

**The UK ADDENDUM to the ECERS-R: December 2014**  
**(Please check [www.aplus-education.co.uk](http://www.aplus-education.co.uk) for updates)**

*This addendum was developed by A+ Education, with the help of a local authority panel and reference to the English Health Protection Agency\* Guidelines and the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014. It is intended for use by users of the ECERS-R in the UK, and aims to align the ECERS-R with UK guidance and standards in the small number of instances where there are differences. It identifies recommended changes to the scoring of the ECERS-R scale, the 'All About the ECERS-R' and the latest US 'Additional Notes for Clarification' available at the time of publication (September 2014, see [www.ersi.info](http://www.ersi.info)), resulting from a cross-referencing exercise with the HPA Guidance and the EYFS, and consultation with UK stakeholders.*

*This revised addendum replaces the original 2009 edition.*

*The numbers in brackets below link to the full Addendum notes for all the scales.*

**KEY**  
CFOC = Caring for Our Children (US guidance on which ECERS/ITERS decisions are based)  
US Additional Notes = US Additional Notes for Clarification ([www.ersi.info](http://www.ersi.info))  
HPA = Health Protection Agency Review June 2013\*  
There is also reference to a Comparison Table, see Appendix i, which is a table showing a comparison of US and UK Guidance

\* The Health Protection Agency was renamed Public Health England in 2014 ([www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england))

## GENERAL NOTES AND EXPLANATION OF TERMS USED THROUGHOUT THE SCALE

### **CLEANING, SANITISING AND DISINFECTING (ECERS-R US Additional Notes for Clarification, Explanation of Terms Used)**

**(1)** ECERS-R requires a weak bleach solution for sanitisation after cleaning. HPA states that detergent and hot water are adequate for cleaning most surfaces and furniture, including toilet areas. So do not score down if bleach is not used. However, if bleach is used, it should be a weak solution. Do not routinely check the make-up of solutions, but observers should ask about products used within toilet/nappy-changing areas, food areas and with toys, especially mouthed toys, and check that these are appropriate.

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### **HAND WASHING**

#### **(2) Use of sanitisers/gels (ECERS-R US Additional Notes)**

ECERS-R allows sanitisers to be used in place of hand washing for adults, and children over 2 years unless hands are visibly soiled. However, observers should follow HPA guidelines and score down if adults' or children's hands are not washed before eating/handling food and after toileting procedures including changing nappies/pull-ups.

Sanitising gels should only be used in exceptional circumstances, i.e. where soap and water are not available/practical, e.g. at the park. Gels are acceptable for hand washing on entry to the setting.

#### **(3) Correct use of gels**

If, in exceptional circumstances, hand gels are used, check the procedures and score down in safety and supervision if these are not followed. The use of gels must be as thorough as when performing hand washing, i.e. the hand-rub solution must come into contact with all surfaces of the hands and the hands be rubbed together vigorously until the solution has evaporated and the hands are dry. Do not use towels to dry hands.

#### **(4) Rubbing soapy hands (ECERS-R US Additional Notes)**

Although ECERS-R US Additional Notes changes the time required to 20 seconds, give credit if soapy hands are rubbed together for at least 10 seconds (All About the ECERS-R, p123 and p130).

#### **(5) Use of paper towels to turn off taps (All About the ECERS-R, p115)**

This is not required, but we would recommend it as best practice. Do not score down if it does not take place.

#### **(6) Use of hands-free bins (All About the ECERS-R p123-124, see illustration 13b)**

ECERS-R requires hands-free bins with lids for all waste. Give credit if open bins are used for paper towels, but not nappies, as long as the bins are well supervised and emptied frequently, i.e. there is an emphasis on not re-contaminating hands. Hands-free bins with lids are needed for nappies, unless it is observed that the procedure is completely hygienic, e.g. the bagged nappy is put into a chute and hands are washed immediately.

#### **(7) Hand driers (HPA)**

ECERS-R allows the use of hand driers. See ECERS-R Scale p31: 3.1. Do not give credit for these. HPA states that the only satisfactory method of drying hands is with good quality disposable paper.

#### **(8) Antibacterial soap (ECERS-R US Additional Notes)**

HPA states that antibacterial soap is safe. Do not score down if it is used, but let the setting know that antibacterial soap is not necessary.

#### **(9) Observers cleaning hands on arrival (ECERS-R US Additional Notes)**

Hand washing or the use of a sanitiser is good practice and it is the responsibility of the observer to clean his/her hands on arrival.

