

## Montana Additional Notes for FCCERS-R

*Note: The Montana Notes that follow supersede the additional notes included in the book and the Notes for Clarification from North Carolina. These are the notes that will be used for assessments from September 1<sup>st</sup> until the next revision April 1<sup>st</sup>. It is important to disregard any NC Notes for Clarification that come out until the next April 1<sup>st</sup> revision.*

### General Notes

**Items to be omitted from MT scoring: #35, #36, #37 and #38**

### Accessibility

Accessibility pertains to Item 3: Provisions for relaxation and comfort-indicators 3.1 and 3.2; Item 17: Art-indicator 3.1; Item 18: Music and Movement-indicator 3.1; Item 19: Blocks-indicators 3.1 and 3.2; Item 20: Dramatic play-indicators 3.1 and 3.2; Item 21: Math/number-indicator 3.1; Item 22: Nature/science-indicators 3.2 and 3.3; and Item 24: Promoting acceptance of diversity indicator.

Materials should be stored on low, open, uncrowded shelves. Materials should be stored in bins or containers that clearly show what is inside, such as a see-through container or container label with a picture of what is inside. If materials are stored in containers, they should be without lids. If lids are used they should be easy to open and close by all children. Containers must not be too heavy that children cannot remove them independently from shelves. Materials must not be stored in such a way that bins must be tipped over rather than removed from the shelf by children or large heavy items stored above the children heads when playing.

For materials to be counted as accessible to children, they must be able to reach and use the materials for a period of 1 hour a day in a program of 8 hours or more. The 1 hour can be provided at one time or as a combination of several periods throughout the day. This does not mean that each child must have a full hour to use the materials. However, it is required that children have a reasonable chance to use the materials at some time if they wish. Less time is required for programs operating less than 8 hours a day, with the amount of time calculated proportionally, based on the ratio of 1 hour for programs of 8 hours or more. For example, if a program operated for 6 hours a day, this would be  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a full-day program, so the time required would be  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the 1 hour. Use this chart to determine the approximate amount of time needed in programs operating less than 8 hours.

Number of hours in operation	2 hours	3 hours	4 hours	5 hours	6 hours	7 hours
Approximate minutes required for accessibility	15	25	30	40	45	50

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Materials are considered accessible only if it is observed that children freely access and are permitted to use most of the materials. If programs limit the amount of children in areas they must ensure that all children have a reasonable opportunity to access materials for a substantial portion of the day. A reasonable opportunity requires that materials are accessible throughout the day, both indoors and outdoors. If children request access to materials and are prevented from using them there must be other opportunities to use the same materials in other areas or other times of the day to receive credit. Some materials may not be accessible during the observation. For example; sand and water play may only be available in the afternoon. However the materials must be available for 1 hour to receive credit for "accessible" or 1/3 of the day to receive credit for "substantial portion of the day. Additional questions may be needed to gain information on other times of the day. Keep in mind that non-mobile infants do not have access to the materials if they are not placed within easy reach of the infant. For programs operating more than 5 hours a day, in order to meet much of the day there should be no significant extended periods of time where structured activities prevent access to materials. Access must be observed throughout the day.

### **“Some”**

The term “some” occurs most frequently in indicators that represent a minimal (3) level of quality, although occasionally it occurs at higher levels. In determining how much is needed to give credit for “some” in an indicator, consider the requirements in the parallel indicators at the lower and next higher level of quality. For example, if under inadequate “no” materials are required, then “some” would mean “one or more”. In cases where a plural is used with the term “some”, then “more than one” would be required to give credit. When terms such as “very few” or “very little” or “rarely” are used under inadequate, then “some” represents a mid-point between what is required for the 1 and the 5 levels.

### **“Many or Variety”**

Terms such as “many” or “variety” are used throughout the scale. We have provided numbers to guide decision making for many of these terms. However, the actual number required will depend on number of children enrolled and the ages and abilities of those children. In cases where there are small groups of children, the numbers provided are likely to be reasonable. However, in large family child care homes, with 10 or more children, more materials will be needed.

### **Scoring**

Levels of quality build expectations from minimal to good to excellent. Consider not only the requirements of the indicator, but the level of quality documented as general practice throughout the observation.

### **Child Participation**

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When children are required to participate in an activity or lose interest during the activity, but are not allowed to leave, participation is considered forced. Children may be encouraged to join an activity, but staff should be respectful of their cues and respond appropriately if any child loses interest.

### **Supervision**

Regarding supervision, staff must be able to hear the child at all times and must be able to physically respond immediately. Limited times when children are out of sight (2 to 4 minutes lapses) are acceptable as long as children are not engaged in high risk activities. The caregiver's focus must be on the children, especially during high risk activities, such as eating, sand/water play, art, etc., in order to adequately protect children who are preschool age and younger.

### **Language and Interactions**

Regarding language and interactions, it is expected that many incidences will be observed, and scoring is based on overall impact. When two or more caregivers are in the home and you are trying to determine overall impact of interactions, look for a balance. However, if one caregiver is extremely negative, a balance cannot be achieved and the indicator should be discounted.

