

Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (FCCERS-R)

Statements of Developmentally Appropriate Practice for Items Included on the Tennessee Child Care Evaluation Program

Space and Furnishings for Care and Learning

1. Indoor space used for child care

Children in home care need an environment that is well lit, in good repair, and conducive to children's exploration and independence. The indoor space should foster children's initiative, active use of materials, and sustained engagement with other children, adults, and activities.

2. Furniture for routine care, play, and learning

Children need appropriate furnishings to meet the demands of their daily routines and activities. Basic furniture such as cots, tables, and chairs should support learning, playing, and routine activities. Furnishings should be sturdy, suitable to children's sizes, promote self-help, and allow for accessible storage of children's belongings.

3. Provisions for relaxation and comfort

Children need space and opportunity to relax and rest. Soft furniture and toys allow children the opportunity for relaxation and comfort daily. Areas of softness provide a space for quiet activities to occur and should be protected from active play so children can snuggle, daydream, and lounge.

4. Arrangement of indoor space for child care

A safe and healthy environment should be created that ensures safety, is healthy, and is conducive to children's exploration and independence. The space should allow caregivers to provide attentive supervision. Play spaces should be well organized and promote a variety of activities. Children should be able to move freely without many restrictions so that their play is non-confining and interactive.

5. Display for children

Children should have their work displayed and valued. Artwork or other individual work that is created by the children should be displayed at comfortable eye-level. Talking with children about the display allows them to revisit projects or concepts, giving them opportunities to revise and expand their ideas.

6. Space for privacy

Often children experience stress when exposed to prolonged group settings. Easily supervised places where children can escape from the pressures of group care promote positive self-esteem. Providing a child with opportunities, space, and time to be alone can contribute to positive classroom behavior.

Personal Care Routines

7. Greeting/departing

Parents and children need a warm, welcoming, and pleasant atmosphere to make the daily greeting and departing routine a happy one. It is important that parents see and experience the environment in which children spend their day. Positive greetings help to promote the children's self-esteem and create a welcoming environment for parents. Caregivers should be sensitive to separation anxiety by parents and children alike. They should request information from parents upon arrival and freely share information about the children's routines and activities while they are in their care.

8. Nap/rest

Nap and/or rest time should be appropriately scheduled and supervised for the children in the group. Each child should have his/her own personal place to rest. Caregivers should help them understand the importance of rest in promoting physical and emotional health. Caregivers should stay alert to handle potential problems.

9. Meals/snacks

Meals and snacks that follow USDA guidelines contribute to the health of children and provide a model of good nutritional habits for life-long practice. Proper hand washing along with careful preparation of food teaches children proper hygiene and promotes sanitary conditions.

Holding young children during bottle-feeding promotes nurturing relationships. Mealtimes provide an excellent opportunity for conversation and social interaction.

10. Diapering/toileting

Young children need appropriate supervision of the toileting process in order to care for basic needs and teach the importance of good health habits. Caregivers should maintain sanitary practices to prevent the spread of germs. Toileting practices promote self-help skills and provide an opportunity for one-on-one interactions. The schedule for toileting should meet each child's needs.

11. Health practices

Practicing preventive measures, such as washing hands after handling pets or wiping noses, helps children develop life-long healthy practices. Taking appropriate action when children are sick will minimize the spread of germs.

12. Safety practices

Protecting children through adequate supervision and minimizing hazards is critical for quality care. Caregivers should anticipate potential safety problems and model safe practices. When children feel safe, they can focus on learning and appropriate experiences.

Listening and Talking

13. Helping children understand language

All children, regardless of age, benefit from extensive exposure to meaningful language. Children's early language experiences influence all areas of development. Language is best understood when modeled by caregivers who are attentive and talk to children in a warm, supportive manner with simple, exact words.

14. Helping children use language

Children use verbal and nonverbal language to communicate their needs. As children develop, their language becomes more distinguishable as words and phrases. When adults show interest in what the child is trying to communicate, children learn their words have meaning and are valued. Adults scaffold children's language learning when they respond quickly, describe actions, introduce new words, and ask questions.

15. Using books

The use of books is an important means of language development. Sufficient numbers of books should be accessible for both independent and group use. Experiences with books encourage continued interest in literacy. Book times should be engaging and interactive so that children eagerly anticipate reading. Literacy is further encouraged when books are kept in good repair, thus sending the message that books are a valued resource. Children should be allowed to choose from a wide variety of age-appropriate books.

Activities

16. Fine motor

Children need a variety of developmentally-appropriate materials that promote small motor development. Materials should be accessible, in good repair, organized for play, and support a variety of skill levels. Activities using these materials provide the foundation for school readiness skills such as handwriting and other small muscle tasks.

