

**Gateways ECE Assessment (Level 2-5)  
Interactions, Relationships & Environments Assessment**

<b>Gateways ECE Competencies</b>	<p><b>IRE1:</b> Describes the role of the environment in supporting children’s development.</p> <p><b>IRE2:</b> Articulates the importance of relationships in supporting positive developmental and behavioral outcomes.</p> <p><b>IRE3:</b> Identifies factors that contribute to positive interactions with the environment.</p> <p><b>IRE4:</b> Designs learning environments and activities supportive of healthy development and learning.</p> <p><b>IRE5:</b> Creates engaging environments that meet the diverse development and learning needs of each child.</p> <p><b>IRE6:</b> Considers the relationship between curriculum, relationships, and child development and learning in analyzing environments.</p> <p><b>IRE7:</b> Facilitates the design of engaging environments based on appropriate theory, policy, and guidelines.</p>
<b>IPTS</b>	1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1I, 1J, 1K, 1L, 1N, 2A, 2B, 2E, 2F, 2G, 2H, 2I, 3A, 3C, 3D, 3E, 3G, 3J, 3K, 3M, 3N, 3O, 3P, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E, 4F, 4G, 4H, 4I, 4J, 4K, 4L, 4M, 4N, 4O, 4P, 4Q, 5F, 5I, 5J, 5P, 6C, 6F, 6S, 7C, 7K, 8C, 8F, 8G, 8H, 8I, 8K, 8P, 8Q, 8S, 8T, 9A, 9I, 9K, 9L, 9M
<b>NAEYC Standards</b>	1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, 2c, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5a, 5b, 5c, 6b, 6c

In this Assessment, you will compare and contrast environments and interactions in early childhood settings. Goals of this assessment include assessing your competencies in describing the characteristics and practices of culturally responsive, collaborative, supportive learning environments; identifying supportive practices and strategies within these environments; and creating and adapting environments that are responsive to external requirements and the unique development and learning needs of each and every child.

Your Assessment requires that you conduct three early childhood classroom observations. These observations should take place in DCFS licensed facilities; preferably, these will be NAEYC accredited centers. In Part 1 of your Assessment, you will develop an overview of legal mandates, standards, and ethical principles that are essential considerations in designing learning environments. Parts 2 and 3 of your Assessment include your observations. In Part 2, you will conduct an Environmental Scan. In Part 3, you will conduct an Interaction Event Sample. Following your observations, you will write a summary of the data collected (Part 4) and analyze the data in your Post-Reflection (Part 5).

**Prior to your observations:**

- Call and schedule your classroom observations. All three observations should take place in different sites/program types, but should all be conducted in similar age groupings/grades (i.e. PreK, kindergarten, three year olds, two year olds etc.).
- You should plan 90 minutes for the total observation, 30 minutes for the environmental scan and 60 minutes for the interaction event sample.
- When setting up your observation, explain to the teacher/ program administrator that you will be taking notes on the organization of the environment and then observing interactions in the classroom. Be sure to arrange a time when different interactions will be observable (i.e. not nap time)

**Part 1: Pre-Reflection**

Part 1 of your Assessment requires that you describe factors within the early childhood environment (such as space, materials, images, sounds, language, ideas) and adult behaviors and interactions) influence classroom community and children's development and learning. With these factors in mind, provide a 1 to 2-page overview critical considerations for each of these factors when designing engaging environments for young children.

### **Part 2: Environmental Scan (30 Minutes)**

- Upon your arrival, introduce yourself to the teacher and work with her/him to choose a location to observe from where you will not hinder classroom activities.
- Ask the teacher if it is possible to obtain a copy of the daily schedule. If this is not possible, write the schedule down.
- During the 30-minute Environmental Scan, develop a diagram of the classroom design. Take notes on features and aspects of the physical environment. Include in your notes the following:
  - Details on signage, labeling, and organizational strategies that are used within the environment to help children navigate and self-regulate.
  - Characteristics of the learning environment that support or impede collaboration
  - Characteristics of the learning environment that support or impede creativity and exploration
  - Ways in which the physical and social environment reflects cultural responsiveness

### **Part 3: Interaction Event Sample (60 Minutes)**

- Create a chart (see attached example) prior to your visit that will allow you to collect interaction samples and data for specific periods of time during the 60-minute period.
- To begin your event sample, provide an overall description of the following:
  - Number of children in the room.
  - Number of staff in the room
  - Activities occurring during observation time period
  - Interaction strategies used, including verbal communication and guidance strategies
  - Other relevant information (whether families were in the room, how children responded to strangers, etc.)
- For the 60 minute period focus specifically in on interactions collecting the following information:
  - A description of the interaction you observed (can include quotes)
  - The location of the interaction
  - Reason for the interaction
  - Duration of the interaction
  - Interaction type (Adult to child; Child to Adult; Child to child; Child to environment)

### **Part 4: Observation Summary**

Your Observation Summary is based on Parts 2 and 3 of your Assessment. Include the following for your summary:

- A one-page summary of the environmental scans for each observation site. (Attach your diagram and daily schedule for each site).
- A one-page summary of each event sample (attach your completed observation charts).