### **Sanitizing**

Disinfectant and/or anti-bacterial wipes do not count for sanitization purposes. Products that can be given credit as sanitizing solutions are bleach and water solution or a commercial product that states on the label or manufacturer's products sheet that it kills 99.9% of germs, kills HIV virus, or is an EPA registered product. All commercial products used for sanitizing must be used according to manufacturer's instruction. Play materials that come into contact with bodily fluids must be cleaned and sanitized after each child's use. Toys that do not come into contact with bodily fluids should be weekly or when visibly soiled (page 106 Caring for Our Children.)

Caring for our Children has issued a new recommendation for use of a diluted bleach solution for sanitizing and disinfecting because many brand name companies have changed their bleach solution and there is no longer a consistent solution across different brands. The new recommendation advises us to: use only EPA registered products for sanitizing and disinfecting; follow the manufacturer's instructions for diluting the bleach solution and for the required contact time. Programs that use a sanitizing and/or disinfecting solution that is not bleach must get approval from their local sanitarian and have proof of approval on site at all times. Approval MUST include use for eating surfaces, diapering/toileting, handwashing surfaces, and sanitizing toys. If approval is not given for all of the above listed instances, then the approval must outline what is approved for use.

### **Allergies**

In all scales where special allergy needs must be considered, the list of food allergies does not have to be publicly displayed; however, directions for finding this information should be publicly displayed in the room where children eat. Examples are for clarification only and are not intended as scoring requirements unless otherwise stated.

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### **Assessment Details**

For scoring purposes in the state of Montana, a single observation will be completed regardless of the number of rooms. Fifty percent or more of the children must be present. In addition, both age groups (under 30 months and over 30 months) must be represented. Children attending Kindergarten are considered school-agers.

### **"Much of the day"**

Much of the day: In most items, "much of the day" is associated with the children's access to materials typically used indoors (e.g. books, art materials, and fine motor or dramatic play toys). It means most of the time that any child may be awake and able to play. If children are prevented from using materials for long periods by overly long routines when the children have to wait with nothing to do, being kept in groups that they are not engaged in, or being kept in areas where access is not possible, then credit cannot be given for "much of the day." If children (or any child) who are ready to play are prevented from reaching and using materials for a total of 20 minutes during a 3-hour observation, then "much of the day" cannot be given credit. The 20 minutes can be calculated as one 20-minute time period or may be calculated as a combination of smaller time periods that equal 20 minutes.

When timing for "much of the day", begin timing when any child has no access to play materials when awake and ready to play. If the time the child does not have access is less than 3 minutes, do not count this in calculating the 20 minute limit. A wait of less than 3 minutes is acceptable. If the time with no access lasts for 3 or more minutes, use the whole time in calculating the 20 minutes time limit. Do not omit the first three minutes of the time without access.

If children are kept outdoors for *extremely long periods* (1/3 of the day or more), thus limiting access to materials typically used indoors, then to give credit for "much of the day", such materials must be provided outdoors as well. Special attention should be paid to individual children who may not have the same access to materials as do the other children. A cranky baby who needs close physical contact to be soothed may not be "ready to play" and thus not require access to materials during the "cranky" times.

When children are taken for stroller rides, do not count the time spent riding as part of the 20 minutes when children do not have access to materials for "much of the day" as long as children are generally engaged (one child may be less engaged than others for some part of the ride, but most children should show interest, and no child should show distress). Some children may fall asleep in the stroller, but in this case they are not awake and ready to play, so falling asleep should not count in the timing for much of the day. Sometimes there are delays in putting children into strollers, and after the walk, removing them. If children have to wait for long periods (over 3 minutes with no access to play materials) while waiting in the strollers, then the time waiting should be counted towards the 20 minute limit that will disallow crediting "much of the day."

### **Specific Notes for FCCERS**

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## 1. Indoor space used for child care

### Montana Notes:

5.2 The natural lighting should enter the areas of the home where children spend much of their day.

## 2. Furniture for routine care, play, and learning

In scoring these indicators, score 1.1 “No” if most of the furniture needed for routine care is observed and used, even though one item may be inadequate to meet the needs of the children or is missing completely. Score 1.1 “Yes” only if many of the furnishings needed are not observed. Generally, the cubbies must be large enough to hold all the possessions of an individual child, without touching other children’s things. If cubbies are large enough to hold possessions, but there is a minor amount of touching of other children’s possessions, (such as coat sleeves touching in winter) then give credit, but consider the contamination issues in the Health item. Each child must have his or her own storage space (such as a cubbie, diaper bag or back pack on an individual hook, a laundry basket, or several different personal storage containers that together, hold all his/her things). No shared spaces should be used because of contamination issues. When a diapering table is not used, an alternative diapering surface is considered adequate if the surface is non-porous, and can be cleaned and sanitized. In addition, the surface must be long and wide enough to accommodate the child’s whole body, from head to foot. The diapering surface must minimize the chance for contamination of surrounding surfaces. Such a diapering surface is acceptable only if diapering can be completed without contamination of surrounding areas.

### Montana Notes:

1.1, 3.1 Sleeping provisions for individual use only. Couches and other shared spaces are not acceptable sleeping provisions due to cross-contamination.

1.1, 3.1 Siblings cannot share cubbies.

1.1, 3.1 When a diapering table is not used, an alternative diapering surface is considered adequate if the surface is nonporous, and can be cleaned and sanitized. In addition the surface must be long and wide enough to accommodate the child’s whole body from head to foot. The diapering surface must minimize the chance for contamination of surrounding surfaces. Such a diapering surface is acceptable only if diapering can be completed without contamination of surrounding areas.

