




# Module 5

## The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale, Third Edition (ECERS-3) and Gross Motor Play



Division of Early Childhood Performance Team

# Covid-19 Considerations

*The information offered in this module is based on best practices as measured by the ECERS-3 tool. While these practices are highly aligned with best practices for health and safety during the Covid-19 pandemic, it may not reflect all aspects of the most current policies and requirements.*

*For specific information on ECERS aligned early childhood practices during the pandemic, please visit the NYC DOE InfoHub.*

# Objectives

**Participants will gain an understanding of:**

- ECERS-3 Items related to gross motor play
- Supporting vigorous play activities
- Protecting children from hazards in gross motor spaces
- Covid-19 Considerations

# High quality gross motor play includes:

- A safe gross motor environment
- Sufficient age-appropriate gross motor equipment for the group
- Positive staff-child interactions
- Sufficient supervision to protect children's health and safety
- Sufficient time to play with equipment
- Staff's assistance with gross motor equipment
- Resources added to enhance play, such as an obstacle course
- No evidence of smoking debris

# Gross Motor Play

- Item 6: Space for Gross Motor Play
- Item 7: Gross Motor Equipment
- Item 28: Gross Motor Supervision
- Item 34: Free Play
- Item 10: Health Practices

# Item 6: Gross Motor Space

## *What is it ?*

All spaces regularly used for gross motor activities (e.g., classroom, playground, gym, multipurpose room).


## *Why is it important?*

The development of muscle coordination is one of the major tasks for young children. When plenty of safe space is provided, children are less crowded and do not have to compete for territory or position.



## Things to consider:

# Item 6: Space for Gross Motor Play

- Ensure adequate space and time for “vigorous” gross motor play (both in the morning and in the afternoon) 
- Minimize hazards in the gross motor space as much as possible
- Organize the gross motor space so that different activities do not interfere with one another
- Provide access to an outdoor gross motor space



## Things to consider:

# Item 6: Space for Gross Motor Play

- Minimize hazards in the gross motor space as much as possible
- Organize the gross motor space so that different activities do not interfere with one another





# Sample Schedule

**AM Gross motor play  
AND Transition**

**PM Gross motor play  
AND Transition**

Arrival and Sign In	8:00 AM-8:10 AM
Wash hands	8:10 AM-8:15 AM
Breakfast	8:15 AM-8:30 AM
Wash hands, sit on rug	8:30 AM- 8:40 AM
Circle Time	8:40 AM-8:55 AM
Center Selection	8:55 AM- 9:00 AM
Center Time	9:00 AM-10:00 AM
Cleanup/Outdoor transition	10:00 AM- 10:15 AM
Outdoors/Gross Motor Play	10:15 AM-10:45 AM
Transition/Bathroom	10:45 AM- 11:00 AM
Lunch	11:00 AM- 11:20 AM
Cleanup/Nap preparation	11:20 AM- 11:35 PM
Nap	11:35 PM-12:05 PM
Wake up/Outdoor transition	12:05 PM- 12:15 PM
Outdoors/Gross Motor Play	12:15 PM- 12:45 PM
Transition/Bathroom	12:45 PM- 12:55PM
Snack	12:55 PM- 1:05 PM
Center selection	1:05 PM- 1:10 PM
Center Time	1:10 PM – 2:10 PM
Cleanup	2:10 PM- 2:15 PM
Closing Circle/ Dismissal	2:15 PM -2:20 PM

# Outdoor Gross Motor Play

Children should have daily opportunities for play outdoors in the morning and afternoon for at least 30 minutes.



# Accessibility during gross motor time



Gross Motor Equipment



Gross Motor Space



Outdoor Play

Children  
should go  
outside daily,  
*Weather  
Permitting*



There must be daily time outdoors when "weather permitting," which means everyday unless there is:

- A weather advisory
- Active precipitation
- Ice on the playground where children mostly play
- Snow or debris left within two days of a major storm
- An effective temperature (wind-chill + actual temperature) of 25 degrees or lower during gross motor time



# Minimizing Hazards in the Gross Motor Space



- Closely supervise hazardous areas such as open access gates that lead to busy streets
- Secure hanging cords or other tripping hazards so that children do not get hurt
- Cover open outlets with caps and/or supervise these areas closely based on the abilities and needs of the children in the group
- Do not place portable equipment within fall zones of climbing equipment

## Taking action to protect children

### Things to consider:

- What are the hazards in the space?
- Is there anything I can do to prevent a child from getting hurt?

