



CHILD CARE QUALITY REFLECTION GUIDE FOR HOME BASED CHILD CARE SETTINGS

SPACE AND FURNISHINGS

SPACE SIZE AND ARRANGEMENT

The first thing that should be considered is whether the size of the space children occupy is adequate to accommodate the children, adults, and furnishings that fill it.

	Yes	No
▪ Are the rooms so full of equipment that free movement of children and adults is hampered?		
▪ Is the space accessible to children and adults with disabilities?		
▪ Does the room arrangement allow caregivers to supervise all children without obstruction?		
REFLECTIONS:		

FURNITURE

	Yes	No
▪ Are there any child-sized chairs or other child sized furniture?		
▪ Are there mats, or cribs for children to sleep in?		
▪ Are tables, chairs, and high chairs placed on easy-to-clean floors?		
▪ Are diapering tables safe, and placed close to a sink?		
▪ Are shelves used to hold toys and learning materials easily accessible to children?		
REFLECTIONS:		

LIGHTING AND ROOM COMFORT

The space children occupy should have sufficient lighting, fresh air, room heating/cooling control, and sound absorption.

	Yes	No
▪ Do the rooms provide natural lighting from windows and/or skylights without blinds or curtains?		
▪ Does air circulate freely, either with open windows or a ventilating fan?		
▪ Are the space and furnishings clean and in good repair, with no chipping paint, sharp edges, or splinters?		
REFLECTIONS:		

SOFT AREAS

“Softness” for children’s relaxation and comfort is another important consideration.

	Yes	No
▪ Is softness available in several areas, including a separate “cozy area”?		
▪ Is the “cozy area” accessible to children for a large portion of the day (at least 1/3 of the time children are in care)?		
▪ Are the soft furnishings clean and in good repair?		
<i>Note: cots, pillows, and blankets used for naps are not considered as softness indicators.</i>		
REFLECTIONS:		

PRIVACY SPACE

A privacy space is a small area or table where only one or two children may play at a time, separated from the group.

	Yes	No
▪ Is there a privacy space accessible to children for a substantial portion of the day?		
▪ Do caregivers allow children to play alone and offer to protect their play from the intrusion of others?		
REFLECTIONS:		

PLAY SPACE

Play space for children is important and should be arranged into interest areas promoting different types of play. It is considered best practices for home based child care to have at least two interest centers (such as a cozy area, block area, art area, dramatic play area, reading area, nature/science area, music area, and the manipulatives area).

	Yes	No
▪ Are there at least two interest centers with adequate space provided for children near where materials are stored?		
▪ Are the quiet and active play areas separated so as to not interfere with one another?		
▪ Are materials in these areas labeled and stored in a way that makes them accessible to children and promotes independent use?		
▪ Are there low, open shelves to store toys designated for independent use while toys requiring adult supervision are maintained in locked or closed shelves?		
▪ Are there additional play materials available to rotate for variety as needed?		
REFLECTIONS:		

DISPLAY

	Yes	No
▪ Are pictures and seasonal displays age-appropriate and displayed at children's eye level?		
▪ Do any of the images contain elements that may frighten young children?		
▪ Do the displays reflect current activities and seasons, so that they may be used as topics for discussion?		
▪ Is most of the artwork done by children, and is it adequately protected to prevent damage?		
REFLECTIONS:		

PERSONAL CARE ROUTINES

GREETING AND DEPARTING

Greeting and departing are two significant daily transition times for children. During both times, children must make an adjustment between home and school and often feel insecure as a result. To ease these insecurities it is important to make these transition times personal for children.

	Yes	No
▪ Does the caregiver greet children individually and by name when they arrive, and take time to convey how happy they are to spend the day with them?		
▪ Are parents encouraged to come into the home and help create/follow a transition routine?		
▪ When children leave at the end of the day, are their belongings prepared and ready for them?		
▪ When families arrive, does the caregiver take time to speak with each one and give them specific information about their child's day?		
▪ Does the caregiver say good-bye to each child and parent using their names?		
REFLECTIONS:		

MEALS AND SNACKS

Meal and snack times are great opportunities for adult-child interactions and should focus on the children's growing language and self-help skills.

