

# Environment Rating Scale Self-Assessment Readiness Checklist



## Child Care Program

Ages Including:

Infants/Toddlers

Preschool

School-Age

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**Purpose:** This tool is designed to assist child care programs in performing a basic self-assessment of the environment provided to the children in care. This is the first step in preparing for the Environment Rating Scale assessments. A thorough review of the rating scale book (ITERS-R, ECERS-R, and SACERS) will help you prepare for the ERS Assessment which is required by Oklahoma's Reaching for the Stars policy. Additional resources are available to assist you in preparing for the assessment day by accessing CECPD's website at [www.cecpd.org](http://www.cecpd.org).

# Environment Rating Scale

## Self-Assessment Readiness Checklist

Child Care Program

Facility Name: \_\_\_\_\_ K8#: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Infant/Toddler Classroom (Birth – 30 months): \_\_\_\_\_ Ages: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Preschool Classroom (30 months – 5 yrs): \_\_\_\_\_ Ages: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

School Age Classroom (5 yrs. and up): \_\_\_\_\_ Ages: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Read each statement carefully. Decide if the stated criteria is “Not Met” in the classroom environment, “Partially Met”, or “Fully Met”, by placing a check mark in the appropriate box. For those areas either “Not Met” or “Partially Met”, the center is encouraged to adapt the classroom environment to fully meet the criteria stated.

**Definitions:**  
**Not Met =** Child care program shows little evidence to support statement.  
**Partially Met =** Child care program shows some evidence to support statement.  
**Fully Met =** Child care program shows a great deal of evidence to support statement.  
**NA =** Statement does not apply to the child care program.

SPACE AND FURNISHINGS:	Not Met	Partially Met	Fully Met	N/A
1. Sufficient indoor space and furnishings for children and adults. Space is in good repair, clean and well-maintained. Individual space is made available for storage of children’s individual belongings.				
2. Adequate lighting, ventilation, temperature control, and sound absorbing materials. Natural light is used in spaces where available.				
3. Most furniture is child-sized, sturdy, and in good repair. Some storage used for extra toys and supplies.				
4. Soft furnishings and toys are accessible to children a substantial part of the day. Toys are clean and in good repair, and a protected cozy area is provided in the classroom for one or two children to play without intrusion by others.				
5. At least 3 interest or routine care areas are defined and conveniently equipped (Ex. Water provided near the art area, diaper supplies are on hand by the changing table, shelving adequate for blocks and manipulatives).				
6. Areas for quiet and active play are separated and toys are stored for easy access by children.				
7. Arrangement of room makes it possible for staff to see all children at a glance.				
8. Appropriate materials for age group served are provided (Ex. Mobiles or other colorful or hanging objects, photos of children, simple pictures, beginning reading and math for older preschoolers, seasonal displays, or popular culture items for school-age children).				
9. Items are displayed at child’s eye-level where children can easily see them and staff talks to children about displayed materials. Most of the display is work done by the children.				
10. Sufficient outdoor space that is easily accessible for children in group. Gross motor space is generally safe (Ex. Impact material under climbers and swings, fenced outdoor area).				
11. Outdoor space and equipment is age-appropriate for children in group. Ample materials and equipment for physical activity are available so children have access without long periods of waiting. Both stationary and portable equipment is used (Ex. Balls, hula hoops, volleyball, trikes).				
12. School-age program has play space dedicated for its exclusive use. Older children with homework are given a suitable area for quiet study.				

