

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-5 Years

The following illustrates connections between FCCERS-R, CLASS Pre-K, and CLASS Toddler quality measures and ways to promote physical activity in family child care settings.

Infants, Toddlers and School-age Children		
Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Space and Furnishings		
CLASS Pre-K: Instructional learning formats FCCERS-R Item 1: Indoor space used for child care FCCERS-R Item 4: Arrangement of indoor space for child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use physical activity as one of a variety of modalities to effectively interest students and gain their participation in activities and lessons. • Provide space for active children away from infants and other children engaged in quiet, sedentary activities. • Remove equipment that does not need to be in the infant room such as activity containers and bouncy chairs. Instead of placing infants in these containing pieces of equipment, place the infants on a blanket on the floor or other safe surface where they can experience freedom of movement, allowing them to explore their bodies and environments in physical positions they are able to get in and out of on their own. • Create open areas for physically active play. Place low bookshelves and heavy tables on rollers so they can be repositioned to alternately discourage rough play during quiet times but then moved to create an open space for safe indoor physical activities. • Add a physical activity space in the room for one or two children to use independently, e.g. suspend a covered balloon in a corner for striking or place rolled socks in a basket and a target on the wall for throwing or on the floor for tossing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children respond well to being physically active as they are learning a variety of concepts. When given the opportunity to be physically active, children tend to bring their best work to the task because the physical activity helps with their focus, attention, and retention of information. • Keep the infant area free of unnecessary equipment to provide enough open space to encourage infants' movements. Create safe places where infants are free to explore their environment. Freedom of movement can aid infants in optimal development across numerous areas including gross and fine motor, cognitive, language, and social-emotional development. These movement experiences can help them feel confident in themselves while gaining interest in the world around them. • In addition to keeping the infant area free of unnecessary equipment, limiting time infants spend in restrictive equipment such as swings, stationary activity centers (e.g., exersaucers), infant seats (e.g., bouncers), molded seats, etc., if used, ensures infants have the opportunity to play on the floor in a safe open area to develop their gross motor skills. If infants are not given the opportunity for floor time, their development can be hindered or delayed.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Space and Furnishings (page 2)		
<p><i>CLASS Pre-K: Instructional learning formats</i></p> <p><i>FCCERS-R Item 1: Indoor space used for child care</i></p> <p><i>FCCERS-R Item 4: Arrangement of indoor space for child care</i></p> <p><i>(Continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide gross motor equipment that may include floor spots; ribbon wands; scarves; 6' parachute; bowling set; targets; riding toys; 24" hula hoops; and soft, light weight balls such as yarn balls and beach balls. For larger spaces equipment might include mats for climbing, rolling, and bouncing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some children need much more physical activity than others. Providing safe, developmentally appropriate physical activity choices within the family child care setting meets the need of these very active children. • Young children benefit from exposure to a variety of age and stage appropriate equipment to promote the development of large muscle movements and activities.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Personal Care Routines		
FCCERS-R Item 11: Health practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have written policies promoting physical activity and include the expectation that children will go outdoors daily in all but extreme weather conditions (see accompanying Weather Watch chart). • Create written policies specifically define the weather conditions in which infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are to be outdoors. • Have extra clothing available so each child can be appropriately dressed for a variety of weather conditions. • Participate in and promote physical activities daily with the children. • Assist children in learning how to put on and take off outdoor clothing before and after playing outdoors multiple times daily. Place outdoor clothing in the dress-up area to enable children to practice putting on and taking off winter and other outdoor clothing. • Lead physical activities with themes that teach good health practices. One example is a tag game in which children posing as teeth keep away other children posing as germs. This activity reinforces the importance of tooth brushing to prevent germs from attaching teeth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written physical activity policies that are shared with families at the time of enrollment may be more likely to enjoy parents' support. Written physical activity policies may potentially be helpful in maintaining consistency across time and personnel changes. • Having a policy on outdoor physical activity that will take place on days when there are adverse weather conditions informs all caregivers/teachers and families about the facility's expectations. The policy can make clear that outdoor activity may require special clothing in colder weather or arrangements for cooling off when it is warm. By having such a policy, the facility encourages caregivers/teachers and families to anticipate and prepare for outdoor activity when cold, hot, or wet weather prevails. • Include in the policies a definition of the weather conditions under which children are to go outside to gain the cooperation of a parent who may think it is only advisable for children to go outside in mild, dry weather. • The availability of extra clothing (supplied by families or other sources) enables children who lack appropriate clothing for the weather conditions to still go outside with the rest of the children. At the end of each season consider asking families if they can donate clothes their children will be outgrowing. Then begin each season by assigning children with any needed outdoor wear to be sure all children can play outdoors no matter what their families have provided. Create a system to avoid the cross contaminating of clothing among children.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Personal Care Routines (page 2)		
<p><i>FCCERS-R Item 11: Health practices</i></p> <p><i>(Continued)</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers who are physically active with the children are modeling regular exercise as a good health practice. • Parents who are educated on the benefits of physical activity and ways to promote it have the potential to become valuable partners in ensuring that physical activities can also happen at home. • Children learn to manage health practices independently when they learn to put on and take off their own outdoor clothes. Children can also begin to conduct their own safety checks related to physical activity such as checking that shoes are tied or fastened and there is nothing in the mouth. • Games are enjoyable ways to reinforce health practices.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Personal Care Routines (page 3)		
