

NYCDOE DECE Additional Notes for the ECERS-R

In order to make the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R) tool a better fit for the context of NYC, the DECE has released the following additional notes for the ECERS-R. The NYC DECEs Additional Notes for the ECERS-R provide supplementary scoring information for the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R). The primary aim of the notes are to clarify the scoring of several indicators and identify indicators where the scoring differs from what is written in the ECERS-R scale or the All About the ECERS-R book. The aim of any scoring revisions is to make the tool a better fit in the context of NYC and better align the ECERS-R tool to the Program Quality Standards and Policy Handbook. The notes also further define or explain requirements of certain items to improve interrater reliability or consistency among assessors.

Pre-K for All programs should be aware of the following:

- The DECE’s Additional Notes for the ECERS-R may be updated annually as needed.
- DECE assessors conduct assessments using the most current notes.
- This document is updated on an annual basis. Visit the Pre-K Program Assessments section of the Division of Early Childhood’s website for additional information.

DECE Additional Notes for the ECERS-R include applicable notes created by the scale authors found on the Environment Rating Scales Institute (ERSI) website. Notes from the authors appear in yellow boxes below. The DECE Additional Notes for the ECERS-R is the comprehensive scoring guidance used by DECE assessors.

Changes

Date of Implementation	Format	Source of Scoring Guidance	Where to Find the Change
9/14/2017	Green	DECE	Items 9, 7, 24, 34
09/15/2016	Yellow	DECE	Items 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 24, 34
	White	ERSI	Items 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 20, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28

Item	Indicator(s)	Notes – Notes from ERSI are highlighted in light yellow, notes from the DECE have no highlighting
2	3.1	When determining whether furniture for routine care is sufficient, consider the sizes of cubbies in relation to what is stored in them to see if they can adequately accommodate all of each child’s possessions. This is to reduce the spread of lice and scabies. When children’s personal belonging, such as coats, extra clothing, blankets (if stored in cubbies,) are not reasonably well-separated, or if cubbies are so full that things fall onto the floor, score 3.1 “No” because the cubbies are not adequate in size based on what must be stored in them. If there is only minor touching of possessions (e.g., protruding sleeves of winter coats touching those of other children, or a small problem with other materials, but this could be solved easily by pushing things into the cubby properly,

		<p>consider the cubbies adequate. Any touching of children’s personal possessions should also be considered in the Health item.</p> <p>When considering children’s storage space (e.g., cubbies), determine whether children’s coats would fit without spilling out or touching another child’s possessions, even if the observation takes place when coats are not being used. Also consider whether all children’s possessions that are put into cubbies fit (such as blankets, sheets, extra clothes) without spilling out. However, if children do not use their cubbies well, not pushing possessions into the space properly, so things fall out, consider whether the furniture would hold everything if used correctly. Consider the problem of things spilling out of cubbies in Health and Nap (if appropriate).</p> <p>Credit can be given if an individual cubby is missing for 1-2 children, as long as these children have a comparable personal space. To be considered comparable, the space must sufficiently separate children’s belongs, and they must be able to easily access their belongings.</p>
4	1.2, 3.2	<p>A room arrangement that is divided into interest areas or centers, using shelves or other furniture, can be given credit as being “not difficult to supervise visually” as long as teachers move about the spaces used by the children so that they can see each child frequently enough to ensure that each child is safe, and so that they can interact with children when needed. Credit can be given even though they may not see all children at all times. However, the ages, abilities, and impulsiveness of the children must be considered when scoring. Older, less impulsive children require less visual supervision than younger or more impulsive children. In addition, slight problems with the room shape, for example, a slight extension, (not a full L- shape) of the room, or the existence of pillars, that create small blind areas are acceptable as long as they are well-supervised frequently enough to meet children’s needs. To score, observe the relationship between the teachers’ supervision and the room arrangement to see if children are adequately supervised visually.</p>
	5.2	<p>Fine motor, sand/water, art, math and science can be counted as “buffer centers” instead of quiet areas. Quiet areas (books, writing, listening centers) should still be separated from noisy areas (dramatic play, blocks, musical instruments, music played without headphones) by using “buffer centers.”</p>
5	3.2	<p>Any space for privacy that a child uses is considered easily supervised by staff if the space is open enough to allow visual supervision. It is not required that the teachers can see the space(s) at all times, as long as teachers move about the room and can see the spaces for privacy used by the children frequently enough to ensure that each child is safe. To score, observe the relationship between the teachers’ supervision and how spaces for privacy are used to see if children are adequately supervised. The ages, abilities, and impulsiveness of the children must be considered when scoring. Older, less impulsive children require less visual supervision than younger or more impulsive children.</p>
6	All	<p>Labels on shelves indicating where materials are to be stored and center labels or signs do not count as display for this item.</p>
7	3.1	<p>In the note for this indicator, replace “In programs operating for less than 4 hours per day, at least ½ hour is required.” with the following: In programs operating less than 8 hours a day, see Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale, on page 7 to determine amount of time required for part day programs of less than 8 hours.</p>
	5.2	<p><i>Gross motor spaces are considered “easily accessible” when the space is up to one floor away by stairs or easily accessible by an elevator that fits the whole class in one trip.</i></p>
8	1.3, 3.3	<p>For all of these indicators, consider metal slides a major hazard when scoring only if staff does not prevent children from using the slides on a day on which they could burn.</p>

