

## DECE ANFC FOR FAMILY CHILD CARE (FCCERS-3)

The NYCDOE DECE Additional Notes for the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale – Third Edition (FCCERS-3) provide supplementary scoring information to better align the tool to the Program Quality Standards and Policy Handbook based on the context of NYC programs.

The primary aim of the notes is to clarify the scoring of several indicators, identify indicators where the scoring differs from what is written in the FCCERS-3 scale, and further define or explain requirements of certain items for assessors' reliability and consistency purposes.

Please note that:

- Latest version of the Environmental Rating Scale Institute (ERSI) notes for clarification is available [here](#).
- The DECE's Additional Notes for the FCCERS-3 may be updated annually as needed.
- DECE assessors conduct assessments using the most current notes.

DECE Additional Notes for the FCCERS-3, used as comprehensive scoring guidance by DECE assessors, include the notes published by the authors of the tool from the [ERSI website](#) and the DECE Additional Notes for the FCCERS-3 which are highlighted in the chart below.

### **Administration of the Scale. Item 2, page 9:**

The three hours must be completed in one continuous block (e.g., 8:30 to 11:30 am, 9:00 to 12:00 pm) at a time of the day when most children are likely to be present and active.

### **Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale, pages 12-14:**

#### **Age Ranges for Children in the Family Child Care Home:**

- *Infants* are children from birth through 11 months of age. *Young infants* are birth through 5 months of age (or who cannot sit unsupported). *Older infants* are able to sit unsupported and are 6 through 11 months of age.
- *Toddlers* are children 12 months through 23 months of age. *Young toddlers* are children 12 through 17 months; *older toddlers* are 18 months through 23 months of age.

- *Two-year-olds* (twos) are children 24 through 35 months of age, *younger twos* are 24 through 29 months of age, while *older twos* are 30 through 35 months of age.
- *Preschoolers* are children 3 years old through 5 years old. *Older preschoolers* are 4 and 5-year-olds.
- *School-agers* are children 6 through 12 years of age. *Older school-agers* are 9 through 12 years of age. School-agers 13 years and older are not considered in this scale.

**Accessible:** During the observation, children must be able to reach and use the required material(s) or equipment. A material simply being present in the home does not necessarily mean that it is “accessible.” Requirements for materials are only applied to the specific children being observed. For example, if school-age children or infants are not present during the observation, there is no need to examine materials required for their access. Young infants who are not able to sit unsupported often require individualized treatment from the provider. They may require more holding and cuddling than older children in the group; more soothing from the provider; and placement in seats, high chairs, cribs, playpens, or swings that are designed to calm infants. This may need to happen more frequently than is considered ideal for their gross motor development, to avoid any extreme distress. However, infants should *not* be placed in these types of restrictive furnishings for long periods during the observation.

- For *young infants* who are not able to sit unsupported, the requirements for “accessible” are less demanding than they are for older children, due to their limited motor skills. However, some access to appropriate materials with provider assistance should be observed for even the youngest children, even if all do not have access to every material.
- For older *non-mobile infants* who can sit unsupported, access to more materials is required, so the provider should either bring materials to the children or move the children to within reach of the materials. It is not required that non-mobile infants’ access match that of mobile children.
- *Mobile children* should have access to materials at all times when they are awake and ready to play (e.g., not involved in routines). This means they should be able to reach and use materials and move freely in the space.

**Free play:** Free play means that the child is permitted to select materials and companions and as much as possible manage play independently. Adult interaction is in response to each child’s needs. Situations when 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 play areas must be open at one time, with all materials accessible. A more limited number of area choices may be available since free play takes place if children are allowed to choose where they will play, and with whom, from the choices allowed. The allowed choices must include play areas or interest centers of varied types, where children are allowed to choose what to take from toy storage shelves or containers. Free play is not credited when staff preselect a material that children are allowed to use in the various play areas or

centers when children are not able to freely access other materials in the play areas/centers if they wish. There must be enough areas open so that children do not have problems accessing materials that interest them.

**Provider:** Usually refers to the individual who operates the family child care home, but can also include any adults who regularly work with all children during the observation. This may include substitutes, the provider’s family members, volunteers, and other helping adults who interact with the children. Do not count any adult who does not work with all children in the group, but instead concentrates on just one child, such as a parent or therapist. In some cases, high school or college students or interns may be considered a provider.

**Routines:** When the term “routines” is used, we are referring to the Items in the Personal Care Routines Subscale: Meals/snacks, Diapering/toileting, and Health practices. Although included in the Subscale, the Safety practices Item is not considered when the term “routines” is used.