FCCERS-R Item 12: Safety practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuously supervise children engaged in physical activities. • Use only safe equipment, e.g. no trampolines, small objects that can be choking hazards, sharp edges that can cut. • Have all children run in the same direction in tag games, e.g. <i>What Time is It, Mr. Fox?</i> • When school-aged children are active together with preschoolers and toddlers, avoid leading physical activities in which the larger, heavier children are likely to fall on and injure the smaller, lighter children, e.g. play <i>Musical Hoops</i> instead of <i>Musical Chairs</i>. • Provide clear boundaries to indicate where children may and may not go during a physical activity. Teach children to adhere to these boundaries. • Have children practice cues for starting /stopping through leading a physical activity such as <i>Red Light, Green Light</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can be quick and clever in the way they place themselves in danger. Close supervision is essential. • It is important that play areas are safely arranged and safe equipment selected to avoid injuries. The provider inspects the play area to remove any toys or equipment that are broken or pose a safety issue. Removing excess water on outdoor play equipment avoids slippery sneaker bottoms, improves hand gripping, and prevents wet clothing on riding toys. Placing toys in their “home” ensures the space is uncluttered and equipment can be found for the next users. • Children need ample practice to develop their spatial awareness. Preschool children may not yet be skilled in dodging because they may have difficulty judging speed and distances. The result is often unintentionally colliding with others. Reduce the need for dodging others by having all children run in the same direction, e.g. clockwise in a large circle around an object in the middle or from one sideline to the opposite one with children running straight across the open space. • Older children may not understand how their larger, heavier bodies may accidentally injure younger children during rough play. When older, heavier children and younger, lighter children are competing for the same space, as in <i>Musical Chairs</i>, it creates the potential for pushing and shoving which can become a safety hazard for the lighter children. By instead playing <i>Musical Hoops</i>, the older and younger children are now cooperating with each other to share a common space, thus reducing the likelihood of pushing, shoving, and potential injury to the lighter children. • Providers need a way to stop children immediately if an activity becomes unsafe. Before engaging in other adult-led physical activities, first teach the children to stop and start moving on cue.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Listening and Talking		
<p>CLASS Pre-K: Language modeling</p> <p>CLASS Toddler: Language modeling</p> <p>FCCERS-R Item 13: Helping children understand language</p> <p>FCCERS-R Item 14: Helping children use language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with children, using language appropriate to each child’s level of comprehension, to describe the actions the children are doing. With infants and toddlers, the provider might say, “You are walking to me.” “Look at you roll over!” “You crawled next to the table.” “I see you reaching for the block.” • With infants and toddlers, use language rich in movement concepts including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spatial relationships such as here/there, on/off, over/under; “Step <u>off</u> the rug.” ○ Spatial awareness such as up/down, high/low; “Reach <u>up high!</u>” ○ Effort such as fast/slow; “See how <u>fast</u> you are moving! • With preschoolers and primary school children, use more advanced language rich in movement concepts including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Spatial relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With body parts (and name body part) - round/narrow/wide/twisted ○ With objects and/or people - over/under, on/off, near/far, meeting/parting ○ With people - leading/following, mirroring/matching, partners/solo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language is key to explaining how to play an adult-led physical activity and to give verbal prompts and feedback throughout the activity. • Adult-led physical activity with children provides an especially rich environment for promoting language around movement concepts including spatial relationships, spatial awareness, and effort. The movement concepts (listed in the center column) take on meaning when linked to children’s movements. Consider these examples: People can move alone (spatial relationship) in general space (spatial awareness) as they run fast and lightly (effort) on a straight pathway at a high level (spatial awareness) with their arms overhead. Or people can move with a partner (spatial relationship) taking slow, strong steps (effort) as they crouch at a low level on a curved pathway (spatial awareness). • Children’s physical activity provides the opportunity to model and strengthen language because of the chance to observe a person’s action and pair it with the descriptive language. • With infants and toddlers, the provider can use language in a positive, encouraging tone to describe children’s actions as they are engaged in movement. The children can begin to understand the link between the words the provider says and the children’s actions. Using exact words to describe a variety of actions enriches the children’s understanding of language. Saying “I see you walking to me. Now you are standing next to me. Hello!” provides a richer language learning opportunity than simply saying “Hello!” when the child walks over to the provider.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Listening and Talking (page 2)		
<p><i>CLASS Pre-K: Language modeling</i></p> <p><i>CLASS Toddler: Language modeling</i></p> <p><i>FCCERS-R Item 13: Helping children understand language</i></p> <p><i>FCCERS-R Item 14: Helping children use language</i></p> <p><i>(Continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Spatial awareness - developing the concept of general space and self-space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Positions - up, down, forward, backward, left, right ○ Levels - high middle, low ○ Pathways - curve, straight, zigzag ○ Extensions – near/far; make your body large/small □ Effort <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Move quickly/slowly ○ Use a lot of force/use little force ○ Move in a free, flowing way or in a jerky, bound way • During adult-led physical activities, use a descriptive vocabulary to explain how to play activities. Use movement concepts to give verbal prompts and feedback throughout adult-led physical activities, e.g. stand <i>behind</i> the barrier, step <i>forward</i> as you throw, throw <i>hard</i> with a lot of <i>force</i>, stand <i>behind</i> your partner, bend your knees then jump <i>forward</i>. • Ask the children questions about their movements during adult-led physical activities, e.g. Are you going to run in a <i>straight</i> or <i>zigzag</i> pathway across the playground? • Promote provider-child conversations during free play. What is your favorite physical activity to play? Why do you like it? • With very young children hold turn-taking conversations while engaged in turn-taking physical activities, e.g. “I roll the ball to you. What do you do now? (Pause to give the toddler time to respond) Yes! You are rolling the ball back to me.