	Yes	No
▪ Do children eat meals in small groups with a caregiver sitting at each table to stimulate social conversation?		
▪ Are children encouraged to help set the table and feed themselves?		
▪ Is the mealtime atmosphere pleasant and non-punitive, and encourage the development of cognitive skills through understanding amounts, sizing, textures, and shapes?		
▪ Are mealtimes personalized, so that each infant or toddler is fed when they show signs of hunger?		
▪ Does the caregiver regularly talk with parents about how their children are adapting to new foods and share any preferences noticed?		
▪ Are meals well balanced, with substitutions made for children with allergies or other family dietary restrictions?		

MEALS AND SNACKS CONTINUED

▪ Is there a list with children’s names and dietary restrictions posted?		
▪ Are proper sanitation routines followed during mealtimes, including sanitizing surfaces used for meals and ensuring children and adults follow proper hand-washing techniques?		
REFLECTIONS:		

NAP AND REST

Naptime should be relaxing, perhaps with soft music, low lights, and caregivers rubbing children’s backs.

	Yes	No
▪ Is naptime a positive atmosphere, individualized to allow sleep as needed throughout the day?		
▪ Are children offered alternative nap activities like books, puzzles, or art materials if they cannot nap?		
▪ Are sleeping cots three feet apart, or separated with a solid barrier?		
▪ Does the caregiver stay alert and attentive for the entire rest period?		
REFLECTIONS:		

DIAPERING AND TOILETING

The most important component of diapering and toileting procedures is proper sanitation. Promoting a positive atmosphere, however, will also promote a successful toileting routine.

	Yes	No
▪ Do caregivers and children wash their hands after diaper changing or toileting?		
▪ Are diapering areas close to a running water source?		
▪ Are safe stepping stools provided for children to reach the sink?		
▪ Are changing tables disinfected after every use, and toilets flushed to promote proper sanitation?		
▪ Are diapering and toileting schedules designed to meet the child’s individual needs?		
▪ Are children encouraged to help with toileting by buttoning, zipping, and pulling up their own clothes?		
REFLECTIONS:		

PERSONAL GROOMING

Personal grooming is an important part of personal care routines, and refers most immediately to caring for the child’s physical appearance.

	Yes	No
▪ Are children’s hands and faces cleaned after messy play or eating?		
▪ Are bibs utilized to protect children’s clothes during mealtimes?		
▪ Do children have their own set of extra clothing to keep in their personal space?		
▪ Are older children encouraged to do many of these grooming tasks on their own?		

PERSONAL GROOMING CONTINUED

- Is dental hygiene taught to toddlers, with their own individually labeled toothbrush?

REFLECTIONS:

HEALTH PRACTICES/POLICIES

Children's equipment and all care giving areas must be clean and in good repair; however, a healthy overall environment includes more than a clean room.

	Yes	No
▪ Do children and adults wash their hands throughout the day, especially before and after meal times, after diapering or toileting, after outdoor and water play, and after wiping noses?		
▪ Is there a clear set of policies regarding illness and medications?		
▪ Are all children up-to-date on their immunizations?		
▪ Does the caregiver keep immunization records and emergency contact information for children in their files?		

REFLECTIONS:

SAFETY PRACTICES/POLICIES

	Yes	No
▪ Are all indoor furnishings and equipment sturdy and free of sharp edges, corners, splintering wood and chipping paint?		
▪ Are any sharp edges or corners protected by padding, or blocked from children? (such as fireplace)		
▪ Are all outlets covered with safety covers?		
▪ In mixed age groups are all small materials and toys kept away from infants and toddlers?		
▪ Are the outdoor materials checked daily to ensure the safety of outdoor play?		
▪ Is there a complete first-aid kit and readily accessible list of telephone numbers in case of an emergency?		
▪ Does the caregiver conduct monthly fire drills in order to prepare the children in case of a fire emergency?		
▪ Have all caregivers who work in the home completed a First Aid/C.P.R. training, and is there at least one caregiver certified in First Aid/C.P.R. present at all times?		
▪ In case of an emergency, do you have a form to document it?		
▪ Are parents informed of all serious injuries, as well as supplied information regarding safety policies on transportation, illness, and accident/incidents?		