	3.1	In the note for this indicator, delete "For programs of 4 hours or less, at least half an hour of access is required. (See chart provided in Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale on p. 7 to determine approximate amount of time required for part-day programs of more than 4 hours)." Insert: In programs operating less than 8 hours a day, see Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale, on page 7 to determine amount of time required for part day programs of less than 8 hours.
9	All	<i>For Half Day programs only: If Pre-K for All hours start after arrival time, and no children arrive during the observation, the evaluator will score this item "N/A".</i>
	1.3	The current requirement in the ECERS-R Scale should be replaced with: Greeting of families is often neglected and/or families are not allowed in the classroom at all during arrival.* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit cannot be given for this indicator if parents are not allowed in the classroom (office staff or other personnel bring students to the classroom, and no exceptions are made during arrival. • Credit cannot be given for this indicator if staff interacts negatively with parents. • This indicator can be scored "N/A" if not observed
	3.3	The current requirement in the ECERS-R Scale should be replaced with: Families not allowed to bring children into the classroom at arrival. (Based upon schoolwide rules or structures). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit can be given if a child arrives late and families are able to come into the classroom then. • Credit can be given if families can enter the classroom upon request.
	5.3	The current requirement in the ECERS-R Scale should be replaced with: School protocol encourages families to bring children into the classroom at arrival and families are warmly greeted. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to receive credit for this indicator, the everyday structure must allow all parents to come into the classroom. Children must be dropped off there.
10	1.1, 3.1	Credit will be given to programs serving breakfast and lunch or lunch and a nutritious snack. Meals must be served at intervals no greater than 3 hours. Credit will not be given at the 3 level if the time between meals exceeds 3 hours.
	1.1, 3.1	Children should be fed every two-three hours unless sleeping. During a 3 hour observation, at least one meal or snack should be observed.
	1.3, 3.3	See the note on handwashing/use of hand sanitizers that has been added to the "Explanation of Terms Used throughout the Scale".
	1.3, 3.3	An alternative EPA approved "sanitizer" may be used in place of the usual bleach and water solution as part of the table washing procedure or for high chair trays, and other food related surfaces. Check the label of the original container and look for the designation as an EPA sanitizer. Be sure all instructions for use are followed such as the time required to be on the surface or whether to rinse after use. If not do not give credit for cleaning the surface. Safety issues regarding the use of the alternative sanitizer, such as not rinsing the residue if required or not keeping out of the reach of children, should be considered in the supervision-related indicators of this item if applicable, and in the Safety and General supervision items where applicable.

		Since three important health practices are required (eating surface washing /sanitizing, hand hygiene before and after eating, and serving uncontaminated foods), consider the extent to which each of the required health practices is followed. If there is little effort in 2 of the 3 health practices, (for example, handwashing is completely ignored, there is no attempt to clean tables, and/or foods are served under conditions that cause extreme contamination), then score 1.3 Yes. There can be minor lapses in following the handwashing procedure (not rubbing for the 20 seconds, but rubbing all hand surfaces thoroughly; not wetting hands first but soap still makes bubbles). However, hands should be cleaned reasonably well. If there is a significant attempt to complete all practices, even if some procedures are not done absolutely correctly, score 3.3, Yes. If there is a minimal attempt to do all procedures, but the practices are completed with many serious errors, score 3.3 No.
11	1.2, 3.2, 5.3	Caring for Our Children, 3rd Edition, now requires 3 feet between cots/mats. Solid screens or other barriers, such as crib ends or toy shelves, are not acceptable because they would need to extend from floor to ceiling to prevent air borne contamination from one child to another, and would disrupt supervision. For 1.2, score No if at least 75% of the mats/cots are separated by at least 18 inches. For 3.2, do not give credit unless there is at least 18 inches between every sleeping provision. 5.3 requires 3 feet between each sleeping surface with no exceptions (e.g., shelves or screens as dividers).
	1.1, 3.1	In order to receive credit, nap/rest time must meet the needs of the students in the class and must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled at consistent times each day • At a time that meets the needs of students in the class • About 30 to 40 minutes long (the length of nap/rest may vary depending on the changing needs of students over the course of the school year). If most students are not ready to wake up at the end of nap/rest time, this is an indication that nap/rest time is not appropriate and credit cannot be given for this indicator.
12	All	For information on changing children in “Pull-ups” or other disposable underwear, or with soiled clothing, see the 2011 edition of Caring for Our Children, pages 108-109. In the most recent Caring for Our Children, 3rd edition, pages 106-108, there are changes to the diapering procedure to use when scoring. First, non-absorbent paper is required that extends from the child’s shoulders to beyond the feet. The diapering surface must be disinfected, but does not have to be washed first, as long as the paper is used and the surface is not visibly soiled. If paper is not used, then the surface must be cleaned (a wipe is permitted for this) and then disinfected, whether visibly soiled or not to be counted as correct when scoring. Second, a soiled diaper should be left under the child, while the child is cleaned. Then it should be folded over and disposed of properly. For the complete current diapering procedure, see Caring for Our Children, or look for the new handout on www.ersi.info .
	1.1, 3.1	An alternative EPA approved “disinfectant” (not sanitizer) may be used in place of the usual bleach and water solution. Check the label of the original container and look for the designation as an EPA disinfectant. Be sure all instructions for use are followed. If not do not give credit for sanitizing the surface. Safety issues regarding the use of the alternative disinfectant , such as not rinsing the residue if required or not keeping out of the reach of children, should be considered in the supervision-related indicators of this item if applicable, and in the Safety and General supervision items where applicable.
	1.3, 3.3	See the note on handwashing/use of hand sanitizers that has been added to the “Explanation of Terms Used throughout the Scale.”
	3.5	Credit can be given when a bathroom is in the classroom if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children leave door ajar. In order to give credit:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff must be aware when each child has gone into the bathroom – some intermittent attention must be paid to every child using the toileting area, but line-of-sight supervision is not required. For example, if a teacher is engaging with children in the block area during center time and a student goes into the bathroom, the teacher must show awareness that a student has gone into the bathroom and he/she does not completely ignore the child using the toilet; and ○ Every child must follow most toileting procedures correctly, but do not consider handwashing routine when scoring this indicator (consider: proper use of toilet, wiping as needed, flushing, and managing clothes). • <i>Or if</i> children close door (but cannot lock it). In order to give credit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Door must not be able to be locked by children ○ Staff must be aware when each child has gone into the bathroom – some intermittent attention must be paid to every child using the toileting area, but line-of-sight supervision is not required. For example, if a teacher is engaging with children in the block area during center time and a student goes into the bathroom, the teacher must show awareness that a student has gone into the bathroom and he/she does not completely ignore the child using the toilet; ○ Staff check on each child by talking through the door and providing assistance if needed; and ○ Any visible toileting procedures must be followed correctly, but do not consider handwashing routine when scoring this indicator (consider: proper use of toilet, wiping as needed, flushing, and managing clothes) <p>Credit can be given with a bathroom out of the classroom if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff accompany every child to the bathroom ○ Staff check on each child by talking through the door and providing assistance if needed (stall door may be closed); and ○ Any visible toileting procedures must be followed correctly, but do not consider handwashing routine when scoring this indicator (consider: proper use of toilet, wiping as needed, flushing, and managing clothes)
13	1.1, 3.1	See the note on handwashing/use of hand sanitizers that has been added to the “Explanation of Terms Used throughout the Scale.”
	1.2	<p>Program Entrance: Credit can be given even if a small amount of smoking debris is observed.</p> <p>Private Playground: Credit cannot be given if any signs of smoking, including smoking debris, are observed.</p> <p>Public Playground:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit cannot be given only in the case that staff does not take measures to protect the children and non-smoking adults from secondhand smoke if that occurrence happens during the observation in the play space (e.g., leaving an area if smoking is occurring in the direct space used by children, getting the smoking person to leave) • Do not consider any smoking or smoking debris that is observed while in transit between the school and playground, unless the smoking person works in the program • Credit can be given even if a small amount of smoking debris is observed. • Credit cannot be given if a child is seen touching smoking debris and is not redirected by staff