3.2 Enough furniture for play means that the children have the developmentally appropriate seating needed to use play materials and that there are suitable ways of making materials accessible to the children on open storage shelves. Children 12 months and older who can select toys independently

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should have access to materials on low, open shelves. There should be some seating available to encourage more sustained play with materials such as fine motor and art, for children 12 months and older.

**7.3** A rocking chair could be considered for supervising children at a child-sized table if placed near the table.

### **3. Provisions for relaxation and comfort**

#### **Montana Notes:**

**3.1** To give credit, there must be at least one soft furnishing provided that is large enough for at least one child to lounge comfortably.

**5.1** Softness provided at indicators 3.1, 5.1, and 7.1 are intended to build on the levels of quality; therefore, if credit was given for a soft provision at a lower indicator, the same provision cannot receive credit at a higher indicator.

**5.3** If only school-agers are enrolled, at least 10 soft toys are required regardless of the number of children.

### **4. Arrangement of indoor space for child care**

#### **Montana Notes:**

**1.2, 3.2** It is understandable that some family homes may use multiple rooms. This would be considered acceptable. Staff must be able to hear the child at all times and must be able to physically respond immediately. Limited times when children are out of sight (2 to 4 minutes lapses) are acceptable as long as children are not engaged in high-risk activities.

**1.3, 3.1** When infants and toddlers are confined and prevented from moving around freely, it prevents them from learning through exploration. If children are unhappy, they should not be confined. If a child is playing happily, the confinement should not exceed 30 minutes at a time. They should spend most of the day unconfined.

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## 5. Display for children

Mirrors can be counted as display if they are decorative in nature and their intention is to be used by the children. In order to receive credit the mirror(s) must be at the children's eye level.

### Montana Notes:

**1.2, 3.2** If the display depicts violent scenarios or is scary in nature than credit can't be given; for example skeletons chasing someone, characters with fangs.

**5.3** Work done by the children should be displayed in the areas where children spend much of their day.

## 6. Space for privacy

### Montana Notes:

**1.2** Children should not be isolated without interaction and/or something to do for a period longer than 10 minutes.

**3.2** The caregivers must be able to supervise the space well enough at all times to ensure that it is possible to use effective, child-appropriate discipline to meet the safety needs of all of the children at all times; no matter where the child(ren) are.

**5.2** If credit is not given for 5.1, then credit cannot be given for 5.2.

## 7. Greeting/departing

### Montana Notes:

**1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1** The expectation is that the children are greeted before the parent leaves. It is important for the caregiver to acknowledge that the child is in their care and make them feel welcome.

**5.1** Observe greeting very carefully to see if each child is actually greeted, and that the greeting is personal and positive (e.g., caregiver makes eye contact and smiles, uses child's real name or nickname, says something to child or asks something).

**5.4** Written information is required and should be documented as routines are completed.

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## 8. Nap/rest

Score this item NA if only school-aged children are enrolled and nap/rest is not used. However, the item must be scored if a child indicates that a rest period is needed or nap/rest is observed.

### Montana Notes:

**1.1** North Carolina Note: According to the 2011 edition of *Caring for Our Children* (page 99) swaddling of children in child care settings is associated with the risk of serious health conditions, and is not necessary or recommended. Therefore consider the use of swaddling in this indicator.

**1.2** Beginning December 28, 2012, cribs with manufacturer dates prior to June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011 must be replaced. Programs must provide a certificate of compliance to the new crib law from the manufacturer for all cribs in their facility. These will be requested at time of assessment.

**1.2** For sleeping infants, light receiving blankets or sleep sacks are allowed. Blankets, pillows, stuffed animals or any other items placed near sleeping infants is not allowed. A sheet is not allowed in playpens but two coverings are required with children over 12 months of age napping in cribs.

**1.2, 3.2** If a parent requests their child to have a special sleeping arrangement due to a health condition, a dated and signed note from a physician detailing the special condition is required. Car seats are not considered an acceptable sleeping arrangement. A physician's statement is required for placing infants on their stomachs to sleep.

**1.2, 3.2** Children must not be allowed to sleep in swings, infant seats, couches or strollers because they are shared spaces and not considered sanitary.

**1.2, 3.2** Two coverings are required for children over 12 months of age—one to cover the type of bedding used and one for the child to have access to in order to cover up with. Discount here for cross-contamination of bedding/linens. With the exception of cots, sleeping provisions should be 2 inches thick. Bedding should be washed weekly.

**1.3, 3.3** Sleeping infants should be checked every 15 minutes by touch.

## 9. Meals/snacks

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**1.1** With regard to drinking water being offered between meals/snacks to children, score “No” if during the observation water is not offered to at least some of the children who cannot access their own water. Also score ‘No’ if water is not available to children who can ask for it or get their own.

