

Tennessee Additional Notes to ITERS-R

Overview

The purpose of the Tennessee additional notes is to improve the interrater agreements of assessors, and to provide further interpretation of items and indicators to assist with scoring decisions by Tennessee Assessment Program Staff (APS). The notes were developed for use in Tennessee, but follow the intent of scale application as defined by Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford and Debby Cryer, authors of the scale. Some of the information used in the additional notes was adapted from the Environment Rating Scales and All About the ITERS-R. The additional notes provided for the ITERS-R scale clarify information to help in accurate scoring. The All About the ITERS-R is a resource for use with the Environment Rating Scales. It is not required for scoring. This resource can be purchased or checked out from a CCR&R or TECTA office.

**Be sure to replace older notes with newer notes.
The most recent TN updates are:**

7-10: General Notes and Items 5, 7, 21 and 24

10-09: General Notes and Items 7, 11, 16, 24 and 30 (Some General Notes have been moved directly under the items)

5-4-09: General Notes and Item 2, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 20, 22

4-28-08: General Notes, Items 8, 11

1-1-08: Overview, General Notes, Items 2, 3, 5, 16, 20, 21, 22, 27, 30, 32

4-30-07: General Notes, Item 8 and Item 10

11-1-06: Item 2; Item 5; Item 8

8-1-06: Overview information; General Notes; Item 7

General Notes for ITERS-R

In some items (16, 19, 22, and 30), access is required for at least 1 hour per day. Less time is required for programs operating less than 8 hours per day, with the amount calculated proportionally based on the ratio of 1 hour for programs of 8 hours or more. Use the following chart to determine the approximate amount of time required for part-day programs.

Number of hours in operation	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	5 hours	6 hours	7 hours
Approximate minutes required for accessibility	15	25	30	40	45	50

Disinfectant and/or anti-bacterial wipes do not count for sanitization purposes. Products that can be given credit as sanitizing solutions are: bleach and water solution; or a commercial product that states on the label or manufacturer's products sheet it kills 99.9% of germs, kills HIV virus, or is an EPA registered product. All commercial products used for sanitizing must be used according to manufacturer's instruction.

Materials are considered accessible only if it is observed that children freely access and are permitted to use most of the materials. Ex. Some materials may not be accessible during the observation. Additional questions may be needed to gain information on other times of the day. **Research verifies that children learn through prolonged periods of play that allow them opportunity to make choices, discover and explore. For all programs, regardless of the hours of operation, much of the day requires that all children benefit from meaningful periods of play. In programs that choose to provide extensive periods of outdoor play, the provider has an additional responsibility to provide access to various materials while outdoors so that children may still have significant opportunities to explore and discover. When rotation of materials is required, rotation should occur monthly.**

With regards to supervision, staff must be able to hear the child at all times, must be able to see the child with a quick glance, and must be able to physically respond immediately, leaving no child unattended. The caregivers focus must be on the children, especially during high risk activities, such as eating, sand/water play, art, etc. in order to adequately protect children.

The term "some" occurs most frequently in indicators that represent a minimal (3) level of quality, although occasionally it occurs at higher levels. In determining how much is needed to give credit for "some" in an indicator, consider the requirements in the parallel indicators at the lower and next higher level of quality. For example, if under inadequate "no" materials are required, then "some" would mean "one or more". In cases where a plural is used with the term "some", then "more than one" would be required to give credit. When terms such as "very few" or "very little" or "rarely" are used under inadequate, then "some" represents a mid-point between what is required for the one and for the five levels. **When rotation of materials is required, rotation should occur monthly.**

Levels of quality build expectations from minimal to good to excellent. Consider not only the requirements of the indicator, but the level of quality documented as general practice throughout the observation.

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When children are required to participate in an activity or lose interest during the activity, and are not allowed to leave, participation is considered forced. Children may be encouraged to join an activity, but staff should be respectful of their cues and respond appropriately if any child loses interest.

The following indicators are connected indicators. When credit is not given for the first indicator, credit cannot be given for the second indicator: 3/5.1 & 5.2, 15/3.1 & 3.2, 19/3.1,3.3 or 3.2, 3.3, 20/3.1 & 3.2, 22/3.1 & 3.2

Items to be omitted from TN scoring: #33, #34, #35, #36, #37, #38, #39

Specific Notes for ITERS-R

2. Furniture for routine care and play

3.2 Enough furniture for play means that the children have the developmentally appropriate seating needed to use play materials and that there are suitable ways of making materials accessible to the children on open storage shelves. Toddlers and twos, who can select toys independently, should have access to materials on low, open shelves. Appropriate seating on small chairs near very low tables is also needed to encourage more sustained play with toys for toddlers and twos.

5.2 In order to receive credit, at least two child-sized chairs at an appropriately sized table is required.

5.4 Some storage means that there is at least one storage provision for routine care supplies and one storage provision for play materials on-site.

5.5 Some adult seating means that there is at least one seating arrangement provided for adults to use during routine care. Credit can be given if seats are observed being used for routine care.