13	3.2	<p>Program Entrance: Credit cannot be given when there is evidence of a smoking area (a cluster of about 10 or more cigarette butts) on sidewalks that are directly in front of the program for which the school is responsible for maintaining.</p> <p>Public Playground: Consider the amount of smoking debris observed within the space to determine if credit can be given for this item.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit cannot be given for this indicator if there is evidence of a smoking area (a cluster of about 10 or more cigarette butts) and staff does not take any measures to redirect children from the area or clean up the area and/or <p>Credit cannot be given if there are many (10 or more) cigarette butts dispersed in the space that are easily accessible and noticeable to children. Do not consider smoking debris that is not very noticeable (e.g. in cracks, crevices, and corners).</p>
15	5.4	Only books that contain violence pertaining to guns, war, and killing (not just dying) are considered inappropriate, unless staff has used them to support the development of social and emotional skills.
20	All	Dot markers (also called Bingo markers, or dot paints) are counted in the “tools” category of art materials. They do not allow the control provided by the materials in the drawing category, nor do they fit the paint category, in terms of how they can be used.
22	3.1, 3.1, 5.1, 5.2, 7.1	There are 3 types of accessories (transportation, people, animals) required for this item, although there can be other types made available to children as well. Within each type, there are subtypes. For example, animals may include subtypes of zoo and farm animals. For 3.1 and 3.3, only one type is required. For 5.1, two of the types are required. For 5.2, the two types must be stored separately, although subtypes can be stored together (ex., all animals in one container; all people in another). For 7.1, at a minimum, all three types must be represented.
23	5.3	In the note for this indicator, replace “For programs of 4 hours or less, the requirement of 1 hour is changed to ½ hour.” with the following: In programs operating less than 8 hours a day, see Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale, on page 7 to determine amount of time required for part day programs of less than 8 hours.
24	5.2	To score this indicator Yes, indicator 5.1 must have been scored Yes.
	5.1	<i>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 ECERS-R 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 classroom materials, children should be allowed to play with any dress-up items that interest them.</i>
27	3.3	Due to recommendations in the 2011 version of Caring for Our Children, pages 66-67, time allowed for children to view television, video, DVD and use the computer (“media screen time) has been changed. Time is limited for children in ECERS groups to not more than 30 minutes total, once a week. Computer use time should be limited to no more than 15 minutes per day for children in a program of any length with the exception of children with disabilities who require assistive computer technology. No media screen time should be allowed during meals/snacks.
28	5.1	Photographs of the children in the group and their families are given credit in Item 6. Child related display, indicator 5.1 and not as “pictures showing diversity” in this item, even if the children and their families in the class photos show diversity of race, culture, abilities or gender roles. In order to be given credit for this indicator, many (at least 3-5) pictures that have been selected intentionally by staff to clearly show diversity, are displayed so they are easy for children to see in the space used by the children most of the time.

29	3.2, 5.2	If formal gross motor time is not observed, consider what is observed during all "gross motor-like activity" even if it is not a formal gross motor time planned in the schedule (i.e. whole group music and movement or transitions) when scoring this indicator.
	5.3	This indicator will be scored "N/A" if no gross motor equipment is observed during the assessment.
34	3.3	<p>"Weather Permitting" does not include any of the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anytime when there is a weather advisory; • Anytime when there is ice on the playground where students mostly play. (Small patches of ice alone in areas where there is low-traffic should not prevent the class from outdoor play). • Snow or debris left within two business days of a major storm (i.e. there is a 2-day grace period to clear the outdoor space or provide a safe alternative, including the path to the space). • Anytime with the effective temperature (wind-chill + actual temperature) is 25 degrees or lower during gross motor time on the date of the observation. <p>Credit can be given for this indicator if children are not taken outside to play for any of the above reasons.</p>