



# CORT: Caregiving Observation & Reflection Tool

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## Introduction

The CORT provides a systematic framework to observe and document interactions and experiences that occur within a classroom. The goal of this measure is to assess and document a caregiver's strengths and areas for growth by observing actual caregiving practices. This measure covers the many domains that make up a high-quality child care environment. The observation tool is divided into five domains:

- *language and literacy*
- *responsive relationships*
- *balanced and differentiated instruction*
- *comprehensive caregiving*
- *family-centered practice.*

Each of these domains is comprised of key skills or practices. Training & Curriculum Specialists or Program Managers should use this tool to observe and document a caregiver's use of these key practices. The T&CS or Program Manager should carefully observe interactions and experiences offered by the caregiver and document the caregiver's competency for each skill. This information can then be used to help identify strengths, opportunities for improvement, and goals for caregivers.

## Rating

This tool is intended to be used to observe caregivers' practices related to quality interactions and experiences and document their level of mastery. For each skill, the observer will mark the caregivers' level of mastery as Emerging, Developing, or Mastered.

When rating a skill, take into account only the caregiver's actual behavior during your observation of that skill. The skill levels build on each other, so a caregiver may show some skills as emerging and some as developing, or some as developing and some as mastered. When documenting a caregiver's skill level, try to pick the competency level that best fits the materials, behaviors, and skills you see in the child care environment. For example, if a caregiver mostly has interactions on a specific skill that you would classify as developing, but you see one or two emerging skills, that caregiver could likely be classified as developing on that skill. However, a caregiver who shows mostly emerging skills and some developing qualities on a skill likely fits better in the emerging category.

During an observation you will only see a snapshot of the child care environment and teaching practices. If there is a domain on the observation form that you did not observe or do not think you observed sufficiently to identify the caregiver's current skills level, rather than trying to rate the domain, indicate this by rating the item as N/O.

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**E**

### Emerging

Staff member is building their understanding and use of the skill.

**D**

### Developing

Staff member understands the practice but is still working to consistently implement it.

**M**

### Mastered

Staff member demonstrates a clear understanding of the skill and implements the practice consistently.



LL1 Quality Reading Materials

The learning environment has a variety of developmentally appropriate print and reading material with a wide range of vocabulary, themes, and pictures.

Emerging

Limited number of developmentally appropriate reading and print materials.

- *Most books are scribbled in or torn*
- *There is not a clear system for organizing books and print materials*
- *Materials are not developmentally appropriate (e.g., chapter books in a preschool classroom library)*
- *Some books unknowingly reinforce stereotypes or provide limited scope (e.g., only books with movie characters or religious stories are present)*
- *Nonfiction books are outdated or do not reflect current knowledge (e.g., space, geography)*
- *Books are the only source of environmental print that are directed at children*

Developing

“Enough” reading materials and books are present but limited thought is put into the content of the materials.

- *Organizational systems are in place, but do not allow children or adults to easily access books and materials*
- *People and characters in books do not reflect the racial, cultural, or linguistic diversity of the children in the room or the community*
- *Books do not connect to learning objectives or curriculum*
- *Limited amount of print in learning environment aside from books (e.g., labels for common objects, welcome signs, names on cubbies, visual schedules)*
- *Charts, visuals, and other environmental print has been created by adults, but does not reflect children’s involvement*

Mastered

Diverse types of reading materials and books that are chosen to reinforce learning objectives and curricula.

- *There is a clear organizational system that allows children and adults to easily find what they want to read or use*
- *Infant room has touch and feel, picture-only, and picture-and-word books*
- *Preschool room has books reflecting different types of families, concepts related to number representation, and stories that allow children to make inferences and problem-solve*
- *School-age program has a diverse selection of books that cover fiction and nonfiction content that spans reading levels (e.g., picture books, chapter books, reference texts like dictionaries)*
- *Visuals, charts, and other sources of environmental print are cocreated with children and include children’s writing*

LL2 Reading Opportunities

Provides children with multiple opportunities to participate in reading in different and meaningful ways each day.

Emerging

Minimal opportunities for enriched and enjoyable reading.

- *Children are only read to during whole group time*
- *Children are not given time to freely enjoy books in developmentally appropriate ways with adult support available*
- *School-age children are asked to read a book as a consequence for behavior*
- *School-aged children are discouraged from reading a particular book based on an adult’s bias or assumptions about that child’s ability (e.g., discouraged from reading a chapter book because it’s “too difficult”)*

Developing

Reading is a part of specific, daily routines.

- *Children may be read to during whole group time and have opportunities to independently look at books during free choice*
- *School-age children are allowed to read independently as an alternative to other activities*

Mastered

Intentionally incorporates diverse reading experiences across routines and activities.

