus on how to promote engagement and reduce challenging behavior in children.

## The Learning Plan

- Provides \_\_\_\_\_ and routine to the day
- Allows providers to meet the \_\_\_\_\_ of the children
- Provides a tool to communicate with parents
- Requires the \_\_\_\_\_ to plan and prepare, allowing time to fully engage with the children

Planning helps the child care provider to be sure to facilitate all children's learning in an intentional way.

Many providers already have certain activities they use year after year. Building on these existing activities helps to encourage a wide variety of opportunities for learning. For example, each year children love the pumpkin patch field trip and cooking activity. This same activity can be continued, but with added focus on science (learning about seeds) and math (counting and measuring things while cooking).

## Goals of a Good Lesson Plan

- Provides a wide \_\_\_\_\_ of learning opportunities
- Integrates experiences that provide for repetition and reinforcement
- Offers ample \_\_\_\_\_ for the development of concepts and skill objectives
- Is \_\_\_\_\_-directed and incorporates natural activities and interests

## Questions to Ask When Planning

- What do you want the children in your care to learn? What are their interests?
- What visuals and concrete objects will you need in order to create inclusive activities?
- How can you get and maintain the interest of all the children in your program?
- What type of follow up is necessary to reinforce and enrich each learning experience?

## Activity Planning Decisions

### Best way to do an activity?

- as an introduction?
- as a conclusion?
- before or after a special event/field trip?

### How to conduct the activity?

- group time/circle time?
- small groups?
- at an interest center?

### What time during the day?

- set up and clean up issues
- routines in the schedule

### Best place for activity?

- indoor?
- outdoor?

## Sample Weekly Lesson Plan

**Children in care:** Maya, Zara, Brenden, Maria      **Week of:** Oct. 2-6<sup>th</sup>      **Essential Questions/Objectives:** Children will discover, discuss, and apply information they learn about fire fighters, the fire station, their equipment and how they respond to emergencies.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	IELG/IELDS Alignment
<b>Large Group</b>	Discuss plans for field trip including guidelines and safety.	Field trip to Fire Station	Introduce graphing	Write group thank you letter to firefighters at station	Read experience chart Make sequence documentation	6D (b), 7C(a), 8B (a)10A (b), 10B (a), 15A (a-b), 19C (a)
<b>Language</b>	Read <i>Alphabet Rescue</i> and emphasize letter sounds	Read <i>If I Could Drive a Fire Truck</i>	Read <i>Firefighter A-Z</i> and retell field trip in sequence	Read <i>Clifford the Firehouse Dog</i> and make experience chart about field trip	Read <i>The Fire Cat</i> Make signs for block area	1E (b-e) 2a (a), 2B (a-c), 2C (a-c), 3B (a), 4B (a-c) 5B (a-c), 5C (a-b), 8B (a)
<b>Art and Music</b>	Five Little Fire Fighters Riding on a Truck (to tune of Five Little Monkeys)	Make fire helmets from red construction paper	Make thank you cards for firefighters	Paint with red and yellow paint	Sing the Fire Truck song	2C (a)5B (c), 6A (a), 25A (a-d), 25B (a), 26B (a)
<b>Science</b>	Fire equipment toys in block area	Discuss nature seen on walk to fire station	Compare ramps and how fast fire trucks roll down different slopes	Compare weights of fire trucks	Suggest building fire tower for balance	11A (a, d, f, g), 12A (a), 12B (a-b), 12D (a), 13B (a)
<b>Blocks</b>	Large pictures of fire trucks in block area	Fire trucks, police cars, fire and police figures in block area	Fire trucks, police cars, fire and police figures in block area	Add additional trucks, cars and people	Post pictures of the trip	9A (a-e)
<b>Dramatic Play</b>	Fire helmets, uniforms in area	Walkie-talkies added to area	Add map rug, pieces of hose	Take photos to document activity	Write anecdotal records	25A (b), 25B (a), 26B (a)
<b>Table Toys</b>	Puzzles about firefighters and fire trucks	Legos and firefighter figures (push truck toys for infants/toddlers)	Table blocks with fire and police vehicles	Dominoes with firefighter stickers (Little People bingo for infants/toddlers)	Matching cards of community helpers	7A (a), 8A (a, b), 9A (a-e), 12C (a)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	IELG/IELDS Alignment
<b>Math</b>	Puzzles with firefighter theme	Lotto game with firefighter equipment	Board game with fire trucks	Where's the Fire activity using house numbers	Folder number games with fire truck cutouts	6A (d), 8A (a), 9A (a), 9A (e), 10B (a)
<b>Sand and Water</b>	Large fire trucks in sand	Firefighter figures added to sand	Police items added to sand	Truck wash (tricycles and wagons)	Water play with hoses	5C (a), 11A (a, b, c), 12D (a, b), 12E (a), 19A (a, b), 215A (d)
<b>Outside and Gross Motor</b>	Dress up items related to firefighters	Tricycles and wagons to pretend firefighters and rescues	Large cardboard boxes to make houses and fire station	Photos to document firefighter play with tricycles and wagons	Fire truck parade	19A (a-e), 19 B (a-c), 19C (a), 21B (a), 24C (a)
<b>Cooking</b>	Candlestick salad for lunch	At fire station, discuss how firefighters prepare meals	Firefighter milkshake for snack (milkshake with strawberries)	Fire station applesauce for snack (applesauce with Red Hots)	Decorate oatmeal cookies with red and yellow sprinkles	7A (b, c, d), 7B (a), 7C (a), 10A (b), 12A (b)
<b>Special Events</b>	Preparation for field trip	Field trip to fire station	Make documentation board of field trip	Post photos of trip on parent access website	Send home parent newsletter about trip	1B (a), 5B (c), 5C (b)

**Materials and Resources:** Red construction paper, cards to decorate for thank you notes to firefighters, dress-up items, food items

**Teacher Reflection:** The children enjoyed the science activities more than I thought they would. Their many question about nature we saw while walking to the fire station indicates that a nature study (butterflies, insects) might be a good theme for us next. They struggled a little with sequencing, so I need to include more opportunities for them to do this.

**Special Instructions/Adaptations:** Decorate Joey's wheelchair to include him in the fire truck parade.

**Differentiation/Strategies/Assessment:** Assessments have been built-in to many of the activities by including photographs of activities, observation, finished products and anecdotal records.

## Weekly Lesson Plan

Age Group: \_\_\_\_\_ Week of: \_\_\_\_\_ Essential Questions/Objectives: \_\_\_\_\_

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	IELG/IELDS Alignment
<b>Large Group</b>						
<b>Language</b>						
<b>Art and Music</b>						
<b>Science</b>						
<b>Blocks</b>						
<b>Dramatic Play</b>						
<b>Table Toys</b>						

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	IELG/IELDS Alignment
Math						
Sand and Water						
Outside and Gross Motor						
Cooking						
Special Events						

Special Instructions/Adaptations:

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Differentiation/Strategies/Assessment:

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Materials and Resources:

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Teacher Reflection:

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## Planning for Individual Children

One of the challenges is planning for individual children while also meeting the needs of all children in your care. You will need to think through ways you can build in specific activities for children to support their developmental goals.

- Based on \_\_\_\_\_
- Achievable
- \_\_\_\_\_; change as the child changes/develops

## Inclusion of Children with Special Needs or Developmental Delays

Does your lesson plan meet the needs for **all** children in your care? Would it meet the need of a child with special needs? How adaptable is your environment to a child with a disability?

Notice on the sample lesson plan on the previous pages, there is a space for “special instructions/adaptations”. A good lesson plan can be easily adapted or changed to be sure all children are included.