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### **ACCESSIBILITY**

#### **(10) Calculating accessibility (ECERS-R Scale p6-7)**

The ECERS-R bases calculations of accessibility on the whole time that a setting is open (see chart at the top of p7 in ECERS-R) and encourages observers to ask questions about access outside the three-hour period observed. However, in England, due to the way in which early education places are funded, many children attend for three hour sessions only, and full-day provision is not necessarily the norm. For sessional provision – or full day provision where *some* children attend on a sessional basis – we suggest basing accessibility calculations on the time observed *only*. Only base calculations on the full time the setting is open where all children attend for a full day (e.g. in some reception classes or private settings).

See page xiii-xiv of the All About the ECERS-R book, which advises when to carry out observations (i.e. ‘when children are most active and when most children are present, and it must include both play/learning times and routines, such as feeding, toileting and nap’.)

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### **SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE DAY**

**(11)** As above, base calculations on the time observed unless all children attend for full days (in these instances, observers should ask for clarification as well as checking the schedule to gather information on the balance of experiences across the whole day).

## **GUIDANCE ON INDIVIDUAL ITEMS**

### **ITEM 2 FURNITURE FOR ROUTINE CARE, PLAY AND LEARNING 3.1; 7.1**

#### **Cubbies (ECERS-R US Additional Notes)**

ECERS-R requires storage for each child, large enough for all possessions to be stored, and requires observers to score down at 3.1 if this is not provided. We relax this slightly as follows:

Do not score down here if the only thing missing is provision for nap/rest unless children need it regularly. Lack of provision for nap would be picked up in Item 11 nap/rest.

At **3.1** children must have individual pegs for coats and bags. Cubbies are not required.

If coats are stored on pegs, do not score down if they touch each other, e.g. sleeves touching, as long as they are not overly crowded. No shared pegs. Hygiene issues should be picked up in Item 13, the Health Practices item.

At **7.1** individual storage space is required. Any storage which fulfils this need can be credited. For example, a school might provide individual drawers, whilst a playgroup in a church hall might use spare chairs to provide each child with space to store their things during the session.

At **7.1**, to count as convenient, ECERS-R requires that cubbies are within sight, to enable supervision. Relax supervision of cubbies requirement, to within sight or **easy hearing**. See Item 30 General supervision of children.

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### **ITEM 3 FURNISHINGS FOR RELAXATION AND COMFORT 7.2**

ECERS-R has very specific guidance on how many soft toys are required to count as 'many'.

The guidance for the UK is: 2 year olds should have 2 toys accessible per child, 3 year olds should have 1 per child, and 4 and 5 year olds should have enough for half the group size, but not fewer than 10 soft toys in total. A rough calculation is acceptable for scoring, as long as the provision meets the needs of the children.

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### **ITEM 4 ROOM ARRANGEMENT FOR PLAY**

This ECERS-R item refers to indoor space only. Observers in the UK should also consider any covered porches or verandas which operate as extensions of the indoor space, i.e. can be accessed directly from the indoors, and are attached to the building.

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### **ITEM 10 MEALS/SNACKS**

#### **Appropriate schedule 1.1; 3.1**

ECERS-R marks down in the 3s if drinking water is not accessible.

Score down at **1.1** if water is not freely accessible for children, in line with EYFS 2014, p6. Also check that younger children, who may not know they need to drink, do not go for long periods without water. Observers should see evidence that children do not go for long periods without a drink, e.g. staff remind children regularly. Observers should check that staff have a list of whether or not children have eaten. This is in accordance with EYFS 2014.

### Hygiene 1.3; 3.3

**Hand washing after eating food (All About the ECERS-R p93 and HPA)** Hands should be washed after eating if children have fed themselves and have sticky fingers, see All About the ECERS-R p93. Wipes are acceptable, but do not allow flannels. Flannels often remain wet for a period of time and provide ideal conditions for growth of germs (see HPA, June 2010, Review 2013). Only allow the use of individual damp flannels if these are used under very strict hygienic conditions, i.e. cloth is used immediately after dampening and is then discarded for laundering. Disposable wipes may be used and faces dried with soft towels.

**Table cloths (All About the ECERS-R p94)** If table cloths are used, a clean cloth should be used for each snack/meal. For cafe-style snacks or snack bars, we would not expect the table to be sanitised, i.e. sprayed, between children, see All About the ECERS-R, p 94. However, children should not be expected to eat at a messy table and the table should be wiped if needed. Plates should be used as an additional barrier against contact with the table, and to promote understanding of social expectations.