<b>PERSONAL CARE ROUTINES:</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>Partially Met</b>	<b>Fully Met</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Children are greeted individually with pleasant arrivals and departures. Children are helped to become involved in activities, if needed. Separation issues are handled sensitively. Parents are greeted warmly.				
2. Daily written record of children's routines is available for parents to see. (Ex. Infant daily sheets, toddler daily sheets, preschool activity announcement board, school-age news board).				
3. Well-balanced and scheduled meals are served appropriate to the age group in the classroom. Basic sanitary procedures are maintained (Ex. Tables and high chair trays are sanitized before and after meals, infant foods are served from individual bowls and spoons, milk and juice in bottles not allowed to sit un-refrigerated no longer than an hour).				
4. Allergies are posted and food beverage substitutions are posted in the kitchen and classroom areas (Ex. Milk allergies, peanut allergies).				
5. Staff sits and talks with children and provides a pleasant and relaxed meal or snack time. Children are encouraged to eat independently when necessary. Preschool and school-age children are encouraged to do self-serve snack times.				
6. Nap/rest is scheduled appropriate to age group in classroom. Sufficient supervision is provided and children are helped to relax in space conducive to resting. Rest or relaxation area is provided to school-age children.				
7. All cots or mats are at least 3 feet apart or separated by a solid barrier.				
8. Diapering/toileting schedules meets individual needs of children met in an appropriate manner suited to the age of children that includes adequate supervision.				
9. Diapering/toileting sanitary conditions maintained. This includes use of diaper sanitization between diaper changes, sinks sanitized between diapering/toileting, and food preparation.				
10. Hand washing practices with soap and running water are observed by staff and children after diapering/toileting, before and after meals/snacks, wiping noses, use of sand and water tables, upon arrival to facility, giving medications, handling body fluids, serving bottles or infant foods.				
11. Procedures used to minimize spread of contagious disease (Ex. Ensuring children have immunizations, exclusion of children with contagious diseases, mouthed toys washed daily, outdoor sandboxes are covered).				
12. Health information kept for each individual child and staff is trained to detect signs of illness, child abuse and neglect, and report when necessary. Medications given only with written permission from parents and exact instructions on original pharmacy container are followed.				
13. Children are properly cared for to meet health needs indoors and outdoors. Children are dressed properly for weather when outdoors (Ex. Sunscreen, hats and mittens, coats).				
14. No major safety hazards indoors or outdoors (Ex. Small toys which are choking hazards, electrical outlets covered, spills on floors are cleaned up immediately to prevent falls, substances labeled "Keep Out of Reach of Children" are locked away, open stairwells are not accessible, fall zones are protected by adequate impact material, no easy access to busy roads or streets).				
15. Staff anticipates and takes action to prevent safety problems and staff explains reasons for safety rules to all children in care. Frequent inspections of grounds, facilities and equipment for potential hazards and safety hazards are eliminated.				
16. All staff trained in safety and emergency procedures (Ex. CPR, First Aide, Poison Control, Fire Extinguisher use). First aid supplies are well stocked and accessible to all age groups. Evacuation procedures are practiced monthly.				
17. Only parents or other persons authorized by parents may call and pick up child(ren) in care. A system is put in place for parents to leave messages for staff concerning their child(ren).				