## Include the Family in Planning

- Post \_\_\_\_\_ plans
- Display panels of activities and work from the children
- Have \_\_\_\_\_ journals
- Web and post activity plans
- Ask for supplies, help, and other resources from families or community organizations

# **Part 3: The Learning Environment**





## The Child's Environment

Many providers will tell you that routine is essential to their program. Days off of school, substitute teachers, even a change in the lunch menu will impact a child's day. Both the indoor and outdoor environment should support routine and consistency.

- Children need consistency in the type of care they receive.
- Children learn from their interactions within the care environment.
- Environments vary

*How does the environment in family child care differ from center-based care?*

The environment includes:

- Indoor/outdoor environments –room arrangements, equipment, supplies, etc.
- Learning plan – routines, transitions
- Caregiver – same person with the same daily routine and expectations

## The Learning Environment



List positive and negative aspects of both learning environments shown.

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List positive and negative aspects of both learning environments shown.

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# How to Create a Nurturing Environment

## 1. Observe the children in your care

- What are their interests?
- What can be shared with parents?
- What information can parents share with you?
- What works? What needs improvement?
- What equipment can be removed or used in a different way?

When changing the environment, let the parents know.

## 2. Establish predictable routines

- Routines build trust
- Routines encourage independence

### Goodbyes and Greetings

One routine that can help build trust and encourage independence is saying goodbye and greeting at drop-off and pick-up time.

Hellos and good-byes can be hard for some children and adults. Our support can help make this an easier transition for children and adults. Some ways we can support are by:

- Create special goodbye area
- Display family photos/objects
- Talk about \_\_\_\_\_
- Create a routine
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Books

## 3. Understand child development

- Tailor the environment to the growing child
- Tailor your responses to the growing child

By providing a safe environment that reflects basic child development principles, providers are on their way to ensuring the care environment is welcoming and nurturing for the children.

## Video—Supporting Large Group Activities

Notes:

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After viewing the video, answer the questions below.

1. Are the children in the video engaged?

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2. What tells you that they are or are not engaged?

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3. Describe what the teacher is doing currently and what she might do to support the children's engagement in the activity.

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4. What other strategies could the teacher do to keep the children even more engaged in the video clip?

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## Supporting Daily Activities

**Small Groups:**

**Clean-up:**

**Naptime:**

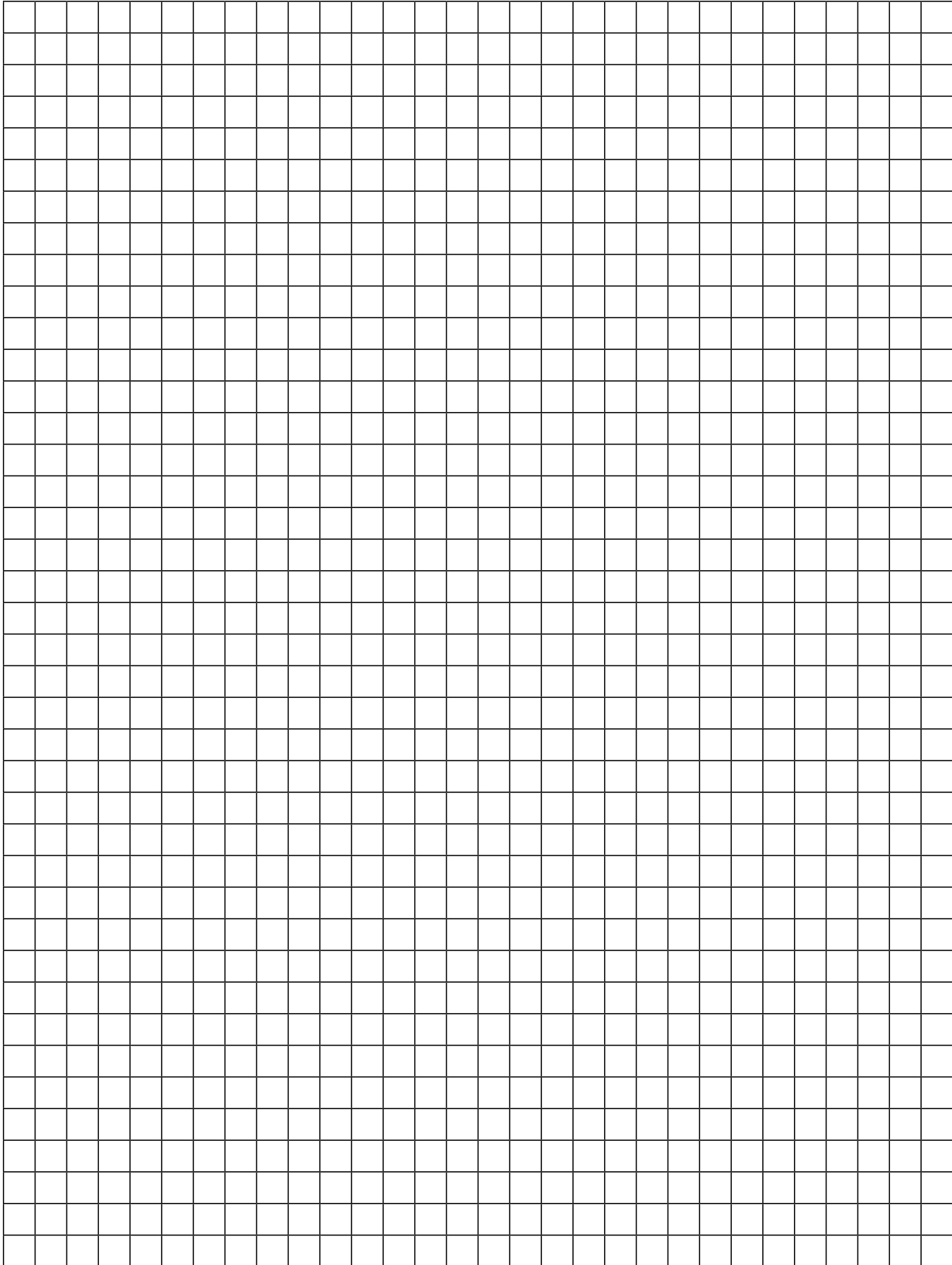
## Traffic Patterns and Use of Space

DCFS licensing standards has minimum requirements for indoor and outdoor spaces. The websites listed in the resource section of the participant manual also offer some tools for providers to use when planning effective use of space.

- Children need room to safely \_\_\_\_\_
- Children must to be \_\_\_\_\_ to adults
- Locate centers \_\_\_\_\_ – i.e. art area close to the sink
- Ensure there are enough age-appropriate materials
- Programs should be \_\_\_\_\_ prior to children arriving
- Change materials on a \_\_\_\_\_ basis to keep children engaged
- Children need to know how to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ a center or play area appropriately



# Your Indoor Environment

A large grid of graph paper, consisting of 20 columns and 30 rows of small squares, intended for drawing or writing.

## Items to Consider When Designing Your Indoor Environments

- Can you supervise the children adequately?
- How do the children move through the area?
- Are there quiet areas (sleeping and book spaces) separate from the noisy areas (block play and dramatic play areas)?
- Are there spaces for the children to be alone? Are there spaces that encourage group interaction?
- Play materials and books are at the children's level to encourage free choice.
- Sleep spaces are separate from main play area and are developmentally/culturally appropriate for the children in the care setting.
- Are cribs/cots/mats for children less than 2 years of age placed at least 36 inches away from one another? This distance is required for control of airborne infection in very young children who are less able to fight off disease.
- Are cribs/cots/mats for children 2 years and older placed at least 18 inches apart?
- The eating area is clean and utensils, chairs, and tables are developmentally/culturally appropriate for the children in the care setting.
- Children's artwork is displayed (in picture frames, as placemats, or hung low on walls).

