Program Observation Tool

2019 NEW OR REVISED MATERIAL IS FLAGGED ON ITEM HEADER. Revised guidance is shown in bold font.

Program ID#: ___________ Org. ID#: ___________ Visit Date: ___________
Assessor ID#: ___________ Assessor Last Name: ___________

Time of Program Observation: Start Time: ___________ End Time: ___________

**ASSESSORS:** Shared spaces to be assessed on this tool include program areas listed below as well as “specials” rooms (such as music) used regularly by the program. Assess all outdoor learning environments (not just those described in more detail on this page), including any public spaces used at least once per week by any and all classes.

**Notes Page:** Complete global ratings. Written notes are optional.

### Program Areas Assessed:
*Check here which areas are assessed on this tool. Write in any areas not already listed.*

| How many outdoor learning environment(s): | ☐ staff lounge | ☐ indoor gross motor |
| ☐ admin. office | ☐ resource room | ☐ kitchen | ☐ storage rooms, sheds |
| ☐ lobby | ☐ bathrooms | ☐ library | ☐ nurse’s office |
| ☐ corridors/stairwells | ☐ computer room | ☐ Other: | ☐ Other: |

### Outdoor Learning Environment(s)

Include a brief description of each of the outdoor learning environments. This may include a private or public playground, field, footpath or sidewalk, or parking lot.

An “area” could also be specific parts of a playground or other outdoor space that a particular class uses.

After identifying discrete areas and the classes that use them, ask: “Is there equipment for outdoor use in this area that is stored in a shed, closet, or rolling cart”? If so, identify which areas utilize which equipment, and ask permission to access the storage space (e.g., have them unlock sheds).

Select three areas to describe in further detail on page 2 of this tool.

### Outdoor Learning Environments used by this program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Toddler playground off Busy Bees room.</th>
<th>Class(es) Using Area</th>
<th>Owned by program?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area 1</td>
<td>Busy Bees, Turtle Doves; all T classes</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 2</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 3</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 4</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 5</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 6</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 7</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area 8</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Elements in three outdoor learning environments used by this program:

Briefly describe up to three outdoor learning environments below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Number from Page 1:</th>
<th>☐ ☐ ☐</th>
<th>☐ ☐ ☐</th>
<th>☐ ☐ ☐</th>
<th>☐ ☐ ☐</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ stationary climber</td>
<td>☐ swings</td>
<td>☐ sensory play</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ loose parts</td>
<td>☒ ride-on toys</td>
<td>☐ ride-on pathway</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☒ slide</td>
<td>☒ garden</td>
<td>☒ gross motor game equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ open spaces</td>
<td>☐ dramatic play</td>
<td>☐ other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 **Loose parts**: “Materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, and taken apart and put back together in multiple ways. They are materials with no specific set of directions that can be used alone or combined with other materials.” ([http://www.letthechildrenplay.net/2010/01/how-children-use-outdoor-play-spaces.html](http://www.letthechildrenplay.net/2010/01/how-children-use-outdoor-play-spaces.html)). Examples: stones, stumps, fabric, sticks, buckets, baskets, rope, seedpods.

2 **Gross motor game equipment**: Outdoor elements that promote gross motor play involving rules and structure. Examples: basketball hoop, hop scotch board, obstacle course, sport balls.
Standard 5 – Health
5.C: Promoting and Protecting Children’s Health and Controlling Infectious Disease

5C.4  I  T  P  K  S  

Scented or unscented candles and air fresheners are not used anywhere in the facility.  
☐ Yes  ☐ No  

*Examples of air fresheners: Potpourri, plug-ins, essential oils, incense, sprays, diffusers, mists.*

Standard 6 – Professional Competencies and Supports
6.A: Supportive Work Environment

6A.2  I  T  P  K  S  

There is private or semi-private adult friendly space in the program facility, where staff can take a break away from children.  
☐ Yes  ☐ No  

_Private_: A space designed for the exclusive use of a particular person or group of people.  
_Semiprivate_: A space designed for a small number of people.  

*Examples of private or semiprivate adult program spaces: Staff break room, nursing room, resource room, conference room, reception area, alcove, open office.*

6A.3  I  T  P  K  S  

Staff have a secure place to store their personal belongings.  
☐ Yes  ☐ No  

_Secure storage_: Belongings are stored in a closet, locker, or drawer out of reach of children.

6A.4  I  T  P  K  S  

There is suitably sized seating available to adults in the outdoor learning environment.  
☐ Yes  ☐ No  

*Rate N/A if the program does not use, own, or maintain any outdoor learning environments.*  
*When assessing multiple outdoor learning environments, rate Yes if at least one of the outdoor learning environments used by children of each age category provides for suitable seating for adults.*  
_Suitable seating_: A stool, chair, bench, or other seat that is capable of supporting an adult person.