# What is the hazard? How can my children be protected?



What is the hazard? How can my children be protected?





# What is the hazard? How can my children be protected?



# Item 7: Gross Motor Equipment

## *What is it ?*

Includes anything portable or stationary that is used by children for gross motor activity.



## *Why is it important?*

Gross motor equipment provided along with helpful staff interactions will influence the development of large motor skills and development.

# Item 7: Gross Motor Equipment

## Things to consider:

- Provide access to gross motor equipment everyday
- Ensure that most of the equipment is appropriate
- Ensure that there is enough equipment so that children do not have to wait a long time to use it
- Provide equipment that stimulates a variety of skills on different levels



# Portable Equipment



# Stationary Equipment



# How do I know if I have enough equipment?



Consider the type of equipment provided during gross motor play at your program, what types of skills does it stimulate?

Equipment should stimulate at least 7 skills

1. Throwing
2. Kicking
3. Catching
4. Pulling
5. Pushing
6. Climbing
7. Balancing
8. Steering
9. Pedaling



## Playground Information to Use with the Environment Rating Scales

Based on information from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), Public Playground Safety Handbook, Pub. No. 325 and information from the American Society for Testing and Materials Standards (ASTM), Standard Consumer Safety Performance Specification for Public Use Playground Equipment for Children 6 Months through 23 Months, F 2373-05. These guidelines are a basic overview of areas to review when scoring playground and safety items in the ECERS-R, ITERS-R, FCCERS-R, or SACERS. This list is not to be used as a comprehensive guide for playground assessment.

**Fall Zones** – A fall zone is the area around and under gross motor climbing, sliding, or swinging equipment where protective surfacing is required to prevent injury from falls. The fall zone should be cleared of items that children may fall onto or run into.

**Protective Surfacing** – Protective surfacing is intended to cushion falls and prevent serious injuries from any equipment used indoors and outdoors. The amount of a consistent type of surfacing required is based on the fall height of the equipment, which is the height of the highest designated play surface on the equipment. Equipment having a fall height of 18" or less is not required to have protective surfacing; however, no equipment should be placed over concrete, asphalt, stone, ceramic tile, or similar hard surfaces. The surfaces under and around play equipment should be soft enough to cushion falls, which are the most frequent causes of injuries on playgrounds. Common indoor surfaces (such as rugs, tumbling mats, or carpet) and common outdoor surfaces (such as grass or dirt) are not adequate cushioning for gross motor equipment with a fall height greater than 18" even when the equipment is not anchored. For specifics on surfacing depth for different loose-fill materials, see the chart below. When the surfacing in much-used areas becomes displaced (e.g., under swings, at slide exits), it should be raked back or replaced to maintain correct depth. For poured or installed foam or rubber surfaces, the materials must meet the ASTM F1292 requirements, which can be verified through a written statement from the manufacturer.

### Minimum compressed loose-fill surfacing depths:

Inches	Of	Loose-Fill Material	Protects To	Fall Height (feet)
9		Shredded/recycled rubber		10
9		Sand		4
9		Pea gravel		5
9		Wood mulch		7
9		Wood chips		10

**Equipment Spacing** – Fall zones for climbing equipment should extend at least 6 ft on all sides for preschoolers and school-agers and at least 3 ft on all sides for infants and toddlers. Spacing between pieces of equipment must allow children to circulate around or fall from play structures without striking another structure, and permit adults to have easy access to the children who are using the equipment. For preschoolers (2 – 5 years) and school-agers (5 – 12 years), adjacent play structures, with a play surface over 30" high, should be spaced at least 9 ft. apart. If the play surfaces of both structures are 30" high or less, the equipment may be located a minimum of 6 ft. apart. For infants and toddlers (6 – 23 months), play structures with surfaces between 18" and 32" high must be spaced at least 3 ft. apart. Moving pieces of equipment (e.g., swings, merry-go-rounds) should be located in an area away from other play structures so children have adequate room to pass from one play area to another without being struck by moving equipment, and their fall zones should not overlap the fall zone of other equipment.

**Age-appropriate equipment** provides children with opportunities to safely practice gross motor skills without putting them at risk for unnecessary injury. Appropriate equipment for each age group is listed below:

Infant/Toddler: 6 – 23 months	Preschool: Ages 2 – 5	School-age: Ages 5 – 12
Climbing equipment up to 32" high	Climbing equipment up to 60" high	Climbing equipment up to 84" high
Ramps	Horizontal ladders and overhead rings 60" high or less for 4-5 year-olds	Arch climbers Free standing flexible climbers
Single file step ladders	Merry-go-rounds	Stairways
Slides	Ramps	Chain or cable walks
Spiral slides less than 360°	Rung ladders	Fulcrum seesaws
Spring rockers	Single file step ladders	Ladders- horizontal (84" high), rung, and step
Stairways	Slides	Overhead rings up to 84" high
Swings with full bucket seats	Spiral slides up to 360°	Merry-go-rounds
Ramps	Spring rockers	Ring treks
Single file step ladders	Stairways	Slides
	Swings- belt, full bucket (2-4 yrs.), and rotating tire	Spiral slides more than one 360° turn Vertical sliding poles
	Balance beams up to 12" high	Swings- belt and rotating tire
		Track rides
		Balance beams up to 16" high

The following equipment is *not appropriate* for any age group: trampolines, swinging gates, giant strides, climbing ropes not secured at both ends, animal figure swings, multiple occupancy swings, rope swings, and swinging dual exercise rings and trapeze bars.

In addition to equipment listed above, the following equipment is *not appropriate* for preschool children (ages 2-5): freestanding arch climbers, dome climbers, freestanding flexible climbers, fulcrum seesaws, log rolls, track rides, spiral slides more than one 360° turn, parallel bars, and vertical sliding poles. Horizontal ladders and overhead rings are not appropriate for children 3 years and younger.



# Is the Gross Motor Equipment Appropriate?

## Public Playground Safety Handbook



U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission  
Saving Lives and Keeping Families Safe

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Spring rockers	Single file step ladders	Fulcrum seesaws
Stairways	Slides	Ladders- horizontal (84" high), rung, and step
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# Is it appropriate?



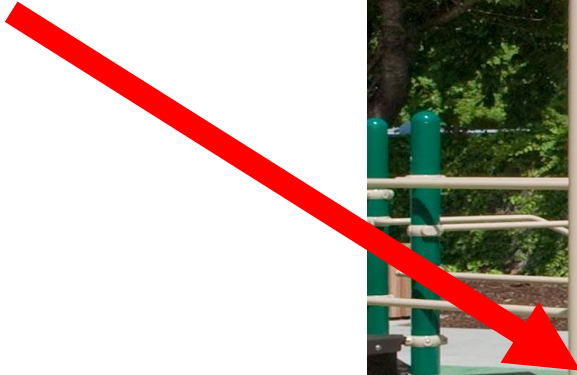
# Not Appropriate



# Is it appropriate?



NO



# Is it appropriate?



# Not Appropriate



Is it appropriate?



**YES!**



Is it appropriate?



YES

# Is it appropriate?



Is it appropriate?



# Item 28: Supervision of Gross Motor

## *What is it ?*

Considers how staff interact with children in all gross motor spaces used (e.g., classroom, playground, gym, multipurpose room).

## *Why is it important?*


Children are more active during gross motor play and accidents are more likely to occur. The supervision provided by staff has an effect on whether or not accidents will occur as result of hazards.



# Gross Motor Interactions



## Things to consider:

- Ensure adequate supervision
- Take action to protect children's health and safety 
- Interact with children in a pleasant and helpful way
- Assist children to develop skills needed to use equipment
- Help with resources to enhance play
- Initiate vigorous gross motor activity

# Item 34: Free Play



## *What is it ?*

Children are allowed to select materials and companions and manage play independently with staff support.

## *Why is it important?*

Free play is when children learn how to make decisions, interact with peers and develop theories about the world around them.

# Outdoor Gross Motor Free Play



# Item 10: Health Practices

## *What is it ?*

Practices required to prevent the spread of germs in early childhood classrooms.

## *Why is it important?*

- Proper hand cleaning throughout the day decreases the spread of germs.
- Keeps spaces, materials and equipment used by children clean.
- Children learn how to care about their health when they watch staff members





# Hand cleaning during gross motor play


- Anytime hands are visibly soiled
- Before and after play with moist materials (e.g., sand /water)
- After gross motor play



# Smoking Debris



## Things to consider:

- Ensure there is no smoking debris at the program entrance 
- Ensure there is no smoking debris on a private playground
- Ensure staff redirect children from smoking debris and second-hand smoke on public playgrounds

## key Takaways:

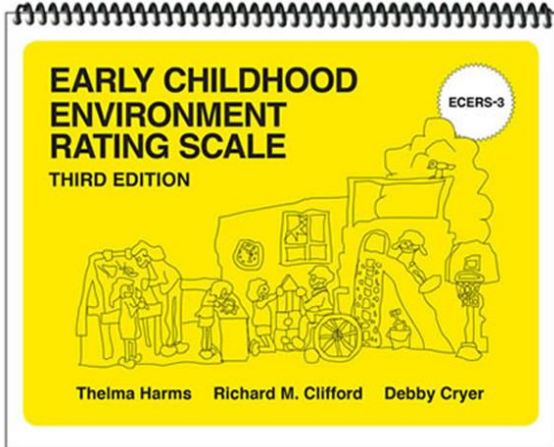
- Disinfect equipment
- Ensure first aid supplies are readily available
- Set up a hand hygiene station
- Use a long rope with holders/strings to help with distancing children in line
- Indicate the number of children allowed at each station/piece of equipment
- Use heavy duty masking tape to indicate different areas/stations
- Monitor traffic/barricades
- Keep the public and dogs away from selected outdoor space

# Covid-19 Considerations

If selecting a street to be approved by the “Outdoor Learning Initiative” the DOE requires the school to provide barriers and staffing to close all streets off as much as possible, and to select a street that is:

- Quiet and non-commercial
- One way, and if two way, not more than one lane of traffic in each direction
- Not an MTA bus or truck route
- Not used by a police/fire station, parking garage or hospital

# For more information on ECERS-3

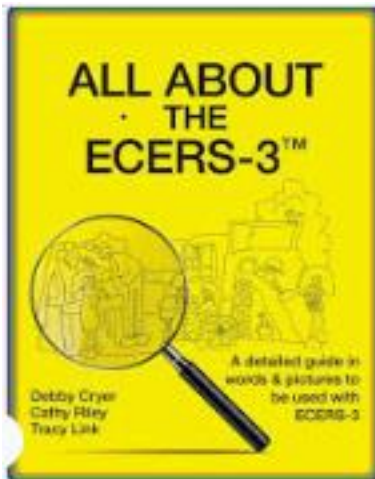


- Please also visit the program assessment page on DECE's website for additional educator resources:

- <https://infohub.nyced.org/partners-and-providers/early-childhood/early-childhood-educators>

- Review the Frequently Asked Questions page

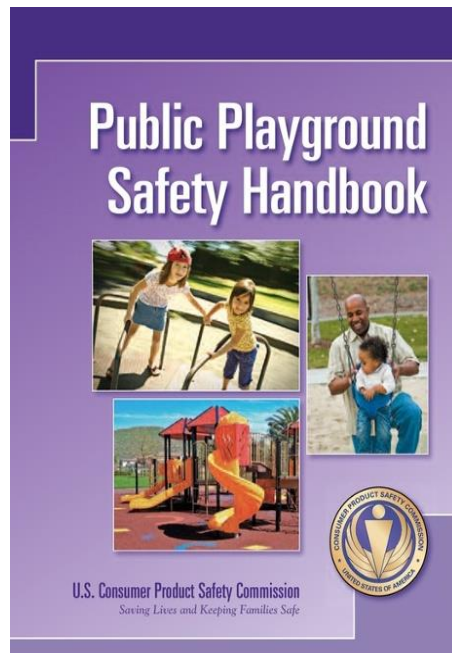
- For other information on ECERS-3 not specific to NYC, please visit <http://www.ersi.info/>.



# For more information on Playground Safety

Public Playground Safety Handbook

<https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/325.pdf>



Playground Safety Information to use with the Environmental Rating Scales

<https://ers.fpg.unc.edu/sites/ers.fpg.unc.edu/files/playground%20revised%2010-28-10.pdf>

# Thank you!

Please fill out the  
feedback survey

**You can also scan  
the QR code to  
fill it out online**