## The Outdoor Environment

- Encourage curiosity, \_\_\_\_\_, and problem solving
- Best place to practice and master emerging \_\_\_\_\_ such as leaping, jumping, throwing, catching, etc.
- Unique sensory experiences
- Children burn more \_\_\_\_\_

Outdoor play encourages curiosity, creativity, and problem solving. Outdoor play also encourages physical activity and promotes language opportunities. There are opportunities for play with peers, adults, or spending time alone.

Almost any activity that could be done indoors can also be adjusted for outdoor play. To receive the full benefit of playing outdoors, it is recommended that children have 45 to 60 minutes of uninterrupted outdoor play.

Outdoor play offers numerous benefits that cannot be replicated indoors. Infants and toddlers have unique sensory experiences- from the breeze in their hair to touching grass on their feet. In addition, the overall health benefits to outdoor play lead to healthier children.



## Playground Equipment Ideas

It is important to offer a variety of different play experiences to children. You can offer different materials that allow the children in your care to be creative. It is developmentally appropriate for young children to be able to use their own curiosity to invent, explore, and experiment. Think about having an area for digging, (and perhaps a garden) logs and tires to walk on and around, items to climb on, into, and through, and using materials that can be moved and varied with the ideas and interests of the children.

Offer opportunities for the children to explore with all their senses. Children need to find, touch, see, and hear things for themselves. The outdoors is a virtual science laboratory for young children. Children can observe the patterns as well as the constant changes in nature. When they study the natural world, children develop observation, classification, and communication skills that will help them succeed in school.



## Gardening

- Hose and tap or pump
- Sterilized manure
- Rakes (child-sized)
- Spades (child-sized)
- Hoes (child-sized)
- String or rope
- Peat moss
- Wooden stakes
- Hand shovels
- Rubber gloves or gardening gloves
- Bags and baskets
- Sprinkler and watering can
- Old fabric and rags (for a scarecrow)
- Seed packets
- Starter kits
- Flats for seeds
- Gardening books

## Large muscle

- Climbing structure
- Jungle gym
- Skipping ropes and hoops
- Securely suspended rope to climb and swing on
- Rowboat
- Beanbags and target
- Tire or swings
- Balance beam
- Rope ladder
- Firefighter's pole
- Weather treated blocks
- Stilts
- Slide
- Stationary-spring riding animals
- Ramps for sliding and jumping
- Simple playhouse
- Bowling set
- Stick horses
- Snow shovels
- Steering wheel on wooden frame
- 7, 10, and 18 inch balls
- Baseball bat, ball and batting tee

## Loose materials

- Painted wooden boxes
- Tree stump
- Barrels and kegs
- Telephone cable spools
- Large packing boxes and crates
- Sawhorses
- Milk crates
- Short wooden ladders
- Lumber in 2 and 1-meter lengths
- Clothesline and pulleys
- Rocks and boulders
- Large and small brushes
- Workbench
- Pails
- Softwood supplies
- Surplus building materials
- Tool kit and tools (child sized)
- Tires
- Logs
- Water-soluble paint or paint with water

## Sand and water

- Buckets
- Diving mask
- Scoops
- Paddles
- Shovels
- Small sailing boats
- Sieves
- Inflatable raft
- Steam shovels
- Jugs and plastic pails
- Heavy-duty trucks and cars
- Funnels and siphons
- Pretend play
- Construction hats
- Flashlight
- Pup Tent
- Camp stools
- Fishing rods and nets
- Sleeping bag
- Tackle box
- Lunch boxes
- Wading pool (not for swimming)
- Canteen
- Air mattress
- Tin pots and pans

## Vehicles and accessories

- Gas station fuel pump
- Tractor
- Tricycles
- Tricycles
- Bicycle pump
- Wagons and carts
- Pedal cars
- Cargo for wagons and carts
- Wheelbarrow

# Outside Play Activity Scenarios

## Rub it in

Help children see the variety of shapes, textures and colors by having them observe, discover, and play with items in nature. Ask questions like:

- How does a blade of grass feel?
- Does it feel different in the early morning with the dew on it?
- What colors do you see?
- How is the color different in the shade and in the sunlight?

After the children have had time to explore and manipulate the items, encourage them to make rubbings of leaves, plants, flowers, bark of different trees, rocks, and twigs they find outside. Cover the items with thin paper and rub the paper with a crayon held sideways. The shape and texture of the item will magically appear. Put the rubbing into a sealable bag along with the item. Close the bags and punch holes in the sides. Tie the bags together to create a nature book. The children can “read” the book often, describing each item as they turn the pages.

*Used with permission from Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc.*

## Tires

Old tires are often used in children’s play yards. The tires should be painted so that the children don’t get black from the rubber. Painting the tire is a great large muscle activity.

Tires can be stepped inside of and on top of, crawled through, or used as swings or targets. The tires should be checked daily for any standing water that may accumulate in the inside. This could be a breeding ground for insects.

## The world is a stage

Take a favorite children’s story outdoors and encourage the children to act it out.

This promotes imagination and language development. Brainstorm with the children on how to make an area of the play yard into a stage. What props can be used with materials found outdoors. Perhaps the children can perform for their parents at pick-up time or at a family night.

## Collection hunt

This can be a spontaneous, unstructured fun activity. Let the children decide what to collect from outdoors. Ideas may include:

- Collecting colors (all browns, all greens, all reds)
- Items that have a scent
- Smooth items
- Rough items

Take pictures as the children are collecting their items. Put the pictures in sealable bags. Close the bags and punch holes in the sides. Tie the bags together to create a collection book.

# Scenario Worksheet

Read the scenario you have selected. What activity does your group have?

What materials will be necessary to do this activity?

Imagine yourself doing the activity with the children in your care. List 4 open-ended questions you may

ask the children to further their thinking and exploration of the activity?

What ways could you involve a variety of ages of children in this activity? What safety concerns would you need to be aware of?

Infants –

Toddlers –

School-age youth –

# Welcoming Environments

Community Playthings

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Kaplan

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Classroom Architect

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Scholastic

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Environments

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## Inclusion

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Consider adjustments or accommodations needed in your program
- Identify the child's strengths and interests

*Remember that children with special needs are first and foremost, children!*

# Understanding the ADA

## What is the ADA?

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal civil rights law that went into effect in 1992. The Act states that people with special needs are entitled to equal rights in employment, state and local public services, and public accommodations such as preschools, child care centers, and family child care homes.

## What does this mean for my care setting?

The ADA creates exciting opportunities to plan for and include children with special needs into your setting. When you care for children with varying abilities, you foster an attitude of caring, interdependence, and tolerance of human differences.

## Who is covered by the ADA?

The ADA applies to any child or adult who:

- Has a special need.
- Is perceived to have a special need.
- Has a record of a special need.
- There are special rules that apply to care settings operated by religious organizations.

State laws protecting persons with special needs can be more extensive in their coverage than the ADA. Check with your state attorney general's office to find out what nondiscrimination laws may apply to you in your state.

## Where do I go for help or for answers to my questions?

- Ask the families—parents of children with special needs already know many resources in your community.
- Ask your care provider network—many care providers are already including children with
- Contact your local resource and referral program.
- Access the ADA Information Line, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice at (800) 514-0301 or <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>
- Call The Arc, an organization that provides information about disabilities at (800) 433-5255

This information is not a substitute for individual legal advice. If you need specific legal information on how the ADA applies to you, seek the assistance of a lawyer who is familiar with ADA requirements.