- *Children are read to as a whole group, in small groups, and when individual children request*
- *Literacy opportunities are incorporated into daily routines, such as meals, to reinforce concepts (“Which one has a letter that makes the “mmmm” sound, the milk or the Cheerios?” or for older children, encouraging them to read the food labels)*
- *School-age children are encouraged to read independently as an activity, or participation in a book club is offered for a scheduled amount of time*

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## LL3 Book Reading Interactions

Engages with children during book reading to introduce and reinforce concepts, connect stories to children's lives, and provoke critical thinking.

### Emerging

Does not provide an interactive reading experience for children.

- *Reads in a caregiver-directed way only (word for word), does not allow for meaningful child interaction*
- *May have unrealistic expectations or struggles to provide support to emerging readers*
- *For independent readers, does not inquire about the content of children's books and reading materials*

### Developing

Provides opportunities for children to participate during reading.

- *Pauses when a child shows interest in the pictures, letters, or sensory properties of a book and narrates what the child is attending to*
- *Asks questions to engage children during read alouds, but questions are yes/no and offer minimal opportunity for meaningful reflection*
- *Will listen and respond if children have questions or comments about reading materials*
- *Asks independent readers questions about their books and materials (e.g., "What's your book about?")*

### Mastered

Intentionally connects reading material to various concepts and skills; creates an interactive and engaging reading experience.

- *Encourages children to explore the physical properties of books and makes connections with the child*
- *Encourages children to engage with print and illustrations.*
- *Poses problem-solving and prediction questions about reading content (e.g., asking preschoolers why the character can't find the mitten that fell in the snow or what they think will happen next)*
- *For school-age children and youth, asks comprehension questions that encourage them to make connections (self to text, text to world, or text to text) and share their feelings, opinions, and beliefs*

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## LL4 Embeds Language Support

Embeds language and literacy support throughout children's activities and routines.

### Emerging

Minimal opportunities for language and literacy support outside of designated times.

- *Lack of singing songs and nursery rhymes for younger children*
- *Writing and reading opportunities are only in the context of homework for school-age children*
- *Children do not practice literacy skills outside of specific times such as group time and homework time*

### Developing

Some language and literacy support incorporated into activities and routines.

- *Uses songs or rhymes to help children learn routines and transitions*
- *Does not intentionally introduce new vocabulary or connect concepts through language*
- *Only teaches literacy concepts and new vocabulary during group time or set literacy activities*

### Mastered

Intentional opportunities embedded throughout activities and routines that connect to language and literacy concepts.

- *Sings songs that repeat and add on to previous verses to support executive functioning in preschoolers*
- *Narrates observations for older infants during art activity*
- *Asks follow-up questions to guide participation and understanding of vocabulary and concepts (e.g., "I've asked you to be gracious during snack time. What are some ways we can be gracious?")*
- *Provides a variety of ways for children to practice literacy skills in multimodal ways (e.g., finding letters in sand, drawing with chalk, telling stories with puppets)*



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## LL5 Extends Language

Expands on children's sounds, words, and sentences in ways that reinforce children's communication.

### Emerging

Rarely expands on children's sounds, words, and sentences.

- *When an infant cries, caregiver picks child up but does not talk to the child to help soothe*
- *Answers children's questions with single words or very short responses*
- *Tells a child their pronunciation of words or their grammar is wrong*

### Developing

Responds to children most of the time but may not expand upon or model language.

- *A toddler approaches caregiver with messy hands and says, "dirty" and caregiver responds, "Go wash your hands"*
- *Inconsistently interprets and models expressive communication for emerging talkers (toddler says, "wuh wuh" for water but caregiver does not model saying "water")*
- *School-age provider gives simple responses to children's questions*

### Mastered

Consistently responds to children's communication and continues the exchanges to expand language and learning.

- *Engages in reciprocal verbal interactions with a cooing infant*
- *Caregiver responds to toddler with "dirty" hands by saying, "You do have dirty hands... Applesauce is sticky! Let's go to the sink and wash your dirty hands"*
- *School-age provider gives an answer and explanation to children's questions then asks a thought-provoking follow-up question*

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## LL6 Encourages Communication

Models diverse vocabulary and ways of communicating to promote language development.

### Emerging

Uses mostly directives to tell children what to do, limited descriptive language or open-ended questions.

- *Caregiver uses more nonwords, such as "ba ba" or "banky," than words*
- *Uses nondescript statements or vague feedback (e.g., "good job", "give me that", "put it here")*
- *Consistently asks close-end questions (e.g., "Which is blue?", "Where's the circle?")*

### Developing

Mostly uses descriptive statements and questions to communicate.

- *Talks to infants during routines*
- *Uses questions to support children's learning (e.g., "What do we do with our coats when we come inside?")*
- *Uses specific language to encourage following routines (e.g., "Use your walking feet")*

### Mastered

Consistently uses diverse language and individualizes communication to situations and children.