3. Provision for relaxation and comfort

3.1 To give credit, there must be at least one soft furnishing provided that is large enough for at least one child to lounge comfortably.

5. Display for Children

Display should be meaningful for children. To meet the requirements of the display item and indicators as well as the requirements of other agencies, consider the quality of the display. The requirements may be met with fewer thoughtfully chosen pieces that incorporate several meaningful components (ex. one poster may include diversity and current themes, etc.).

5.2 This indicator focuses on the three-dimensional objects hanging in space in the room. A three-dimensional object has height, width, and depth. To score this indicator, "Yes", there must be at least 2 three-dimensional hanging objects in the room for use by all of the children most of the day.

5.3 This indicator requires both two-dimensional and three-dimensional items. Some of the two-dimensional items should be in easy reach. Non-mobile children may need to be moved in close proximity to the items displayed.

7. Meals/snacks

1.2, 3.2 The intent of this indicator is to determine whether the correct components of a meal or snack are being served to the children. No analysis of the nutritional value of foods served is necessary. Use the Food Guide to determine whether the components are present. The guidelines also require ALL components to be served together. Personal dietary preferences of the assessor (e.g., whole grain vs. white breads; fresh vs. canned vegetables, high vs. low sugar or fat content, etc.) are not to be used in determining the quality of foods served. Foods that are perishable (including infant bottles) should not be left out longer than 1 hour. Regardless of source or ages served, 75% of all children must receive meals and snacks that meet USDA guidelines. Providers may supplement if they choose in order to guarantee 75% compliance. Programs that choose to "offer" rather than "serve" food (i.e. family style serving, school-age multiple choice snacks) carry an additional responsibility to encourage appropriate choices and model good nutritional habits. Combination foods are foods with multiple components that have been packaged together or combined during the cooking process. Combination foods can be counted to meet up to two different components. Scoring consideration of combination foods should be balanced with other items on the menu. Foods that might be served together, but do not meet the definition of combination foods can count for up to 3 components (i.e. hamburgers, sandwiches, cereal and milk with added fruit). When vegetable garnishes are served in sufficient quantities, they may be considered to meet the requirement as a vegetable. Breading on meat products may not be counted. Cooked dry beans, such as kidney or black beans which are considered to be an excellent source of protein, can count as either a protein or vegetable. However green beans, like string or lima beans which aren't considered to be good sources of protein, should only be counted as a vegetable.

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1.3, 3.3

- Eating surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized prior to, and following, use for food service. Follow the “2-step” process. Eating surfaces should be: 1) washed with a soap and water mixture to remove gross soil and 2) sanitized with a bleach-water solution before and after being used for meals/snacks. To allow bleach-water solution to do its job, it should be allowed to sit for at least 10 seconds (preferably longer) before wiping dry or allowing to air dry. For other acceptable sanitizing agents, refer to the manufacturer's labeled instructions. If proper sanitary measures are clearly practiced as part of the childcare program, but an occasional lapse does occur, credit can be given.
- Caregivers' hands must be washed before and after feeding a child a bottle. The expectation is for children's hands to be washed before and after eating (including bottle feeding) regardless of whether they feed themselves or are fed by an adult. The use of wipes on very young infants without head/neck control is appropriate. In addition, if an infant falls asleep during the bottle-feeding, it is permissible for their hands to be wiped before laying the child down, or the child's hands can be washed upon awakening. **To allow staff to keep their focus on children while they are eating, a separate wipe may be used on each child's hands as they leave the table. However, all hands must be washed as soon as staffing allows.**

1.4 Young toddlers who can sit up independently and hold their bottles may be allowed to feed themselves.

3.5 The list of food allergies does not have to be publicly displayed; however, directions for finding this information should be publicly displayed in the room where children eat.

8. Nap

1.1 If a parent requests their child to have a special sleeping arrangement due to a health condition, a dated and signed note from a physician detailing the special condition is required. Car seats are not considered an acceptable sleeping arrangement. A physician's statement is required for placing infants on their stomachs to sleep.

1.1, 3.2 With the exception of cots, sleeping provisions should be 2 inches thick.

1.2, 3.3 Sleeping infants should be checked every 15 minutes by touch.

3.2 Two coverings are required for children over 12 months of age - One to cover the type of bedding used and one for the child to have access to in order to cover up with. Bedding should be washed weekly.

9. Diapering/Toileting

1.1, 3.1 and 5.1 Basic sanitary conditions include proper diapering procedures as outlined in the TN 10-Step Diapering Process.

1.2, 3.2 Diapers should be visually checked approximately every 2 hours.

10. Health

3.2 When combining all categories to determine 75%, priority should be given to handwashing when dealing with bodily fluids (blood and mucous). Consider the impact upon the children.

11. Safety Practices

1.1, 3.1 5.1 Indoor space for gross motor play and equipment is not held to the same standards as outside; however, safety as the primary focus should be insured. Consider the placement of equipment as well as the surface under equipment where children might fall. If indoor children's climbing equipment is used, mats or carpet are required to be placed under the equipment if it is over 12 inches in height. This is in reference to equipment specifically for climbing.