## **Building Relationships: Scenario 1**

Maria is a single working mother who has three children: Gwen, 5½, Sam, 3, and Natalie, 2 months. She lives in a small rental apartment in a housing project. Gwen is in a full-day Kindergarten program. Sam has been at your preschool for two weeks and has Down Syndrome. Natalie stays with Grandma, who often picks up Sam. Mom reports that she is exhausted because Natalie is not sleeping well.

What did you need to know in order to help Sam adjust to school?

What kinds of services can you offer Sam and his family?

How will you insure that the other children understand and become accepting of Sam's needs?

## **Building Relationships: Scenario 2**

Bob and Susan have a four-year-old son, Brian, who is in a wheelchair. They are very concerned about him being included in daily activities.

How will you include Brian in the motor activities at your school?

How will you accommodate him at the children's tables?

How will you insure that the other children understand and become accepting of Brian's needs?

## **Building Relationships: Scenario 3**

Tony and Nicole have a three-year-old daughter, Jiliesha. Nicole believes that she is just not talking as well as she should. She has been in your facility for two weeks and every day she brings the subject up.

What resources can you offer this family?

How will you work with the resource personnel if there does need to be an intervention?

How will you insure that the other children understand and become accepting of Jiliesha's needs?

## **Building Relationships: Scenario 4**

Stephan has been in your preschool for six months. He is 3 1/2 and has two older siblings and one younger. Stephan never wants to play with the other children. He stays by himself during all of the choice times.

How will you, as Stephan's teacher, help him to engage in the activities?

What resources do you have to offer Stephan?

How will you insure that the other children understand and become accepting of Stephan's needs?



# The Importance of Physical Activity

You may not think you need to encourage children to be physically active, but studies show that the older children get, the less likely they are to get the physical activity necessary for good health. It is important to encourage children's love of physical activity for lifelong benefits.

## The winning goal

There are so many benefits of physical activity for children. Supporting or increasing children's activity is a goal worth working for. A few of the things children gain from being physically active include:

- Enjoyment
- Stress relief
- Physical benefits of increased fitness and lower risk of obesity (strength, endurance, efficient heart and circulatory system, increased mental alertness)
- Chance to learn new skills and develop new interests
- Sense of competence and achievement when they work on skills
- Social interaction with other children during play

As you watch the children run and play, you can see the enjoyment they get just from moving their bodies. Experts refer to this as the motor drive. It is an inborn drive in most children that prompts them to move. You probably first observed the motor drive in babies as they were learning to pull up on furniture. They try over and over to stand. Then comes crawling and then walking. You observed that the toddlers liked nothing better than to move around. They didn't really need a destination, they just wanted to be on the move! As preschoolers, that same motor drive kept them running, climbing, and dancing just for the fun of it. This is a prime time to use their love of physical movement to form habits that will remain once their motor drive is diminished.

## Sitting it out

It is interesting to consider why some children may become more sedentary as they get older. Here are a few factors that keep children sitting on the bench.

- Temperament. Some children are just not inclined to be active and need special encouragement to attain the benefits of physical activity.
- Lack of opportunity. If spaces and times for vigorous physical play are inadequate, children are limited in their ability to be active.
- Overuse of television, videos, or electronic games. Electronic entertainment has its place, but it has the ability to transfix a child so that valuable time for physical play is lost.
- Lack of confidence. Some children lack confidence in their physical abilities, perhaps because they have received negative comments from peers or adults, or because they judge themselves negatively.

Interest in other pursuits. Physical activity is not everyone's interest, but it is important for everyone to engage in for strong muscular development and good health.

## Adults make the team

- You, the care provider, along with the parent can be the athletic director, coach and cheerleader all rolled up in one to encourage the children's physical activity. Here are some things you can do:
- **Be a role model.** Participate in and enjoy physical activity yourself. The same benefits listed above for children apply to adults too.
- **Play active games with the children.** Make physical activity a whole group affair. Having your attention and participation encourages the children to engage in physical activity.
- **Plan time for unstructured play.** Young children need blocks of time to invent play, including physical activity.
- **Provide space, including outdoor space, for active play.** Incorporate outside time in the daily routine. In addition to time in your play yard, be creative. Take the children to a park, playground, or schoolyard. Put away the breakables and allow the children to play actively indoors as well.

- **Look for programs in your community.** Consult your community's recreation or park department for activities appropriate for all the children in your care. Take the children on field trips to these activities or share the information with parents and encourage them to take advantage of these programs with their child.
- **Limit TV watching.** Limiting the use of TV and electronic games takes discipline on your part. They engage children so well, and occupy their time. But more than an hour or two of TV and game playing a day poses a threat to the children's physical well being. Now is the time to set good habits for a lifetime.
- **Be positive about physical activity.** Encourage the children's physical activity. Be positive about their skills.

The encouragement and expectations the adults have influence how children engage and grow in their physical development. Avoid making fun of them or belittling their abilities. Show your appreciation for their physical activity, and you will lay the foundation for lifelong habits.

*Used with permission from Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc.*

## Video—100 Ways to Show a Child You Care

Notes:

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You are the most important part of your environment. You don't have to have the most expensive materials. You don't have to be high-tech. You do have to have a sense of humor, a sense of needs of the group and flexibility, and good sense to take care of yourself and the children in your care. By having a strong understanding, you can plan appropriate activities and experiences in your environment that you provide



## Knowledge to Practice

Answer the following questions.

1. Name 1-2 strengths of your program's environment. Explain your choice(s).

2. Name 1-2 areas of opportunity that you see in your program's environment. How can you help make these changes?

# Competency Checklist

Reflect on your understanding of the following competencies:

## The Learning Relationship

Identify ways to help children develop a positive sense of self.

Describe ways that warm, predictable adult-child relationships contribute to children's development.

Provide examples of adult behaviors that indicate sensitive, responsive adult-child interaction.

Identify guidelines for children's interactions that would support a positive emotional environment

## The Learning Plan

Identify contact information for sources (web-sites, books, people, and community sites) of developmentally appropriate learning activities.

Identify areas of development being supported in a particular activity.

Identify specific elements of a weekly activity plan that address the needs of individual children.

Name benefits that children gain from productive engagement.

Select examples of modifications to materials or activity plans that could be used to support active participation by children with special needs.

Describe how a particular activity reflects and promotes children's choices and interests.

Identify how elements of a weekly activity plan differ for children of different ages.

Identify strengths and weaknesses of a particular activity plan.

## The Learning Environment

Name interest areas shown in a room arrangement plan.

Identify strengths and potential drawbacks of a given room arrangement.

Recognize examples of developmentally appropriate room arrangements.

Name examples of how an environmental plan promotes child-directed play.

Identify appropriate arrangement of materials for different interest areas.

Identify outdoor learning areas and describe a structured and unstructured use of each area.

Identify examples of the kinds of displays that reflect children's work and interests.

Describe the importance of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Name ways in which an environment could be altered to support the ADA.

View toys and plans that have been modified and describe how the modifications may help a child with special needs participate in classroom activities and interactions.

Recognize types of environmental or teacher-child modification that may increase engagement.





# Resources





## Tips for Using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)

This tip sheet was created to assist you with some common areas of clarification around the ECERS-R. Every observation is different, so remember that these are guidelines to support your assessments. Remember to use each item's *Notes for Clarification* section and to look at the ERSI website (<http://ersi.info/>) for updated *Additional Notes* frequently. *All About The ECERS-R* is also a valuable resource that details each indicator and often provides photographs for clarification.