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical activities also lend themselves to frequent opportunities to ask children what they plan to do or describe what they did before or after observing their movements. • Engaging in adult-led physical activities as well as free active play typically prompt children’s oral communication. The excitement and fun of the activity as well as the large muscle movements may be particularly useful in prompting children, especially reticent children, to use expressive language. • When engaged in imaginative and physically active play children often are able to communicate and perform at a higher level than otherwise evident. • The turn-talking that can occur while the provider and the child are engaged in a physical activity together can prompt turn-taking in their conversation. • Open-ended movement questions provide children with opportunities to develop their language skills. Physical activities also provide the opportunity to ask children <i>why</i> and <i>how</i> questions about their movements.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Listening and Talking (page 3)		
CLASS Pre-K: Concept development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use obstacle courses to practice sequencing. • Use carry games to practice matching same/different objects. • Use carry games to identify and categorize objects by size or shape. The concepts of color, size, or shapes can be practiced using a carry game in which children run from one end of an open space to the other end. Each child carries an item and looks for its exact match among the many items at the other end. • Practice sorting through playing carry games that involve identifying healthy and less healthy foods .Ask children to explain why they sorted objects into different groups, or to explain in what way are two objects/pictures the same or different. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept development can be promoted while children are enjoyably engaged in a variety of adult-led physical activities. These activities provide the opportunity for the provider to have conversations with children regarding their analysis and reasoning when matching/categorizing objects. Further explanations of examples follow. • Obstacle courses are based on children moving from one obstacle to another in a defined sequence. Obstacle courses make it easy for the provider to observe children who may have difficulty sequencing movements and give them corrective feedback. • In carry games children pick up an object at one end of the open space then run, walk, run, jump, hop, slide, or log roll, to the other end of the open space where they look for the object’s exact match, or to place the object in its category. • Carry games provide opportunities for the provider to help children identify or categorize objects/pictures/numbers/letters that are the same or different with regard to color, size, shape, etc. • Physical activities lend themselves to frequent opportunities to ask children what they plan to do or describe what they did before or after observing their movements.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Listening and Talking (page 4)		
FCCERS-R Item 15: Using books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children to act out the actions occurring in a story. • Encourage preschool children to form shapes (e.g., round, wide, narrow, long, straight), express emotion, and point to and move body parts when mentioned in the story. • Ask children to create their own stories using items that promote physical activity (e.g. scarves, rolled socks, hula hoops). • Read books such as <i>Going on a Bear Hunt</i> and <i>The Hungry Caterpillar</i>. Another reference is Story Walk (www.lets-go.org). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote children’s interest in books through encouraging children to act out stories. This technique can help promote children’s comprehension and expand their movement vocabulary while also providing the opportunity to be physically active during an otherwise sedentary story time. • Acting out stories provides an opportunity for the provider to explicitly model and prompt language through encouraging children to act out and repeat certain words or phrases in conjunction with the movements. • An important aspect of children’s development is the ability to express emotion both verbally and physically. Acting out stories provides these opportunities to express emotions.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Activities		
FCCERS-R Item 18: Music and movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dance to the music and encourage children to do the same. • Clap in rhythm while encouraging the children to also clap in rhythm with the music. In addition to clapping, the provider can gently tap a child’s body in rhythm with the music. • With preschoolers and school-age children, play music with lyrics that dictate a range of movements for children to do. • Play music and the provider/children add movements to do to the music. • Prompt children to respond to music cues through dancing then abruptly stop (freeze) in response to music that starts and stops. • Add rhythmic equipment such as ribbon wands, scarves, or crepe paper streamers for children to explore movements with music. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this young age, the use of imitation as in “copy me, follow me, my turn now your turn” is appropriate for children to practice familiar and newly introduced physical and rhythmic skills. • Moving to music can help children develop rhythm and express the feelings that the music evokes. Developing a sense of rhythm is foundational to moving with coordination and fluidity. Rhythmically tapping on children’s bodies in time with the music can help children develop their internal sense of rhythm. The importance of rhythm extends beyond movement. A sense of rhythm is also integral to understanding speech. • Rhythmic activities combined with movement may help with self-regulation among preschool children. <p><i>Note: Item 18 is focused almost exclusively on music with only two indicators mentioning movement.</i></p>
FCCERS-R Item 20: Dramatic play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use dramatic play to promote and enrich physical activities. • Use physical activities to promote and enrich dramatic play. • Provide children with opportunities for dramatic play outdoors as well as indoors. • Add props such as scarves, sports jerseys, and tutus to promote physically active dramatic play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many adult-led physical activities, with very simple rules for toddlers, can be designed to incorporate dramatic play in them. Both dramatic play and physical activity tend to be especially engaging for young children. Combining physical activity with dramatic play can enrich both aspects of the activity. • Providing opportunities for dramatic play while outdoors enables children to engage in vigorous physical activity as part of their play.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Activities (page 2)		
