

## Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale

### Assessment Tool Description

The Infant/Toddlers Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) is designed to assess to meet the needs of infants and toddlers in a group care setting because each child requires a great deal of personal care in order to thrive. The scale is designed to assess programs for children from birth to 30 months of age, the group that is the most vulnerable physically, mentally, and emotionally.

There are a total of 39 items that are broken down into 7 subscales: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure and Parents and Staff. Each item is rated on a scale from one to seven. A rating of one would indicate that much improvement is needed. A rating of seven would indicate that all areas are met. Each item then contributes to the subscale rating. The scores are averaged together to give an overall score for the environment.

### Setting description

Head Start is a federal preschool program that promotes the school readiness of children ages birth to 5 from low income families by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development. Telamon operates three types of Head Start programs for disadvantaged families: Head Start (preschool for children ages 3 to 5 years old), Early Head Start (childcare for children 0 to 3 years old and pregnant women) and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (childcare and preschool for children of eligible farmworkers ages 0 to 5 years old). Children with disabilities are also encouraged to participate in programs.

[REDACTED] is located in the [REDACTED] on [REDACTED] in [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. At this facility, they serve children from the ages of 6 weeks to their third birthday. The traditional federal sponsored program provides services from 8:15 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Early and late childcare is available upon request and is not a part of the federal sponsored time. Parents have the opportunity to pay using vouchers or out of pocket. The focus of [REDACTED] Head Start services includes: a nurturing environment that supports the healthy growth and development of each child in the context of the child's family, culture and community, also parents as partners in the shared decision-making process and as active participants in policy group; and recognition of the importance of strengthening linkages within communities.

### Evaluator

The evaluator of this ITERS-R Observations was [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] is a senior at [REDACTED] University. She is completing a dual license in Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education. [REDACTED] completed this assessment over a period of time. She spent 100 hours in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s classroom observing daily activities and



interactions while recording findings. [REDACTED] also spent time looking at materials and asked questions about the daily routines throughout the course of the observation.

## Results

### **Space & Outdoor Furnishings    Overall Score: 5.60**

1. Indoor Space Score: 6
  - \*Great amount of space for children, adults and furnishings
  - \*Ventilation and natural lighting cannot be controlled
2. Furniture for care, play & learning Score: 7
  - \*Great and adequate furniture for routine care and play
3. Provision for relaxation and comfort Score: 4
  - \*Limited soft furnishings provided for children
  - \*Most soft toys are only for the infants
  - \* No cozy area and space for a cozy area to be separated for child's protection
4. Room Arrangement Score: 4
  - \*Room arrangement allows for visual supervision of children without major difficulties
  - \*Quiet and active play areas are not separated; spaces are combined
5. Display for Children Score: 7
  - \*Children's artwork is on display throughout classroom
  - \*Lots of materials are displayed at children's eye level

Space and outdoor furnishings received an overall score of 5.60 for many reasons. Although, the furniture for care, play and learning and display for children are great, there are some other problems in the room that could really benefit the children. There is no way to ventilate the room and there is only one widow/door that could provide natural light but that is very limited. Also, the main entrance to the classroom is a door that leads directly to outside so there is no way to control the temperature entering the room in different seasons. Also, there needs to be more soft and cozy furniture available for all of the children.

### **Personal Care Routines    Overall Score: 7.00**

6. Greeting/departure Score: 7
  - \*Greeting and departing time is great
  - \*Parents receive daily records about their child that entails all diaper changes and potty times, meals, and activities completed
7. Meals/snacks Score: 7
  - \*Food preparation is very sanitary
  - \*Children all receive a bit of what is offered for lunch to expose them to new foods
  - \*Food is measured in ounces and then distributed to each child on their plate with appropriate silverware
8. Nap Score: 7



- \*Great naptime routine
- \*Children are allotted up to 2 hours or more to nap if needed
- 9. Diapering/Toileting Score: 7
  - \*Sanitary conditions always maintained
  - \*Child-sized toilets and low sinks are provided
- 10. Health practices Score: 7
  - \*Children are encouraged to manage health practices independently
  - \*Individual toothbrushes for toddlers used at least once daily
- 11. Safety practices Score: 7
  - \*Staff help children follow safety rules
  - \*Children receive an explanation of safety rules

Personal Care Routines received an overall score of 7.00. The health and safety practices along with nap, diapering and toileting are all great. Spaces are sanitized well after each diaper change, tables are cleaned before and after each meal and group activity, and the classroom is cleaned daily in preparation for the next day.