- **Take time to understand some of the key concepts that impact many items in the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)** and develop a plan to ensure your program is aligned with these concepts which include:
  - *Free Play*: Children are permitted to select materials and companions and as far as possible manage play independently. Adult interaction is in response to children's needs. Situations in which children are assigned to centers by staff or staff select the materials that individual children may use do not count as free play. Free play does not mean that all areas of the classroom must be open at one time. However, children must be allowed to choose where they will play, and with whom, from the choices allowed.
  - *Accessible*: Children can reach and are allowed to use toys, materials, furnishings, and/or equipment. For materials to be considered "accessible," they must be within view of younger preschoolers (two and three year olds). For older preschoolers (four and five year olds), if materials are stored in closed spaces, they can be considered accessible only if it is observed that children can freely access and use the materials. For example, if musical instruments are stored in a bin with a closed lid, they would not be considered accessible to younger preschoolers and it would need to be observed that older preschoolers could freely open the lid and access the instruments.
  - *Substantial portion of the day*: It means at least one-third of the time the children are in attendance (operating hours of the center). You can determine your program's substantial portion of the day by using the reference chart in the back of the ECERS-R (score sheet page 12). If children are kept together in whole group activities for long periods, it reduces the likelihood of children having access to materials for a substantial portion of the day.
- **Keep in mind that an outdoor area should be used for gross motor play at least one hour daily year-round, weather permitting.** In Illinois the term "weather permitting" means temperatures between 25 and 90 degrees, taking into consideration the wind chill (e.g., if the temperature was 30 degrees, but 18 degrees with wind chill, it is not expected that children have outdoor play time). It is said, "There is no bad weather; only bad clothes." Therefore, children should be dressed properly and taken outdoors on most days. Taking children on a nature walk does not count as gross motor play.
- **Remember to engage the children in meaningful conversations throughout the day.** Conversations should be encouraging, informative, and relevant to children. Try to find opportunities to add information to expand on ideas presented by children. According to the ECERS-R, "expand" means staff responds verbally to add more information to what a child says. For example, a child says, "Look at this truck," and the teacher responds, "It's a red dump truck. See it has a place to carry things."
- **Remember to have a wide selection of books accessible to children.** A "wide selection of books" includes a variety of topics: fantasy; factual information; stories about people, animals, and nature/science; and books that reflect different cultures and abilities. Make certain there are no books accessible to children that show violence in a graphic or frightening way, or that glorify violence.
- **Consider how you use music and movement with children.** There should be enough musical instruments for at least half of the children to use at once plus some music to listen to, such as a tape player with tapes. For a

tape or CD player to be considered accessible in a group of older children (majority of children are four years and older), children should be able to use tapes or CDs independently, but in younger groups help may be needed from the teacher.

- **Don't forget about block play.** Blocks do not include small blocks (sometimes called table blocks), or any size of plastic interlocking blocks that fit together. Blocks are building materials that do not restrict children by having to fit pieces together in a special way, but challenge children to carefully place and balance materials to create a variety of structures. Block accessories need to be within or near the block area so that it is obvious to the children that those materials are to be used with blocks. Accessories (e.g., small trucks, cars, trains, road signs, small toy people, and small toy animals) enrich block play.
- **Don't forget dramatic play props.** Dramatic play materials and furniture should be accessible, so children can act out family roles themselves. At the good level, "many dramatic play materials" means that three or more children can use the materials at one time, without undue competition, and materials are plentiful enough to encourage more complex play. There must be concrete examples of dress-ups associated with being men and women. Thus, two or three gender-specific examples of dress-up items are required (such as ties, hard hats, or shoes to represent men's clothes; purses or flowery hats for women's).
- **Does your classroom have a cozy area?** A cozy area is a clearly defined space with a substantial amount of softness where children may lounge, daydream, read, or play quietly. The cozy area must provide a substantial amount of softness for children. This means cozy furnishings must allow a child to completely escape the normal hardness of the typical early childhood classroom. This area must be accessible to children for a substantial portion of the day.
- **Does your classroom have space for privacy?** At the good level, space must be set aside for one or two children to play, protected from intrusion by others. Examples of space for privacy are a small loft area or activity centers where use is limited to one or two children. Teachers must enforce the protection rule, if needed.
- **Limit use of TV, video and/or computer use.** Due to recommendations in the 2011 version of *Caring for Our Children*, pages 66-67, time allowed for children to view television, video, DVD and use the computer ("media screen time") has been changed. Time is limited for children in ECERS-R groups to not more than 30 minutes total, once a week. Computer use time should be limited to no more than 15 minutes per day for children in a program of any length with the exception of children with disabilities who require assistive computer technology. No media screen time should be allowed during meals/snacks.
- **Be aware of potential outdoor safety hazards.** For a basic overview of playground guidelines and safety information, please visit the *Environment Rating Scales Website*: [http://www.ersi.info/ecers\\_supmaterials.html](http://www.ersi.info/ecers_supmaterials.html) Click on "playground guidelines." If the playground has a poured or installed foam or rubber surface, site-specific documentation must be provided to verify that ASTM F1292 requirements are met.

Adapted from the *Early Child Environment Rating Scale Revised Edition* and *All About the ECERS-R*

# Tips for Using the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R)

This tip sheet was created to assist you with some common areas of clarification around the ITERS-R. Every observation is different, so remember that these are guidelines to support your assessments. Remember to use each item's *Notes for Clarification* section and to look at the ERSI website (<http://ersi.info/>) for updated *Additional Notes* frequently. *All About The ITERS-R* is also valuable resources that details each indicator and often provides photographs for clarification.

- **Take time to understand some of the key concepts that impact many items in the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R) and develop a plan to ensure your program is aligned with these concepts which include:**
  - *Much of the day:* It means most of the time that any child may be 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 an observation, then “much of the day” cannot be given credit. The 20 minutes can be calculated as one 20-minute time period, or as a combination of smaller time periods that equal 20 minutes. Special attention should be paid to individual children who may not have the same access to materials as do other children. For example, non-mobile children or children who are kept in exersaucers, bouncers, high chairs, or cribs may not have the same access to play materials as other children in the group. It is important to set up an environment that allows all children plenty of time to play and explore materials.
  - *Play:* “Play,” or “play activities,” require that children are actively involved, able to use toys or other play materials, and are able to interact with others if they wish. Play activities should not be confused with more passive group times (such as circle times, when children mostly listen to a “teacher” or spend time watching TV or videos) or times when children are required to work on specific non-play tasks, such as coloring alphabet ditto sheets, and are not able to choose to do the activity. Play is characterized by the child being engaged.
  - *Accessible:* Children can reach and are allowed to use toys, materials, furnishings, and/or equipment. Toys in open storage, such as open shelves, must be within easy reach of children. No barriers (verbal, such as a “no-touch” rule, or physical, such as being stored out of sight) can be present to prevent children from reaching them. For example, toys are not accessible if they are in containers with lids that children cannot manage, unless staff show signs of regularly making the toys accessible to children by opening various containers during the observation. If materials are stored out of reach, they must be placed within children’s reach to be counted as accessible. If stored out of a non-mobile child’s reach, the child must be moved to reach the materials, or the materials must be placed close to the non-mobile child, within reach. During the observation, if there is evidence that staff regularly provide access to the variety of toys required for an item or indicator, credit can be given for “accessible.”
- **Don’t forget the babies!** All non-mobile children should have a variety of toys and materials brought to them. It is a good idea to try and limit the amount of time non-mobile children are restricted by being placed in high chairs, bouncers, playpens, etc. The optimal situation is for the staff to be down on the floor with the non-mobile children engaged in conversation, reading books, and showing them a variety of toys and materials.
- **Keep in mind that an outdoor area should be used for active physical play at least one hour daily year-round, weather permitting.** In Illinois, the term “weather permitting” means temperatures between 25 and 90 degrees, taking into consideration the wind chill (e.g., if the temperature was 30 degrees, but 18 degrees

with the wind chill, it is not expected that children have outdoor play time). It is said, “There is no bad weather; only bad clothes.” Therefore, children should be dressed properly and taken outdoors on most days. Taking children outside for stroller rides or a nature walk does not count as active physical play.

