



ECERS-3 Materials and Furnishings



This list includes items and indicators in the ECERS-3 that need specific materials or furnishings¹. However, simply having these items is not enough to meet all requirements for an item. It is also important to consider how much time children use materials, the condition, organization, and types of language and interactions adults have with children using materials. These factors affect how much children benefit from the materials.

Within each item and category of materials, there are a wide variety of options to meet the requirements. Individualizing the materials based on children's interests, abilities, and relating the materials to the current classroom topics, themes, and/or curriculum are key when creating a stimulating environment. Below are some common considerations programs may find helpful when reviewing specific items:

Teacher-made materials: Purchasing all materials may not be necessary. For example, teacher-made, repurposed, or donated materials can meet requirements for many items and indicators.

Materials count in multiple items: Notice that some types of materials can meet the requirements for different items. For example, art materials are a category in the fine motor item and the art item. Often math materials or science puzzles and games stimulate fine motor skills and count in that item as well. Likewise, books that represent diversity, science, or math impact all relevant items.

Rotating materials: Swapping materials out regularly helps sustain interest, and can allow for rotation between different classrooms, adding value beyond a single classroom in some cases. Developmentally appropriate materials help children to confidently explore, play, and learn. Incorporating more challenging materials, allows each child to continue developing at their own pace and skill level.

Intentional teaching practices: Many items and indicators require interactions and/or planned activities related to the item. It is likely that offering planned activities will require at least some additional materials, but since there are a variety of ways to do this, it is not possible to list materials for these indicators. Determining what materials are needed will vary for each program and change over the course of the year.

While there are many items that require specific materials, classrooms may choose to include more than the numbers required, so this list should be used only for minimum guidance. Additionally, not every early childhood material is included in the ECERS-3, so carefully consider all materials currently included in a classroom when determining how to prioritize and refresh materials to best meet children's needs. Having extra items beyond basic requirements is also wise, as materials may get lost, broken, or worn.

There may be times when decisions are made not to offer certain types of materials based on program priorities, available resources, and/or knowledge of the children's needs. These decisions are completely fine, and the ECERS-3 overall score is based on the average scores of all items using a 1–7-point range. Ultimately, there is room for some items to score high and others to score lower, while still ending up with an overall good average score (5.0). Choices are encouraged and there is no expectation that a high score will be earned on all items.

ECERS-3 Item and Page	3 Level Requirements	5 Level Requirements	7 Level Requirements
Item 2. Furnishings for care, play, and learning (p. 16-17)	<p>3.1 Enough tables, chairs, cots/mats, cubbies, and shelves for enrolled children</p> <p>3.3 Adaptive furniture for children with disabilities if enrolled</p> <p>3.4 Two soft furnishings</p>	<p>5.1 Ample tables, chairs, cots/mats, cubbies, and shelves for materials.</p> <p>5.2 Child-sized tables and chairs</p> <p>5.3 Two pieces of furniture designed for two different activities</p> <p>5.4 Furnishings that provide a substantial amount of softness</p>	<p>7.2 Three or more pieces of furniture designed for different activities</p>
Item 3. Room arrangement for play and learning (p. 18-19)	<p>3.2 At least three interest centers</p>	<p>5.2 At least five interest centers including a cozy area</p>	<p>n/a</p>
Item 4. Space for privacy (p. 20 –21)	<p>n/a</p>	<p>5.1 Materials and furnishings that create a space for one or two children to be alone</p>	<p>n/a</p>
Item 7. Gross motor equipment (p. 26-27)	<p>3.1 Enough gross motor equipment for all children indoors or outdoors</p> <p>3.3 Gross motor equipment that stimulates seven skills outside and at least five skills indoors on bad weather days</p>	<p>5.1 Enough gross motor equipment including stationary and portable</p> <p>5.4 Adaptive equipment to support inclusion for children with disabilities if enrolled</p>	<p>7.1 Ample and varied equipment</p> <p>7.2 Appropriate equipment for children’s ages and abilities, including safety helmets</p> <p>7.3 Gross motor equipment that stimulates advanced skills.</p>
Item 15. Encouraging children’s use of books (p. 42-43)	<p>3.1 At least 15 books</p> <p>3.2 Fantasy and factual books</p>	<p>5.1 At least 20 books for 10 children, or 30 books for 15 children, and one extra book for each additional child</p>	<p>7.1 Wide selection of books, including people, feelings, nature/science, math, cultures, varying race, males and females, jobs/work, health or self-help skills, sports/hobbies, abilities</p> <p>7.2 At least five books that relate to current classroom activities or themes</p>
Item 17. Fine motor (p. 46-47)	<p>3.1 At least 10 different materials</p>	<p>5.1 One age-appropriate example from each of the four categories (interlocking building materials, art materials, manipulatives, puzzles)</p>	<p>n/a</p>
Item 18. Art (p. 48-49)	<p>3.1 At least one drawing material</p>	<p>5.1 At least one material from all five categories (drawing materials, paints, three-dimensional objects, collage materials, tools)</p>	<p>n/a</p>
Item 19. Music and movement (p. 50-51)	<p>3.1 At least three music materials</p>	<p>5.1 At least 10 instruments</p>	<p>n/a</p>

Item 20. Blocks (p. 52-53)	3.1 Enough blocks and accessories for at least two children to build at the same time	5.1 Enough space, blocks, and accessories from three categories for three children to build sizeable structures at the same time (80-unit blocks = one structure, 40 larger blocks=one structure) 5.3 Special block interest center	7.1 Large hollow blocks
Item 21. Dramatic play (p. 54-55)	3.1 Some dramatic play materials and furniture	5.1 Many and varied dramatic play materials Including dolls, child-sized furniture, play foods and cooking/eating utensils, dress-up clothes (two female, two male specific examples) 5.2 Dramatic play interest center	7.1 Four examples of dramatic play props that represent diversity
Item 22. Nature/science (p. 56-57)	3.1 At least five nature/science materials from at least two categories (living things, natural objects, factual books/nature science picture games, tools, and sand/water with toys) 3.3 Sand or water play, with toys	5.1 At least 15 materials from each of the five categories. Including five nature/science books organized in a nature/science interest center	7.2 At least one pet/plant present to observe, care for, and discuss
Item 23. Math materials and activities (p.58-59)	3.1 At least two different math materials from three categories (counting/comparing quantities, measuring/comparing sizes and fractions, and familiarity with shapes)	5.1 At least 10 math materials with three materials from each of the three categories	n/a
Item 25. Understanding written numbers (p. 62-63)	3.2 Some play materials with numbers	5.1 At least three materials with printed numbers and the corresponding number of objects to show the meaning of the number	7.1 At least five materials with printed numbers and the corresponding number of objects
Items 26. Promoting acceptance of diversity (p. 64- 65)	3.1 Three examples of racial/cultural diversity in materials	5.1 Two types of dramatic play props representing different races or cultures 5.2 At least 10 examples with at least one example in each category from books, pictures, and materials. 5.3 Materials should include at least 4 of the 5 types of diversity (race, culture, age, ability, and non-traditional gender role).	n/a
Item 34. Free play (p. 80 – 81)	3.4 Enough materials and activities to keep children engaged during play times	5.3 Ample and varied materials and equipment for free play	7.1 Materials or activities that relate to classroom topics/themes

Harms, T., Clifford, R., & Cryer, D. (2015). *Early childhood environment rating scale*. (Third edition). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

ⁱ There is also a technology item, but it is optional and not required to use TV, video, computers, or any device with a screen. If the choice is made to use technology with children, review item 27 to see the requirements.