**3.1** With regard to drinking water being offered between meals/snacks to children, score “No” if during the observation water is not offered to at least some of the children who cannot access their own water. Also score ‘No’ if water is not available to children who can ask for it or get their own

**1.3, 3.3, 5.3** With regard to the note on handwashing/use of hand sanitizers that has been added to the “Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale,” stating that hand sanitizer can be used unless hands are “visibly soiled.” Visibly soiled hands result from outdoor/indoor play, contact with bodily fluids, messy play, touching pets, arrival into classroom, or anytime hands are otherwise contaminated. See “Examples of categories when proper handwashing is needed,” on page 124 in All About the ECERS-R. Montana does not support the use of hand sanitizer in place of proper handwashing. See also, The 2011 edition of Caring for Our Children (page 113) “Rationale.” Hand sanitizer has been proven to be effective only after washing properly with soap and water. Hand sanitizer is labeled “keep out of reach of children” due to its high alcohol content and requires careful supervision and child training on proper use in order to be effective. Hand sanitizer is only permitted when running water is unavailable or impractical such as on a picnic or field trip.

**1.3, 3.3, 5.3** Children and adults must wash hands for ten seconds before rinsing. Antibacterial soap cannot be used.

**1.3, 3.3, 5.3** An alternative EPA approved “sanitizer” cannot be used in place of bleach and water solution for the purposes of sanitizing tables/sinks, high chairs, or other food related surfaces, unless approval from the local sanitarian has been secured and documentation is on site.

**1.1, 3.1** Meals/snacks should be served to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers every 2-3 hours unless children are sleeping.

**1.2, 3.2** The intent of this indicator is to determine whether the correct components of a meal or snack are being served to the children. No analysis of the nutritional value of foods served is necessary. Use the Food Guide to determine whether the components are present. The guidelines also require all components to be served together. Personal dietary preferences of the assessor (e.g., whole grain vs. white breads; fresh vs. canned vegetables; high vs. low sugar or fat content, etc.) are not to be used in determining the quality of the foods served. Also, consider perishable foods, which are left out longer than 1 hour. Regardless of source or ages served, 75% of all children must receive meals and snacks that meet USDA guidelines. Providers may supplement if they choose in order to guarantee 75% compliance. Programs that choose to “offer” rather than “serve” food (i.e., family style serving, school-age multiple choice snacks) carry an additional responsibility to encourage appropriate choices and model good nutritional habits. Combination foods are foods with multiple components that have been packaged

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together or combined during the cooking process. Combination foods can be counted to meet up to two different components. Scoring consideration of combination foods should be balanced with other items on the menu. Foods that might be served together, but do not meet the definition of combination foods, can count for up to 3 components (i.e., hamburgers, sandwiches, cereal, and fruit). When vegetable garnishes are served in sufficient quantities, they may be considered to meet the requirement as a vegetable. Breading on meat products may not be counted. Beans can count as either a vegetable or protein as needed. Milk is required at all meals excluding snack where only 2 of the 4 components are required.

**1.3, 3.3, 5.3** Eating surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized prior to, and following, use for food service. Follow the “2-step” process. Eating surfaces should be: 1) washed with a soap and water mixture to remove gross soil and, 2) sanitized with a bleach-water solution before and after being used for meals/snacks. To allow bleach-water solution to do its job, it should be allowed to sit for at least 10 seconds (preferably longer) before wiping dry or allowing to air dry. For other acceptable sanitizing agents, refer to the general notes. If proper sanitary measures are clearly practiced as part of the child care program, but an occasional lapse does occur, credit can be given. If food is served directly on the high chair tray, the food should be dry (e.g., crackers, cheerios, etc.) for credit to be given; otherwise, a plate, bowl, or paper towel, etc., should be used.

**1.3, 3.3, 5.3** Caregivers' hands must be washed before and after feeding a child a bottle. The expectation is for children's hands to be washed before and after eating (including bottle feeding) regardless of whether they feed themselves or are fed by an adult. The use of wipes on very young infants without head/neck control is appropriate. In addition, if an infant falls asleep during the bottle-feeding, it is permissible for their hands to be wiped before laying the child down, or the child's hands can be washed upon awakening. To allow staff to keep their focus on children while they are eating, a separate wipe may be used on a child's hands that have finished eating and may leave the table. However, all children's hands (exception children who have no head control) must be washed after all children are through eating.

**1.4, 3.4** The intent for these indicators is for infants to be held for bottle feeding unless the bottle is being served with a meal.

**3.2** With regard to drinking water being offered between meals/snacks to children consuming solid foods, score “No” if during the observation water is not offered to at least some of the children who cannot access their own water. Also score „No” if water is not available to children who can ask for it or get their own.

**3.3** If the same sink is used by either children or adults for both diapering/toileting and food-related routines (including toothbrushing) or for other purposes (to wash toys/other classroom equipment; after wiping nose), it must be sanitized by spraying sink and faucets with a bleach solution after diapering/toileting use.

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**5.2** Staff and children are required to eat together family style during most meals. Staff and children must participate in the same meal. Some foods must be dished up so that children can serve themselves. Staff must sit at the table and eat with the children to help facilitate conversations, help with the meal service, and supervise children while eating. There must be at least one staff person at each table or an attempt made by staff to include all children in the conversations, make sure they are served and receive foods, and are closely supervised.

**5.4** The menu must be posted where it can be easily seen by parents.

## **10. Diapering/toileting**

For proper sanitary diaper/pull-up changing procedure, refer to the Montana Diaper Change Procedure. For the purpose of the scales pull-ups are held to the same standards as diapers.