- **Be sure to provide opportunities for all children to understand and use language.** The provider should talk to children frequently throughout the day using language that is meaningful to the children. Be sure to provide opportunities for all children to understand and use language. Talk about many topics and different aspects of experiences, including feelings and the names of objects and actions. Engage in many turn-taking conversations with infants and toddlers, as well as older children, expanding on and adding more words to children's attempts to communicate.
- **Remember to bring books to the non-mobile infants.** Often classrooms have a wide selection of books; however, infants may not have an opportunity to enjoy age-appropriate books. At the minimal level, at least six infant/toddler books (but no less than one for each child in the group) must be accessible daily, for much of the day.
- **Be sure to have sleeping infants within sight of staff.** Supervision of sleeping infants requires that the children are within view of the staff, and visually checked regularly when sleeping; napping toddlers also need to be within sight and hearing of at least one supervising adult.
- **Consider the types of art materials accessible to infants/toddlers.** All art materials used with children must be nontoxic and safe. Glitter is considered an inappropriate art material for infants and toddlers because the sharp particles may cause eye injury if children rub their eyes. Foam pieces, packing “peanuts”, and other small items should not be used with very young children because they are choking hazards. If you use shaving cream for art experiences, check the label. Some shaving cream is labeled “Keep out of reach of children” and is not appropriate for use with young children.
- **Consider how you use music and movement with children.** Music materials should be accessible to all children, including the non-mobile child for much of the day. Children should not be required to participate in group music activities; alternative activities should be accessible. Do not have music on throughout the day. When recorded music is used, it must be used at limited times and with a positive purpose.
- **Be sure to have blocks and accessories accessible to children 12 months and older.** Note that interlocking blocks (whether large or small) and very small blocks are considered under Item 16. Fine motor, and are not counted for blocks. See *ITERS-R*, page 40 for a complete list of appropriate blocks. Accessories include appropriately-sized toys that can be used with blocks to extend block play, such as small vehicles, people, and animals. Accessories must be placed near the blocks so that children know they are meant to be used with blocks.
- **Be aware of potential outdoor safety hazards.** For a basic overview of playground guidelines and safety information, please visit the Environment Rating Scales Website: [http://www.ersi.info/iters\\_supmaterials.html](http://www.ersi.info/iters_supmaterials.html) Click on “playground guidelines.” If the playground has a poured or installed foam or rubber surface, site-specific documentation must be provided to verify that ASTM F1292 requirements are met.
- **Consider the types of nature/science experiences set up in your environment.** Children should have some opportunities to experience the natural world daily, either indoors or outdoors. This can occur either by taking children outside to see or experience natural things such as trees, grass, and birds, or by providing experiences with nature indoors, with living plants, an aquarium, or pets.
- **Limit the amount of time children spend with TV, videos and/or computers.** 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, the age listed in these indicators for the *ITERS-R* has changed from 12 to 24 months. In addition, media screen time is limited for children 2 years and older to not more than 30 minutes total, once a week. Computer use time should be limited to no more than 15 minutes per day. No media screen time should be allowed during meals/snacks.

Adapted from the *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale Revised Edition* and *All About the ITERS-R*

# Tips for Using the School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS-U)

This ERS tip sheet was created to assist you with some common areas of clarification around the SACERS-U. Every observation is different, so remember that these are guidelines to support your assessments. Remember to use each item's *Notes for Clarification* section and to look at the ERSI website (<http://ersi.info/>) for updated *Additional Notes* frequently.

- **Be sure all materials for children are age-appropriate.** The ages of the children in the group are a key factor in deciding appropriateness. Materials should: vary by ability, age and interest; be challenging, but not frustrating for children to use; send positive social messages; and be safe. Appropriateness includes content that is not violent, sexually explicit or biased toward any group.
- **Be sure that materials in the program are accessible.** To be considered accessible, children must be able to get the materials easily by themselves. If materials are stored in closed spaces, they can be considered accessible only if it is observed that children can freely access and use the materials when allowed. This access must be provided as part of the usual daily (or almost daily) practice. In addition, at the good level, materials must be accessible for at least 30 minutes in the typical three hour after-school program.
- **Be sure there are interest centers with a clearly defined purpose.** An interest center is a place where materials are arranged for use within an appropriately equipped play space. Centers should promote independent use by children. For example, an art interest center would have art materials near easels or tables. If homework is part of the program, a quiet space with suitable furniture should be provided.
- **Remember that a variety of gross motor activities must stimulate at least five different skills.** In the good level of quality there must be a minimum of two skills that are made possible by stationary equipment and a minimum of two skills that are made possible by portable equipment; however, a total of five skills are necessary to receive credit for all of the indicators in the good level. Therefore, one additional skill must be present in either stationary or portable equipment. For example, if children have access to a stationary climber with a slide, a ladder and a tunnel (three skills), as well as a hula hoop and a jump rope (two skills), they have a variety of equipment that stimulates many skills.
- **Children should have access to a variety of music and movement activities.** Music materials (e.g., dance props, CDs, musical instruments) and activities should be accessible daily. To be considered accessible, children should be able to use the tape/CD player independently.
- **Remember to provide opportunities for dramatic play.** Teachers should provide a variety of props which support many roles and situations, and add to the children's possibilities for dramatic play. For example, if the dramatic play is very active, they might provide children with a larger space. Or if children need more props, teachers might help them find what they need. Also, materials that are of interest to both boys and girls must be provided.
- **Remember to participate and encourage reading/language activities.** Teachers should be responsive or participate with children involved in language games. They could play the game with children or help set up the game. Teachers should also encourage children to use reading or writing for practical situations, such as writing a letter to friends or looking up instructions online.
- **Be sure to include science/nature activities.** Science/nature books should be used to extend children's information about science. A book could be used to answer a science question or it could be open and placed next to natural objects which are described in the book. Children should be given the opportunity to care for living things. They should also have opportunities to observe nature for extended periods of time.
- **Remember to engage the children in meaningful conversations.** Conversations should be encouraging, informative, and relevant to children. There should be several turns for the teachers and children to listen and talk. Try to find opportunities to ask children open-ended questions such as why and how questions, which encourage longer more complex responses.

- **Keep in mind that an outdoor area should be used for gross motor activities daily year-round, weather permitting.** 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 18 degrees with the wind chill factored in, it is not expected that children have outdoor play time.
- **Be sure to take advantage of community resources that are available to the program.** Field trips out of the center should be taken regularly. In Illinois “regularly scheduled” means that there is a field trip every quarter. This means that there must be a couple of field trips during the school year (which can be on days when children are not in school) and a couple of trips during the summer.
- **Be aware of potential outdoor safety hazards.** For a basic overview of playground guidelines and safety information, please visit the Environment Rating Scales Website:  
[http://www.ersi.info/ecers\\_supmaterials.html](http://www.ersi.info/ecers_supmaterials.html) Click on “playground guidelines.” If the playground has a poured or installed foam or rubber surface, site-specific documentation must be provided to verify that ASTM F1292 requirements are met.