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### ITEM 11 NAP/REST (All about the ECERS-R p103)

**Distance between cots/mats/beds 1.2, 3.2, 5.3 (ECERS-R US Additional Notes)** Do not score down for the distance between cots/mats/beds at 1.2 and 3.2, as required in ECERS-R (see ECERS-R scale p26, 3.2), if the only sanitary issue is the proximity of children to each other. However, if the spacing causes other problems with hygiene, such as walking on other children's mats to access their own, then score down.

At **5.3** we require 45cm minimum, as long as adults and children have enough room to access beds easily and hygienically. Only allow less if there is a solid barrier.

### Supervision 1.3; 3.3

ECERS-R states that there should always be at least one alert staff member in the room. See ECERS-R scale notes p27. We relax this requirement to allow children to be within sight or easy hearing. This means that small blind areas are acceptable, as long as they are well supervised frequently enough to meet children's needs, i.e. relax supervision for sleeping slightly, for older children.

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### ITEM 12 TOILETING/DIAPERING 1.1; 3.1; 5.1

**Changing facilities** The EYFS 2014, p28, requires suitable hygienic changing facilities. Do not score down at 1.2 if there is no diapering table, as long as there is a changing mat which is sufficiently long to accommodate the full length of the child's body. Staff undertaking nappy changes should **not** be involved in the preparation of food, unless **strict** hand washing procedures are adhered to.

**Aprons** In ECERS-R, the wearing of aprons is optional, but observers should follow HPA guidelines, which require staff to wear a disposable plastic apron to protect their clothing or uniform from contamination when involved in nappy changing. Score down at 3.1 if staff do not wear aprons for nappy changing. We do not require aprons to be changed between children, unless the aprons are visibly soiled.

**Posting of nappy change procedure (ECERS-R US Additional Notes and CFOC p106-108)** ECERS-R requires nappy changing procedures to be posted. We do not require this, but if a care plan is in operation relating to personal care/additional needs for a particular child, this should be posted.

**Disposal of nappies (All About the ECERS-R p114)** Hands-free bins are needed for nappies. However, we would give credit if it is observed that the procedure is completely hygienic, e.g. the bagged nappy is put into a chute and hands are washed immediately.

**Nappy creams, lotions, etc.** should be labelled with the child's name and **must not be shared** between children. It is important to use clean, disposable gloves when removing creams from containers. This will help to avoid cross infection and contamination of the container.

## Basic Provisions 1.2 (EYFS p25)

**Lack of toilet doors** ECERS-R allows toilets without doors, but we would mark down at **1.2** if lack of doors compromises dignity, e.g. staff or children from other rooms see children on toilets when they walk past, i.e. children should not be in view of people passing by. Where children's nappies are changed on a mat on the toilet floor in full view of passers-by, and no effort has been made to provide privacy, mark down at 1.2 as the child's dignity is compromised.

## Supervision 1.4; 3.5

The ECERS-R scale says that **3.5** should be scored no if 'pre-schoolers go to the bathroom, close the door and staff cannot see the children to monitor them'. Relax this requirement. Children must be within sight or easy hearing of staff, and staff must be aware when children need help or when there is a problem. Score down for these indicators if children access the toilet area independently but out of sight or easy hearing of an adult, e.g. down a long corridor. Supervision should depend on the ages of children and whether their needs are being met.

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## ITEM 13 HEALTH PRACTICES 1.1; 3.1

### Hand washing

*ECERS-R is very rigorous about hand washing. We suggest relaxing the requirement as follows:*

**Upon arrival** Do not require adults or children to wash hands upon arrival or when re-entering the room after outdoor play, unless hands are visibly soiled.

**After sand/messy play** Children should wash hands after sand/messy play, where hands are obviously soiled. We recommend hand washing after play dough and before cooking. However, it would be hard to enforce at other times, and it risks cutting across play. Convenience is more important.

Hands that are visibly soiled, potentially grossly contaminated with dirt or organic material, i.e. following the removal of gloves, after touching animals, or where potentially infectious symptoms are suspected, must be washed with liquid soap and water.

**Before and after water play** Hands should be washed after water play but do not require hands to be washed before water play.

**Dealing with bodily fluids** ECERS-R requires hands to be washed after sneezing/coughing. Most general guidance on hand washing also suggests that hands should be washed after coughing or sneezing. For example, HPA guidance from the South West states that 'if bare hands are coughed or sneezed into, they must be washed immediately'. While this procedure should be in place, it would be very difficult for staff to ensure that children wash their hands after every sneeze or cough. We are therefore relaxing the ECERS-R guidance as follows:

Observers should not be over zealous when assessing this. Encouraging the use of tissues is good practice. Observe whether adults encourage children to wash hands/throw tissues in the bin after coughs/sneezes. If adults are being explicit and encouraging good hygiene practices, then observers should not score down, even if hands are not washed every time. If no attention is paid, then score down. Where adults wipe children's noses, they should wash their own hands.

