Preschool Environment Checklist

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) Item	Notes/ Changes to be made
Space and Furnishings	
☐ Adequate lighting, temperature control, and sound-absorbing materials	
☐ Good ventilation, some natural lighting through windows or skylight	
☐ Space is in good repair	
☐ Space is reasonably clean and well-maintained	
☐ Space for children is accessible to children and adults with disabilities	
☐ Ample indoor space for children, adults, and furnishings	
Furniture for routine care, play and learning	
☐ There is enough shelving for toys and materials	
☐ There are enough tables and chairs for the children	
☐ Tables and chairs are child-sized (the children's feet touch the floor when sitting)	
☐ All furniture is sturdy and in good repair	
☐ Adaptive furniture permits inclusion of children with disabilities	
☐ Cots/mats stored for easy access,	
☐ Children use woodwork bench, sand/water table, or easel	
☐ Cubbies placed for easy use by parents, staff, and older toddlers	
Furnishings for relaxation and comfort	
☐ Special "cozy area" with soft furnishings is accessible for much of the day, and softness is accessible in several other areas	
☐ "Cozy area" protected from active play and is used for reading or other quiet play	
☐ Other soft furnishings in addition to cozy area is accessible to children (area rugs, carpeting, cushions in dramatic play)	
☐ Many soft toys accessible much of the day	
Room arrangement for play	
There are at least five different interest centers to provide a variety of learning	

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experiences: ☐ Art ☐Reading ☐ Blocks ☐ Nature/ Science ☐ Dramatic Play ☐ Manipulatives/Fine Motor	
Centers are organized for independent use by children ☐ Labeled open shelves ☐ Labeled containers for toys (w/ pictures) ☐ Uncluttered shelves ☐ Accessible play space near toys	
☐ Arrangement of room makes it possible for staff to provide visual supervision	
☐ There is sufficient space for several activities to go on at one time and traffic patterns do not interfere with activities	
☐ Areas for quiet and active play are separated	
☐ Additional materials are available to add to or change interest centers	
Space for Privacy	
☐ There is space set aside for one or two children to play, protected from intrusion by others	
☐ There is more than one space available for privacy	
Child-related display	
☐ Individualized children's work comprises more than 50% of the classroom display	
☐ Appropriate materials are displayed for the age of the children (Ex: photos of children, nursery rhymes, seasonal displays)	
☐ Three-dimensional child-created work displayed as well as flat work	
☐ Pictures showing diversity (people of different races, cultures, ages, abilities, and gender in non-stereotyping roles)	
☐ Many items displayed where children can easily see them	
☐ Photographs of children in the group, their families, pets, or other familiar faces displayed on child's eye level	
☐ New materials added or display changed at least monthly	
Spaces for gross motor play	

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☐ There is adequate space outdoors and some space indoors for gross motor play	
☐ Space is easily accessible to the children	
☐ Space is organized so that different types of activities do not interfere with one another	
☐ Both stationary (swings, slides, climbing equipment) and portable gross motor equipment (wheel toys, tumbling mats, jump ropes, bean bags, ring toss games, balls and sports equipment) are used	
Equipment stimulates a variety of skills: ☐ balancing ☐ climbing ☐ ball play ☐ steering ☐ tumbling ☐ jumping ☐ throwing ☐ pedaling	
☐ Gross motor equipment stimulates skills on different levels (tricycles with and without pedals; different sizes of balls, both ramp and ladder access to climbing structure)	
☐ There is enough gross motor equipment so that children have access without a long wait	
☐ Gross motor equipment is in good repair	
☐ Most of the stationary equipment (75%) is appropriate for the age and ability of the children	
☐ Adaptations are made or special equipment is provided for children in group with disabilities	
Book and pictures	
A wide selection of books (at least 20 books for up to 15 children) accessible for a substantial portion of the day. Topics should include: ☐ fantasy ☐ factual information ☐ animals ☐ nature/science ☐ people of various races, cultures, ages and abilities	
☐ Book are organized in a reading center for children to use independently (all accessible books do not have to be in the reading center)	
☐ Books and language materials are rotated to maintain interest	
☐ Some books should relate to current classroom activities or themes	

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☐ Additional language materials are available (posters and pictures, flannel board stories, picture card games, and recorded stories and songs)	
☐ Books are appropriate for the age, development and abilities of the children in group	
☐ There are no books that show violence in a graphic or frightening way	
Fine Motor	
At least three examples of each type of fine motor materials are accessible for a substantial portion of the day. The types of fine motor materials, including: ☐ small building toys (ex**:** interlocking blocks and Lincoln logs) ☐ art materials (ex: crayons and scissors) ☐ manipulatives (ex: beads of different sizes for stringing, pegs and pegboards, and sewing cards) ☐ puzzles	
☐ Materials well-organized (similar toys stored together; sets of toys in separate containers)	
☐ Containers and accessible storage shelves have labels to encourage self-help	
☐ Materials of different levels of difficulty available	
☐ Materials are rotated to maintain interest	
Art	
3 to5 different art materials from at least four categories are accessible for a substantial portion of the day. Categories of art materials include: ☐ drawing materials (ex: paper, crayons, markers, pencils) ☐ paints (ex: finger paint, water colors, brushes, sponges) ☐ three-dimensional materials (ex: play dough, clay, wood gluing, or carpentry) ☐ collage materials (ex: feathers, buttons, yarn) ☐ tools (ex**:** safe scissors, staplers, hole punches, tape dispensers)	
Music and movement	
☐ Music center with music materials are accessible for children's use at least 1 hour daily	