Source: Harms, T., Jacobs, H., & Romano, D. (2014). *School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale*. New York: Teachers College.

# Ideas for Keeping Children Interested During Large Group Activities

- Consider the length of time needed for circle time relative to the children's ages and abilities and to the types of activities that will occur during the large group time.
- Have a purpose and be clear about what it is you want children to learn.
- Vary activities from day to day. For example, you can teach concepts during large group in a variety of ways (e.g., puppets, role play, stories, songs, visual aids, discussion). You might also do repeated reading of the same story for several days but use puppets on the first day, a flannel board on the second day, and have children role play the story on the third day.
- Do circle time to teach new concepts, not because it is on your schedule, but use it as a time to teach new concepts. This is an especially good time to teach social skills and to support children's emotional development. Explain that we will be talking about this point later.
- Make sure all children have opportunities to be involved (e.g., everyone holds a character from the story, children do things with partners).
- Assign jobs for children who have a particularly difficult time during circle time (e.g., book holder, page turner).
- Vary the way you talk and the tone of your voice.
- Have children help lead activities.
- Pay attention to children's appropriate behavior, as well as the function of their behavior. Remember, if they are wiggling and wandering away, the activity is probably not interesting to them.



# Tips for Supporting Daily Activities

## Small Groups

- Be clear about the purpose and outcomes of the small group activity. What is it you want children to learn and are you structuring the activity so that it meets the needs of all of the children involved?
- Although small group activities are often more teacher directed, they do not have to be that way. They can involve games, stories, discussion, projects, etc.
- Small groups also provide a great opportunity to use peers as models. One peer can model a skill or behavior you are trying to teach another child.
- It is important to ensure that all children participate in a way that is meaningful and relevant to their goals and needs.
- Provide descriptive feedback related to appropriate behavior to children throughout the activity.

## Clean-up time

- Recognize that they are asking children to interrupt their play to perform a task that, from the child's perspective, is unnecessary and interferes with play.
- Validate children's feelings while emphasizing the importance of keeping the space safe in the community. Group time conversations about clean-up help develop a sense of ownership of the problem and encourage calm discussion of solutions.
- Prepare children that clean-up time is close. Children need at least five minutes to begin to shift gears.
- Provide warning signals and signs that are pleasant and appealing as well as obvious. Combining both visual and auditory signals, such as a bell, a flag, a clean-up song, etc. will help prepare children.
- Be consistent in the clean-up process-the same clean-up song every day, timing and order of the day, the same place to gather the groups when finished.
- Arrange the daily schedule so that something the children enjoy follows clean-up time and they can transition to it quickly with little wait time.

## Naptime

- Establish a quiet, peaceful environment.
- Make the environment as comfortable as possible.
- Establish classroom naptime rituals.
- Emphasize the need for rest in order for children to be happy and healthy.
- Take the attitude that you are there to help the child rest.
- Use challenges as opportunities to take the perspective of others. (For example, "Johnny keeps yawning, I wonder what he feels like right now. Is there a way you could help him?")

## Traffic Patterns and Use of Space

- Minimize large open spaces in which children can run, etc.
- Minimize obstacles
- Consider environmental arrangement as it applies to children with physical or sensory (e.g., blindness) disabilities.
- Have clear boundaries so that children know where the center begins/ends so that children are not crowded together.
- Make sure children are visible to adults, easily supervised, and adults are visible to children.
- When learning centers are closed for some reason, indicate that the centers are closed by using visual prompts such as sheets or blankets, circles with a slash through them, etc.
- Have enough centers for the number of children in your care and enough materials within the centers so that children are engaged and not continually arguing over materials.
- Consider the size of centers and the location of centers. For example, it is best to avoid having a center that is likely to have a high level of activity in it (e.g., block center, dramatic play) located close to a center where the child care and early learning professional wants quieter activities (e.g., listening centers, computer) to occur.
- Use developmentally appropriate and creative ways to limit the number of children in centers if this is necessary (e.g., laminated cards containing children's names that can be moved into pockets at the center as opposed to a sign saying "two children only").
- Have centers organized and ready to go when children arrive.
- Organize materials and keep them in appropriate places, taking into consideration children's development of independence skills.
- Materials within learning centers need to be meaningful and relevant to children's needs, interests, and lives (e.g., within the dramatic play area, materials that are culturally appropriate should be available; the pictures on puzzles and in the classroom library should reflect the diversity within your community). There should be culturally meaningful activities and materials (e.g., within the typical water table, you can alternate materials that have a similar consistency such as cotton balls and pom poms, or beads and aquarium rocks.) Be aware that not all of these suggested materials may be appropriate for younger children. Also, consider using labels in multiple languages around the classroom.
- Learning centers need to be highly engaging and interesting to children. Build on children's interests by including materials and activities that children enjoy or express an interest in. If children all tend to stay in one or two centers that would suggest that the other centers are not engaging or interesting to children.
- Provide a variety of materials in each area. For example, related books can be put in every center (e.g., books on animals can be placed in the reading center; magazines can be placed in the dramatic play area that is designed as a veterinarian's office; a book about the post office can be placed in the writing center). Writing utensils and paper also can be in a variety of centers (e.g., in the dramatic play area, the writing center, or near the computers). Be creative.
- Change the materials or themes in areas on a regular basis. The post office set up in the dramatic play area might be interesting and engaging at the beginning of the year but will be old and uninteresting if it is still there in the spring. Listen to what children are talking about. Create centers that build on their interests. Rotate materials within a center so that the same materials are not out all year. Let children help you choose the materials.

# Creating a Welcoming Environment

## What is Included in Your Environment?

You! Also, the physical make-up, the toys and materials and the tone of the relationships within the room.

## Things to Keep in Mind

- The environment you create has a profound effect on the feelings and actions of the children in your care.
- New environments can be unsettling for children, no matter how welcoming they are.
- Your environments should reflect the children's backgrounds. (Antibias)
- Your environment must communicate a sense of trust and security.
- Your environment must be comfortable to you as well. (Aesthetics)

## The Message You Send

"This place is comfortable"

- Toys and blankets from home
- Everyday objects from home are available to play with (i.e., pots, pans, baskets)
- Home-like touches (i.e., plants, pillows, adult-sized "comfy chair")
- "We know who you are and we like you. You belong here."
- Pictures of children and their families
- Places for each child to "keep their stuff"
- A message board that tells parents about their child's day
- Pictures and materials that reflect the ethnic and individual characteristics of children and families
- Space affects behavior. Large, open spaces encourage children to run and use large muscles. Small spaces encourage social interaction and concentration. You should have both.
- Keep it easy to maintain. Washable rugs, flooring, etc.
- Organize and label storage space. "A place for everything and everything in its place." Use the nontraditional: baskets, low hooks, cardboard dressers with drawers, etc.
- Evaluate, evaluate, evaluate. As your children develop and change, so should your environment.

## Don't Forget Your Outdoor Environment

- Are there a variety of surfaces and a range of toys and equipment?
- Take outside: balls, riding toys, push and pull toys, easels, markers, colored chalk, small slides, bubbles, buckets, baskets, materials for sensory play, (finger paint, water table, play dough) and musical instruments.