### **Montana Notes:**

**1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1** Reusable diapers such as cloth diapers must be placed in a separate covered container with waterproof liner when soiled. The container must be emptied (laundered, given to parent, or other disposal) daily and cleaned and disinfected daily.

**1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1** Basic sanitary conditions include proper diapering procedures as outlined in the MT Diaper Change Procedure would adequately minimize the spread of germs and replaces the procedure outlined in the scale. When cleaning or sanitizing surfaces, a disposable towel or fresh cloth must be used for each part of the process. If the same sink is used for all hand washing, it must be properly sanitized following toileting/diapering hand washing routines before it is used for any other purpose. Proper sanitizing includes spraying the sink bowl, rim, and faucets with an appropriate sanitizing agent. If the facility permits sinks to be designated for specific purposes, then this should be done (for example, sinks near toilets should be used for hand washing following toileting/diapering, while sinks in the food prep area are used for food-related and other purposes). The intent is to cut down on fecal-oral contamination (intestinal germs on the hands).

**1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1** When a diapering table is not used, an alternative diapering surface is considered adequate if the surface is nonporous, and can be cleaned and sanitized. In addition the surface must be long and wide enough to accommodate the child's whole body from head to foot. The diapering surface must minimize the chance for contamination of surrounding surfaces. Such a diapering surface is acceptable only if diapering can be completed without contamination of surrounding areas. When children are changed standing up while wearing a pull-up or diaper the same rules apply.

**1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1** Children and adults must wash hands for ten seconds before rinsing. Antibacterial soap cannot be used.

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**1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1** An alternative EPA approved “sanitizer” cannot be used in place of bleach and water solution for the purposes of sanitizing tables/sinks, high chairs, or other food related surfaces, unless approval from the local sanitarian has been secured and documentation is on site.

**1.3, 3.3** With regard to the note on handwashing/use of hand sanitizers that has been added to the “Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale,” stating that hand sanitizer can be used unless hands are “visibly soiled.” Visibly soiled hands result from outdoor/indoor play, contact with bodily fluids, messy play, touching pets, arrival into classroom, or anytime hands are otherwise contaminated. See “Examples of categories when proper handwashing is needed,” on page 124 in All About the ECERS-R. Montana does not support the use of hand sanitizer in place of proper handwashing. See also, The 2011 edition of Caring for Our Children (page 113) “Rationale.” Hand sanitizer has been proven to be effective only after washing properly with soap and water. Hand sanitizer is labeled “keep out of reach of children” due to its high alcohol content and requires careful supervision and child training on proper use in order to be effective. Hand sanitizer is only permitted when running water is unavailable or impractical such as on a picnic or field trip.

**1.3, 3.3** Since new research has shown that waterless washes are an inadequate sanitary measure, proper hand washing with soap and running water is required following diapering or toileting.

**1.2, 3.2** Diapers/pull-ups should be visually checked approximately every 2 hours.

## **11. Health practices**

### **Montana Notes:**

**1.1, 3.2, 5.2** With regard to the note on handwashing/use of hand sanitizers that has been added to the “Explanation of Terms Used Throughout the Scale,” stating that hand sanitizer can be used unless hands are “visibly soiled.” Visibly soiled hands result from outdoor/indoor play, contact with bodily fluids, messy play, touching pets, arrival into classroom, or anytime hands are otherwise contaminated. See “Examples of categories when proper handwashing is needed,” on page 124 in All About the ECERS-R. Montana does not support the use of hand sanitizer in place of proper handwashing. See also, The 2011 edition of Caring for Our Children (page 113) “Rationale.” Hand sanitizer has been proven to be effective only after washing properly with soap and water. Hand sanitizer is labeled “keep out of reach of children” due to its high alcohol content and requires careful supervision and child training on proper use in order to be effective. Hand sanitizer is only permitted when running water is unavailable or impractical such as on a picnic or field trip.

**1.1, 3.1, 5.1** If outdoor sand area is not covered then mark off for exposure to animal feces.

**1.1, 3.2, 5.2** Children and adults must wash hands for ten seconds before rinsing. Antibacterial soap cannot be used.

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**3.2** If the same sink is used by either children or adults for both diapering/toileting and food-related routines (including toothbrushing) or for other purposes (to wash toys/other classroom equipment; after wiping nose), it must be sanitized by spraying sink and faucets with a bleach solution after diapering/toileting use.

**3.2** When combining all categories to determine 75%, priority should be given to hand washing when dealing with bodily fluids (blood and mucous). Consider the impact upon the children. Examples are required.

**5.3** Caregivers must have spare clothing for children to use. Sunscreen and sun protection should be provided as needed regardless of time of day. Care should be taken to wash children's faces and wipe their noses.

**5.4** If a significant health issue arises mark off at 5.4.

**7.2** Toothbrushes should be allowed to air dry, by leaving them uncovered (out of the danger of contamination) or covered in a way that allows them to breathe.

## **12. Safety practices**

### **General Note**

If outlet receptacles are tamper resistant they must be labeled TR from the manufacturer in order to be considered tamper-resistant. Otherwise outlet plugs are sufficient.

### **Montana Notes:**

**1.1** Beginning December 28, 2012, cribs with manufacturer dates prior to June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011 must be replaced. Programs must provide a certificate of compliance to the new crib law from the manufacturer for all cribs in their facility. These will be requested at time of assessment.

