

Appendix C

Observation Checklists for Ensuring Quality in Toddler Programs

As you complete these checklists, you may wish to take notes regarding the status of the characteristics you observe. Add the dates of your observations if that information will be helpful to you.

1. Toddler Environment Observation Checklist

Environmental characteristic	Observed		
	Yes	Somewhat	Not yet
1. A welcome area where families talk with teachers, get information about their children and the program, and find parenting resources.			
2. Photographs of the children prominently displayed in cubbies and throughout the classroom.			
3. Materials and displays represent the children's home languages, cultures, and family structures.			
4. Furnishings, flooring textures, tape, and exits clearly define interest areas and manage traffic flow.			
5. Messy activities take place on washable flooring, while other activities occur on carpeted floors.			
6. Materials displayed on low shelving labeled with pictures and words in both English and home languages.			
7. Personal areas, such as cubbies and "be by myself" spaces, are visible to teachers.			
8. An easily sanitized diapering area well stocked with supplies and a foot-operated trash can lined with a plastic bag.			
9. Child-size toilets and sinks located in a bathroom adjacent to the classroom or in a nearby hallway that children use with adult supervision.			
10. Large, open spaces containing ramps, steps, and other equipment that encourage physical activity are available indoors.			
11. Indoor spaces large enough for two or three children to play side by side.			
12. Outdoor area has designated spaces for active play by individuals or small groups of children, for construction, for gardening, for observing animals, for doing art, and for playing with sand and water.			

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2. Toddler Toys, Materials, and Equipment Observation Checklist

Toys, materials, and equipment characteristic	Observed		
	Yes	Somewhat	Not yet
1. Some of toddlers' personal items, homelike items like cushions, a tablecloth, plants, culturally significant props and play materials, and books, print, music, and other items in children's home languages are included.			
2. Books featuring families, everyday experiences, animals, and simple concepts like color and shape, numbers, and the alphabet.			
3. Blocks (soft, cardboard, and wooden), props, and accessories are available.			
4. Materials toddlers use to pretend and take on roles are available for play.			
5. Materials for filling and dumping from containers.			
6. Art materials that allow children to draw, paint, mold, print, and make collages.			
7. Rhythm instruments (both purchased and homemade), musical toys and balls, and devices such as CD players, MP3 players, or tablets are available for listening to and making music.			
8. Materials that encourage problem solving and other cognitive skills, such as pegboards, puzzles, dominoes, and lacing beads.			
9. Wheeled toys to ride, push, and pull and equipment for gross-motor activities.			
10. Natural materials that children can explore and manipulate.			
11. Unbreakable dishes, flatware, utensils, bowls, and kitchen gadgets for snack and mealtime use.			
12. Outdoor equipment and materials that promote gross-motor activity and interaction with nature.			

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3. Toddler Program Structure Checklist

Program structure characteristic	Observed		
	Yes	Somewhat	Not yet
1. A picture/photograph schedule illustrating the sequence of the day's activities hangs at toddlers' eye level.			
2. Time slots for daily activities match children's developmental capabilities.			
3. Active and quiet times are alternated throughout the day.			
4. Children play outdoors at least once a day for at least an hour.			
5. Children spend at least an hour doing activities of their own choosing, interacting with children and teachers.			
6. Teachers wait patiently as toddlers participate in routines and transitions.			
7. Teachers lead children in small-group activities.			
8. Toddlers regularly nap after lunch and get out their own blankets and lovies from home.			
9. Children sleep for as long as they need at naptime.			
10. Teachers announce to children when a transition is about to take place.			
11. Teachers are flexible about the schedule.			
12. Teachers occasionally lead unplanned activities.			

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4. Toddler Curriculum Observation Checklist

Curriculum characteristic	Observed		
	Yes	Somewhat	Not yet
1. Teachers introduce and reinforce skills based on what they observe children doing and learning.			
2. Teachers use routines and transitions as opportunities to facilitate learning.			
3. Children work independently on tasks or activities they have selected for themselves.			
4. Children play alongside others, often using the same kinds of toys.			
5. Teachers regularly observe children's interactions and activities, document what they see and hear, and maintain individual portfolios.			
6. Children use their large muscles in various activities throughout the day.			
7. Children use the small muscles in their hands in various activities throughout the day.			
8. Children engage in conversations, use language, and see print in English and their home language throughout the day.			
9. Children solve problems, explore cause and effect, and apply old knowledge to new situations throughout the day.			
10. Children express their ideas and feelings through the creative arts daily.			
11. Teachers ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all children, including those with special needs.			
12. Family members share their skills and interests and play with, read to, and otherwise engage the children.			

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5. Toddler Supportive Interactions Observation Checklist

Supportive interaction characteristic	Observed		
	Yes	Somewhat	Not yet
1. Teachers play with one or a few toddlers, modeling how to share, take turns, and use other social skills.			
2. Teachers accommodate toddlers' desires to be independent yet remain close to familiar people and places.			
3. Teachers listen to, repeat, interpret, and respond to toddlers' communications.			
4. Toddlers show empathy and concern for their peers and ask an adult for help if needed.			
5. Teachers and toddlers work together to clean up spills and messes.			
6. Teachers and toddlers hold conversations about topics of interest to the children; teachers model how to keep a conversation going.			
7. Teachers help families and toddlers reunite at the end of the day.			
8. Teachers learn and use a few important words and phrases in the toddlers' home languages.			
9. Teachers spend one-on-one time with every child at some time each day.			
10. Teachers encourage toddlers' development of new skills by responding to requests and cues as to whether teacher support is desired.			
11. Teachers use caring language, tone of voice, and physical touch to let toddlers know they are appreciated and valued.			
12. Teachers congratulate toddlers on progress and achievement of goals while watching for cues that children are ready to pursue new goals.			

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6. Toddler Positive Guidance Observation Checklist

Positive guidance characteristic	Observed		
	Yes	Somewhat	Not yet
1. The environment supports toddlers' active play and explorations while ensuring adults are comfortable.			
2. Teachers use positive statements to tell children what to do rather than what not to do.			
3. Teachers involve the toddlers in setting a few simple rules, phrased in positive terms.			
4. Teachers privately congratulate toddlers when they remember to follow the rules.			
5. Teachers review with toddlers the procedures for a neighborhood walk, field trip, or other new experience.			
6. Teachers gently hold and acknowledge the feelings of an out-of-control child during a tantrum; they help calm the child before making any suggestions.			
7. Teachers offer acceptable alternatives to address toddlers' needs or respond to their requests.			
8. Teachers read books and tell stories about typical events and challenges, using toys to help toddlers recognize, name, and manage feelings.			
9. Teachers give children time to resolve their differences; if the disagreement lasts too long, they step in to offer help.			
10. Teachers invite toddlers to say no by asking silly questions, singing songs, performing fingerplays, and reading books.			
11. Teachers provide tools, materials, time, and encouragement so toddlers can experience success.			
12. Teachers have appropriate expectations for toddlers; they give instructions for tasks.			

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