6A.5  I  T  P  K  S  

Staff can readily access professional planning and curriculum resources.  
☐ Yes  ☐ No  

*Examples of professional planning and curriculum resources: Books, computer software, or other planning materials related to curriculum, developmentally appropriate practice, teaching strategies, classroom management, professionalism, ethics.*

Standard 9 – Physical Environment

9A.4  I  

Nursing mothers have a comfortable, private or semiprivate place available to breast-feed and/or pump their breast milk.  
☐ Yes  ☐ Not  ☐ No  ☐ Age  

*Rate Not Age if the program does not serve infants.*  
_Private_: A space designed for the exclusive use of a particular person or group of people.  
_Semiprivate_: A space designed for a small number of people.  

*Examples of private or semiprivate program spaces suitable for nursing mothers: Dedicated nursing room, conference room, infant room, unused office (not administrator's office), semiprivate space in a staff lounge or resource room. Spaces open to through-traffic are not semiprivate.*
### 9.B: Outdoor Environmental Design

#### 9B.1 ITPKS

Outdoor learning environments include three or more natural elements that children can interact with, such as grass, sand, rocks, plants (including gardens), and variations in ground elevation.

When assessing multiple outdoor learning environments, rate Yes if the outdoor learning environments together include three or more natural elements.

Rate No if the group does not utilize any outdoor learning environment at least once a week (including public spaces and private playgrounds).

Rate No Opp if snow cover prevents an accurate assessment of the outdoor learning environment(s).

**Examples of outdoor learning environments:** Playgrounds (public or private), parks, parking lots, open fields without equipment, gardens, woods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Opp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### 9B.2 ITPKS NEW GUIDANCE 2019 N/A

Sandboxes are at least half full of sand.

Rate N/A if there are no sandboxes in the outdoor learning environments.

Rate N/A if the program uses, but does not own or control sandboxes (e.g., public park).

Rate No Opp if snow cover prevents an accurate assessment of the outdoor learning environment(s).

Do not rate sensory tables or sand used as safety surfaces or ground cover.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Opp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 9B.3 ITPKS NEW GUIDANCE 2019

The outdoor learning environment is free from tripping hazards.

Rate No Opp if snow cover prevents an accurate assessment of the outdoor learning environment(s). Rate NO if the program does not utilize an outdoor learning environment at least once per week.

**Examples of tripping hazards:** Exposed concrete footings, abrupt changes in surface elevations, or other man-made elements which can trip children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Ag</th>
<th>No Opp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 9B.4 ITPKS NEW GUIDANCE 2019

The outdoor learning environment includes one or more elements that protect children from harmful weather conditions common to the area, such as excessive wind or strong direct sunlight.

When assessing multiple outdoor learning environments, rate Yes if each of the outdoor learning environments offer such protections.

Protection must match the most prevalent adverse conditions (cold, wind, sun) in the local area.

Rate NO if the program does not utilize an outdoor learning environment at least once a week.

Rate No Opp if snow cover prevents an accurate assessment of the outdoor learning environment(s).

**Examples of outdoor learning environments:** Playgrounds (public or private), parks, parking lots, open fields without equipment, gardens, woods.

**Examples of weather conditions:** Winds, temperature extremes, precipitation, pollution, pollen, high UV Index.
9.C: Building and Physical Design

9C.5 I T P K S
The program’s building, grounds, furnishings, and equipment are kept in good repair and are free of hazardous maintenance problems.

Examples of hazardous maintenance problems: Sharp edges, splinters, protruding or rusty nails, missing parts.

☐ Yes ☐ No

9C.6 I T P K S
The program’s building and grounds are free of trash and hazardous items.

☐ Yes ☐ No

9.D: Environment Health

9D.2 I T P K S
A rough walk-off mat is supplied at the main entrance(s) and all regularly used exits to outdoor learning environments.

☐ Yes ☐ No

9D.3 I T P K S
There is a posted sign or notice at the main facility entrance(s) that encourages staff, families, and visitors to wipe or remove their shoes before entering the program facility.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Global Ratings

Make the following global ratings of observation quality. Before rating, consider the specific mid-point and end-point descriptions for each scale. For each item, circle the number that most accurately describes this observation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety of the program environment for children, staff and families</th>
<th>Numerous safety concerns</th>
<th>Few, minor safety concerns</th>
<th>No safety concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 ☐</td>
<td>2 ☐</td>
<td>3 ☐</td>
<td>4 ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cleanliness of the program environment for children, staff and families</th>
<th>Dirty &amp; unsanitary throughout</th>
<th>Few unclean areas</th>
<th>Clean &amp; sanitary throughout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 ☐</td>
<td>2 ☐</td>
<td>3 ☐</td>
<td>4 ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functionality of the program environment for children, staff and families</th>
<th>Facility does not work well for this use</th>
<th>Few areas of the facility do not work well</th>
<th>Facility is optimally designed for this use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 ☐</td>
<td>2 ☐</td>
<td>3 ☐</td>
<td>4 ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes