









Tools for Assessing Your Environment

-  Assessing from the Child's Perspective
-  Assessing for Family-Friendly Environments
-  Assessing Your Environment for Infants and Toddlers
-  Assessing Your Work Environment for Staff

-  Herramientas para la Evaluación del Medio Ambiente Evaluación Preescolar
-  La Evaluación de los Entornos Acogedores para Familiares
-  Evaluando el Medio Ambiente de Infantes y Párvulos
-  La Evaluación de su Entorno de Trabajo para el Personal

Assessing from the Child's Perspective

Draw a floor plan of your current facility. Put yourself in the shoes of the young children who spend their days in your space. Consider the statements below from a child's perspective and use them to assess your space. Write the numeral of each statement in all of the places on your floor plan where you are confident the statement is true.

- 1** = I can see who I am and what I like to do at school and at home.
- 2** = I see places that are comfortable for my tired mommy or daddy, grandma, or auntie to sit and talk with me or my teacher.
- 3** = The natural world can be found here (such as objects from nature, animals, or living specimens).
- 4** = There is something sparkly, shadowy, or wondrous and magical here.
- 5** = My teacher leaves a special object out here every day so I can use it many times and try to figure out more about its properties and how it works.
- 6** = There are materials here that I can use to make representations from what I understand or imagine.
- 7** = I can feel powerful and be physically active here.
- 8** = I can learn to see things from different perspectives here, literally and through assuming roles in dramatic play.
- 9** = There is a cozy place here where I can get away from the group and be by myself.
- 10** = I see my name written, or I get to regularly write my name here.
- 11** = I get to know my teachers here—what they like, how they spend their time away from school, and which people and things are special to them.

Now examine your coded floor plan. Did you have trouble finding any of these components in your room? If so, you will probably find new ways to think about transforming your environment in this book.

Assessing for Family-Friendly Environments

Draw a floor plan of your current facility. Write the letter of each statement in all of the places on your floor plan where you are confident the statement is true.

- L** = Families and children can see their interests, languages, and **lives** reflected here.
- E** = Families can see here what their children have been **engaged** in at the program.
- R** = Children and families can strengthen their **relationships** with each other in these spaces.
- S** = Children and families can learn more here about the **staff** and their lives.
- N** = Children and families can learn here about what is happening in their **neighborhood** and larger community.
- C** = Children and adults can sit **comfortably** together in these spaces.
- A** = Family members can stop and talk with the program **administrator(s)** here.

Now examine your coded floor plan. Reflect on the results and identify changes you want to make.

Assessing Your Environment for Infants and Toddlers

Draw a floor plan of the infant and toddler room(s) and write the following letter codes in all the places where these elements are present.

- I** = Children's **identities**, family lives, and cultures are reflected and nourished here.
- H** = Parents can feel **at home**, relaxed, and respected here.
- R** = Places where **relationships** can be nourished with special time, sharing, and enjoyment between adults and children are here.
- SD** = Children can have **sensory discoveries** and experiences (encountering different textures, light pools, colors, shadows, smells, and sounds) here.
- LM** = Children are encouraged to have **large-muscle** activity (climbing, crawling, pushing, pulling, sliding, bouncing, hiding, throwing, going up/down, up/over, in/out, and so on) here.
- SM** = Spaces where **small-muscle** skills (grasping, banging, poking, stacking, shaking, squeezing, patting, pouring, fitting together, taking apart, and so on) can be developed are here.
- C** = Places that are soft and **cozy** and where a child can get away from the group to rest or watch are here.
- P** = Children can feel **powerful**, independent, important, and competent here.
- A** = **Adults** can relax, enjoy, and share their lives with the children here.
- S** = **Systems** for communication and record keeping among the adults about the infant or toddler's time in the program and at home are found here.

Reflect on the results and decide on any goals you want to set to create changes.

Assessing Your Work Environment for Staff

Draw a quick floor plan of your building. Write the numeral of each statement in all of the places on your floor plan where you are confident the statement is true.

- 1** = Here is a dedicated place to welcome new staff members into the program.
- 2** = There is evidence here of who the staff members are and what they do in the rest of their lives (their passions and values).
- 3** = Families and visitors can learn the history of the program and its people here.
- 4** = Staff can easily store their personal belongings in this place.
- 5** = Staff have easy access to technology—for example, a phone, a computer with e-mail, camera(s), multitouch mobile device(s)—and technical training and support available here.
- 6** = Adults are nurtured by beauty and a relationship with the natural world (fresh air, natural light, plants, shells, and so on) here.
- 7** = Staff work space with accessible, well-organized resources here.
- 8** = Here is a comfortable place to meet with families.
- 9** = Staff can learn here what is happening with coworkers' and children's activities taking place in other rooms.
- 10** = There is evidence here that staff members are engaged in professional development.
- 11** = Here is a place for staff, away from children, to relax, put their feet up, and have some quiet time to think over how the day is going.
- 12** = Places for staff to have uninterrupted discussions with each other are here.
- 13** = Here there is evidence of accomplishments by the staff.
- 14** = Here you can see ongoing efforts to improve wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Reflect on the results and identify changes you want to make.