**1.1** Lofts and climbing ramps are considered indoor climbing equipment. Scores are based on hazards present such as; height, entrapment issues, fall zones, insufficient cushioning, how it is used, ages of children, and supervision.

**3.1** Lofts and climbing ramps considered indoor climbing equipment. Scores are based on hazards present such as; height, entrapment issues, fall zones, insufficient cushioning, how it is used, ages of children, and supervision.

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**1.1, 1.2, 3.1** For scoring purpose in Montana, we do not consider the measurements listed in the notes for clarification for raised edges on changing tables and choking hazards (follow licensing rule which is “toys and objects with a diameter of less than 1 inch, objects with removable parts that have a diameter of less than 1 inch”). Consider the location of the area and how it is supervised.

**1.1, 3.1** The water used by the children should be checked. The temperature should be considered even if the children can't turn the water on themselves as a distracted adult could turn the wrong faucet on.

**1.1, 3.1** Spraying bleach water, or other chemicals over the children's heads, such as sanitizing table, is a safety hazard.

**1.1, 3.1** Bleach and water solution, used to sanitize surfaces, do not have to be locked, but must be stored out of reach of young children. Safety concerns such as glass, unsteady furniture, sanitizing agents sprayed directly in breathing areas of children, etc. are considered here. Crib slats should measure less than 2 3/8 inches. Discount if bottles or baby food are heated in the microwave and immediately fed to children without first being shaken or stirred to eliminate “hot spots”. Bean bag chairs may be used with infants under close supervision.

**1.1, 3.1** Indoor space for gross motor play and equipment is not held to the same standards as outside; however, safety as the primary focus should be insured. Consider the placement of equipment as well as the surface under equipment where children might fall. If indoor children's climbing equipment is used, mats or carpet are required to be placed under the equipment if it is over 12 inches in height. This is in reference to equipment specifically for climbing. General home furnishings such as a couch, chair, or bed that children climb on do not require mats or carpet underneath. Temporary padding such as a pillow, cushion, or bean bag placed to protect the child from injury in the event of an accidental fall, are acceptable around furnishings. However, home furnishings should not be used as play climbing equipment and should only be used for its intended purpose.

**1.3, 3.2** Sleeping infants should be checked every 15 minutes by touch.

## **15. Using books**

### **Montana Notes:**

**3.2** For scoring purposes in Montana, when determining if almost all of the books are in good repair consider the total number of books.

**3.3** If credit is not given at 3.3 then credit cannot be given at 3.4.

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**3.4** If children are required to participate, but they quickly become engaged in the activity, obviously enjoying it, then score “Yes.” Score “No” only if the children are not engaged or enjoying the activity and there is no alternative of leaving and doing something else.

If credit was not given at 3.3, then do not give credit at 3.4.

**7.1** Since young children cannot read, the book area should be designed for children to view books by seeing the fronts of the books. If only the spines of the books are showing credit cannot be given. To give credit for this indicator, you must observe that 75% of the required number of books organized with the fronts of the books visible.

## **16. Fine Motor**

**Montana Notes:** None

## **17. Art**

Toxic substances or materials labeled “Keep out of Reach of Children; such as shaving cream cannot be offered to the children for use in Art activities.

**Montana Notes:**

**1.1** Any appropriate art material can be credited for this indicator. Score this item “Yes” only if there are no art materials provided.

**Montana Note:** These materials are required to be accessible throughout the day.

## **18. Music and movement**

**Montana Notes:**

**1.3.** For assessment purposes, evaluate the severity of the lyrics and the impact on the children.

### **3.1, 5.1, 5.2**

Music played on the radio, CD player, wind-up swing that plays music, etc. that is managed by the provider counts as only 1 music material. There must be at least one other material that children can reach and use to give credit for 3.1.

**3.1** For Montana scoring purposes, some means at least two materials for each age group

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enrolled.

**3.2** Songs initiated by the provider, such as a clean-up song, or a prayer sung at meals, count to meet the requirement of this indicator.

**3.3** If children are required to participate, but they quickly become engaged in the activity, obviously enjoying it, then score “Yes.” Score “No” only if the children are not engaged or enjoying the activity and there is no alternative of leaving and doing something else.

**5.2** To give credit for much of the day, the numbers of music materials required in this indicator must be met.

**5.2** Some appropriate music materials refers to the “many” music materials as defined at 5.1.

**7.2** If not observed, ask the provider to explain whether this is done, as she answers the question for 1.1, 3.2, 5.4.

## **19. Blocks**

When determining if very small blocks should be considered under item 16 as fine motor materials or under item 19 as blocks, consider the size, intent, and placement.

There has been some inconsistency about the dimensions of blocks to be considered for this item, with some requiring that the blocks are “at least” 2 inches from the majority of sides, and others requiring “more than” 2 inches. To ensure reliability across assessors, blocks are now interpreted as having to be at least 2 inches for the majority of sides, rather than more than 2 inches.

Note: Interlocking blocks; such as Duplo’s are not considered here. They are considered under Fine Motor.

### **Montana Notes:**

**3.2** “Some” for this item is defined as at least five accessories of two different types.

**7.2** There should be at least five examples of each type listed in the indicator accessible.

## **20. Dramatic play**

### **Montana Notes:**

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**7.1** To meet the requirements for this indicator, there must be at least two different types of props that represent two different elements of diversity (e.g., clothing, skin tone, food, abilities, eating utensils, and dishes, etc.) accessible for use in dramatic play.

