

Early Head Start Center-Based: DST Classroom/Center Preparation Checklist

DST Team Names:

School Year: _____ LOC ID: _____
 Due by: Fall: _____ Winter: _____

Complete and document any materials and assistance needed. The fall DST checklist will be due the Monday before the first day of class and turned in to the Area Manager. Area managers will review and document any follow-up and place the original DST Checklist in the classroom's lesson plan notebook. The second review of the DST Checklist will be completed 4 weeks after winter break and turned in to the Area Manager. Use a red pen to mark for the winter review.

Classroom Environment

Children are required to have access to the following materials and interest areas for “*Much of the Day*”, which means most of the time that any child may be **awake** and **able to play**.

Space and Furnishings

1. Indoor space:

- ____/____ Ample indoor space for children, adults, and furnishings (5.1)
- ____/____ Good ventilation, some natural lighting through windows or skylight (5.2)
- ____/____ Space for children is accessible to children and adults with disabilities (5.3)
- ____/____ Natural light can be controlled (7.1)
- ____/____ Ventilation can be controlled (7.2)
- ____/____ Floors, walls, and other built-in surfaces made of easy-to-clean materials (7.3)
- ____/____ The classroom is organized to provide a responsive environment that addresses the needs and growing abilities of young children (CC)
- ____/____ The environment is healthy, safe, and clean. (CC)

2. Furniture for routine care and play:

- ____/____ Furniture suitable for individual care of infants/toddlers (5.1)
- ____/____ Some child-sized table(s) and chairs used with toddlers (5.2)
- ____/____ Furniture promotes self-help as children are ready (5.3)
- ____/____ Some accessible storage used for extra toys and supplies (5.4)
- ____/____ Routine care furniture accessible and convenient (7.1)
- ____/____ Most of the tables and chairs are child-sized (7.2) (75%)
- ____/____ Comfortable adult seating for working with children (7.4)
- ____/____ Classroom areas for routines support consistent and responsive care (CC)

3. Provisions for relaxation and comfort:

- ____/____ Special cozy area accessible much of the day (5.1)
(a combination of things gathered together Ex. Padded chair, carpeted corner, pillows, mats, beanbag)
- ____/____ Cozy area projected from active play (5.2)
(placed away from active play spaces, redirect children's active play elsewhere)
- ____/____ Many soft toys accessible much of the day (5.3)
(at least 10 soft toys for a group of 5 children or fewer; add 2 more soft toys per additional child)
- ____/____ Special cozy area **plus** softness accessible in several other areas (7.1)
- ____/____ Cozy area used for reading or other quiet play (7.3)

(Created 03/2026)

4. Room arrangement

- ____/____ Routine care areas conveniently arranged (5.1)
- ____/____ Arrangement of the room makes it possible for staff to see all children at a glance (5.2)
- ____/____ Areas for quiet and active play separated (5.3)
- ____/____ Toys are stored for easy access by children (5.4)
(on open shelves and made available and ready to be used by children when they want them)
- ____/____ Suitable space provided for different kinds of experiences (7.1)
(three different types of play spaces Ex. Active, quiet, and messy play areas)
- ____/____ Materials with similar use are placed together to make interest areas (7.2)
- ____/____ Traffic patterns do not interfere with activities (7.3)
- ____/____ Classroom areas for learning experiences support children's development and learning. (CC)

5. Display for children

- ____/____ Many colorful, simple pictures, posters, and/or photographs are displayed throughout the room (5.1)
- ____/____ Mobiles and/or colorful hanging objects for children to look at (5.2)
- ____/____ Many items are displayed where children can easily see them, some within easy reach (5.3)
- ____/____ Photographs of children in the group, their families, pets, or other familiar faces displayed on the child's eye level (7.1)
- ____/____ Most pictures are protected from being torn (7.2)
- ____/____ New materials added or display changed at least monthly (7.3)
- ____/____ Artwork done by toddlers displayed (7.4)
- ____/____ The environment reflects the languages, family backgrounds, home cultures, and exceptionalities of the children in the classroom (CC)

Fall Notes	Winter Notes

Personal Care Routines

6. Greeting/departing

- ____/____ Individualized plan for greeting each child and parent and provide pleasant organized departure posted on lesson plan (5.1)
- ____/____ Plan for problems with separation from parent or departing from center handled with sensitivity (5.2)
- ____/____ Written record of infant's daily feeding, diapering, and naps located in a convenient spot as to not interfere with active supervision (5.3, *N/A for toddler*)
- ____/____ Friendly, relaxed atmosphere that encourages parents to spend time in the classroom at drop-off and pick-up times (7.1)

