




Module 6

The Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale, Third Edition (ECERS-3) and Language and Literacy



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 NYC DOE Info Hub.

Objectives

Participants will gain an understanding of:

- The role of language and literacy in the ECERS-3
- How staff can encourage language and literacy interactions throughout the day

Language and Literacy Items

- Item 12: Helping children expand vocabulary
- Item 13: Encouraging children to use language
- Item 14: Staff use of books with children
- Item 15: Encouraging children's use of books
- Item 16: Becoming familiar with print

ECERS-3 and Staff support



Language and Literacy Play a Strong Role in the ECERS-3

Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7
20. Blocks						
1.1 No blocks accessible for children's use.*		3.1 Enough blocks and accessories accessible for at least 2 children to build sizeable independent structures at the same time, for at least 25 minutes during the observation.*		5.1 Enough space, unit blocks, and accessories from 3 categories accessible for 3 children to build sizeable independent structures at the same time.*		7.1 Large hollow blocks are accessible for use in a suitably large area where play can be very active.*
1.2 Staff show little or no interest in children's block play (Ex: do not encourage block-building; interact only to stop quarrels or insist that children clean up after block play; do not talk about their play or show appreciation for their constructions).		3.2 Enough clear floor space for 2 children to build sizeable independent structures.*		5.2 Almost all blocks and accessories are stored on open, labeled shelves (Ex: labeled with pictures or outline of blocks).*		7.2 Staff link written language to children's block play (Ex: write children's comments about what they have built; take photos and write captions; write about shapes children used in structures).*
		3.3 Blocks and accessories are organized by type.*		5.3 Special block interest center set aside, with storage and suitable building surface (Ex: flat rug or other steady surface; area out of traffic).*		7.3 Staff point out the math concepts that are demonstrated in unit blocks in a way that interests children (Ex: discuss "more" and "less", relationships in size or shape: "Look, these two squares make a rectangle, just like this one."; number of blocks; measurement). <i>Observe once</i>
		3.4 Some positive involvement by staff when children use blocks (Ex: make positive comments about what children are building; show some interest in children's work with blocks; ask children to identify shapes).		5.4 Block interest center accessible for play for at least 1 hour during the observation.*		
				5.5 Staff have many conversations with interested children about their block play (Ex: ask questions about what children are building or their favorite shapes to use; talk about pictures of structures with the children).		

Activities and Materials

The types of activities and materials children can access will:

- Support language and literacy development
- Determine skills that can be practiced
- Support understanding of logical relationships
- Help develop reasoning skills



Item 12: Helping children expand vocabulary

What is it ?

Staff helping children to expand their vocabulary by using a variety of words throughout the day.



Why is it important?

- Supports the development of expressive and receptive language
- Children are more likely to understand more complex ideas.

Things to consider:

- Use a variety of words to talk to children
- Use classroom experiences, themes, and materials to introduce new words
- Correctly explain the meaning of unfamiliar words
- Ensure language is appropriate for children's ages and abilities
- Add information and expand on children's ideas

Item 12: Helping Children Expand Vocabulary



Item 12: Helping children expand vocabulary

Things to consider:

- Engage children in rich informal conversations offering new information and using specific, more descriptive words
- Provide special accommodations to suit diagnosed disabilities or individual needs



Item 13: Encouraging children to use language

What is it ?

Staff encourage children to use language by providing a supportive environment.

Why is it important?

- Children are better prepared to share their ideas
- Children are better equipped to express feelings and negotiate solutions to problems.



13. Encouraging children to use language



Things to consider:

- Encourage communication throughout the day:
 - Free play
 - Meals
 - Gross motor
 - Whole group gatherings
- Ask questions relevant to children's interests
- Maximize children's individual abilities

13. Encouraging children to use language



Things to consider:

- Encourage communication among children
- Ask children questions that encourage them to give longer and more complex responses
- Engage children in many turn-taking conversations
- Ensure activities are suited to ages and abilities

Item 14: Staff use of Book with Children

What is it ?

Staff-child interactions anytime the print content of a book is read.



Why is it important?

- Influences the relationship children develop with books
- Supports literacy development
- Provides opportunities to accommodate different learning needs

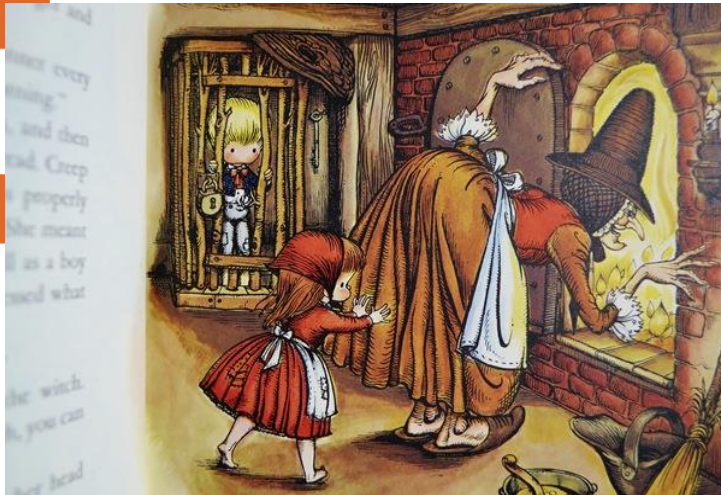
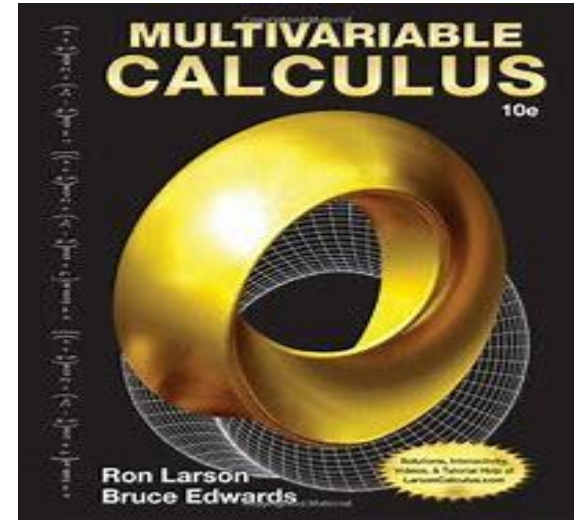
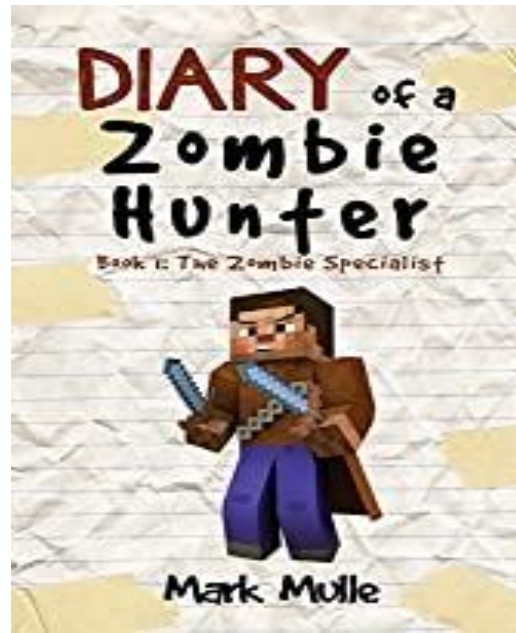
Item 14: Staff Use of Books with Children



Things to consider:

- Use books with children:
 - Read to them
 - Point out pictures
 - Tell them a story informally
 - Talk about a book's content
- Ensure children are engaged and interested
- Show enthusiasm and interest
- Make accommodations

Ensure books are appropriate



Item 15: Encouraging children's use of books



What is it ?

Staff support of children's use of books through interactions and developmentally appropriate materials.

Why is it important?

- Influences how children use books independently.
- Supports literacy development

Item 15: Encouraging Children's Use of Books



Things to consider:

- Have discussions about book content with children
- Look at books that provide answers and information based on their interests
- Show positive interest when children choose to look at books

Item 16: Becoming Familiar with Print



What is it ?

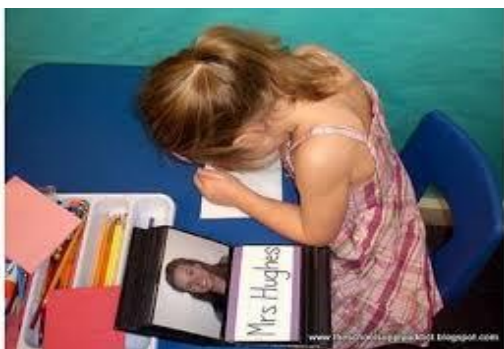
Staff use of daily experiences to support early literacy development.

Why is it important?

- Provides the foundation for reading
- Influences children's connection with reading and writing
- Helps children make meaningful connections between written and spoken language

Things to consider:

Item 16: Becoming Familiar with Print



- Point out letters and words and read print to children
- Display printed names of children around the room
- Take dictation or encourage older children to write
- Explain the purpose of print

Language and Literacy during routines and group activities

- Item 5: Child related displays
- Item 8: Meals/snacks
- Item 10: Health Practices

Item 5: Child-Related Display

What is it ?