## **21. Math/number**

**Montana Notes:** None

## **22. Nature/science**

In Montana, for all pertinent indicators, natural live elements are okay; such as farm and ranch animals if it is part of their regular routine.

**3.2** If credit cannot be given for 3.1, then credit cannot be given for 3.2.

**5.3** “Some” means that children have daily experience with either living plants or animals located in the room where the children play the majority of the day or in an indoor area that children visit daily. In order to receive credit, living things (plants, animals, etc.) must be easily seen by the children. If these items are stored out of the view of children (on top of a shelf, behind a cabinet, etc.) the teacher must make these accessible by bringing them down to the children’s eye level. There must be clear evidence that this occurs on a daily basis and that the intent is for children to have meaningful experiences with living things.

## **23. Sand and water play**

Consider the potential implications under Health, Safety and Supervision Items if children under 18 months participate in Sand and Water play activities.

**1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1** If outside sand is not covered in the winter time, then not considered accessible due to accumulation of snow and ice on the sand. If sand is not covered all year round then also take off in Item 11: Health for exposure to animal feces.

**3.1, 3.3** If 3.1 is scored “No” because there are no provisions for sand/water, then 3.3 must also be scored “No.”

**5.2** If both sand and water are used, at least three types of toys should be accessible for each. Consider the number of children allowed to use the provision in determining if more toys are needed.

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**7.1** For children 18 months and older, both sand and water must be included as a regular part of the program, but both are not required daily.

## **24. Promoting acceptance of diversity**

### **Montana Notes:**

**5.1, 5.2** Required materials should be accessible for much of the day. Credit cannot be given twice for any materials counted in 5.1 and 5.2.

**7.1** We will accept family and classroom pictures but we want to see that whatever is being displayed is meaningful to Montana children and that the display is well thought out and intentional.

## **25. Use of TV, video, and/or computer**

If the assessor observes movies/videos being used that have violent or otherwise inappropriate material, discount the appropriate indicator. Otherwise, ask about the program's/provider's policy concerning use of TV and videos. No longer base your determination on what you see stored in the room. Do not reference movie/program names or ratings on summary reports. If audio-visual materials are used less than once a **month while children are interested, mark this item NA.**

**1.4, 3.3** North Carolina Note: In addition, media screen time is limited for children 2 years and older to not more than 30 minutes total, once a week. Computer use time should be limited to no more than 15 minutes per day with the exception of school-aged children completing homework assignments, or children with disabilities who require assistive computer technology. No media screen time should be allowed during meals/snacks.

**3.3** The time children "use" the computer includes the time that the children watch other children use the computer.

**5.1** To be considered "good for children," materials for computer and TV viewing must be appropriate and educational.

## **26. Active physical play**

### **Montana Notes:**

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**1.2** Lofts and climbing ramps are considered indoor climbing equipment. Scores are based on hazards present such as; height, entrapment issues, fall zones, insufficient cushioning, how it is used, ages of children, and supervision.

**3.2** Lofts and climbing ramps are considered indoor climbing equipment. Scores are based on hazards present such as; height, entrapment issues, fall zones, insufficient cushioning, how it is used, ages of children, and supervision.

**1.2, 3.2** Indoor space for gross motor play and equipment is not held to the same standards as outside; however, safety as the primary focus should be insured. Consider the placement of equipment as well as the surface under equipment where children might fall. If indoor children's climbing equipment is used, mats or carpet are required to be placed under the equipment if it is over 12 inches in height. This is in reference to equipment specifically for climbing. General home furnishings such as a couch, chair, or bed that children climb on do not require mats or carpet underneath. Temporary padding such as a pillow, cushion, or bean bag placed to protect the child from injury is acceptable in these situations.

**1.2, 3.2** When there are more than five minor hazards or if there are two serious hazards outdoors, credit cannot be given at the one level. If there are no serious hazards and no more than five minor hazards, credit can be given in the three level. Lack of resilient surfacing, equipment spacing, etc., may be considered as major hazards depending on the measurements and whether or not serious injury could result.

**5.1** "Except in very bad weather": Health experts are unanimous on the importance of fresh air and the negative health consequences of children spending too much time in closed, indoor settings. If a child is well enough to be at the center, the child is generally assumed to be well enough to go outside. Except in extreme weather, children are expected to go outside every day. Very young children have difficulty regulating their core temperature making them more susceptible to heat stroke in the summer and cold in the winter. Therefore Montana guidelines for infants are more restrictive than they are for older children but the importance of fresh air remains the same so infants need to go outside to get some fresh air for brief periods.

Classes of older children will go outdoors to play every day the temperature plus wind-chill factor is 15 degrees or above as long as conditions are safe, e.g. if ice is not a danger. When it is very cold outdoor play times can be shortened. The basic rule of thumb is one minute for each degree. If the temperature permits, the children can go outside in snow but not in freezing rain or sleet. The importance of appropriate clothing and outerwear should be considered rather than restricting outdoor play.

