

***Meeting Licensing Rules and Environment Rating Scales Indicators  
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Third Edition (ECERS-3)  
June 2020***

The Environment Rating Scales (ERS) provide an overall picture of the environment that has been created within an early childhood setting. The ERS tools should be used in connection with Wisconsin Licensing Rules. This document provides clarifications for ERS items as they pertain to Wisconsin Licensing Rules. Information in bold print is from DCF 251 Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers with Commentary. Information following the Licensing Rules are guidelines for scoring indicators for that specific item.

Item 1. Indoor space – temperature control

**251.06(1)(d) The inside temperature may not be less than 67°F.**

**251.06(1)(e) If the inside temperature exceeds 80°F., the licensee shall provide for air circulation with fans, with air conditioning, or by other means.**

Licensing regulations for inside temperature will be followed when scoring indicator 1.2 and 3.2

Item 6. Space for gross motor play – weather permitting

**251.03(14r) “Inclement weather” means stormy or severe weather such as any of the following:**

- (a) Heavy rain.**
- (b) Temperatures above 90 degrees Fahrenheit.**
- (c) Wind chills of 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below for children age 2 and above.**
- (d) Wind chills of 20 degrees Fahrenheit or below for children under age 2.**

Licensing regulations for inclement weather will be followed when the scale references weather permitting for indicators 3.1 and 5.2.

Item 6. Space for gross motor play – safety of gross motor space

**NOTE:** From December 1 to March 31, if children do not use outdoor equipment with platforms over 18 inches tall, insufficient cushioning will not be cited as a safety hazard when scoring this indicator. ERS Observers will not cite insufficient cushioning as a safety hazard if they have observed the program at times when children are not present because they would be unable to know if the children use the equipment with platforms over 18 inches tall.

Rationale: Accumulated snow does not provide adequate cushioning to protect against head injuries. Additionally, surface types such as loose-fill cushioning (wood mulch and rubber mulch), sand, pea gravel, and poured-in-place cushioning can freeze and lose their shock absorbency in winter/cold weather. Children can be permitted to use other equipment that does not require a cushioned fall surface. Other safety hazards in the gross motor space may still be cited as a safety hazard when scoring this indicator.

Note: For programs with fenced gross motor areas. When snow is cleared/moved and piled next to the fence, it can reduce the effective height of the fence. Licensing requires that fences are 4 feet (48

inches) high. Fence height should be considered when deciding where cleared snow will be placed, so that the required fence height can be maintained. Reduced fence height will be cited as a safety hazard.

This information will be used when scoring indicators 1.2 and 3.2.

Items 8. Meals/snacks, 9. Toileting/diapering, and 10. Health practices - hand hygiene

**251.07(6)(i) 7. Disinfecting hand sanitizers may not replace the use of soap and water when washing hands.**

Licensing regulations will be followed when scoring any indicator related to handwashing, disinfecting hand sanitizers are not allowed.

Item 10. Health practices – spacing of cots

**251.07(4)(cm) Each child one year of age and older who has a nap or rest period shall be provided with a sleeping surface that is clean, safe, washable, and placed at least 2 feet from the nearest sleeping child. Sleeping surfaces may be placed end-to-end if a solid partition separates the children and an aisle not less than 2 feet in width is maintained between sleeping surfaces. The sleeping surface shall be any of the following:**

1. A bed.
2. A cot.
3. A padded mat.
4. A sleeping bag.
5. A crib or playpen.

Licensing regulations will be followed when scoring indicator 3.2. To score 3.2 Yes, cots must be 2 feet apart and/or separated by a solid partition.

### **Resources**

- Caring for Our Children, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition: <https://nrckids.org/files/CFOC4%20pdf-%20FINAL.pdf>
- DCF 251: Licensing Rules For Group Child Care Centers: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/205.pdf>
- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale®, Third Edition (ECERS-3™) - Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford, Debby Cryer: <https://www.ersi.info/ecers3.html>
- ERSI Website: <https://www.ersi.info/index.html>
- Playground Information to Use with the Environment Rating Scales: <https://www.ersi.info//PDF/playground%20revised%207-31-18.pdf>
- Public Playground Safety Handbook: <https://cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/325.pdf>
- Supporting Families Together Association: <https://supportingfamieltogether.org/formal-rating-in-youngstar/>
- YoungStar Website: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar>

**\*\*Final determination of any Wisconsin modified scoring must continue to meet all Wisconsin licensing and certification health and safety standards.**