### **Part 5: Post-Reflection**

Your Post-Reflection requires that you reflect on data collected in your observations, and suggest adaptations to the environments you observed within. For your Post-Reflection, respond to each of the following:

- What was your overall assessment of the environments observed in terms of their ability to support positive behavioral and developmental outcomes? Identify specific environmental strengths and opportunities.
- What strengths and opportunities did you observe within the environment related to fostering trusting relationships with children and their families?
- Describe culturally and individually responsive strategies observed within each of the environments. In addition to strategies observed, identify opportunities, if applicable. How can strategies be adapted in ways that are respectful of personality and temperament?
- Based on your responses to each of the questions above, how effective do you feel each of the environments you observed within were in terms of supporting the healthy development and learning of young children, including
  - encouraging active, creative exploration,
  - promoting children's positive interactions with others,
  - supporting self-regulation,
  - supporting health social and emotional development,
  - supporting access and participation;
  - and promoting positive behaviors.

What would you suggest in terms of environmental adaptations or changes to the learning environment overall to enhance the learning community and ensure that the diverse development and learning needs of each and every child is enhanced?

### **Part 6: Professional Application**

As part of your center/school's annual professional development plan, you, as the program director, are planning a seminar for teachers and staff on developing and facilitating positive environments for learning. Your data and analysis has indicated that many of your center's classrooms are at different stages of development in their ability to create and maintain engaging environments and promote positive, collaborative interactions between young children and families. For your workshop:

- Develop an agenda/outline for a 60-90-minute workshop, which incorporates child development and theory in the creation and facilitation of positive environments, program planning, and positive interactions between young children and families.

In addition to your workshop outline, describe how you will support your colleagues in ensuring environmental design, program planning, and collaborative interaction guidelines and strategies are appropriately implemented and supported within your program.

**Interactions, Relationships & Environments Master Rubric**

Competency	Distinguished	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Unable to Assess
<p>IRE1: Describes the role of the environment in supporting children’s development.</p>	<p>Describes how factors within the environment, including space, materials, images, sounds, language, and ideas, support community within the classroom and children’s development and learning.</p> <p>Includes connections with families, community and children’s overall development in environmental description.</p>	<p>Describes how factors within the environment, including space, materials, images, sounds, language, and ideas, support community within the classroom and children’s development and learning.</p>	<p>Partially describes how factors within the environment, including space, materials, images, sounds, language, and ideas, support community within the classroom and children’s development and learning.</p>	<p>Description of factors within the environment, including space, materials, images, sounds, language, and ideas, support community within the classroom and children’s development and learning lacking.</p>	
<p>IRE2: Articulates the importance of relationships in supporting positive developmental and behavioral outcomes</p>	<p>Considers adult behaviors, attitudes and interactions in articulating the importance of relationships in supporting positive developmental and behavioral outcomes and building trusting relationships.</p> <p>Builds opportunities for positive social interactions which incorporate healthy self-concept techniques for multi-language learners and children of diverse abilities.</p>	<p>Considers adult behaviors, attitudes and interactions in articulating the importance of relationships in supporting positive developmental and behavioral outcomes.</p> <p>Describes role of positive social interactions, which incorporate adaptations for multi-language learners, and children of diverse abilities.</p>	<p>Partially considers adult behaviors, attitudes and interactions in articulating the importance of relationships in supporting positive developmental and behavioral outcomes.</p>	<p>Does not consider adult behaviors, attitudes and interactions in articulating the importance of relationships in supporting positive developmental and behavioral outcomes.</p> <p>Describes practices that minimize opportunities for positive social interactions.</p>	
<p>IRE3: Identifies factors that contribute to positive interactions with the environment</p>	<p>Identifies factors, including personality and temperament, that influence behavior and interactions within early childhood environments, and advocates for environments that support positive behavior and classroom community</p>	<p>Identifies factors, including personality and temperament that influence behavior and interactions within early childhood environments.</p>	<p>Partially identifies factors that influence behavior and interactions within early childhood environments.</p>	<p>Identifies factors within early childhood environments, but does not consider influence on behavior and interactions.</p>	