REFLECTIONS:

LANGUAGE-REASONING

INFORMAL USE OF LANGUAGE

The informal use of language is a very important part of children’s development, so it is essential for families and caregivers to begin talking with children starting at birth. Responding quickly and consistently to verbal and non-verbal signals is a way to encourage oral language development.

	Yes	No
▪ Does the caregiver maintain eye contact with children while talking, and respond verbally to their crying, gestures, sounds, words, and questions?		
▪ Does the caregiver talk to each child during play and personal care routine, explaining what you and/or the child is doing?		
▪ Does the caregiver explain to children what you will be doing next or what they can expect next?		
▪ Does the caregiver ask open-ended questions of preschoolers?		
REFLECTIONS:		

BOOKS AND PICTURES

Books and pictures are a great way to enhance young children’s language development, especially if children can experience many kinds of books on a daily basis.

	Yes	No
▪ Do children have access to a variety of books, including fantasy and fact, stories about people, animals, and science, and books that reflect different cultures and abilities?		
▪ Are caregivers available to read books informally to one or a few children and encourage communication about the books?		
▪ Does caregiver have other language development materials in the classroom including posters, pictures, flannel board stories, picture cards games, and recorded stories and songs?		
REFLECTIONS:		

ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO COMMUNICATE

Children should communicate with their peers to develop appropriate social skills—and this communication should take place during both free play and group times.

	Yes	No
▪ Do the children have opportunities to share thoughts that are then written down by an adult?		
▪ Do the children have access to a variety of materials that encourage language such as play telephones, puppets, dolls and dramatic play props, and small figures and animals?		
▪ Does caregiver expand on what a child says, encouraging the child to add to what he or she is sharing?		
REFLECTIONS:		

USING LANGUAGE TO DEVELOP REASONING SKILLS

The use of language is important for developing reasoning skills, and children need help with this in order to process the world around them.

	Yes	No
▪ Are there materials available that stimulate reasoning, such as sequence cards, size and shape toys, sorting games, and math and number games?		
▪ Does caregiver ask children questions that focus their attention on objects and the similarities and differences between them?		
REFLECTIONS:		

INTERACTION

SUPERVISION OF GROSS MOTOR ACTIVITIES/GENERAL SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

Safety is a primary concern during gross motor skills, and children should be supervised and observed carefully with adults who are ready to intervene whenever safety is jeopardized.

	Yes	No
▪ Can caregiver visually supervise all areas where children may be?		
▪ Is caregiver involved with the children's conversations and extending their ideas by asking open-ended questions?		
▪ Do caregivers encourage positive social interactions by setting up small group activities and helping children take turns and cooperate with each other?		
▪ Are older children often included in creating simple safety rules?		
REFLECTIONS:		

DISCIPLINE

Helping children gain inner control is the most important goal of discipline, and this often means guiding and directing children towards acceptable behavior.

	Yes	No
▪ Are caregivers positive, calm, and firm, starting with simple, clear rules and limits children can understand?		
▪ Are children often involved in establishing any rules?		
▪ Does caregiver often plan ahead and have duplicate toys accessible and provide smooth transitions so as to avoid conflicts?		
▪ Is caregiver knowledgeable about the characteristics of different age groups and children?		
▪ Does caregiver help children with problem-solving skills?		
▪ Does caregiver acknowledge children's feelings and sensitize them to others' feelings?		
▪ Does caregiver observe the environment and look for reasons why a child is misbehaving?		
▪ When following through with a limit, it is done in a respectful tone using an acceptable and appropriate intervention for that individual child?		
REFLECTIONS:		

ADULT-CHILD INTERACTIONS/INTERACTIONS AMONG CHILDREN

Interactions are day-to-day experiences in which children and adults relate to each other and develop social, emotional, cognitive, and physical skills. Adults who work with children must have a good understanding of how children learn. One important aspect of staff interactions is building relationships with children. Children's social development is strengthened when they have secure relationships with their parents and teachers, as well as with other children.

	Yes	No
▪ Does caregiver plan time to get to know your children?		
▪ Does caregiver try to meet the needs of individual children by adapting daily routines?		
▪ Does caregiver observe, listen, and respond to children by giving them your full attention?		
▪ Does caregiver respect children by using caring words to let them know they are valued?		
▪ When possible, does caregiver create opportunities for children to make decisions and choices?		
▪ Is caregiver dependable (follow through with what you promise, there for children regularly)?		
REFLECTIONS:		

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Learning activities are a key ingredient in any early childhood setting. Without them, children miss out on golden opportunities to develop skills and gain knowledge during their earliest years.

	Yes	No
▪ Are materials and equipment in good repair and non-toxic?		
▪ Is there a variety of developmentally appropriate materials and equipment?		
▪ Are materials and equipment accessible to children? Can children reach them without the help of an adult?		
▪ Are materials and equipment available for a substantial part of the day (at least one third of the time children are in attendance)?		
▪ Is there adequate uncluttered space, inside and outside?		
▪ Are there music activities provided at least three times a week?		
▪ Do the children go outside at least three times a week, weather permitting?		
▪ Does caregiver label play shelves, so as to encourage self-help skills?		
▪ Are there materials for three-dimensional art play at least once a month?		
▪ Does caregiver encourage children's creativity through open-ended activities like art projects, child-created dances and songs, and dramatic play?		
▪ Are sand and water play accessible at least one hour a day?		
▪ If computers are available, do you use them as one of many free choice activities?		
▪ Are there activities that promote understanding and acceptance of diversity?		
REFLECTIONS:		

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

DAILY SCHEDULE

The daily schedule for basic routines should be flexible and individualized to meet each child's needs. These routine times should have learning and play experiences incorporated into them.

	Yes	No
▪ Is there a written, current schedule posted and available for parents? Does it list scheduled daily play activities, including a variety of free-play activities?		
▪ Does the schedule balance between indoor and outdoor play activities, as well as between active and quiet play times?		
▪ Are there planned transitions between activities, so as to avoid long waiting periods and/or constant disruption of children's activities?		
REFLECTIONS:		

SUPERVISION

	Yes	No
▪ Are children within sight, hearing, and easy reach of a caregiver at all times?		
▪ Is the caregiver's attention on children and not other tasks?		
▪ Is there sufficient supervision to meet the routine care needs of children in the group without rigid scheduling or long periods of waiting or crying?		
▪ Is supervision of the entire group maintained even while a caregiver works with one child or a small group?		
▪ Does the caregiver maintain a balance between supporting each child and encouraging her independent exploration?		
REFLECTIONS:		

PROGRAM PLANNING

All programs needs adequate planning time to run smoothly.

	Yes	No
▪ Do you have time at least biweekly for planning activities?		
▪ If there is more than one caregiver, do they interact with each other in a positive way that adds a feeling of warmth and support to the environment? NA permitted		
▪ If there is more than one caregiver, is there time allowed at least biweekly for communication and planning time? NA permitted.		
REFLECTIONS:		

PROVISIONS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

When children with special needs are enrolled in a program, caregivers need to be more flexible in their planning. This need for flexibility will vary depending on the type and severity of the child's disability.

	Yes	No
▪ Are children with special needs included in as many activities as possible?		
▪ Are lesson plans and activities changed or adapted to account for the child with special needs?		
▪ Has the environment, daily schedule, and routine times been reviewed and adjusted in order to meet that child's needs?		
▪ Does the caregiver have copies of any assessments that have been used with the child?		
REFLECTIONS:		

PARENTS AND STAFF

ADULT PERSONAL NEEDS/PROVISIONS FOR PERSONAL NEEDS

	Yes	No
▪ Is there a space the caregiver can go to be alone free from children provided there is someone to supervise them?		
REFLECTIONS:		

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

In order for staff members to continue to grow professionally, they need access to different types of resources.

	Yes	No
▪ Does caregiver take part in professional growth activities such as classes, workshops, lectures or special programs?		
▪ Does caregiver strive to continue learning through staying current on philosophy's and practices relevant to early childhood development and education?		
▪ Does caregiver belong to a professional group related to early childhood development or education?		
REFLECTIONS:		

PROVISIONS FOR PARENTS

In order for parents to serve as partners in a child care program, they need to be well informed and feel their input is respected. The beginning of this partnership starts prior to enrollment when they are urged to observe in the program..

	Yes	No
▪ Do parents receive a handbook including administrative information, approaches practiced, discipline policy, and description of activities?		
▪ Does caregiver refer parents to other professionals for special parenting help, when needed?		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are parents encouraged to stay involved in their child's program through periodic conferences, meetings, and newsletters? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are parents given the opportunity to evaluate the program annually via parent questionnaires or group evaluation meetings? 		
REFLECTIONS:		

CAREGIVERS INTERACTION AND COOPERATION (FOR PROGRAMS WITH MORE THAN ONE CAREGIVER)

For caregivers to provide the best quality care in a positive environment, they need to get along and cooperate.

	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do caregivers interact positively with one another, and add a feeling of warmth and support to the classroom? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are caregivers responsibilities clearly defined? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do caregivers share child-related information daily? Do they have a time when they can meet to plan activities and discuss classroom issues on a weekly basis? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the program promote positive interactions among caregivers through the organization of social events or by encouraging group attendance at professional meetings? 		
REFLECTIONS:		

SCHEDULE

	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a posted daily schedule of activities including both indoor and outdoor play times and a combination of gross motor and less active play? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there a variety of play activities including both child-initiated and caregiver-directed? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there smooth transitions between activities with no long periods of waiting? 		
REFLECTIONS		

FREE PLAY

Child initiated play activities are often called free play or free choice time and should be provided for at least one third of the time children are in care. Outdoor play where children choose their own activities should also be provided and is considered free play.

	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there a variety of toys, games, and equipment accessible for children to use for free play both indoors and outdoors? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are these toys rotated or added periodically to stimulate children's interests? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the caregiver play numerous roles during free play time including providing supervision to protect health and safety, facilitating children's play by extending suggestions, helping foster the use of play as an opportunity for educational interaction, as well as assisting problem solve as situations arise? 		
REFLECTIONS		

GROUP TIME

Young children sometimes have difficulty participating in large group activities, and because of their need for guidance and individual attention, it is recommended that whole group activities be limited to short periods of time appropriate to the ages and developmental levels of children.

	Yes	No
▪ Are children given daily opportunities to choose with whom they wish to play?		
▪ Does the caregiver observe different group dynamics and encourage positive interactions?		
REFLECTIONS		

PROVISIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Parents and caregivers should be involved with the professionals who are working with the child. Developing goals and sharing information is important to meeting the needs of the child with disabilities.

	Yes	No
▪ Are most therapies or other professional interventions carried out within the regular activities of the classroom?		
▪ Is the caregiver encouraged to contribute to individual assessments and intervention plans?		
REFLECTIONS		

SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION OF STAFF IF THERE IS AN ADDITIONAL CAREGIVER OR ASSISTANT

Staff members need to receive appropriate supervision and evaluation to be effective professionals in the program.

	Yes	No
▪ Are observations and feedback frequently provided for staff in a helpful and supportive manner?		
▪ Does staff receive written evaluations at least yearly, identifying both their strengths and areas for improvement? Does staff have an active role in these evaluations by completing a self-evaluation?		
▪ Are there frequent opportunities to implement the recommendations of the evaluations?		
REFLECTIONS		