<b>LANGUAGE AND REASONING:</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>Partially Met</b>	<b>Fully Met</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. At least 12 books appropriate for infant/toddlers are accessible daily. Preschool children have at least 20 children's books accessible daily. This includes a variety and wide selection of topics for children (Ex. fantasy, factual information, people, animals, science, books that reflect cultures and different abilities).				
2. Staff read books daily with individuals or small groups of children. Book times are warm and interactive.				
3. Language *materials and **activities are appropriate for children in group.				
4. Staff talks with children frequently throughout the day during routines and play. Content of talk is generally encouraging and positive rather than discouraging and negative. Verbal communication is personalized.				
5. *Materials that encourage children to communicate are accessible in a variety of interest centers (Ex. Figures and animals in block areas, puppets and flannel boards pieces in a book area, toys for dramatic play indoors and outdoors).				
6. Staff adds words to the actions they take in responding to children throughout the day. Staff adds information to expand on ideas presented by children (Ex. Teacher says, "Look at this truck, it is a red dump truck, see it has a place to carry things, " "I'm changing your diaper and now you are all dry, doesn't that feel better?"). Staff generally responds in a timely and positive manner to children's attempts to communicate.				
7. Staff talks about logical relationships while children play with materials that stimulate reasoning. Children encouraged to talk through or explain their reasoning when solving a problem (Ex. Sorting objects into different groups, in what way are two pictures the same or different, sequence cards, lotto games, size and shape games).				
8. Concepts are introduced appropriately for ages and abilities of children in group, using words and concrete experiences (Ex. ABC matching games instead of rote teaching the ABC's, color matching games instead of drilling children on knowing colors of objects).				
<b>ACTIVITIES:</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>Partially Met</b>	<b>Fully Met</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Many developmentally appropriate fine motor materials of each type accessible for a substantial portion of the day according to age group served (Ex. Pegs and pegboards, building toys, sewing cards). Sets are stored separately, well-organized, and similar toys stored together.				
2. Many and varied art materials, which are safe and non-toxic, are accessible for a substantial portion of the day according to age group served. Individual expression and use of art materials is encouraged for all ages. Staff facilitates appropriate use of materials.				
3. Many and varied music materials including instruments and dance props are accessible for much of the day according to age group served. Various types of music are used including classical, and popular children's music, music characteristic of different cultures, and some songs in different languages.				
4. Variety of blocks and accessories are accessible for much of the day according to age group served. Special block area set aside out of traffic, with storage and suitable building surface. Blocks and accessories are organized according to type.				

\*Materials for infants and toddlers: cloth or hard page books, pictures of familiar objects. For two-year olds and older: children's books, magazines, or records; commercial or homemade picture games like lotto, talking about pictures. Additional materials include: puppets, books, puzzles, and props for dramatic play, toy telephones, records, dolls, mirrors, and pictures, commercial or homemade toys to learn colors, sizes, shapes, number and letters.

\*\*Activities: repeating nursery rhymes, singing and babbling to babies, naming familiar objects, talking about drawings or pictures in books, dictating stories, show and tell.

<b>ACTIVITIES CONTINUED:</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>Partially Met</b>	<b>Fully Met</b>	<b>N/A</b>
5. Sand or water activities set up to facilitate play for at least one hour daily according to age group served. Variety of toys accessible for play (Ex. Containers, spoons, funnels, shovels).				
6. Many and varied age-appropriate dramatic play materials accessible for a substantial portion of the day according to the age group served. Props for at least 2 themes accessible daily including child-sized play furniture (Ex. Housekeeping and work). Dramatic play area clearly defined with organized storage.				
7. Developmentally appropriate games, materials, or activities from 2 nature/science categories accessible daily. Children are encouraged to bring in natural things to share with other or add to collections. Daily events used as a basis for learning about nature/science.				
8. Age-appropriate math/number materials of various types accessible for a substantial portion of the day according to the age group served (Ex. Materials for counting, shapes, measure, learning shape and size).				
9. All materials used are developmentally appropriate, non-violent, and culturally sensitive. TV use is limited to 30 minutes for infants/toddlers and 1 hour for preschool. Computer use is limited to 10 minutes for infants/toddlers and 20 minutes for preschool. Most of materials encourage active involvement by children and adults. All materials are limited to those considered "good for children" (Ex. Sesame Street, educational video and computer games, but not most cartoons).				
10. Many books, props, pictures, and materials accessible showing people of different races, cultures, ages, abilities, and gender in non-stereotyping roles (Ex. Dolls of different races, ethnic clothing, males and females shown doing many types of work, cooking and eating utensils from various cultural groups).				
<b>INTERACTIONS:</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>Partially Met</b>	<b>Fully Met</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Staff/child interactions are pleasant and helpful. Staff shows awareness of the whole group even while working with 1 child or a small group. Staff reacts quickly to solve problems in a comforting and supportive way and act to prevent dangerous situations before they occur.				
2. Careful supervision of all children adjusted appropriately for all ages. Staff gives children help and encouragement when needed.				
3. Staff consistently does not use physical punishment or severe discipline. Expectations are generally realistic and based on age and ability of children. Staff use non-punitive discipline methods effectively and program is set up to avoid conflict and promote appropriate interaction.				
4. Staff responds to children in a warm, supportive manner through the use of appropriate verbal and physical contact that is respectful and sympathetic to children who are upset, hurt, or angry.				
5. Staff facilitate positive peer interactions among all children. This includes stopping negative and hurtful interactions and modeling good social skills (Ex. Being kind to others, listen, empathized, cooperate, use gentle touching, warm and affectionate).				
<b>PROGRAM STRUCTURE:</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>Partially Met</b>	<b>Fully Met</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Daily schedule is written and posted in rooms and provides a balance of structure and flexibility with a variety of play activities a substantial portion of the day. No long periods of waiting during transitions between daily events. Indoor/outdoor play periods occur daily (weather permitting) for all age groups.				
2. Free play occurs daily indoors and outdoors, weather permitting, with supervision that protects children's health and safety. Staff is actively involved in facilitating children's play. Ample and varied toys, games, and equipment are accessible for children to use in free play.				
3. Whole-group gatherings limited to short periods suited to age and individual needs of children. Some routines done in small groups or individually. Children are never forced to participate in group play.				