- *Imitates infant and young toddlers' sounds and narrates their intentions using simple yet specific language (e.g., "You want the ball? Here's the ball!")*
- *Caregiver gives modified choices to promote independence (e.g., "Do you want to go to the homework center or game center?" when discussing available activity options)*
- *Introduces new vocabulary (e.g., describes the words "translucent" and "opaque" during a watercolor activity) and finds a variety of ways to reinforce new vocabulary*



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## LL7 Promotes Social Emotional Learning

Communicates about actions, thoughts, and feelings to promote social-emotional development through language.

### Emerging

Minimal use of language to teach social-emotional concepts.

- *May label actions but does not connect actions to emotions or social skills (e.g., "You pushed her")*
- *Does not narrate to give voice or words to children's intentions and feelings*
- *May use comments like "be nice" or "say you're sorry"*

### Developing

Sometimes uses specific vocabulary, questioning, and commenting to support social-emotional learning.

- *Verbalizes when children demonstrate prosocial behavior (e.g., "Thank you for sharing with your friend")*
- *Gives reminders to encourage prosocial behavior and following rules (e.g., "What voice do we use when we are inside?")*
- *Models and supports children with labeling their emotions, but uses limited vocabulary like "sad," "mad," and "happy", to describe emotions*

### Mastered

Consistently extends children's learning using language, questioning, and commenting to facilitate social reasoning and problem-solving, greater understanding of children's emotions in relation to their actions, and perspective-taking.

- *Gives voice or words to children's emotions (e.g., "You're feeling sad because daddy is leaving, but he will be back later.")*
- *Asks questions to foster social skills and perspective taking (e.g., "How do you think others feel when you say they are 'stupid'?")*
- *Models and supports children with labeling emotions using a variety of vocabulary (e.g., "It sounds like you were disappointed that recess was inside today.", "Are you feeling jealous that your friend is playing with someone else when you want to play with them?")*

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## LL8 Responsive to Nonverbal Cues

Uses nonverbal communication to support language and communication and observes children's nonverbal cues to inform own responses.

### Emerging

Rarely pays attention or responds to children's nonverbal cues and unaware of the impact of own nonverbal communication.

- *Inconsistently responds to children's gestures and emotional expressions*
- *Does not respond or acknowledge children unless they use words or directs children to verbalize (e.g., "use your words") without offering support*
- *Does not use facial expressions to indicate emotions, or primarily uses them to indicate negative emotions or redirect behavior*

### Developing

Notices and responds to more obvious nonverbal communication, generally attends to nonverbal communication but sometimes misinterprets.

- *Looks at what a child is pointing to and comments, uses facial expression to show interest and engagement*
- *Acknowledges children's gestures and words, even if unintelligible*
- *Caregiver may observe nonverbal expressions and behaviors and help interpret for older children (e.g., "It looks like to you want some alone time.")*

### Mastered

Consistently observes nonverbal communication, including very subtle cues, and uses this information to strategically respond.

- *Narrates and looks at what a child looks at to facilitate joint attention*
- *Models gestures for children with emerging receptive communication to reinforce spoken words (e.g., "Where did the marker's cap go?" while holding hands out in a questioning way)*
- *Mirrors appropriate emotional responses and incorporates expressions to engage and communicate with older children*
- *Notices children's body-language and responds appropriately to meet their needs*



# Responsive Relationships

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## RR1 Responsive Engagement

Engages with children in a warm and encouraging way (e.g., smiles, looks at, gets down on child's level).

### Emerging

Has a flat affect or lacks a positive demeanor.

- *Rarely smiles or shows warm emotion*
- *Uses a firm tone or shows frustration during challenging situations*
- *Shows inconsistent attention to certain children or shows more patience with children who demonstrate preferred behaviors*

### Developing

Usually warm and encouraging with children, but it may be contingent on children's behavior or other factors.

- *Shows interest (e.g., smiles, looks at) when children initiate interaction*
- *Affect may be warm when children are exhibiting ideal behavior*
- *Caregiver's demeanor toward children may noticeably change in various contexts, such as an unexpected schedule change or challenging interaction with another coworker or family member*

### Mastered

Consistently engages with children with warmth and encouragement.

- *Shows patience and warmth with all children despite challenges*
  - *Shows concern and neutral affect during difficult or unexpected situations and reacts in calm and thoughtful ways*
  - *Acknowledges children's emotions when in distress and uses warmth and physical touch (when appropriate) to nurture*
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## RR2 Positive Guidance

Uses positive guidance and communication to redirect behavior and reinforce children's effort.

### Emerging

Limited use of positive guidance or rarely acknowledges children's effort.

- *Gives attention to problematic behaviors but may ignore positive behaviors*
- *Minimal use of encouraging statements*
- *Uses mostly negative or critical statements such as "no", "don't do that", or "stop it"*

### Developing

Recognizes children's achievements and behavior but may be nonspecific, overly complimentary, or use words that describe what not to do instead of what to do.

- *Uses vague praise, such as "Good job!" or "You're always good"*
- *Language targets what should not happen instead of what should happen (e.g., "Don't hit" instead of "Please use safe touch")*
- *Comments on results more than a child or youth's positive progress*

### Mastered

Consistently points out children's specific, ideal behavior and acknowledges effort as much as achievement.