FCCERS-R Item 21: Math/number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infuse physical activity into math/number activities. One example is a carry game in which children carry cards with numbers on them across an open space to place the numbered cards in packets labeled with the same numbers. Vary the locomotor skills practiced by asking children to run, walk, bear crawl, hop, or gallop as they carry the numbered cards across the open space. • Play <i>Follow the Leader</i>. Play additional activities in which you count aloud while leading the toddlers in simple, repetitive physical activities such as marching/stepping in place. • Ask toddlers to identify “more” and “less” as they throw socks over a barrier at a wall. Questions such as “Are there more socks here at our feet than over next to the wall? After we throw all of the socks at the wall, will there be more or less socks at our feet than next to the wall?” • Provide large and small balls to throw at the wall. Help toddlers identify which balls are large and which balls are small. • As another example, ask preschoolers to count aloud the number of times the group performs a movement. Or ask a child volunteer to select how many times the group will do the movement. • Incorporate throwing into number identity by asking preschoolers to name the numbers on the paper targets that they try to hit with rolled socks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical activity can be helpful in promoting children’s focus, attention, and memory. Infusing physical activities into the practice of math/number learning can enhance children’s engagement with the concepts. • Carry games in which children carry something from one end of the open space to the other and back are a way to practice their locomotor skills while also rehearsing math/number concepts. • Concepts such as “more” and “less” are basic to understanding math concepts. Using concrete examples such as determining that a large collection of sock has “more” socks than a small collection of socks can help children begin to comprehend these basic math concepts. • Similarly, introduce the concepts of “large/largest” and “small/smallest” through using concrete objects such as various size balls children throw.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Activities (page 3)		
FCCERS-R Item 22: Nature/science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design physical activities to also teach nature/science concepts. An example is an activity in which children imitate the movements of animals that eat other animals, e.g. birds fly around catching mosquitoes. Use the activity as the stimulus to present the concept of the food chain. • Use throwing activities to discuss basic physics concepts such as force and speed. • Imitate the movements and behaviors of a variety of animals, e.g. turtles and dogs, elephants, monkeys. • Identify and point to the most prominent muscles and bones used in varying physical activities, e.g. the bicep muscle during in a pulling activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging children in an imaginative physical activity provides fertile opportunities to incorporate nature/science concepts. • The ability to experience movements can help make somewhat complex concepts more understandable. Discuss how the varying animals' bodies influence how the animals move, e.g. ask children to crawl on their bellies imitating turtles then creep on all fours imitating dogs. Lead the children in a discussion about why turtles on land move more slowly than dogs. • As children's hearts are pounding after playing a vigorous running game, they may be receptive to a simple explanation of how their hearts beat fast when they are moving fast in order to more quickly pump energy to the muscles used in running. • Children are often fascinated to learn the names and locations of the most prominent muscles and bones of their own bodies.
FCCERS-R Item 23: Sand and water play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote physical activities involving sand/water such as challenging preschoolers to carry objects as they walk. Children can carry jugs filled with water or sand while acting out dramatic scenarios in which they are making deliveries to customers. Vary the size and weight of the jugs to match each child's ability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying gallon (or half-gallon or quart) jugs of water or sand from place to place provides ample opportunity for the children to develop their muscular strength and endurance. • Carrying jugs also provides opportunities to integrate math and science concepts such as asking preschoolers questions about the weight of objects that vary by volume and material inside the jugs.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Activities (page 4)		
FCCERS-R Item 24: Promoting acceptance of diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively promote acceptance of children with varying skill levels and modes of moving during physical activity. • Be flexible with rules and expectations, e.g. some children may need consistent reinforcement of the instructions. • Modify the environment and task as needed to enable children with disabilities to participate in physical activities throughout the day. • Lead minimally competitive, open-ended adult-led physical activities, modified as needed, to enable children with disabilities to enjoy participating with their typical peers. • Play simple games that reflect the specific cultures of those in the class. Infuse preschool games that originated from other countries and cultures. • Display posters of both boys and girls, including children with disabilities, engaged in physical activity. • Lead cooperative activities such as <i>Musical Hoops</i> in which children cooperate and share the hoops rather than compete against each other in <i>Musical Chairs</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During physical activities children’s (and adults) varying skill levels are on full display for others to observe. This provides a rich opportunity to discuss individual differences and promote acceptance of people with varying skill levels and modes of moving. • Most minimally competitive, open-ended adult-led physical activities can be modified to enable children with disabilities to participate with their typical peers. • Including children with disabilities in physical activities with their typical peers sends the important message that children of differing abilities are similar enough that they can all enjoy playing together. • Providers are encouraged to examine the room arrangement and investigate adapted equipment (e.g. wheelchairs, gait trainers and mobile prone standers) to enable children with physical disabilities to participate in physical activity. Seek to consult with the children’s physical and occupational therapists as available. • Introducing physical activities that are inherent in diverse cultures expands the curricular offerings while simultaneously providing recognition, appreciation, and validation for diverse cultures and the children who are part of them.