All displays in a classroom. They include staff, child or commercially generated creations.

Why is it important?

- Children are given a message that their creations and thinking are valued and respected when they see their unique work on display.
- Promotes making connections to previous learning and experiences.
- Families are more likely to engage in learning when displays feature children's work and are updated.



Item 5: Child-Related Display



Things to consider:

- Discuss displays (e.g., weather, attendance, center charts)
- Reference proper handwashing procedures during routines
- Talk about center choices
- Reference theme-related artv



Item 8: Meals and Snacks

What is it ?

Various times throughout the day when children are served nutritious meals.

Why is it important?

- Helps to ensure children get what they need for healthy growth.
- Provides opportunities for learning and developing social skills.
- Supports children's independence.



Language during meals

Things to consider:

- Provide a relaxed environment
- Encourage social conversations among children
- Ask children non-route questions during meals



How can staff expand on children's vocabulary and ideas during meals?

Child: "Ms. Smith, I'm eating waffles for breakfast."

Ms. Smith: "I love Belgium waffles. They have deep squares and are sweet without syrup because they are topped with fresh fruit like strawberries. How do you think that would taste?"



Let's role play...

Literacy during health practices

Things to consider:

- Provide picture/word reminders/instructions to teach sanitary health practices (handwashing, toothbrushing, wiping noses, etc).



Language and Literacy in Centers

- Item 17: Fine motor
- Item 18: Art
- Item 19: Music and movement
- Item 20: Blocks
- Item 21: Dramatic play
- Item 22: Nature/science
- Item 23: Math materials and activities
- Item 24: Math in daily events

Language and Literacy in Centers

- Item 25: Understanding written numbers
- Item 26: Promoting acceptance of diversity
- Item 27: Appropriate use of technology



Item 17: Fine Motor



What is it ?

Materials/activities when children use the smaller muscles in their hands.

Why is it important?

- Good eye-hand coordination is especially important as children learn self-help skills and become ready for academic tasks that require greater motor control.
- The types of activities and materials children can access in the classroom determine the kinds of fine motor skills they can practice.

Things to consider

Item 17: Fine Motor



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- Demonstrate how to use materials or joining play
- Have back-and-forth conversations related to activity
- Expand their vocabulary
- Help with understanding concepts

Item 18: Art



What is it ?

Activities and materials that allow children to show their creative expression.

Why is it important?

Children develop fine motor and spatial reasoning skills as they experiment with shapes, lines, space, and the combination of colors along with a variety of materials.

Item 18: Art



Things to consider:

- Join in or teach how to use more complex materials
- Have back-and-forth conversations related to activity
- Take dictation of their work or encourage older children to write their own captions

Item 19: Music



What is it ?

Activities with music and/or movement as the primary content.

Why is it important?

- Helps children develop gross motor skills
- Encourages creativity
- Exposes children to different cultures
- Encourages expressive and receptive language development

Item 19: Music and Movement

Things to consider:

- Sing with children, formally or informally
- Point out/experiment with rhyming words, sound repetition, or do finger plays with children
- Ensure they are engaged when large group activities occur



Item 20: Blocks



What is it ?

Materials that children use to build different types of structures. they do not restrict children by having pieces fit together in a special way.

Why is it important?

- Blocks challenge children to carefully place and balance materials to create a variety of structures.
- A variety of blocks help children learn about math concepts as they play.

Things to consider

Item 20: Blocks



- Have conversations with children as they use blocks
- Link written language to block play
- Point out math concepts in an interesting way (e.g., more/less, size/shape, measurement, quantity)

Item 21: Dramatic Play



What is it ?

Activities when children pretend or act out various roles.

Why is it important?

- Children practice many skills and attempt to understand what happens in their world
- Engaging in dramatic play helps children practice language skills, develop social skills, and work through emotional difficulties.

Item 21: Dramatic Play



Things to consider

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- Support children as needed with play materials
- Join in their play
- Have conversations with children as they use materials
- Talk about numbers (e.g., discussing menus with prices, making signs and price tags)

Item 22: Nature/Science



What is it ?

Activities that provide children the opportunity to explore the natural world

Why is it important?

- Children are curious about and fascinated by the natural world around them.
- Providing nature/science materials and activities, including plenty of exposure to the outdoor world, gives children a wider base from which to develop vocabulary and understand basic natural concepts.

Item 22: Nature/ Science



Things to consider:

- Talk to children about nature/science topics.
- Use daily activities to promote nature/science learning.
- Model how to respectfully and positively treat the environment (e.g., recycling objects, avoid wasting water).
- Initiate activities for measuring, comparing, or sorting using materials.