- *Uses encouraging statements to reinforce children's efforts (e.g., "You have practiced tying your shoelaces every afternoon this week. Great job being persistent!")*
- *Intentionally points out positive actions*
- *Specifically shares what should happen during redirection*



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## RR3 Appropriate Expectations

Demonstrates developmentally appropriate expectations for children's peer interactions and facilitates growth in this area of their development.

### Emerging

Limited understanding of appropriate peer interaction, and rarely facilitates them.

- *May show frustration when children need support due to inappropriate expectations*
- *Rigid view of children's social abilities (e.g., resolves peer conflict by separating children or limiting toy or activity access)*
- *Does not plan activities that encourage cooperation or turn taking*

### Developing

Encourages children to socialize and provides support for these interactions.

- *Facilitates parallel play in infants, toddlers, and, when appropriate, older children with developmental delays*
- *Uses the learning environment and routines to prevent peer conflict and promote interaction (e.g., visual cues for where preschoolers stand when lining up or how many children can be at a table or area for play)*
- *Intentionally plans opportunities for children and youth to play, solve problems, and complete tasks together*

### Mastered

Consistently incorporates developmentally appropriate social learning opportunities into activities and care, and provides guidance to foster children's growth in this area.

- *Strategically pairs or groups children for some activities so peer models can support children with emerging skills*
- *Appropriately supports children and youth during conflicts, making sure not to impede their opportunity to problem-solve*
- *Recognizes when certain children need additional help with peer interaction and uses targeted supports (e.g., uses a scripted story to help a child understand safe touch)*

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## RR4 Joins Play

Observes and joins children in their interests, enhancing the nature of their interactions, play, and learning.

### Emerging

Rarely recognizes or joins children in their interests and play.

- *Thinks concretely about play and behavior (e.g., puzzle pieces go in the puzzle, we don't tap them on the table)*
- *Minimal interaction beyond basic care and supervision*
- *Is not always sensitive to children's cues (e.g., may not notice that child is sensitive to sound)*

### Developing

Acknowledges children's interests but may not use this information to enhance their experiences.

- *Responds to children requests (e.g., reads a book when asked by a child)*
- *May see "play time" and "teaching time" as separate*
- *Engages during adult-directed activities but inconsistently interacts during free-choice time*
- *May offer to help a child participate a preferred activity (e.g., "Do you want me to push you on the swing?")*

### Mastered

Consistently builds on children's interests to build relationships, teach new concepts, and expand play.

- *Scaffolds interactions during play to elevate learning and ideas (e.g., playfully covers blocks with older infant and says, "Bye-bye blocks" seeing if the child can find them)*
- *Uses children's interests and strengths to encourage them to try new activities (e.g., builds on interest in painting with different brushes or mediums)*
- *Spontaneously creates learning opportunities during routines and activities (e.g., counts peaches as a child serves themself)*



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## RR5 Secure Relationships

Develops a special relationship with each child in care.

### Emerging

Caregiver and children seem indifferent to each other.

- *Caregiver does not develop unique relationships with individual children*
- *Some children appear unattached to caregiver, even when they are upset*
- *Does not know specific preferences of children in care*
- *Older children request other caregivers over this caregiver*

### Developing

Has a connection to most children in care, but may struggle to develop special relationships with others.

- *Prefers to engage with social, outgoing children over children who are shy and difficult to engage*
- *Attempts but struggles to engage with some children, particularly those with challenging behavior, developmental delays, or dual-language learning*
- *Uses children's first names when speaking with them and gets down on their level to engage*

### Mastered

Uses children's needs, preferences, and interests to build relationships with all children.

- *Uses smiles, physical warmth and affect to form strong attachments with children (e.g., "You are so sleepy, do you want me to hold you?")*
- *Individualizes care for children based on their interests and preferences*
- *Initiates opportunities for children to share about their family and culture, showing interest in their lives outside of the program*

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## RR6 Calm and Present

Has a calm and engaged demeanor when interacting with children, coworkers, and families.

### Emerging

Emotional reactions are unpredictable; seems uninterested in others.

- *Often demonstrates frustration*
- *Responds with minimal feedback when children or families engage*

### Developing

Maintains composure and interest in others most of the time but may occasionally react in an unregulated or indifferent manner.

- *May occasionally overreact to an unexpected occurrence or difficulty with a child but generally remains calm and engaged*
- *Gets down on children's level and engages face-to-face*

### Mastered

Consistently maintains composure and interest during interactions with others.

- *Is a calm, stable presence for children and adults even through the most stressful of situations*
- *Knows to respectfully ask for help or a break when feeling unregulated before losing composure with children, coworkers, or families*





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## RR7 Sensitive Caregiving

Is sensitive to and adjusts expectations when children are feeling unwell, injured, going through changes, or experiencing stressful circumstances.

### Emerging

Does not adjust level of care for children during stressful circumstances.