7. Meals/snacks

- ____/____ Individualized plan for meals/snacks that are relaxed and pleasant posted on lesson plan (5.2)
- ____/____ Environment set up to provide basic sanitary procedures are usually practiced. Such as transition to and from handwashing and easy access to cleaning/sanitizing bottles (5.3)
- ____/____ Menus posted for parents (5.5, *N/A permitted*)

8. Nap

- ____/____ Nap is personalized for each child on lesson plan (5.1)
- ____/____ Map of cot placement posted (toddler room)
- ____/____ Cribs are assigned one per infant and labeled with the child's name (Infant Room, WAC)
- ____/____ Infants who can roll front to back and back to front independently, while awake, need a laminated sign added to their cribs that says "I can roll over" and do not need to be rolled over onto their backs while sleeping (Infant Room, WAC)
- ____/____ Cots and cribs are spaced by at least 36 inches

9. Diapering/toileting

- ____/____ Sanitary conditions easy to maintain, cleaning and sanitation supplies are within reach (5.2)
- ____/____ Changing table is adjacent to a hand washing sink (WAC)
- ____/____ Steps are available for children to climb to the sink and wash hands
- ____/____ Provisions convenient and accessible (5.3)
- ____/____ Child-sized toilets and low sinks provided (7.2, *N/A for infants*)
- ____/____ Materials for self-help skills as children are ready (7.3)

10. Health practices

- ____/____ Sand used for outdoor sand play is clean and covered when not in use (5.4)
- ____/____ Individual toothbrushes for infants a toddlers used at least once daily in full-day are stored in a sanitary way
- ____/____ Health information from recognized health organizations available for parents (7.3)
- ____/____ Hand washing posted at each hand washing sink

11. Safety practices

____/____ No safety hazards that could cause serious injury indoors or outdoors (5.1)
 Active Supervision Board with child's name & picture posted

Fall Notes	Winter Notes

Listening and talking**12. Using books**

____/____ At least 12 appropriate infant/toddler books accessible daily for much of the day (5.1)
 ____/____ A wide selection of books is accessible (5.2)
 ____/____ Books are age appropriate and represent the cultures and languages of the children and families
 ____/____ Book area set up for toddlers to use independently (7.1)
 ____/____ Books are added or changed to maintain interest (7.3)

Fall Notes	Winter Notes

Activities

13. Fine Motor

- ____/____ Many and varied appropriate fine motor materials are accessible for much of the day (5.1)
- ____/____ Materials are well-organized (5.2)
- ____/____ Materials rotated to provide variety (7.1)
- ____/____ Materials of different levels of difficulty accessible (7.2)

14. Active physical play

- ____/____ An easily accessible outdoor area where infants/toddlers are separated from older children is used at least 1 hour daily year-round, except in very bad weather (5.1)
- ____/____ Large active play area that is not crowded or cluttered (5.2)
- ____/____ Ample materials and equipment for physical activity so children have access without long periods of waiting (5.3)
- ____/____ Some equipment that can be used by each child in the group, including children with disabilities, if enrolled (5.4)
- ____/____ All space and equipment are appropriate for children (5.5)
- ____/____ Outdoor space has 2 or more types of surfaces permitting different types of play (7.1)
- ____/____ Outdoor area has some protection from the elements (7.2)
- ____/____ Materials used daily stimulate a variety of large muscle skills (7.3)
- ____/____ Staff are aware of the playground safety plan and the big climbing structure is a one to one ratio for children under 30 months old

15. Music and movement

- ____/____ Many pleasant-sounding musical toys and/or instruments are accessible daily, for much of the day (5.1)
- ____/____ Musical toys or instruments rotated to provide variety (7.1)

16. Blocks

- ____/____ At least 2 sets (10 or more per set) of different types accessible daily for much of the day (5.1)
- ____/____ Blocks and accessories sorted by type (5.2)
- ____/____ Space used for toddler's block play is out of traffic and has a steady surface (5.3)
- ____/____ At least 3 sets (10 or more blocks per set) of different types accessible daily for much of the day (7.1)
- ____/____ Variety of accessories including transportation toys, people, animals (7.2)