For a more detailed listing of Playground Safety Hazards, refer to the Tennessee Playground Safety Sheet found at www.tnstarquality.org.

1.3, 3.2 Sleeping infants should be checked every 15 minutes by touch.

12. Helping children understand language

7.2 In order to receive credit, staff taking part in verbal play should be a general practice. Examples must be observed periodically during the observation.

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13. Helping children use language

7.2 In order to receive credit, the requirements for this indicator should be a general practice. Examples must be observed periodically during the observation.

14. Using books

7.1 Since young children cannot read, the book area should be designed for children to view books by seeing the fronts of the books. If only the spines are showing credit cannot be given.

15. Fine Motor

3.1 "Some" for this item is defined as at least five examples of fine motor toys. The toys must be age-appropriate, intact, and functional. In addition, the material should have enough pieces to allow the type of activity for which it was designed.

16. Active Physical Play

Indoor space for gross motor play and equipment is not held to the same standards as outside; however, safety as the primary focus should be insured. Consider the placement of equipment as well as the surface under equipment where children might fall. If indoor children's climbing equipment is used, mats or carpet are required to be placed under the equipment if it is over 12 inches in height. This is in reference to equipment specifically for climbing.

For a more detailed listing of Playground Safety Hazards, refer to the Tennessee Playground Safety Sheet found at www.tnstarquality.org.

3.2 To give credit for some space, the space used must be large enough to permit children to move freely according to their abilities and needs. The space should not be limited due to clutter or crowding that may restrict movement.

3.3 Some appropriate materials/equipment used daily means that there are enough provisions so that children do not have to wait with no other appropriate gross motor material or equipment option.

5.4 To receive credit, there should be some appropriate gross motor materials/equipment for each child to use while engaged in active physical play.

17. Art

5.2 To give credit for this indicator, the majority of art activities used with the children should encourage individual expression.

19. Blocks

3.2 "Some" for this item is defined as at least five accessories of different types. Types of accessories include people, animals or vehicles. For young toddlers who like to fill containers with blocks and dump them, containers are also considered accessories.

20. Dramatic play

5.1 These materials should be accessible for much of the day.

5.4 Some child-sized furniture means a functioning piece of play furniture that children can easily reach and manage to play independently. Child-sized furniture used for toddlers may be smaller than furniture normally used by preschoolers.

21. Sand and water play

Since moldable sand cannot be easily poured, it is not an acceptable substitute for sand. Moldable sand is considered a three dimensional art material.

3.3 Provisions are to be accessible for the children in order to have meaningful play with these items as they relate to sand and water.

22. Nature/science

3.1 The materials should be realistic and developmentally appropriate for the children in care.

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5.2 Some means that children have daily experience with either living plants or animals located in the room where the children play the majority of the day or in an indoor area that children visit daily. In order to receive credit, living things (plants, animals, etc.) must be easily seen by the children. If these items are stored out of the view of children (on top of a shelf, behind a cabinet, etc.) the teacher must make these accessible by bringing them down to the children's eye level. There must be clear evidence that this occurs on a daily basis and that the intent is for children to have meaningful experiences with living things.

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

5.1 To be considered "good for children," materials for computer and TV viewing must be appropriate and educational.

24 Promoting acceptance of diversity

5.1 At least three of each category for a total of ten examples must be accessible.

5.1, 5.2 The requirements for accessibility should be met for much of the day.

27. Staff-child interactions

3.4 Some is defined as extra touches that are added for the purpose of showing children they are valued and appreciated during routines or in play. This should be a normal part of practice and should occur throughout the day.

30. Free play

3.2 Some supervision to protect children's safety and to facilitate play means that staff are present in the area being used by children and are usually paying attention to them as they play. To facilitate play means that staff help children access toys and materials and help children who become upset or uninvolved.

5.1 Time spent outdoors and indoors should be significant enough that children become engaged in meaningful free play. Length of time may vary depending on the ages of the children and their needs.

32. Provisions for children with disabilities

ECERS 37, ITERS-R 32, FDCRS 35 and 40, and SACERS 44 should be scored NA unless a child with a disability that has been diagnosed through a formal assessment procedure and receives (or is eligible for) early intervention services is enrolled. Across all four scales, the following aspects should be considered when scoring: modifications, parent involvement, inclusion, and use of assessment information. Look for the extent of modifications needed to the schedule or classroom to include the child in daily activities, parent and staff communication regarding the child's assessment information and ongoing therapy, and the use of assessment information into planning throughout the day. Some parents may not share all information with staff for various reasons. Consider the levels of quality when determining if staff and parents have shared enough information to meet the child's needs. Even if staff put significant effort into asking about a child's needs, if parents share no information, the child's development is compromised.

3.3 Some involvement of parents and staff can take place through formal meetings, informal conversations, phone or written communications. Goals must take place through these communications.

3.4 Some involvement means a child with disabilities sometimes participates with others in the class and other times may not. The child may be segregated from the other children at some times, but not at all times of the day.

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