#### **Listening and Talking Overall Score: 7.00**

- 12. Helping children understand language Score: 7
  - \*Staff use a wide range of simple, exact words in communicating with children
  - \*Staff take part in verbal play with children by repeating infant sounds, rhyme play, etc.
- 13. Helping children use language Score: 7
  - \*Children are asked simple questions and are given time to think before the teacher helps them with the response
  - \*Staff usually maintain a good balance between listening and talking
- 14. Using books Score: 7
  - \*Books are read daily
  - \*Both children and staff initiate reading

Listening and Talking received an overall score of 7.00 because there was great communication between the staff and children. Books are used daily and there is a wide range of books in the classroom. Books are also rotated out with other books to give the children more of a variety of texts to read.

#### **Activities Overall Score: 5.77**

- 15. Fine Motor score: 7
  - \*Many and varied appropriate fine motor materials available and accessible for much of the day
  - \*Materials are rotated for variety
  - \*Materials of different levels of difficulty are accessible



16. Active Physical Play Score: 6
- \*All space and equipment is appropriate for children
  - \*Outdoor space does not have 2 surfaces that are considered safe play areas; only cement and turf (grass) areas available
17. Art Score: 7
- \*Variety of materials is introduced as children are ready
  - \*Appropriate and safe materials used are but are not limited to paint/finger paint, large brushes, bath foam, glue (non-toxic)
18. Music and Movement Score: 7
- \*In addition to singing, staff provide other music experiences daily
  - \*Various types of music are played but not a good variety (no music from other cultures, no songs sung in different languages)
19. Blocks Score: 7
- \*More than 3 sets of blocks accessible daily for students (prism blocks, foam blocks, wooden blocks with color windows in the center, Legos)
  - \*Variety of accessories including transportation toys, people and animals
20. Dramatic play Score: 7
- \*Dolls representing different races/cultures
  - \*Dramatic Play materials available: babies, puppets, toy telephones, pots and pans, kitchen apron, child-sized tables and chair as play furniture, play foods, dishes/eating utensils, kitchen
21. Sand and water play Score: 1
- \*Sand and water play not available for children 18 months or older
  - \*No sand and water table in the classroom
  - \*Occasional water play (depends on the lessons for the week) (Outside water play only)
22. Nature/Science Score: 4
- \*Outdoor experiences with nature provided at least 2 times a week (infants placed on the grass but not with a blanket)
  - \*No daily experiences with living plants or animals indoors
23. Use of TV, video and/or computers Score: N/A
24. Promoting acceptance of diversity Score: 7
- \*Non-sexist images in pictures or books accessible to children
  - \*Boys and girls participate in the same activities
  - \*Cultural awareness shown in a variety of activities

Activities had an overall score of 5.77. An important part of this is that there is no sand and water play available for the children. Also, there is not a large amount of nature/science experiences for the children which are very important even at such a young age. There are plenty of blocks, dramatic play items, and art supplies for the children.



**Interaction Overall Score: 7.00**

25. Supervision of play and learning Score: 7

\*Staff watch carefully and usually act to avoid problems before they occur

\*Supervision is individualized

26. Peer interaction Score: 7

\*Staff explain children's actions, intentions and feelings to other children (Example: "When you bite someone, it hurts them. That's why it is not okay to bite.")

\*Lots of positive social interaction talk about (Example: "Look at the girls playing so nicely together.")

27. Staff-child interactions Score: 7

\*Staff provide a very loving, warm, inviting atmosphere

28. Discipline Score: 7

\*Head Start has mandated that no one, at any age, is allowed to have time out but rather discipline is used through redirection

Interactions scored 7.00 overall. The interactions among the staff and children are great especially at such a young age. There is a lot of encouragement for interaction. The teachers also encouraged play among sexes, to avoid the girls from always play with each other and the boys always playing together.