### Other issues

**Use of Face flannels (HPA)** HPA says that children's skin should be cleaned with a disposable wipe. Flannels should **not** be used.

**Sun cream 3.1; 3.2 (See ITERS guidance in All About the ITERS p127)** When adults are applying sun cream to children, hands should be cleaned between the application of different types of sun creams. If children apply their own cream, they should wash their hands. Wipes are acceptable.

**Mouthed toys** Observers should ask about procedures for washing and sanitising mouthed toys, if there is no indication that these are washed/sanitised daily.

**TB tests and immunisations 3.4** We do not expect staff to have TB tests every 2 years, or to ensure that children have immunisations.

#### **ITEM 14 SAFETY PRACTICES 1.1; 1.2; 3.1; 3.2**

**Plug sockets** Do not score down for lack of safety caps on plug sockets. Please see [www.fatallyflawed.org.uk](http://www.fatallyflawed.org.uk) for further information.

**Glitter** Count as a safety hazard at 1.1. if children under 3 years freely access loose glitter and/or other materials with warnings 'not for use with under 3s', unless under the most stringent supervision, i.e. the member of staff is within an arm's reach of the child and watches closely. However, if the glitter is suspended in other materials such as glue or play dough, but not in water, then this could be considered safe. The observer should use professional judgement. Do not score down if glitter is observed in display, as this might have been added by the child under very close supervision, i.e. the member of staff was within an arm's reach of the child and watched closely. Ask for clarification.

**Safety of toys/materials** Consider it a hazard if children are allowed to play with toys or craft materials which carry warnings 'not suitable for children under 3 years', unless they are very closely supervised, i.e. the member of staff is within an arm's reach of the child and watches closely. Observers should check labels. N.B: Some ready mixed paints carry this warning, but this is because the caps on the containers could present a choking hazard. In this case, the staff should pour the paint out for the children to use, but be careful to keep the containers out of the reach of the children. The paint itself does not pose a problem.

Refer to Items 7/8 for potential hazards posed in relation to gross motor/active play materials and space. These could be in or outside.

**Essentials needed to handle emergencies 3.3** Check and list visible evidence including the following: fire procedure posted; fire equipment available and exits clearly identifiable; first aid kit; emergency services numbers, including child protection service, posted. Score down if these are not met. Questions can be asked during the interview to establish that the setting has planned for emergencies. Scoring yes to this indicator will not necessarily mean that all EYFS requirements are met. Settings should use the EYFS as specific guidance in this regard.

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#### **ITEM 39 PROVISION FOR PERSONAL NEEDS OF STAFF 1.2; 3.4**

ECERS-R stipulates that a 15 minute break is required if staff work 8 hours.

European legal requirements: if a person works more than 6 hours, s/he must have a 20 minute rest break. Additional requirements are:

- The 20 minutes is in one block
- Not to be taken at the end of a shift, somewhere in the middle
- Can leave place of work if wish
- The employee can decide when the break is taken so long as it meets these conditions
- Young workers under 18 years, working more than 4.5 hours, get a rest break of 30 minutes

At **1.2** and **3.4**, apply the above EU requirements for those working 6 hours or more, i.e. increasing the minimum requirement from 15 minutes to 20 minutes.

Part-time workers require the opportunity for toilet breaks and to have a drink alongside children. So, for example, staff working for 2.5 or 3 hours should be able to have a drink of water and access the toilet, but do not require a break as such. This follows EC guidance.

**5.3** ECERS-R requires a total of 1 hour break for staff working an 8 hour day, split into 3 breaks. There is flexibility on whether staff take 3 breaks or leave early, or take fewer longer breaks, as long as the time totals 1 hour and this has been agreed with staff. See above for guidance on staff working fewer hours. In a 3 hour session, staff should be allowed time for access to the toilet and to have a drink, but not necessarily a 15 minute break. This might impact negatively on the children, as they would miss time with their key person.

**7.3** Some flexibility is required concerning when staff may take breaks, even for staff working in sessional provision, e.g. 3 hours.

Observers should consider elsewhere in the scale whether breaks and flexibility in breaks affect the needs of the children and parents, e.g. for access to the child's key person. Any issues with children's needs not being met should not be reflected in the scoring of this item, which is about staff needs. The impact on children and parents should be reflected elsewhere in the scale, as appropriate.

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#### **ITEM 43 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH**

Use A levels/Level 3 as an equivalent of AA degree rather than scoring the indicator N/A.