Item 23: Math Materials and Activities

What is it ?

Activities that provide hands-on experiences to explore quantity, size and shape to build the foundation for later abstract math learning.

Why is it important?

Young children become interested in math/numbers if their math experiences have a purpose and match their abilities



Things to consider:

Item 23: Math Materials and Activities



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- Provide information or ask questions
- Set up/joi play while children use math materials
- Encourage them to use their fingers to represent numbers
- Relate math materials/activities to current themes or topics of interest
- Ask questions that stimulate reasoning
- Offer math activities that require more input

Logical Relationships

Help children make connections and develop logical thinking structures, such as:

- same/different
- classifying
- sequencing
- one-to-one correspondence
- spatial relationships
- cause and effect



Item 24: Math in Daily Events

What is it ?

Staff using math words and concepts words throughout the day.

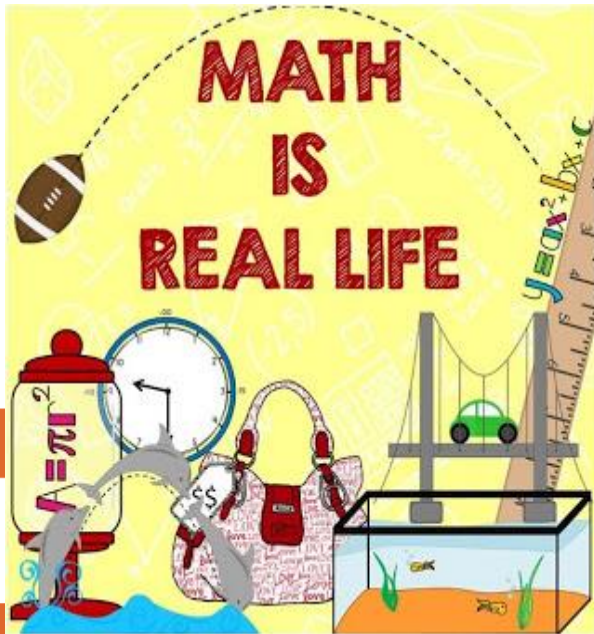


Why is it important?

- Connecting math to daily events helps children see the value of math in a meaningful way
- Helps children to generalize math learning to many different types of experiences

Things to consider:

Item 24: Math in Daily Events



- Help children connect numbers and shapes in the environment (e.g., talk about shapes of traffic signs during walk to the park, count number of days on calendar until a birthday)
- While children play in non-math areas, encourage them to explain their own math reasoning (e.g., "How do you know if one more person can play here?")
- For older children, give them more complex math-related tasks (e.g., count number of children to figure out how many are missing)

Item 25: Understanding Written Numbers

What is it ?

Activities and interactions that help children make connections between written/printed numbers and quantities.

Why is it important?

When staff draw connections between numbers and quantities they represent, these concepts become meaningful to children over time.



Item 25: Understanding written numbers

Things to consider:

- Encourage and show children to use the many developmentally appropriate materials with printed/written numbers and talk with them
- Relate print numbers to the corresponding number of pictures or objects
- Use fingers to show the quantity represented by print numbers.



Item 26: Prompting Acceptance of Diversity



What is it ?

Positively acknowledging the differences and similarities between groups with respect to race, religion, culture, ability, age and gender

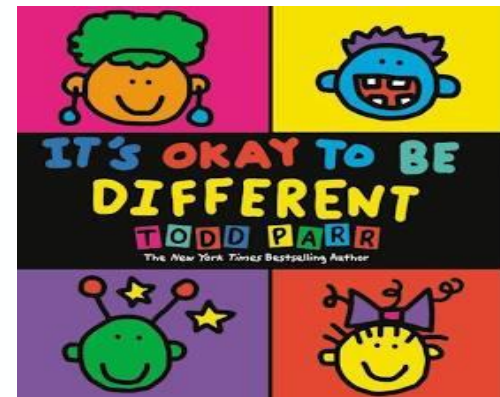
Why is it important?

Diversity in classroom materials, activities and interactions provide the foundation for attitudes about differences.

Things to consider:

Item 26: Promoting Acceptance of Diversity

- Include diversity in learning activities
- Allow all children to follow their interests
- Have positive conversations about the similarities and differences among people



Item 27: Appropriate use of Technology

What is it ?

Electronic media/technology (e.g., Smart Board, iPad, computers used during activities.

Why is it important?

It is not required that electronic materials are used in early childhood classrooms.