- Little flexibility in caregiving routines
- When a child is unwell or injured, may respond with "you're okay"
- Doesn't consider how family circumstances affect how children and youth feel and act (e.g., a toddler has a new baby sibling and wants to be held more often)

### Developing

Notices and attends to children's needs.

- Offers comfort to children when they are upset, tired, unwell (e.g., gives a hug, offers to hold, asks what they need)
- Listens and engages with a child who seems upset and tries to understand the child's perspective and how to help
- Is patient with and provides additional support to children who are new to the room or program or are struggling to learn routines

### Mastered

Provides additional nurturing and support when needed to help children through stressful circumstances.

- Able to adjust routines or expectations for individual children experiencing difficulty, while still considering the needs of the entire group
- Communicates support provided to children experiencing difficult circumstances with their families

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## RR8 Appreciates Individuals

Respects children's ideas and perspectives.

### Emerging

Inflexible or intolerant of children's ideas and unique perspectives.

- Does not try to understand or comfort child who is scared or frustrated
- Rarely allows children to carry out their own ideas (e.g., does not allow children to use car ramp as a slide for toy animals)
- Dismisses a child's idea or request for minor changes in the routine

### Developing

Usually demonstrates openness to children's ideas and tries to understand perspectives.

- May be rigid with more caregiver-directed activities but is generally flexible to children's ideas during designated free times
- Allows children to adapt activities using creative ideas (e.g., child uses cut-out circle intended to make a "snowy day" picture to instead create a snake)

### Mastered

Uses children's ideas to build on their learning and relationships.

- Validates children's feelings or perspectives and provides reasoning for a choice or action
- Intentionally incorporates diverse interests and ideas into activities and routines (e.g., "I see that Mya is walking to the playground and Tim is marching.")



# Balanced & Differentiated Instruction

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## BDI1 Individualized Instruction

Understands developmental abilities of children in care and demonstrates appropriate expectations and support. Modifies activities as needed for groups of children and for individual children.

### Emerging

Limited differentiated support.

- *Has unrealistic expectations for children's development (e.g., expects toddler to toilet train with no signs of readiness)*
- *Unaware when activities are either too difficult or too easy*
- *Provides the same support for all children, regardless of their individual needs*

### Developing

Some differentiated support.

- *Provides differentiated support when needed, but may not help child develop new skills or promote independence*
- *Assists children who need increased support but may not challenge those who have mastered a concept or skill*

### Mastered

Consistent differentiated support.

- *Observes and responds when children need help following instructions (e.g., breaks down a two-step process for a child who needs support following multistep commands)*
- *Scaffolds children's learning and development*
- *Modifies learning environment to support all children (e.g., moves toys at the top of shelf to the bottom so infant who cannot pull to stand can access)*
- *Plans and provides differentiation for children who require more challenging tasks, which may include (adult-supported) peer modeling*

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## BDI2 Celebrates Diversity

Acknowledges and celebrates diversity in an inclusive way that makes children feel special and fosters a sense of belonging.

### Emerging

Unaware of personal bias when caring for children.

- *Little evidence of culturally diverse books or materials in the environment*
- *Overlooks statements that reinforce broad generalizations (e.g., uses "Mexican kids" when referring to children from various Latin cultures)*
- *Often makes unintended assumptions about gender, cultures, and practices (e.g., "Girls love dress-up")*
- *Planned activities and experiences reflect only caregiver's values and culture, not those of the children and families*

### Developing

Provides bias-free care but may not incorporate familial and cultural diversity into children's learning experiences.

- *May occasionally make unintended assumptions about children's lives that are not reflective of their experience (e.g., "Did everyone have a nice Christmas?")*
- *"Blind" to children's diversity, does not acknowledge individuality*
- *Planned activities and experiences reflect some thought to cultural diversity, but only on a surface level (e.g., only Christmas, Hannukah, and Kwanzaa are acknowledged)*

### Mastered

Consistently provides care in a bias-free manner and embeds opportunities to learn about familial and cultural diversity throughout learning experiences.

- *Challenges stereotypes to expand children's thinking (e.g., fathers can be stay-at-home parents, not assuming that a doctor is a man)*
- *Uses pictures and stories to explore different types of families (e.g., one-parent households, step-parents, kinship care, LGBTQ families)*
- *Incorporates the language and customs of children in care into the learning environment and activities (e.g., books, music, various religious celebrations)*
- *Planned activities and experiences reflect meaningful reflection and thought to cultural diversity, and authentically engage children, families, and community members*



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## BDI3 Balanced Opportunities

Provides a balance of activities and experiences including caregiver vs. child-directed, whole group/small group/individual, quiet activities vs. collaborating activities, and physically active vs. sedentary.

### Emerging

Limited balanced opportunities.

- *Most activities are caregiver-directed, limited free play*
- *Infants are placed in swings, sit-in activity centers, and other mobility limiting devices for long periods of time*
- *Children and youth are often expected to sit and be quiet*
- *There are not adequate materials for all children and youth to engage in activities*

### Developing

Often provides balanced opportunities.