| Item  | Indicators | ERSI Notes and <a href="#">NYCDOE DECE Notes</a>   |
|---|------------|--|
| 1. Indoor space                             | 3.2        | If a home has windows with dark shades or blinds on all windows that are closed throughout the observation, credit is not given since children do not experience natural light.  |
| 2. Furnishings for care, play, and learning | 5.1        | The additional note for 1.1 and 3.1 also applies to indicator 5.1  |
|   | 3.1, 5.1   | If a smaller diapering table or other diapering surface is used, but it is not long and/or wide enough to accommodate the child’s whole body, give credit for 3.1 but not for 5.1.   |
|   | 5.2, 7.1   | Child-sized tables/chairs are not required for either of these indicators. For Indicator 5.2, credit can be given even if the tables/chairs must be adapted in some way to the children’s size, for example, adult furniture is used with booster seats. For 7.1, a “child-appropriate table with chairs” means that it is furniture purchased for young children to use. It does not necessarily meet the child-sized definition, found in the <i>ITERS-3</i> or <i>ECERS-3</i> , meaning that the child’s feet rest on the floor, knees fit comfortably under the table and elbows rest comfortably on the top of the table without having to raise the arms. Instead, as long as the furniture requires no adaptation and is comfortable/safe for toddlers/preschoolers to use, based on the abilities of children, it can be considered child-appropriate. |
|   | 5.3        | Older children are required to have access to their personal storage in this indicator. This access is not required in indicators 1.1 and 3.1.   |
|   | 5.4        | Several means at least two areas.  |

| Item                                    | Indicators    | ERSI Notes and <a href="#">NYCDOE DECE Notes</a>   |
|---|---------------|--|
| 5. Meals and snacks                     | 1.2, 3.1, 5.2 | <p>When deciding whether foods observed being served at meals may be choking hazards, consider all foods offered. To score 1.2 Yes, most foods must be inappropriate, with many problems. For 3.1, generally appropriate means there may be a minor problem observed, but the children are not observed being affected. For example, there may be a food that might cause choking but children eat the food with no problems. To score 5.2 Yes, there can be no safety issues with the appropriateness of the food.</p> <p><a href="#">This indicator also requires that children's food allergies and dietary restrictions, or a statement that none exist, be visibly posted to providers in the room.</a></p> |
|   | 3.4           | To score No, an extremely negative interaction or many mildly negative interactions must be observed.  |
| 6. Diapering/toileting                  | 3.2, 5.2      | When older four-year-olds or school-aged children are present, they have no toileting accidents, and the toilet is clearly freely accessible to them, it is not necessary to observe they have used the toilet.  |
|   |               | To score No, an extremely negative interaction or many mildly negative interactions must be observed.  |
|   | 1.3, 3.3, 5.3 | The bathroom door must not be able to be locked by children. Children require visual supervision.  |
| 7. Health practices                     | 1.3           | To score Yes, the observed environmental risk must present an extreme hazard to the children and be likely to cause a major health risk. For example, if many cigarette butts are observed within easy reach and supervision is lax, or obvious animal excrement is widespread in actively used play spaces, score Yes. However, if any environmental problems do not create a high risk, and supervision decreases the risk, score No.  |
| 8. Safety practices                     | 3.2, 5.1, 7.1 | Metal slides are considered a major safety hazard if the provider does not prevent children from using them on a day on which they could burn.   |
| 14. Encouraging children's use of books | 5.3, 7.2      | NA permitted applies only to infants who are unable to sit unsupported.  |
|   | 1.2, 3.1, 5.1 | <a href="#">Only books that contain violence pertaining to guns, war, and killing (not just dying) are considered inappropriate unless the provider has used them to support the development of social and emotional skills.</a>   |
| 15. Fine motor                          | 3.1           | The fine motor materials must be accessible to score 3.1 Yes.  |
|   | 1.3, 3.3      | If no fine motor materials are observed to be accessible, score No. If materials are accessible but children do not choose to use them, then the provider must be observed encouraging their use at least once to score 1.3 No and 3.3 Yes.  |

| Item                          | Indicators | ERSI Notes and <a href="#">NYCDOE DECE Notes</a>  |
|-------------------------------|------------|---|
| <b>17. Music and movement</b> | 1.2        | Change the word “day” to “observation” in the indicator text.   |
|                               | 3.4        | The intention of this indicator is that the provider offers the children a music experience that is not informal singing. Therefore, even if informal singing is not observed, credit can be given if another type of music activity is observed. This indicator requires one provider-initiated music or movement activity that is not counted as informal singing. Either a “music activity” can be observed such as a formal singing time, fingerplays, listening to recorded music, or playing musical instruments. Movement is a type of music activity that requires the use of large muscles when moving/dancing to music. The provider may initiate such activity with one child or in a group. |
|                               | 3.5, 5.3   | If only one child is present, then a provider-led music activity is acceptable with just that one child participating.  |
| <b>18. Blocks</b>             | 1.2        | (On page 50 of the <i>Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale - Third Edition</i> , the book indicates the note below is for 1.1, it is for 1.2.) If no child plays with blocks and the provider does not encourage block play in any way, then score Yes.   |
| <b>19. Dramatic play</b>      | 5.1        | <a href="#">Uniforms (e.g. construction worker, police officer, nurse, etc.) no longer qualify as “gender-specific” clothing items that allow children to express gender in ways that are socially defined as either masculine or feminine. Uniforms can continue to be provided, but these do not count as gender-specific items. To clarify, the intent of this requirement in FCCERS-3 is to ensure that children have a variety of materials to imaginatively play out different roles, which is important to their development. As with any materials, children should be allowed to play with any dress-up items that interest them.</a>  |
| <b>20. Nature/science</b>     | 1.3        | If the only observed nature/science provider involvement is negative, such as stepping on a cockroach indoors, killing a mosquito, or telling a child about her fear of snakes, then score this indicator Yes. However, if there are also positive instances observed, such as showing interest in plants, animals, or the weather, and these outnumber the negative, score No.   |
|                               | 3.1        | This indicator specifies “at least 5 pictures, books, games or toys” that represent nature realistically.” Even if other appropriate nature/science materials are accessible, credit cannot be given. Such materials might include plants and animals that children obviously show interest in or care for, nature science tools that are accessible and used to observe or experiment with, and natural objects children can easily access.  |
|                               | 5.1        | The ten materials, representing two categories, do not include sand/water, which is considered separately in this indicator. For sand and /or water to be counted as accessible, children must be able to reach and use them during the observation for a reasonable amount of time that allows satisfying  |