<b>PROGRAM STRUCTURE CONTINUED:</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>Partially Met</b>	<b>Fully Met</b>	<b>N/A</b>
4. Provisions for children with disabilities include: minor modifications made to meet the needs of children with disabilities; parents are involved in sharing information with staff, setting goals, and giving feedback about how program is working; staff follow through with activities and interactions recommended by other professionals; children with disabilities are included in on-going activities with the other children in the classroom.				
5. Some use made of community resources when planning special activities for children (Ex. Visits to parks, museums, libraries, or community services that provide on-site activities). Parent permission obtained for all trips out of center and rules of conduct and safety are explained to children prior to trip.				
<b>PARENTS AND STAFF:</b>	<b>Not Met</b>	<b>Partially Met</b>	<b>Fully Met</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1. Parents are made aware of philosophy and approach practiced in the program and is urged to observe in child's group prior to enrollment.				
2. Much sharing of child-related information between parents and staff with a variety of alternatives are used to encourage family involvement in the children's program.				
3. Parents and staff participate in an evaluation of the program annually.				
4. Parent resources are provided and parents are referred to other professionals when needed.				
5. Separate adult bathrooms are provided for staff. Storage for personal belongings with security provisions and facilities for meals and snacks are provided when necessary. At least one break daily is scheduled for staff working in classrooms. Lounge or adult planning space is available with adult sized furniture. Accommodations are made for staff members that have disabilities.				
6. Equipped office space, which includes file/storage space and office equipment including phone, needed for daily use. Some space available for individual adult meetings that are separate from areas used by children.				
7. Interpersonal interaction among staff does not interfere with caregiving responsibilities. Staff interactions are positive and add a feeling of warmth and support. Staff duties are shared fairly and child-related information is communicated daily among staff.				
8. Annual written evaluation of performance shared with staff at least yearly. This includes supervisory observations and well as feedback from individual staff members regarding their identified strengths and weaknesses. Action is taken to implement the recommendations of the evaluation.				
9. In-service training, workshops, and conferences are provided for staff members. This includes opportunities to belong to professional organizations supporting young children. Professional resources and materials are provided on site for staff to access.				
10. Thorough orientation for new staff takes place and monthly staff meetings are held to include staff development activities.				
11. Staff continuity is maintained with groups of children in care. This includes one to two staff members who lead the group everyday. Children rarely change to new groups or staff members. A stable group of substitutes familiar with the children and program are always available.				
12. For staff working with school-age children, some communication between staff and children's classroom teachers takes place as needed to support the child.				