- *Use of a daily schedule that reflects balanced experiences*
- *Children have access to physical activity opportunities, even during inclement weather*
- *Learning environment has a quiet corner*
- *There are adequate materials for children and youth to engage in activities in large/small groups and individually, but requires frequent intervention from an adult to support appropriate use and sharing*

### Mastered

Consistently provides balanced opportunities.

- *Provides a developmentally appropriate amount of choice for children to choose activities*
- *Is flexible during caregiver-directed activities and involves children's ideas without straying too far from activity objectives*
- *Whole group, small group, and individual activities are strategically chosen to meet children's learning objectives*
- *There are plenty of materials for children and youth to engage with activities together and individually, with adult support focused on learning goals rather than sharing/appropriate use of materials*

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## BDI4 Variety of Developmentally Appropriate Experiences

Provides and facilitates a variety of developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that support all learning domains.

### Emerging

Activities are limited and/or narrow in focus.

- *Does not guide or facilitate interactions at activities*
- *Materials are accessible but few or no specific activities are prepared in the environment*
- *Planned activities lack variety and focus only on one or two learning domains (e.g., math, literacy)*
- *Children engage in free play only*
- *Children do not have access to messy or physical activities*

### Developing

A variety of activities are provided but not all learning domains are consistently emphasized.

- *A variety of activities are prepared and available in the classroom, but some learning domains are missed (e.g., art activities or gross motor activity is missing)*
- *Professionals interact during activities but scaffolding may be limited.*
- *School-age children are offered group games, arts and crafts, and dramatic play, but rarely focus on character development*

### Mastered

Consistently provides a variety of activities that support all learning domains.

- *Arranges and facilitates at least one activity for each learning domain (e.g., cognitive, math, science/sensory, social-emotional, language/literacy, physical)*
- *Professional is engaged and scaffolds learning at a variety of activities*
- *Activities are intentionally chosen to meet all learning domains*
- *Staff member can articulate how specific learning objectives are being met at each activity*



BDI5 Consistent Routines

Schedule and routines are such that children and caregivers know what to do and there are consistent expectations.

Emerging

Minimal structure within the learning environment.

- Learning environment is chaotic
- Rarely follows the schedule
- Inconsistent expectations for routines (e.g., sometimes talking with friends in line is okay, other times not)
- Transitions and routines are completely directed by adult, with little to no opportunities for children to help or lead

Developing

Use of a schedule and has consistent expectations.

- Children generally know what to do and when
- Mostly consistent expectations for routines and behavior
- Verbally prepares children for transitions
- The same children are chosen over and over to lead or engage in transitions and jobs

Mastered

Learning environment enhances children’s ability to follow routines and expectations.

- Uses picture schedules and other visual cues to encourage desired behavior and help children follow routines
- Provides differentiated instruction for children who need more support with routines and expectations (e.g., knows child does not process auditory instructions well from a distance and may repeat for child face-to-face)
- All children are given structured opportunities to lead and engage with transitions or routines

# Comprehensive Caregiving

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## CC1 Healthy and Safe Environments

Learning environments and materials are clean and free of hazards.

### Emerging

Learning environment noticeably needs cleaning or contains minor safety hazards.

- *Minor safety hazards, such as water from the sensory table on the floor, is not attended to immediately*
- *Noticeably soiled items within the learning environment (e.g., table is not cleaned after snack)*
- *There is no clear system in place to support cleanliness and safety*

### Developing

Learning environment is generally clean and free of hazards.

- *Spills and other potential hazards are quickly attended to*
- *Makes sure to relock cabinets, etc., after opening*
- *There are systems in place to support safety and cleanliness, but execution is inconsistent or impractical (e.g., does not empower older children to clean up after themselves)*

### Mastered

There is a clear system to ensure that a clean and safe learning environment is maintained.

- *Uses a "Dirty" or "To be washed" box for toys that are cleaned daily*
- *Employs a system for periodically checking outlet covers, safety locks, etc.*
- *There are clear systems in place for cleanliness and safety that adults and children follow consistently*

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## CC2 Responsive to Health Needs

Observes and responds to children's health and hygiene needs.

### Emerging

Rarely quickly attends to children's health and hygiene needs.

- *Children are left in soiled diapers longer than a few minutes*
- *Does not assist with self-help skills (e.g., wiping a child's nose) when engaged in another task*
- *Allows a hungry infant to cry for longer than a few minutes*
- *Does not encourage older children to cover their mouth when they cough or sneeze or wash their hands when soiled*

### Developing

Usually quickly attends to children's health and hygiene needs.

- *Changes diaper per licensing or regulations and when needed*
- *Takes appropriate measures to handle illness and injury*
- *Follows most of the appropriate clean-up procedures (e.g., use of gloves, cleaning area)*
- *Encourages older children to wash hands and cover coughs/sneezes, but only sometimes*

### Mastered

Consistently and quickly attends to children's health and hygiene needs.