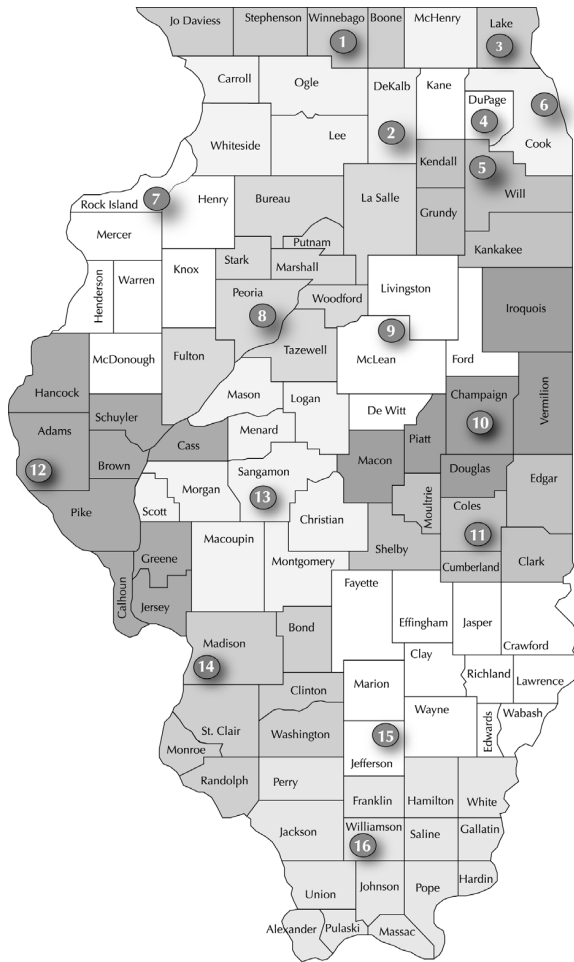
## Selecting and Organizing Materials

- When deciding which toys to have out, ask yourself:
- “Will this interest my babies/toddlers/two’s?”
- “Is this safe?”
- “Is this developmentally appropriate?”
- “What is it’s purpose?”

## Don't Forget Families

- How welcoming is your environment to families? If they are not comfortable, their children may not be either. Help them feel welcome. Allow them to take their time saying goodbye (transitions with small children take time). Have a parent board that lets parents know “We are all learners.” Post information about community services, etc.

# Illinois Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies Service Delivery Area (SDA)



**SDA 1**  
YWCA  
Child Care Solutions  
(Rockford)  
888-225-7072  
[www.ywca.org/Rockford](http://www.ywca.org/Rockford)

**SDA 2**  
4-C: Community Coordinated  
Child Care  
(DeKalb)  
800-848-8727  
&  
(McHenry)  
866-347-2277  
[www.four-c.org](http://www.four-c.org)

**SDA 3**  
YWCA Lake County CCR&R  
(Gurnee)  
877-675-7992  
[www.ywcalakecounty.org](http://www.ywcalakecounty.org)

**SDA 4**  
YWCA CCR&R  
(Addison)  
630-790-6600  
[www.ywcachicago.org](http://www.ywcachicago.org)

**SDA 5**  
Joliet CCR&R  
(Joliet)  
800-552-5526  
[www.childcarehelp.com](http://www.childcarehelp.com)

**SDA 6**  
Illinois Action for Children  
(Chicago)  
312-823-1100  
[www.actforchildren.org](http://www.actforchildren.org)

**SDA 7**  
Child Care Resource & Referral  
of Midwestern Illinois  
(Moline)  
866-370-4556  
[www.childcareillinois.org](http://www.childcareillinois.org)

**SDA 8**  
SAL Child Care Connection  
(Peoria)  
800-421-4371  
[www.salchildcareconnection.org](http://www.salchildcareconnection.org)

**SDA 9**  
CCR&R  
(Bloomington)  
800-437-8256  
[www.ccrm.com](http://www.ccrm.com)

**SDA 10**  
Child Care Resource Service  
University of Illinois  
(Urbana)  
800-325-5516  
[ccrs.illinois.edu](http://ccrs.illinois.edu)

**SDA 11**  
CCR&R  
Eastern Illinois University  
(Charleston)  
800-545-7439  
[www.eiu.edu/~ccrr/home/index.php](http://www.eiu.edu/~ccrr/home/index.php)

**SDA 12**  
West Central Child  
Care Connection  
(Quincy)  
800-782-7318  
[www.wcccc.com](http://www.wcccc.com)

**SDA 13**  
Community Connection Point  
(Springfield)  
800-676-2805  
[www.CCPoint.org](http://www.CCPoint.org)

**SDA 14**  
Children's Home + Aid  
(Granite City)  
800-467-9200  
[www.childrenshomeandaid.org](http://www.childrenshomeandaid.org)

**SDA 15**  
Project CHILD  
(Mt. Vernon)  
800-362-7257  
[www.rlc.edu/projectchild](http://www.rlc.edu/projectchild)

**SDA 16**  
CCR&R  
John Logan College  
(Carterville)  
800-548-5563  
[www.jalc.edu/ccrr](http://www.jalc.edu/ccrr)

Find your local CCR&R by identifying what county you reside in.

## Services your local CCR&R provides:

- Free and low cost trainings and professional development
- Grant opportunities for quality enhancements
- Professional development funds to cover expenses related to trainings and conferences
- Mental health consultants, infant toddler specialists and quality specialists to answer your questions
- National Accreditation support
- Free referrals of child care programs to families searching for child care.
- Financial assistance for families to help pay for child care.

*And more...*

## Helpful Websites: Module 4

Classroom Architect

<http://classroom.4teachers.org>

Colorín for ESL

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/>

Community Playthings

[www.communityplaythings.com](http://www.communityplaythings.com)

Cooperation in the Preschool Classroom: Class Discussions\*

<http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/coop-meetings.htm>

Environments

[www.environments.com](http://www.environments.com)

Helping Children Learn to Get Along\*

<http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/conflict.htm>

Indiana Continuity of Care website\*

[www.child-care.org](http://www.child-care.org)

Jump Start lesson plan resources (Things to purchase)

<http://www.jumpstart.com/teachers/lesson-plans/grade-based-lesson-plans/preschool-lesson-plans>

Kaplan

[www.kaplanco.com](http://www.kaplanco.com)

Kids Who Care\*

<http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/kidsicare.htm>

Making and Keeping Friends\*

<http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/makekeepfriends.htm>

Play and Self-Regulation in Preschool\*

<http://illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/self.htm>

Scholastic: Practical Tools and Plans

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lessons-and-ideas/>

Video clips on High Scope website

<http://www.highscope.org/Content.asp?ContentId=381>

## General Links

Early Childhood News  
[www.earlychildhoodnews.com](http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com)

ExceleRate Illinois homepage  
[www.excelerateillinois.com](http://www.excelerateillinois.com)

Gateways i-Learning System - for online trainings  
<http://courses.inccrra.org>

Gateways to Opportunity: Illinois Professional Development System  
[www.ilgateways.com](http://www.ilgateways.com)

Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLKC)  
<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc>

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Child Care Licensing Standards  
[www.illinois.gov/dcf/aboutus/notices/Documents/Rules\\_407.pdf](http://www.illinois.gov/dcf/aboutus/notices/Documents/Rules_407.pdf)

Illinois Early Learning Project  
[www.illinoisearlylearning.org](http://www.illinoisearlylearning.org)

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)  
[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)  
[www.nafcc.org](http://www.nafcc.org)

Statewide Training Calendar  
[www.ilgateways.com/en/statewide-online-training-calendar](http://www.ilgateways.com/en/statewide-online-training-calendar)

# Notes



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