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-5 Years

Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Activities (page 5)		
Item 25: Use of TV, video, and/or computers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid screen time with infants and young toddlers. • Only occasionally use TV, video, music video and/or computer programming in which the preschool and school-aged children are active along with the characters/children/adults displayed on the screen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise videos in which children and their provider are actively involved are ways to further promote physical activity. • The American Academy of Pediatrics <i>New Recommendations for Media Use</i> recommends the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For children younger than 18 months, avoid use of screen media other than video-chatting. Parents of children 18 to 24 months of age who want to introduce digital media should choose high-quality programming and watch it with their children to help them understand what they're seeing. • For children ages 2 to 5 years, limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs. Parents should co-view media with children to help them understand what they are seeing and apply it to the world around them. • Problems begin when media use displaces physical activity, hands-on exploration and face-to-face social interaction in the real world, which is critical to learning. Too much screen time can also harm the amount and quality of sleep. Organizations like Common Sense Media can help parents evaluate media content and make decisions about what is appropriate for their family. <p><i>*1 hour per day of high-quality programs includes time spent watching at home and in early care and education settings. It is important to talk with parents about screen time limits.</i></p>

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Activities (page 6)		
FCCERS-R Item 26: Active physical play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote many opportunities for children to be physically active in both indoor and outdoor settings throughout the day. • Provide numerous opportunities for infants to be safely supervised as they are positioned on their tummies on the floor, not propped by bolsters or other equipment, while awake. <i>Caring for Our Children, Fourth Edition, Best Practice</i> recommends “Initially place infants on their tummies for brief periods of 3-5 minutes. Extend the length of time as the infants increase their tolerance for tummy time.” Staff can get on the floor, face to face with the infants, to engage with them during tummy time, especially with infants who are initially fussy in this position. • Provide ample time for infants to engage in freedom of movement in safe spaces both indoors and outside. • Infants should be taken outside 2 to 3 times per day (as tolerated) and toddlers should be allowed 60 to 90 total minutes of outdoor play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical activity needs to be the default activity throughout the child care day in order for young children to master the movement skills that lay the foundation for a lifetime of gross and fine motor skill development and the accompanying enjoyment of being physically active. • <i>Caring for Our Children, Fourth Edition, Best Practice</i> recommends that [providers] participate, to the extent that they are physically able, in active play with the children. While doing so, the adults need to maintain their balance to avoid falling onto any children. They also need to maintain supervision of all children while participating in the physical activity. • Infants’ participation in physical activity, such as tummy time is essential to their overall health, and the development of their neck, upper body and trunk muscles. Strengthening these muscle groups lays the foundation for developing efficient rudimentary movements and fundamental movement skills. Tummy time can also reduce the development of a flat back of the head caused by extensive time in a back lying position.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Activities (page 7)		
<p><i>FCCERS-R Item</i> 26: <i>Active physical play</i></p> <p><i>(Continued)</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants develop from their head to their feet and from their core outward to fingertips. They have so many parts of their body they need to practice moving and learn to coordinate. It is important for infants to have time they are enjoying on the floor in order to develop control of their bodies' movements. Time spent in positions they can get in and out of from their back is necessary for optimal developmental outcomes. When adults place or prop infants in sitting positions before infants are able to sit on their own, it can create situations in which the infants lose the motivation to learn to get into the sitting position on their own or are stuck in that sitting position due to fear of falling. While well intended, placing infants into positions they cannot get into on their own can disrupt the exploration and extensive practice needed for infants' optimum motor development. • Infants and toddlers require many, many opportunities to be physically active to develop and master their rudimentary movement skills such as rolling over, reaching, sitting, scooting, crawling, creeping, and eventually pulling to a stand and taking their first steps. As they become toddlers, they need practice learning to maintain their balance as they stand and squat, walk forward, walk backward, and walk while simultaneously carrying objects. Similarly, preschool children and school-age children need many, many opportunities to be physically active to develop mature fundamental movement skills.

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Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Interaction		
<p>CLASS Toddler: Facilitation of learning and development</p> <p>CLASS Toddler: Language modeling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage children in physical activities as a simple way to promote children’s manipulation of materials, physical involvement, and verbal involvement. • Encourage children’s thinking skills and language by asking questions about the physical activity as the children are playing it. One example is to challenge the children to push safe objects of varying weights across the floor. As the children push, ask questions about which objects are harder/easier to push, what is needed to push faster/slower, how children’s muscles feel as they push hard, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing physical activities together provides the opportunity for the provider to facilitate children’s learning and development. During the physical activity the provider can provide opportunities and guide exploration, embed information, and encourage thinking skills. • Playing physical activities together also provide opportunities for providers to model language skills through naming and describing children’s action as they occur. The provider can also ask questions that prompt the children to use the same language that was just modeled.
<p>CLASS Pre-K: Quality of feedback</p> <p>CLASS Toddler: Quality of feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe children’s actions as they are engaged in physical activities. One example is to place safe objects around the room and challenge the children to find them. Describe the children’s actions, e.g. “I see you look up high to find an object.” Also ask questions of children such as “Do you think one might be on the chair seat? Where else might you look? Can you look up behind the chair? Under the table?” • Further encourage children’s physical activity through providing encouragement and affirmation of the children’s efforts, e.g. “I see you are moving quickly to gather as many objects as you can!” “Great! You just found two objects that were hidden behind the chair!” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical activities are ideal for providing quality feedback to young children because the children’s actions are easily observed. The provider can then comment on children’s actions to scaffold learning, provide information, and encourage and affirm their efforts.