"weather-permitting" or "Inclement weather" Policy Taken from *Caring for our children national Health and safety performance standards* –

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Children shall play outdoors daily when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. Outdoor play for infants may include riding in a carriage or stroller; however, infants shall be offered opportunities for gross motor play outdoors, as well.

Weather that poses a significant health risk shall include wind chill at or below 15 degrees F and heat index at or above 90 degrees F, as identified by the National Weather Service.

Air quality conditions that pose a significant health risk shall be identified by announcements from local health authorities or through ozone alerts. Such air quality conditions shall require that children remain indoors where air conditioners ventilate indoor air to the outdoors. Children with respiratory health problems such as asthma shall not play outdoors when local health authorities announce that the air quality is approaching unhealthy levels.

**5.3** Ample implies that children have choices.

**5.4** If a physical barrier limiting access to equipment is not observed, then the space and equipment is considered accessible to all children.

## **29. Discipline**

**3.3** If the basic play needs of children in any age group are rarely met, resulting in children spending long periods with nothing interesting to do or to learn, score 3.3 “no.” If 20 minutes or more of wait time, score 3.3 “no.” A wait of less than 3 minutes is acceptable. If the time with no access lasts for 3 or more minutes, use the whole time in calculating the 20 minutes time limit. Do not omit the first three minutes of the time without access.

## **30. Interaction among Children**

**1.1** When age groups are separated and never mix, (e.g., infants cared for in one room with one provider and older children cared for in another space with a second provider) consider this indicator NA if there is only one child in a space. Ideally, two separate observations would be done when there are two separate groups. See page 7, Instructions for using the FCCERS-R, under 1.

**3.1** No specific amount of time is required for the interactions to be encouraged. Observe to see whether encouragement is a regular practice, depending on the ages of the children, their moods, etc. Some encouragement should be seen for at least part of the observation, with more time required for children who are older.

## **31. Schedule**

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**Montana Notes:** None

## **32. Free Play**

### **Montana Notes:**

**3.1** “Except in very bad weather”: Health experts are unanimous on the importance of fresh air and the negative health consequences of children spending too much time in closed, indoor settings. If a child is well enough to be at the center, the child is generally assumed to be well enough to go outside. Except in extreme weather, children are expected to go outside every day. Very young children have difficulty regulating their core temperature making them more susceptible to heat stroke in the summer and cold in the winter. Therefore Montana guidelines for infants are more restrictive than they are for older children but the importance of fresh air remains the same so infants need to go outside to get some fresh air for brief periods.

Classes of older children will go outdoors to play every day the temperature plus wind-chill factor is 15 degrees or above as long as conditions are safe, e.g. if ice is not a danger. When it is very cold outdoor play times can be shortened. The basic rule of thumb is one minute for each degree. If the temperature permits, the children can go outside in snow but not in freezing rain or sleet. The importance of appropriate clothing and outerwear should be considered rather than restricting outdoor play.

“Weather-permitting” or “Inclement weather” policy taken from Caring for our Children national health and safety performance standards.

Children shall play outdoors daily when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk.

Weather that poses a significant health risk shall include wind chill at or below 15 degrees F and heat index at or above 90 degrees F, as identified by the National Weather Service.

Air quality conditions that pose a significant health risk shall be identified by announcements from local health authorities or through ozone alerts. Such air quality conditions shall require that children remain indoors where air conditioners ventilate indoor air to the outdoors. Children with respiratory health problems such as asthma shall not play outdoors when local health authorities announce that the air quality is approaching unhealthy levels.

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**3.2** Consider relative dangers, developmental level of the child, and ease of quick access to the child when deciding whether supervision is extremely lax. For example, allowing a toddler to play outdoors, unsupervised would be considered extremely lax supervision of free play, even if other parts of free play were supervised well.

**5.1** “Except in very bad weather”: Health experts are unanimous on the importance of fresh air and the negative health consequences of children spending too much time in closed, indoor settings. If a child is well enough to be at the center, the child is generally assumed to be well enough to go outside. Except in extreme weather, children are expected to go outside every day. Very young children have difficulty regulating their core temperature making them more susceptible to heat stroke in the summer and cold in the winter. Therefore Montana guidelines for infants are more restrictive than they are for older children but the importance of fresh air remains the same so infants need to go outside to get some fresh air for brief periods.

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### 33. Group Time

#### Montana Notes:

**1.1, 1.4, 3.3** “Whole group” refers to all the children who are required to do the same activity. The term “whole group” applies even when some children, such as a baby or school-aged child” are exempt from participating in the required activity.

**5.3** Alternate activities must be accessible for *any* child who does not wish to participate.

### 34. Provisions for children with disabilities

**ECERS 37, ITERS-R 32, FCCERS 34, and SACERS 44** should be scored NA unless a child with a disability who has been diagnosed through a formal assessment procedure and receives (or is eligible for) early intervention services is enrolled in the program. Across all four scales, the following aspects should be considered when scoring: modifications, parent involvement, inclusion, and use of assessment information. Look for the extent of modifications needed to the schedule or classroom to include the child in daily activities, parent and staff communication regarding the child’s assessment information and ongoing therapy, and the use of assessment information in planning throughout the day. Some parents may not share all information with staff for various reasons. Consider the levels of quality when determining if staff and parents have shared enough information to meet the child’s needs. Even if staff put significant effort into asking about a child’s needs, if parents share no information, the child’s development is compromised.

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