However, if developmentally appropriate materials are used for a limited time, they can supplement regular hands on activities, add information to what children are learning and provide another type of experience.



Item 27: Appropriate use of technology

Things to consider:

- Help children think through problems presented by software
- Encourage children to explain how to complete a task
- Discuss the content of materials



Language during Gross Motor Play

- Item 28: Gross Motor Supervision

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.



Item 28: Gross Motor Supervision

Things to consider:

- Assist children to develop skills needed to use equipment
- Help with resources to enhance play
- Initiate vigorous gross motor activity
- Provide proactive supervision (e.g., remain near the most hazardous equipment when it is used, stop potentially dangerous activities)



Language during Supervision and Interactions

- Item 29: Individualized Teaching and Learning
- Item 30: Staff-child Interaction
- Item 31: Peer Interaction
- Item 32: Discipline

Item 29: Individualized Teaching and Learning

What is it ?

Individually appropriate strategies and encouragement to support learning.

Why is it important?

When staff are sensitive to individual learning styles and social emotional needs, they can optimize each learning opportunity. In addition, research has shown that an individualized approach to teaching is associated with success in math and literacy.



Item 29: Individualized Teaching and Learning

Things to consider:

- Use an individualized approach to teaching
- Circulate around the room to add to children's learning
- Promote staff-led activities that allow children to be successful



Item 30: Staff-Child Interactions

What is it ?

Staff-child interactions help build positive relationships.



Why is it important?

Warm and respectful interactions throughout the day support children in developing positive relationships with school and peers.

Item 30: Staff-child interaction



Things to consider:

- Have many positive interactions with children
- Encourage the development of mutual respect
- Respond to children sympathetically
- Provide a message of warmth



Item 3 I: Peer Interaction

What is it ?

Considers how staff foster positive child-child relationships and help children learn social skills.

Why is it important?

- Impacts children's learning attitudes and excitement
- Helps children learn how to positively interact with one another.
- Allows staff to know when they need to step in to help children work things out.
- Having staff model social skills helps to support children's social skill development.



Item 3 I: Peer Interaction



Things to consider:

- Provide opportunities for children to select their own companions and activities
- Allow children to communicate with one another
- Help children avoid conflicts and/or solve social problems in satisfying ways
- Point out children's positive behaviors toward one another

Item 32: Discipline

What is it ?

Considers the strategies used by staff to guide children's behavior and help them develop positive relationships.

Why is it important?

- Children learn self-regulation
- Children learn how to make their own choices about how they will act
- Children learn how their actions affect themselves and others



Item 32: Discipline



Things to consider:

- Call attention to children's feelings for one another
- Use positive, child-friendly responses and methods to minimize problems
- Actively involve children in solving their own conflicts
- Explain reasons for why certain behaviors are not permitted

Key Takeaways:

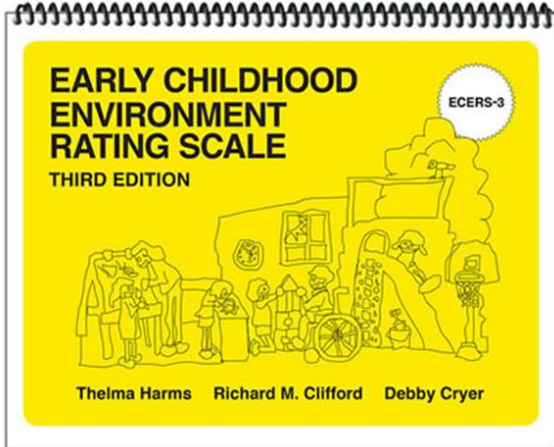
- Positive classroom environment
- Support communication among peers
- Provide a variety of play materials and activities
- Join in play with children
- Point out math and literacy concepts throughout the day
- Support social emotional development



Covid-19 Considerations

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

For more information on ECERS-3

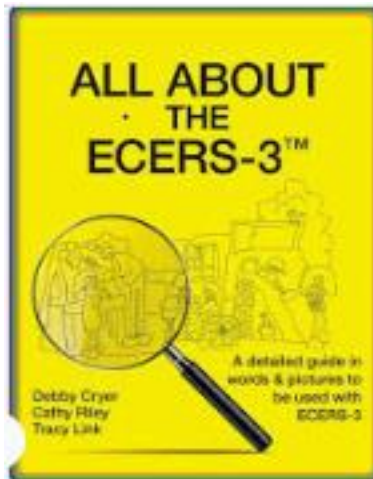


- Please also visit the program assessment page on DECE's website for additional educator resources:

- <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/>.



Thank you!

Please fill out the feedback survey

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