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-5 Years

Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Interaction (page 2)		
FCCERS-R Item 27: Supervision of play and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervise while engaging in active play with the children, helping and encouraging children as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision is essential while engaging with children in active play. • Providers need to anticipate and act to avoid problems to promote and sustain children’s active play. • <i>Caring for Our Children, Fourth Edition</i>, Best Practice recommends that providers participate, to the extent that the providers are physically able, in active play with the children. While doing so, providers need to maintain their balance to avoid falling onto a child. They also need to maintain supervision of all children while participating in the activity.
CLASS Pre-K: Positive climate CLASS Toddler: Positive climate FCCERS-R Item 28: Provider-child interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use non-competitive, inclusive, cooperative physical activities, whether adult-led or free play, to support positive provider-child interactions. • Play developmentally appropriate physical activities together with the children. The physical activities mentioned as examples elsewhere in this document meet this criterion. • Lead physical activities that promote a positive climate. Developmentally appropriate, non-competitive, non-elimination, inclusive, and cooperative physical activities may be good choices for achieving a positive climate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the aspects of a positive provider-child interaction can be supported through the provider and children playing adult-led physical activities together. Playing and laughing together involves physical proximity while enjoying a shared activity. Leading non-competitive, inclusive, cooperative physical activities can involve peer assistance, opportunities for matching affect by adopting facial expressions, tone of voice and body language that match the child’s emotional state, and spark social conversations as adult and children play together toward a common goal. Active play has the potential to be a powerful way to build positive relationships. Additionally, children who are learning to move are increasing their sense of competence. If children are given choices (color of ball to throw) within the adult-led physical activity they are also developing their autonomy. • Further, a positive affect can be strengthened through playing developmentally appropriate, inclusive physical activities together. These activities involve all children participating and no elimination. Adults and children naturally smile, laugh, and show enthusiasm when playing fun adult-led physical activities together. • Having fun while playing physical activities together can be an especially powerful way for providers to show they enjoy being with children. It also provides fertile opportunities to develop and maintain mutual respect.

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-5 Years

Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Interaction (page 3)		
<p>CLASS Pre-K: Negative climate</p> <p>CLASS Toddler: Negative climate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead developmentally appropriate adult-led physical activities with rules and skill demands that match children’s abilities to avoid a negative climate. • Invite rather than require children to participate in the adult-led physical activity. • Never withhold active play as a consequence for children who misbehave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the aspects of a negative climate can be present during a poorly selected and conducted adult-led physical activity. Consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Highly competitive physical activities with complex rules that are beyond the children’s level of understanding and physical skills and pits children against each other to determine winners and losers can prompt negative affect. ○ A provider who is attempting to lead poorly organized, unsafe, developmentally inappropriate physical activities can become overwhelmed and resort to punitive control, sarcasm/disrespectful comments, and severe negativity in a frustrated attempt to establish control. Peer disputes, escalating frustration and negativity are also likely to be observed in adult-led physical activities that are beyond the developmental level of the children. • In contrast, a well-organized developmentally appropriate physical activity has the potential to prompt a positive climate.

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-5 Years

Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Interaction (page 4)		
<p>CLASS Pre-K: Behavior management</p> <p>CLASS Toddler: Behavior guidance</p> <p>FCCERS-R Item 29: Discipline</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide frequent opportunities for children to be physically active. Design the physical activity environment and task to minimize children wandering and waiting. • Provide open space and equipment for individual children to choose to engage in additional physical activity when they need it. Consider providing picture cards with various physical activities that children can do. • Use physical activities to teach social skills, e.g. turn taking, sharing equipment, working together toward a common goal, and negotiating conflicts. • Use yoga, breathing star, and other breathing techniques to help children calm themselves. One example is the <i>breathing star</i>, a star cut out of construction paper that children open and close with each inhalation and exhalation, according to teacher modeling. Another example is the adult narrating a story about a journey to a garden. A child reaches down, picks a few beautiful flowers, then blows the pedals a few times. The adult emphasizes slow breaths to help children become calm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young children are designed to be physically active. Often potentially disruptive behavior can be averted through providing frequent opportunities for children to be physically active throughout the day. • Providing the opportunity for individual children to engage in physical activity in the room gives each child the additional choice to be physically active when the child needs it. • The off-task, disruptive, and at times aggressive behaviors children exhibit often stem from traumatic events in their lives. These behaviors represent biological dysregulation. Movement activities are being increasingly shown to help children regulate themselves biologically when they are upset. The provider may find using movement may help children calm down and regulate the biological effects of trauma. • Social skills are strong predictors of success among older children and adults. Young children need much assistance and practice in learning these social skills. Playing physical activities together, whether adult-led or free active play, provide ample opportunities for the provider to help children understand and develop these essential social skills such as turn-taking, sharing equipment, working together toward a common goal, negotiating conflicts that may arise, and encouraging others' efforts.

