

ECERS-3 Tips from Dr. Seplocha

- Scores are based on observation. There is NO interview. A classroom is observed for 3 hours. Everything that needs to be seen needs to occur during the 3-hour observation.
- During the 3-hour observation, for a score of 5, the observer is looking for a minimum of 30 minutes of gross motor play with gross motor equipment either inside or outside. Weather permitting, gross motor play should occur outside. Transitions preparing for or after gross motor time (getting on jackets, walking to/from the playground or indoor gym) are NOT considered as part of the 30 minutes.
- During the 3-hour observation, for a score of 5, the observer is looking for a minimum of one hour of free play/access to interest centers and play areas for all children. The minimum 60-minutes observed time does NOT start until all children are playing and does not include any planning time or completion of prior activity (ie washing hands, finishing meals). The time stops as soon as the adult calls for clean-up even if no one starts to clean-up. We recommend having over an hour of free play time in the morning to ensure that the minimum of one hour is met. If small group time is incorporated into the free play time, then the time that children are required to participate in the small group activity is NOT counted as part of the 60 minutes as not ALL children have the opportunity for free play. There are many items in ECERS-3 that speak to this minimum of 60 minutes. If you don't have the minimum of 60 minutes required, then it affects your score in multiple items that will not reach a score of 5.
- Play Areas vs Interest Centers
 - ✓ All Interest Centers are Play Area; All Play Areas are NOT Interest Centers
 - ✓ An Interest Center is a clearly defined play area for a PARTICULAR type of play. Materials are organized by type and stored so that they are accessible to children. Furniture is provided for the use of materials, if needed. An appropriate amount of space is provided for the type of play being encouraged by materials and the number of children allowed to play in the center. Blocks and dramatic play interest centers are usually larger than other interest centers. All materials in an Interest Center should relate to the PARTICULAR type of play for that Interest Center.
 - ✓ A minimum of 5 Interest Centers are required for a score of 5 in Item 5 *Room Arrangement* including a Cozy Area. The other Interest Centers can include blocks, dramatic play, fine motor, art, computer, science/nature, library, literacy center, math, etc.
 - ✓ For a score of 5, for items 15, 20, 21 & 22 Reading Center/Library, Blocks, Dramatic Play, and Nature/Science are required to meet the definition of an Interest Center and meet the minimum time requirement of at least 60 minutes.
- Interactions are key. For highest scores, the observer is looking for over 60 specific instances of the varying types of interactions noted in ECERS-3 indicators. Indicators throughout the scale identify types and the number of times a specific interaction and/or teacher talk/action must be observed.
- There should be NO Waiting Time of 3 minutes or longer during any observed transition.
- Read and become familiar with ECERS-3 including the notes for clarification for all items.