| Item                               | Indicators   | ERSI Notes and NYCDOE DECE Notes   |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
|                                    |  | productive play, but not necessarily for the amount of time to meet “accessibility” at the 5 level of quality for other materials. If the weather does not permit outdoor use, then sand and/or water must be made accessible indoors.   |
| 22. Appropriate use of screen time | <p data-bbox="520 412 663 548">The American Academy of Pediatrics released new guidance for the use of technology with young children. This guidance is provided for parents at home with their children, not for early childhood programs. Many children are exposed to large amounts of technology at home, and it is not in their best interest to add to that in early childhood programs. Therefore, the ERS item is to be interpreted as written.</p> <p data-bbox="520 553 663 586">1.3</p> <p data-bbox="520 591 663 623">3-3</p> <p data-bbox="520 628 663 660">5.2</p> | <p data-bbox="688 412 1913 548">Screen time is used for children under 24 months.</p> <p data-bbox="688 553 1913 660">Time allowed for children two years and up is limited to 15 minutes during the observation, and if it is used it is with constant positive provider interaction. <i>NA permitted.</i></p> <p data-bbox="688 665 1913 732">Time allowed for children two years and up is limited to 10 minutes during the observation. <i>NA permitted.</i></p>   |
| <b>24. Gross motor</b>             | 3.2, 5.1, 7.1  | <p data-bbox="688 737 1913 769">“Weather Permitting” means that children can go outside to play unless there is:</p> <ul data-bbox="737 774 1913 1057" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="737 774 1031 807">• Active precipitation;</li> <li data-bbox="737 807 1031 839">• A weather advisory;</li> <li data-bbox="737 839 1913 911">• Ice on the playground where children mostly play (small patches of ice where children do not play should not prevent the group from outdoor play);</li> <li data-bbox="737 911 1913 982">• Snow or debris on the path to and/or the playground up to two business days after a major storm;</li> <li data-bbox="737 982 1913 1057">• An effective temperature (wind-chill + actual temperature) of 25 degrees or lower during gross motor time on the date of the observation.</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="688 1094 1913 1159">Credit can be given for “weather permitting” if children do not go out to play due to any of the above reasons.</p> |
|                                    | 5.3  | <p data-bbox="688 1167 1514 1200">Gross motor spaces are considered “easily accessible” when children:</p> <ul data-bbox="737 1205 1913 1406" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="737 1205 1352 1237">• Do not need to walk more than one set of stairs</li> <li data-bbox="737 1237 1400 1269">• Use an elevator that fits the whole group in one trip</li> <li data-bbox="737 1269 1913 1341">• Do not experience any undue effort or complications (e.g., waiting for the elevator for a long period of time and/or being very crowded while in it).</li> <li data-bbox="737 1341 1808 1406">• Are not exposed to hazardous situations (e.g., walking through a parking lot, crossing streets).</li> </ul>  |

| Item                                       | Indicators | ERSI Notes and <a href="#">NYCDOE DECE Notes</a>  |
|--|------------|---|
| <b>25. Supervision of gross motor play</b> | 7.1, 7.2   | Evidence for both indicators must be observed during the observation.   |
|  | 7.2        | The indicator requires that the provider helps children develop a new gross motor skill and/or to use more challenging equipment. Only one of these needs to be observed. (Replaced previous note for clarification).   |
| <b>27. Provider-child interactions</b>     | 3.3, 7.2   | In some cases, a provider may show mild negativity with a child. If this happens very infrequently and other responses are overwhelmingly positive, 3.3 can still be scored Yes. However, if mild negativity is observed more often, score No.  |
| <b>30. Interactions among children</b>     | 7.3        | The intent of this indicator is for the provider to “teach” children how to work or play together in a satisfying way. It requires more than just making materials accessible and telling children to use them at the same time. For example, putting out a bin of interlocking toys and having children build independently with them is not enough to give credit. The provider must actively encourage children to work or play together, so they coordinate and cooperate in what they are doing in a way that is appropriate based on their abilities. |
| <b>33. Group time</b>                      | 5.3        | Delete the note that says to see the definition of accessible at the beginning of the scale. It does not apply here. The alternate materials should be accessible during the group time.  |