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☐ Enough musical instruments for at least half of the children to use at once	
☐ At least 3 different types of music. (Ex. children's songs, lullabies, folk songs, classical, country western, jazz, popular, rap, reggae, rhythm & blues, rock , songs in different languages, music characteristic of different cultures	
Blocks (for toddlers 12 months and older)	
☐ Block area set aside out of traffic, with storage and suitable building surface	
☐ The block area is accessible for play for a substantial portion of the day	
☐ Enough space, blocks, and accessories are accessible for three or more children to build at the same time	
At least two types of blocks are accessible daily. The types of blocks are: ☐ unit blocks- wooden or plastic, including shapes such as rectangles, squares, triangles, and cylinders ☐ large hollow blocks- wooden, plastic or cardboard ☐ homemade blocks- shoe boxes, plastic containers, etc.	
☐ A variety of accessories are accessible daily (ex: toy people, animals, vehicles, and road signs)	
☐ Blocks and accessories are stored on open, labeled shelves.	
☐ Some block play is available outdoors	
Dramatic play	
☐ Dramatic play center is clearly defined, with space to play and organized storage	
☐ Dramatic play center accessible for a substantial portion of the day	
☐ Many dramatic play materials accessible including dress-up clothes`	
☐ Props for at least two different themes are accessible daily (ex: housekeeping, and office)	
☐ Materials are rotated for a variety of themes	
☐ Props provided to represent diversity	
☐ Props provided for active dramatic play outdoors	
Sand and water play	

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☐ Provision for sand and water play provided either outdoors or indoors (preferably both if classroom size permits)	
☐ Variety of toys accessible for play (ex: containers, spoons, funnels, scoops, shovels, pots and pans, molds, toy people, animals, and trucks	
Nature/science	
Many developmentally appropriate games, materials, and activities from three categories accessible for a substantial portion of the day. The categories are: ☐ collections of natural objects (ex: rocks, insects, seed pods) ☐ living things (ex: house plants, gardens, pets) ☐ nature/science books, games, or toys (ex: nature matching cares, nature sequence cards) ☐ nature/science activities (ex: cooking, and simple experiments w/ magnets, magnifying glasses, etc.)	
☐ Materials are well-organized and in good condition (ex: collections stored in separate containers, animals' cages clean)	
Math/number	
3 to5 different math/number materials of each type are accessible for a substantial portion of the day. The types are: ☐ counting ☐ measuring ☐ comparing quantities ☐ recognizing shapes ☐ written numbers	
☐ Materials are well-organized and in good condition (ex: sorted by type, all pieces needed for games are stored together)	
☐ Materials are rotated to maintain interest	
Use of TV, video, and/or computers	
☐ All materials used are nonviolent and culturally sensitive	

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☐ Alternate activities accessible while TV/computer is being used	
☐ Use of TV limited to 60 minutes daily	
☐ Use of computer is limited to 20 minutes daily, it is offered as one of several free choice activities	
☐ Materials used are limited to those considered "good for children" (these are materials that add much to children's development, such as to their vocabulary or understanding of the world)	
☐ Most materials encourage active involvement (ex: children can dance, sing, or exercise to video; computer software encourages children to think and make decisions, and use creativity)	
☐ Materials are used to support and extend classroom themes and activities (Ex: video on insects adds information on nature theme; video on farms prepares children for fieldtrip)	
Promoting acceptance of diversity	
☐ Many books, pictures, and materials accessible showing people of different races, cultures, ages, abilities, and gender in non-stereotyping roles	
☐ Some props representing various cultures included for use in dramatic play (ex: dolls of different races, ethnic clothing, cooking and eating utensils from various cultural groups)	
Safety practices (indoor)	
☐ Protective covers on electrical outlets; all electrical cords are kept out of reach of children	
☐ Heavy objects or furniture placed so that children cannot pull them down	
☐ Controls or knobs are not accessible	
☐ Hot stove or fireplace must be protected from children's reach	
☐ Pot handles on stove are not accessible	
☐ Medicines, cleaning materials, pesticides, aerosols, and substances labeled "keep out of reach of children" are locked away	
☐ Bleach solution used **only** when children cannot inhale the spray	
☐ Hot water temperature set to 120 degrees F or less in children's restrooms	

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☐ Mats/rugs do not slide or present tripping hazards	
☐ Open stairwells are not accessible	
☐ There are no play areas in front of doors	
Safety practices (outdoor)	
☐ Tools (not meant for children's use) are not accessible	
☐ All dangerous substances labeled "keep out of reach of children" are locked away	
☐ There are no sharp or dangerous objects present	
☐ Walkways and stairs are safe for the age and development of children, or there are barriers preventing access by children	
☐ There are barriers preventing access to road or driveways	
☐ Hazardous trash is not accessible	
☐ Play equipment is not too high, in poor repair, or unanchored	
☐ Play equipment poses no threat of head entrapment, finger entrapment, injury from pinch-points, or projections	
☐ Fall zones under play equipment has sufficient cushioning	