- *Knows to alter expectations for children's activity when they are not feeling well (e.g., allows child to stay longer than usual in the quiet corner)*
- *Completes all necessary steps to prevent the spread of disease*
- *Always encourages children to cover coughs/sneezes and wash hands at recommended times*



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## CC3 Reliable Ratios

Demonstrates a clear system of accountability for children's whereabouts and ratio compliance.

### Emerging

Fails to adhere to supervision guidelines for age group.

- *Unaware of what to do when out of ratio*
- *Does not use strategies and tools to ensure accountability for children*
- *Remains stationary and does not communicate with coworkers to coordinate supervision*

### Developing

Adheres to supervision guidelines for age group.

- *Remains in ratio*
- *Is generally aware of children's whereabouts but may inconsistently count name-to-face, use attendance list, or use other accountability strategies*
- *May occasionally move around to provide supervision in all aspects, but may fail to coordinate this with other staff (e.g., many staff are in one area)*

### Mastered

Adheres to supervision guidelines for age group and provides active supervision.

- *Engages and interacts with children while simultaneously adhering to supervision guidelines*
- *Consistently counts name-to-face before and after transitions*
- *Consistently updates attendance list throughout the day*
- *Coordinates supervision of program area well with other staff (e.g., spread out across the playground)*

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## CC4 Calm Demeanor

Reacts to conflicts, unexpected occurrences, and stressful situations in ways that minimize negative effects on children, staff, and families.

### Emerging

Overwhelmed by typical expectations and changes.

- *Becomes upset with staffing changes or new children in care*
- *Makes excuses or blames others*
- *Withdraws from classroom engagement when upset or frustrated*

### Developing

Usually responds with a calm demeanor.

- *Generally copes well with the normal workflow and challenges encountered when caring for children*
- *Takes a moment or two to adapt to abrupt changes in the daily schedule*

### Mastered

Consistently responds with a calm demeanor.

- *Consistently copes well with the normal workflow and challenges encountered when caring for children*
- *Uses relationships with others to diffuse tense situations*
- *Models healthy adaptation and adjustment (e.g., planned visitor had to cancel, talks through feelings and next steps to problem-solve)*



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## CC5 Professional Communication

Communicates with children, families, and coworkers in a collaborative, professional way.

### Emerging

Does not have a team mindset and minimizes the importance of communication.

- Gives short responses to children's and families' questions
- May discount others' opinions or perspectives
- Does not always follow through with agreed-upon tasks

### Developing

Usually demonstrates effective communication when working with others.

- Gives full attention to others when communicating
- May consider that different perspectives exist but does not individualize response based on this information
- Staff (e.g., many staff are in one area)

### Mastered

Consistently demonstrates effective communication when working with others.

- Gives full attention to others when communicating and asks questions to learn how to best be helpful
  - Considers others' perspectives and values when communicating and problem-solving
- 

## CC6 Procedural Awareness

Follows all program policies and procedures. If certain policies and procedures are not observable, demonstrates understanding through conversations and professional learning activities.

### Emerging

Observable instances of failure to follow program policies and procedures.

- Needs support adhering to most program policies and procedures (e.g., hand washing, child abuse reporting, time-off requests)

### Developing

Usually follows program policies and procedures.

- May consistently follow some procedures but not all (may need support with specific policies and procedures)

### Mastered

Consistently follows program policies and procedures.

- Always adheres to policies and procedures and supports other team members when they need help in learning expectations
- 

## CC7 Welcomes Expertise

Seeks advice from a trainer, coach, or administrator when unsure of how to respond or support a child, family, or coworker, or when encountering a situation that calls for someone in a leadership role to be involved.

### Emerging

Does not demonstrate appropriate involvement of leadership.

- Too reliant on leadership and defers questions or concerns caregiver should be able to answer
- Too isolated in making decisions and responding to situations and questions

### Developing

Usually demonstrates appropriate involvement of leadership.

- Knows when to involve program leadership or consult with team

### Mastered

Consistently demonstrates appropriate involvement of leadership.

- For situations where caregiver would like the input of leadership (but doesn't necessarily need it, according to procedures) tries to find solutions or research information before asking for help



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## CC8 Values Professional Growth

Responsive to professional development opportunities and support provided by a trainer, coach, or administrator.

### Emerging

Does not value or understand the importance of professional development.

- Does not actively participate in goal setting
- Lacks interest in expanding current level of knowledge or practice, or in mentoring others
- Rarely follows through with action steps to improve practices

### Developing

Participates in professional development.

- Shows interest in growing professionally but initiative or ownership is sometimes limited
- Models best practices to others in a few key areas
- Generally responsive and follows through with goal-setting steps

### Mastered

Initiates own professional development and learning.