**Interactions, Relationships & Environments Master Rubric**

Competency	Distinguished	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Unable to Assess
IRE4: Designs learning environments and activities supportive of healthy development and learning	<p>Incorporates, advocates and models DAP and input from children to design environments and activities which accommodate individual children’s needs and encourage positive expression of emotions, exploration and problem solving.</p> <p>Environmental design reflects knowledge of legal and ethical principles related to behavior management.</p>	<p>Incorporates knowledge of developmental, individual, and culturally appropriate practice to design environments and activities, which are supportive of healthy development and learning, reflective of individual children’s needs, and supportive of positive expression of emotions, exploration and problem solving.</p>	<p>Incorporates knowledge of developmental, individual, and culturally appropriate practice to design environments and activities, which are supportive of healthy development and learning.</p> <p>Explicit attention to individual and group not evident.</p>	<p>Learning environments and activities designed are not supportive of healthy development and learning.</p>	
IRE5: Creates engaging environments that meet the diverse development and learning needs of each child	<p>Creates flexible, engaging indoor and outdoor environments that meet the needs of individual and groups of children.</p> <p>Consults with parents and health professionals to maximize participation of all children and accommodate individual abilities, interests and personalities.</p>	<p>Creates engaging indoor and outdoor environments that support the development and learning of individual and groups of children.</p> <p>Seeks to maximize access and participation for all children and to accommodate individual abilities, interests and personalities.</p>	<p>Creates engaging indoor and outdoor environments supportive of development and learning.</p> <p>Explicit attention to access and participation not evident.</p>	<p>Creates indoor and outdoor environments that do not support children's development and learning.</p>	
(5) IRE6: Considers the relationship between curriculum, relationships, and child development and learning in analyzing environments	<p>Analyzes indoor and outdoor environments for incorporation of current-research based strategies supportive of children’s learning and development.</p> <p>Analyzes relationship between curriculum, environmental design, children's interactions and relationships, and children's unique developmental strengths</p>	<p>Analyzes indoor and outdoor environments for incorporation of current evidence-based strategies supportive of children’s learning and development.</p> <p>Analyzes relationship between curriculum, environmental design, children's interactions and relationships, and children's</p>	<p>Examines indoor and outdoor environments for incorporation of practices supportive of children’s learning and development.</p> <p>Explicit attention to the relationship between curriculum, environmental design, children's interactions and relationships, and children's unique developmental needs in analysis not evident.</p>	<p>Analysis of indoor and outdoor environments for incorporation of current evidence-based strategies supportive of children’s learning and development absent.</p>	

<b>Interactions, Relationships &amp; Environments Master Rubric</b>					
<b>Competency</b>	<b>Distinguished</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Unable to Assess</b>
	<p>and challenges.</p> <p>Includes connections to instructional support and applied examples communication ideas and practice skills to families and colleagues.</p>	<p>unique developmental strengths and challenges.</p>			
<p>IRE7: Facilitates the design of engaging environments based on appropriate theory, policy, and guidelines</p>	<p>Facilitates the design of engaging environments, which incorporate the current evidence-base, policy, standards and guidelines.</p> <p>Identifies evidence-based approaches to evaluate environmental effectiveness and appropriateness.</p> <p>Develops and justifies program policies to maintain environments and meet shifting needs of learners.</p>	<p>Facilitates the design of engaging environments, which incorporate the current evidence-base, policy, standards and guidelines.</p> <p>Identifies evidence-based approaches to evaluate environmental effectiveness and appropriateness.</p>	<p>Facilitates the design of engaging environments.</p> <p>Current evidence-base, policy, standards and guidelines inconsistently applied.</p> <p>Evidence-based approaches to evaluate environmental effectiveness and appropriateness inconsistently applied.</p>	<p>Facilitates the design of engaging environments.</p> <p>Current evidence-base, policy, standards and guidelines not applied.</p> <p>Evidence-based approaches to evaluate environmental effectiveness and appropriateness not applied.</p>	

### Event Sample Chart

Observation Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_ Observation site/Classroom \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Adults (roles) \_\_\_\_\_

Activities during observation (i.e. large group, centers, snack, small group etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

	Minutes 0-10	Minutes 10-20	Minutes 20-30	Minutes 30-40	Minutes 40-50	Minutes 50-60
Interaction #1						
Interaction #2						
Interaction #3						
Interaction #4						
Interaction #5						
Interaction #6						
Interaction #7						
Interaction #9						