**Program Structure Overall Score: 7.00**

29. Schedule Score:7

\*Schedule is pretty set but staff adjust the schedule to better meet the needs of the children

\*Regarding wait time, children do not have to wait any longer than a minute or two except for if the person who is going to get lunch that day takes a lot longer than expected

\*Usually all transitions are smooth

30. Free play Score: 7

\*Supervision used as an education interaction

\*Staff add materials to stimulate interest during free play

31. Group play activities Score: 7

\*Group activities are theme based and age appropriate as well as developmentally appropriate

\*Activities are set up to maximize children's success

32. Provisions for children with disabilities Score: N/A

\*No children with disabilities

Program structure scored 7.00 overall. The schedule is set to ensure the children have both free play and structured play, indoors and outdoors. Bathroom breaks and diaper changes happen as needed but there are set times in the schedule in which it takes place (before and after meals,



before and after naptime, etc.). There is lots of group play encouraged although children are not forced to participate. The children seem to have really gotten used to the schedule because they know what comes next and when they should or should not be doing something.

**Parents and Staff Overall Score: 6.57**

**33. Provisions for parents Score: 7**

\*Parents/Guardians receive a daily sheet about their child that tells exactly what they ate and what time, diapering or potty times, nap times (start and finish), health check, daily activities that their child participated in

**34. Provisions for personal needs of staff Score: 6**

\*No separate adult lounge area without dual use for teachers/staff (Office doubles as a lounge/conference room/storage area)

**35. Provisions for professional needs of staff Score: 7**

\*Provisions consists of areas used for dual purposes but still available

\*Area could be scheduled for use of individual conferences

**36. Staff interaction and cooperation score: 7**

\*Teachers work well together

\*Co-teaching; teachers equally share the responsibilities and the best interest of children is main priority

**37. Staff continuity Score: 7**

\*Sometimes there can be lots of different people in an out of the room depending who is available for the day to get meals and cleaning supplies from the main building (Head Start located on 13<sup>th</sup> Street in Anderson)

**38. Supervision and evaluation of staff Score: 6**

\*Staff create goals and reflect on those goals at the end of each quarter to see how they have accomplished it or how they need to improve

\*No frequent observations but feedback and constructive criticism is given as needed

**39. Opportunities for personal growth Score: 6**

\*Support not frequently available for staff to attend conferences

\*Anything is usually provided in workshops or meetings that are mandatory

Parents and Staff scored 6.57 overall. There are great accommodations for the staff but there could be better accommodations for them. With the office doubling as multiple things, it is not ideal. There is not a comfortable area for staff to break in and if there is a meeting occurring in the office during someone's break then they are limited to being in the hallway. Also there could be better opportunities for personal growth because the teachers desire it.

**Final Recommendations**



There are a few final recommendations that would make Early Head Start the best environment for the students. These recommendations include Space and Furnishings and Activities. The recommendation for Space and Furnishings is to increase the provisions for relaxation and comfort. With such young children, it is important that at all ages, they are able to sit in a comfy bean bag with their baby or roll around on a play mat. These things are provided for the infants but the toddlers are too big for these things. Also, if possible, it would be great to rearrange the room so that there is an area for children to play quietly and independently. As of now, the quiet and loud areas are very much intertwined. With there being separate spaces, children could benefit from having that private alone time while still being supervised and vice versa.

The major recommendation for Activities is to provide more opportunities to engage the children in science and nature activities as well as sand and water play. These are great ways to get young children inquisitive about the world. By learning more about science and nature they are discovering what is around them. Having conversations about the weather is great and having everyone lie down on their backs and watch the clouds is another way to get the children involved in nature or science things. Even bugs are super cool to look at even at the age of 2. By allowing the children to have time to play with sand and water, they are unknowingly practicing those fine motor skills by manipulation of the objects in the sand and water. It can strengthen those muscles in their tiny little hands.

#### Highlighting Good Work

- Great personal care routines
- Listening and talking along with interaction is great especially with children of such young ages
- The daily schedule and program structure is great also. Children are used to the flow of things and are able to already anticipate things to come
- There are great provisions for parents along with programs to benefit them at all ages

Signature Line

---