17. Art

Children benefit from appropriate art activities that are open-ended and process oriented. Children's art should be respected and appreciated as individual creative expression. Materials should be accessible as children are developmentally ready.

18. Music and movement

Children need access to a variety of music and movement materials that encourage self-expression. Children's language needs are better met when recorded music is used for a specific purpose at limited times. Music opportunities promote cultural exposure and math concepts.

19. Blocks

Block play, with a variety of blocks and accessories, allows children the opportunity to explore spatial, mathematical, and role-play possibilities. Block play requires sufficient space in a protected area and time to expand on concepts and ideas.

20. Dramatic play

Dramatic play gives children the opportunity to discover an array of roles and responsibilities. It provides a vehicle through which they make sense of their world. Dramatic play is enhanced by space, time, props, materials, and supportive teachers.

21. Math

Math skills, when introduced through appropriate hands-on methods, form a foundation for school readiness and later academic success. Math skills can be taught effectively through routines, schedule, and play activities. A variety of materials that enhance math skills should be organized, in good repair, and freely accessible to children.

22. Nature/science

Science and nature activities and materials foster curiosity. When children have opportunities to experience the natural world, they learn respect and responsibility for the environment and living things. A variety of accessible science and nature materials promote observation skills and experimentation.

23. Sand and water play

Sand and water play gives children the opportunity to actively explore with sensory materials. The addition of interesting props extends the learning potential. Solitary sensory play can have a calming effect while small groups experience cooperative learning. Math and science concepts can be enhanced through sensory play.

24. Promoting acceptance of diversity

Children benefit from exposure to the diversity of people and cultures in positive ways through books, pictures, dolls, and materials. Activities and classroom interactions are valuable resources as well. This exposure encourages respect and appreciation for others.

25. Use of TV, video, and/or computer

TV/video viewing and computer use tend to be passive in comparison to active involvement with materials and people. The use of each should be confined to subject material that is age-appropriate and related to curriculum content. Time limits encourage more active learning. Participation should not be required.

26. Active physical play

Children, including infants, need daily opportunities to exercise and practice gross motor skills. Opportunities for active play should be available both indoors and outdoors. All play equipment should be safe, and effective monitoring should be implemented to teach children appropriate play behavior and to safeguard against accidents.

Interaction

27. Supervision of play and learning

During activities, caregivers must balance the level of supervision and control based upon the ages, abilities, and individual needs of the children. Adequate supervision and awareness of the whole group is required to ensure children's health and safety. Caregivers should provide materials that stimulate the interests of the children. Caregivers should intentionally engage with children at play.

28. Provider-child interaction

Nurturing and responsive caregivers promote the development of respect between children and adults. Children who trust adults to provide for their physical, psychological, and emotional needs develop a sense of self-worth.

29. Discipline

When rules are simple, consistent, and fit the developmental levels of children this helps to foster a positive atmosphere. Environments rich in materials with ample time to play impact how children behave in child care. Guiding children rather than confining them for long periods of time is conducive to a well-rounded home. Children learn to get along with their peers and can often resolve issues independently.

30. Interactions among children

Self-regulation and positive relationships are essential life skills. Caregivers should encourage children to develop pro-social behaviors by creating an environment that encourages empathy and respect. Modeling good social skills and providing opportunities for children to work and play together and participate in group activities are ways caregivers can promote positive social relationships.

Program Structure

31. Schedule

Children learn best in an environment where they know what to expect. A consistent schedule that offers ample time for indoor and outdoor play, smooth transitions between activities, and a balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed activities promotes optimal learning. While children should experience a consistent routine, some flexibility is needed to allow for individual needs.

32. Free play

When children are permitted to select materials and companions and manage play independently, they learn to make effective choices. When given opportunities to explore, children can follow their interests and work on skills they need to develop. Caregiver involvement should be purposeful and responsive to children's needs.

33. Group time

Group times need to focus on recognizing and meeting individual needs and guiding children as they interact in small groups. Whole group activities should be kept to a minimum and limited to gatherings that follow the interests and involvement of the children.

34. Provisions for children with disabilities

Caregivers able to serve children with special needs should make adjustments in space, schedule, and furnishings as needed. The child must be able to independently use the space and participate in activities. Meeting the needs of children with disabilities requires knowledge of routine care needs, developmental levels, individual assessments, and the integration of the children in ongoing activities. It also requires the involvement and establishment of a partnership between the parents and caregiver in setting attainable goals that will assist the child in reaching his/her full potential.