- Independently utilizes available resources, in conjunction with leadership support, to extend learning and practice
  - Actively models practices for other professionals and seeks mentorship opportunities
  - Asks questions and engages during professional learning opportunities
- 

## CC9 Active Supervision

Provides active supervision by engaging in and expanding on children's play and learning.

### Emerging

Does not provide active supervision.

- Is sometimes distracted when supervising children (e.g., looking at phone)
- Passively supervises children, may watch but does not engage
- Is aware of individual children but not the whole group

### Developing

Usually provides active supervision.

- Is aware of what is happening in the learning environment and responds when needed (e.g., helps two children fighting over the same materials)
- Communicates with team about supervision (e.g., "I'm taking Amaya with me to get more paper")

### Mastered

Consistently provides active supervision.

- Anticipates and modifies the environment to prevent challenges or oversights (e.g., opens up the flaps to a play tent)
  - Implements supervision zones when children are playing in larger or outdoor areas
- 

## CC10 Respectful of Privacy

Speaks about children, families, and staff in a confidential and respectful manner.

### Emerging

Does not always speak respectfully about others or may unknowingly break confidentiality.

- Shares information about a child with other families
- Engages in gossip about coworkers and families
- Occasionally makes subjective comments about families

### Developing

Usually speaks respectfully and adheres to confidentiality.

- Usually adheres to confidential practices regarding children's educational and medical plans
- May occasionally gossip but is generally respectful

### Mastered

Consistently speaks respectfully and adheres to confidentiality.

- Consistently adheres to confidential practices regarding children's educational and medical plans
- Addresses individuals directly when they have concerns, engages leadership for support when needed
- Speaks objectively about families (e.g., "They forgot to bring an extra pair of clothes" instead of "They are irresponsible")





# Family-Centered Practice

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## FCP1 Family Engagement

Caregiver communicates positively with families.

### Emerging

Does not actively communicate with families.

- *At drop off and pickup, caregiver rarely greets families or initiates conversation*
- *Interacts with families as if caregiver knows child better than the family*
- *Shares only information about child's challenges, not their successes, when communicating with families*

### Developing

Usually communicates positively with families.

- *At drop off and pickup, families are inconsistently greeted or engaged in conversation even when caregiver is available to talk*
- *Interacts positively with families, but does not appear to view families as experts about their child*
- *Does not highlight child's successes when communicating with families*

### Mastered

Consistently communicates positively with families.

- *At drop off and pickup, all families are greeted consistently, and efforts are made to engage families in conversation and to listen to them*
  - *Demonstrates to families, through interactions with them, that the family knows their child best*
  - *Communicates child's successes to families*
- 

## FCP2 Family Presence

Caregiver incorporates children's families in the learning environment.

### Emerging

No evidence of families in the program environment.

- *Program environment contains no photos of children with their families*
- *Program environment does not include books or labels for items in children's home languages*
- *Families are not invited to participate in the child's classroom community*

### Developing

Some evidence of families in the program environment.

- *Program environment may contain a few photos of children with their families, but not all children in the program are represented*
- *Program environment may include one book or label in children's home languages*
- *Families are invited to participate in some activities*

### Mastered

Rich evidence of families in the program environment.

- *Program environment displays photos of all children in care with their families*
- *Program environment includes multiple books and labels in children's home languages*
- *Families are invited to participate in the child's classroom community in a variety of ways*



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## FCP3 Programming Communicated to Families

The caregiver includes families when communicating about classroom and program topics and events.

### Emerging

No evidence of communication to families about program topics and events.

- *Program environment does not contain a central family board where information such as schedules or curriculum is shared with families*
- *Classroom or program contains no examples of children's work*

### Developing

Some evidence of communication to families about program topics and events.

- *Program environment may contain a family board, but no events or information about child development is posted there*
- *Program environment may contain few examples of children's work*
- *Schedules (daily or weekly) and curriculum are not shared on the family board*

### Mastered

Rich evidence of communication to families about program topics and events.

- *Information about upcoming family events is posted visibly for families to see and information about child development is available for families*
- *Program environment prominently displays all children's work*
- *Schedules (daily or weekly) and curriculum are shared on the family board so families know what to expect*
- *Provides avenues for open, bidirectional communication with families (e.g., journals, daily sheets, online communication)*

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## FCP4 Protective Factors in Place

The classroom or program includes information about family supports.

### Emerging

No evidence of information about family supports.

- *There is no area in the program environment that serves as a lending library for families or that families can get information about community resources*
- *The classroom does not include a family communication board/area*

### Developing

Minimal evidence of information about family supports.

- *Lending library contains few items and families may not be aware of the availability of resources*
- *Lending library does not include materials in children's home languages, community resources, and books about diverse families*

### Mastered

Rich evidence of family supports.

- *Families are encouraged to use the lending library and materials are available on a variety of child development topics*
- *Lending library includes materials in children's home languages, community resources, and books about diverse families*
- *Program has a robust system (including a digital resource library) for sharing resources and supports with families*
- *Resources are available in home languages and have been checked for accessibility*