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-5 Years

Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Interaction (page 5)		
FCCERS-R Item 30: Interactions among children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The examples and rationale for Item 30 are the same as in Item 28 above - except the examples apply to interactions among the children themselves. • During free play enable the children to direct their own physical activities whether it be playfully chasing each other around the playground, acting out a real or imagined scenario, or exploring their physical capabilities on playground equipment. • Take action to be sure children are not consistently marginalized by their peers during free play. • Engage children in physical activities that promote positive peer interaction. Developmentally appropriate, non-competitive, inclusive, and cooperative physical activities may be good choices for achieving positive peer interactions. • Give children practice moving with control and without bumping into others through playing activities such as <i>Red Light, Green Light</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play “is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated (Leichter-Saxby & Law, 2015, p. 97).” During free play children direct their play (with adult supervision to assure all children’s physical and emotionally safety). While they are doing so, they are developing executive functions, using creativity, and honing their social skills. • All of the aspects of positive peer interactions can be supported through adults and children playing adult-led physical activities together. Playing and laughing together involves physical proximity while enjoying a shared activity. Adult and children playing together toward a common goal can involve peer assistance; provide opportunities for matching affect by adopting facial expressions, tone of voice and body language that match the child’s emotional state; and can spark social conversations. Active play has the potential to be a powerful way to promote positive interactions among children. • Developing children’s spatial awareness, including the ability to move with control and avoid collisions with others, is foundational to positive peer interactions.

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-5 Years

Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Program Structure		
FCCERS-R Item 31: Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable infants to spend most of their day in safe spaces where they are able to experience freedom of movement. Assure that infants are not confined in containers such as ring standers, car seats, and high chairs during non-feeding times. • Provide supported tummy time for infants several times daily (3-5 min). Provide opportunities for freedom of movement while outside on a daily basis (2-3 times per day), weather permitting (see accompanying Weather Watch chart). • <i>Caring for Our Children, Fourth Edition</i>, recommends the following best practices regarding free play and whole-group adult-led physical activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide at least 60-90 minutes of physical activity daily for toddlers. ○ Provide at least 90-120 minutes of physical activity daily for preschoolers. ○ Provide opportunities for freedom of movement while outside on a daily basis, weather permitting. (See accompanying Weather Watch chart.) ○ Include at least two bouts of adult-led physical activities daily. • To achieve the recommended minutes of daily physical activity it may be most practical to intersperse short periods (5-15 minutes) of physical activity throughout the day. This could include multiple brief active transitions, three or more bouts of 10-minute adult-led whole group physical activities, and an hour or more of outdoor free play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Caring for Our Children, Fourth Edition</i>, Best Practice recommends infants should have supervised tummy time every day when they are awake. Beginning on the first day at the early care and education program, caregivers/teachers should interact with an awake infant on his/her tummy for short periods (3–5 minutes), increasing the amount of time as the infant shows he/she enjoys the activity. • <i>Caring for Our Children, Fourth Edition</i>, Best Practice recommends daily opportunities for both adult-led physical activities and child-initiated free play because these two types of activities offer complementary benefits for children. • Adult-led physical activities that accommodate children with wide-ranging skill levels and conducted in a welcoming, inclusive manner increase the likelihood that most if not all children will participate. The adult can plan activities that provide practice in a wide variety of motor skills.

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-5 Years

Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Program Structure (page 2)		
FCCERS-R Item 32: Free play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervise and interact with children who are engaged in both indoor and outdoor free play. Offer a commentary on the children’s activities and acknowledge their efforts. Imitate what the children are doing or play along with the children but without taking control of their play. Allow the children to take the lead while asking questions to enhance and extend the children’s experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child-initiated free play gives children practice in planning and conducting their own creative physical activities, important executive functions. It also places upon the children the responsibility for setting and following the rules as well as determining how to handle the situation when a child breaks the mutually agreed upon rules. • Historically the nature of young children’s free play is to be physically active with bursts of moderate to vigorous physical activity interspersed with brief periods of rest. This free play provides a rich opportunity for the provider to supervise children in a way that encourages educational interaction. Free play provides opportunities for the provider to help children think through solutions to conflicts, encourage children to communicate about activities, and introduce concepts in relation to the play. However, it is important that the adult not step in and start directing the children’s free play. <p><i>Note: While the provider is not leading the activity during free play, adult supervision is still essential to assure the physical and emotional safety of all children and to help guide children in developing healthy skills for resolving conflicts.</i></p>