"That's where we're looking out the window at the top."



"That's the lunchroom where we ate."

RCIN
AA

"That's when we're on the elevator."

"That is where we came in."

11-8-12

Tools to Reflect on Quality Rating Scale Components

- ⌘ Taking a Closer Look at an Infant or Toddler's Daily Schedule
- ⌘ Getting to Know the Assessment Tool
- ⌘ Evaluando tus rutinas en Tomando un vistazo más cercano al horario de Infantes o Párvulos (Niños de edad aproximada (12-30 meses))
- ⌘ Conociendo la Herramienta de Evaluación



Children First, Durham, NC

Taking a Closer Look at an Infant or Toddler's Daily Schedule

Directions: Select a child in your program between 6 months and 30 months who typically spends an extended time in your care. Fill in the time and activity log below based on the daily schedule of the child you selected. In the first column put the time segment (e.g., 9:00–9:15 am). Then describe what the child is doing during that specific time frame. Routine care activities include such things as feeding, diapering, and naptime. Other activities include all the other play and learning experiences during the day such as playing with blocks, being read a book, and working on a simple puzzle.

Child's name _____

Time	Routine care activities	Other activities

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After you have completed the child's daily schedule, answer the following questions:

How much time does this infant or toddler spend in routine care?

What is the total time during the day that this child spends in bouncy chair, exersaucer, swing, or high chair?

How much time did the child spend in group activities such as story time, music time, or teacher-directed group art projects? What were the child's options if he/she did not want to participate in a group activity?

How often during the day does the child have access to soft, cozy places?

When did the child have an opportunity to engage in active play?

How much time did the child get to actively explore the world outdoors? (Stroller rides are not considered active play).

How much time did the child get to enjoy unstructured free play indoors?

What insights did you glean from analyzing the content of this infant or toddler's daily schedule?

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Getting to Know the Assessment Tool

Purpose: This activity provides an opportunity for teachers to reflect and discuss their understanding of the quality indicators in a particular assessment tool like the ECERS-R, ITERS-R, or CLASS Pre-K. The activity offers a format to self-assess and consider changes for improving classroom quality.

Directions: Teachers work in small peer learning teams. Peer learning teams are best defined as ongoing groups of four or five teachers who meet regularly with the focus on increasing understanding about children’s learning. For this activity, the learning team determines which item in the assessment tool they want to work on. Once that is determined, each person on the team independently completes the attached handout titled “Getting to Know the Assessment Tool.” It is fine to use the assessment tool books to guide their thoughts in completing the handout. It is important that the handout is used as an individual tool for reflection and is completed prior to meeting as a group. This allows the learning team to hear varying perspectives and interpretations from one another.

Once each member of the team completes the handout, a learning team meeting is scheduled for discussion. In round-robin fashion, each person shares one or two components from their completed handout that were of particular interest to them. Once each person has had a turn, the group responds to the guided questions below:

What are common beliefs we agree upon relating to this item of the assessment tool?

Are there any areas where we have differing points of view?

What resources might help guide our group to a better understanding of this item?

Are there steps we’d like to take to improve this item in our classrooms?

The group generates a list of what they do well and possible next steps to implement or improve this item in their classrooms.

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Getting to Know the Assessment Tool

Teacher:		Date:
Assessment tool:		
Item or dimension:		
Why does this item matter for positive child outcomes?		
Key questions prompted by the item	The environment includes	A child will experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
When you think about this item in your own environment, what questions come up?		
What steps are necessary to implement or improve this item in your environment?		

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Getting to Know the Assessment Tool

Assessment tool: CLASS Pre-K		
Item or dimension: Instructional Learning Formats		
<p>Why does this item matter for positive child outcomes?</p> <p>While we want children to have fun play experiences, we also want them to be actively learning.</p>		
Key questions prompted by the item	The environment includes	A child will experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Am I involved, asking meaningful questions and expanding children's interests? Do the children have a wide range of hands-on materials that peak their curiosity? When I scan the room, are children actively engaged in activities? Can the children explain what they are learning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers moving around and working with the children Lots of materials and experiences for kids to explore, like the new recycled art materials I put out on the art shelf this week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Never being bored or sitting around waiting! Active, hands-on learning
<p>When you think about this item in your own environment, what questions come up?</p> <p>I think I do a pretty good job with the dimension Instructional Learning Formats during free choice time. But I'm not so sure how well I do during group time. It feels like I spend a lot of time correcting children's behavior and trying to get them to listen. They often seem tuned out. I wonder what a high score in this CLASS dimension looks like during group time.</p> <p>I would also like to learn more about the effective facilitation indicator within this dimension. What do they mean by "effective questioning?"</p>		
<p>What steps are necessary to implement or improve this item in your environment?</p> <p>Perhaps I could observe one of Sam's group times? During our learning team sessions he has described some pretty interesting things he's done with the children when they gather as a whole group.</p> <p>I wonder if our learning team could review some of the CLASS video clips that focus on effective facilitation. The videos might offer some concrete examples. If I'm not sure about this concept, others might be struggling too</p>		

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