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-5 Years

Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Program Structure (page 3)		
FCCERS-R Item 33: Group time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to Item 31 above for the <i>Caring for Our Children, Fourth Edition</i>, best practices regarding group time physical activity. • Intersperse short periods (5-15 minutes) of adult-led whole-group physical activities throughout the day to promote children’s fundamental movement skill development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamental movement skills are basic movements such as run, jump, hop, (locomotor skills), throw, catch, kick (object control skills), and bend, stretch, and balance (stability skills). Children need many, many opportunities to practice these skills in order to become skillful movers who seek to be physically active now and across their lifespan. Offering multiple adult-led whole-group physical activities daily provides children with the needed practice to develop these fundamental movement skills that are the foundation of children’s skillful movement. • Infants need many opportunities to engage in tummy time, explore movement, and strengthen their muscles. As infants refine their rudimentary movement skills (e.g. roll over, sit, crawl, creep) they develop the movement foundation needed to work on their fundamental movements skill when they become toddlers. • Observe the children closely in order to end the whole-group physical activity before children begin to lose interest. This will serve to maintain the children’s interest in playing the activity again another time and help keep children enthusiastically participating in whole-group physical activities.

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-5 Years

Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Program Structure (page 4)		
FCCERS-R Item 34: Provisions for children with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively promote acceptance of children with varying skill levels and modes of moving during physical activity. • Be flexible with rules and expectations, e.g. some children may need consistent reinforcement of the instructions. • Modify the environment and task as needed to enable children with disabilities to participate in physical activities with their typical peers. • Lead minimally competitive, open-ended adult-led physical activities, modified as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During physical activities children’s (and adults) varying skill levels are on full display for others to observe. This provides a rich opportunity to discuss individual differences and promote acceptance of people with varying skill levels and modes of moving. • It is important to be flexible with rules and expectations to be truly inclusive of children with widely varying abilities. • Most minimally competitive, open-ended adult-led physical activities can be modified to enable children with disabilities to participate with their typical peers. • Including children with disabilities in physical activities with their typical peers sends the important message that children of differing abilities are similar enough that they can all enjoy playing together. • The provider is encouraged to examine the house arrangement and investigate adapted equipment (e.g. wheelchairs, gait trainers and mobile prone standers) to enable a child with a physical disability to participate in physical activities. Seek to consult with the child’s physical and/or occupational therapist as available.

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-5 Years

Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Parents and Provider		
FCCERS-R Item 35: Provisions for parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include policies that promote physical activity for children and tummy time for infants in the program handbook provided to all parents. Explain the importance of ‘physical literacy’ to parents. • Include a discussion of the program’s practices that promote children’s daily indoor and outdoor physical activity during admissions meetings with parents. • Share information with parents of infants on the importance of tummy time and concerns with overuse of infant containers. • Share information with parents of children about the physical activities in which their children engage on a regular basis. • Encourage parents to establish household routines that involve physical movement, such as taking out the trash and cleaning-related chores. • Use an assessment such as the <i>Peabody Developmental Motor Scale, 2nd Edition (PDMS-2)</i> to report to parents the progress infants and toddlers are making toward developing rudimentary movement skills. • Use an assessment such as the <i>Test of Gross Motor Development (TGMD)</i> to report to parents the progress preschool and school-age children are making toward developing mature fundamental movement skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing parents of the physical activity policies and practices potentially encourages their support and cooperation in promoting their children’s physical activity both in the child care setting and in the home. • Physical literacy is defined as the ability to move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person (Mandigo et al., 2012; Whitehead, 2001). Children who are physically literate possess the skills, knowledge, and confidence to safely participate in a variety of physical activities that benefit the development of the whole child. <p><i>References:</i> Mandigo, J., Francis, N., Lodewyk, K., & Lopez, R. (2012). <i>Physical literacy for educators. Physical Education and Health Journal</i>, 75(3), 27-30. Whitehead, M. (2001). <i>The concept of physical literacy. European Journal of Physical Education</i>, 6, 127-138.</p>

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-5 Years

Quality Category	Example of Physical Activity	Rationale
SUBSCALE: Parents and Provider (page 2)		
FCCERS-R Item 37: Opportunities for professional growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a provider, participate in professional development on the benefits of and strategies for promoting young children’s physical activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provider who receives ongoing training and library resources on early childhood physical activity becomes equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to promote infants’ freedom of movement, lead children in adult-led physical activities, promote children’s development of rudimentary and fundamental movement skills and physical fitness, and develop creative ways to infuse physical activity into other curricular activities throughout the child care day.

Physical Activity Opportunities for Quality Improvements in Early Learning: 0-5 Years

Citations:

Harms, T., Cryer, D., & Clifford, R. M. (2007). *Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition*, New York: Teachers College Press

CLASS Pre-K: Pianta, R. C., La Paro, K. M., Hamre, B.K. (2008). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System: Manual Pre-K*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes

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This FCCERS, CLASS Pre-K and CLASS Toddler Crosswalk with Physical Activity was created by

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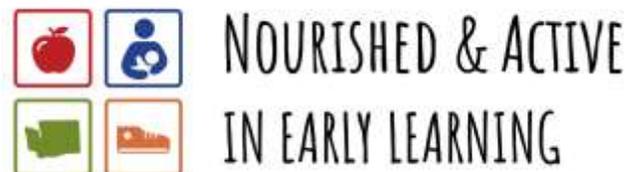
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ATTACH WEATHER WATCH CHART



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