17. Dramatic play

- ____/____ Many and varied age-appropriate dramatic play materials are accessible daily (5.1)
- ____/____ Props represent what children experience in everyday life (5.2)
- ____/____ Materials are organized by type (5.3)
- ____/____ Some child-sized play furniture for toddlers (5.4, *N/A for infants*)
- ____/____ Props provided to represent diversity (7.2)
- ____/____ Props provided for toddlers to use active dramatic play outdoors or in another large area (7.2, *N/A for infants*)

18. Sand and water play

- ____/____ Sand or water play at least once a week (5.1)

- ____/____ Variety of toys used for sand/water play (5.2)
 ____/____ Sand or water activities set up to facilitate play (5.3)

19. Nature/science

- ____/____ Outdoor experiences with nature provided at least 2 times a week (5.1)
 ____/____ Some daily experiences with living plants or animals indoors (5.2)
 ____/____ Nature/science materials are well-organized and in good repair (7.2)

20. Promoting acceptance of diversity

- ____/____ Many books, pictures, and materials showing diversity (5.1)
 ____/____ Dolls representing at least 3 races accessible (5.2)
 ____/____ Images of persons in non-stereo-typical roles in pictures or books accessible to children (7.1)
 ____/____ Cultural awareness is shown in a variety of activities (7.2)

Fall Notes	Winter Notes

Program structure

21. Schedule

- ____/____ Schedule for basic routines is flexible and individualized to meet each child's needs (5.1)
 ____/____ Schedule provides a balance of indoor and outdoor activities (5.2)
 ____/____ Active and quiet play varies to meet children's needs (5.3)
 ____/____ The daily schedule and weekly plans are flexible and include a balance of types of experiences and settings. (CC)

22. Free play

- ____/____ Free play occurs for much of the day, both indoors and outdoors, weather permitting (5.1)
 ____/____ Ample and varied toys and materials and much equipment provided for free play (5.3)
 ____/____ Staff add materials to stimulate interest during free play (7.2)

CLASSROOM POSTINGS

The following are to be posted in your classroom before the first day of class:

- ☐ Emergency Procedure is located on a ring by classroom telephone:
 - Emergency Medical/Dental Procedures (HLTH 2b)
 - Opioid-Related Overdose Policy and Procedure (HLTH 5g)
 - Emergency Care for Seizure (HLTH 2c)
 - Bump to the Head Handout (HLTH 2d)
 - Procedure for Completing an Accident Report or Incident Summary Report (HLTH 9b)
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 - Classroom Lockdown Procedure (FACI 1p)
 - Building Lockdown Procedure (FACI 1q)
- ☐ Classroom Fire Drill/Evacuation Plan for Specific Classroom/Center
- ☐ Exit signs by each Exit Door
- ☐ Fire/Earthquake/Lockdown Drill Record Form (HLTH 2j)
- ☐ Emergency Phone Numbers for Police, etc. *(Post by your telephone.)*
- ☐ Phone Location Sign
- ☐ Germ Buster Poster *(Handwashing Poster)*
- ☐ Dental Health Poster(s)
- ☐ First Aid Kit Location Sign
- ☐ Emergency Light Source Location Sign
- ☐ First Aid Poster *(Layperson CPR & First Aid for Choking; seizure plan)*
- ☐ Food Health & Sanitation Checklist for Staff & Volunteers (NUTR 2c)
- ☐ Diaper/Pull-Ups Changing Procedure (HLTH 4c) *(Post by changing table or in bathroom.)*
- ☐ Toothbrushing Procedure (EDUC 7f)
- ☐ Toileting procedure (EDUC 7a1)
- ☐ Bathroom Procedure *EDUC 7a (HS/ECEAP only)*
- ☐ Bleach Solutions & Three-Step Process (HLTH 4e)
- ☐ Daily Cleaning Log
- ☐ Dietary Restrictions List *(ChildPlus Health Report)*

CENTER POSTINGS

The following are to be posted at your center before the first day of class:

- ☐ Smoke Free Environment Policy (FACI 1g)
- ☐ Annual Fire Inspection *(If questions, please see Area Manager.)*
- ☐ Annual Fire Alarm/Smoke Detector Sensitivity Testing *(If questions, please see Area Manager.)*
- ☐ Health Department Food Program Permit *(Posted in Center Kitchen or Kitchen Area. See Kitchen Manager if Needed or Expired)*
- ☐ Building for the Future *(USDA)*
- ☐ WIC
- ☐ Justice for All Poster

#1 – Staff Signatures/Date:

#2 – Staff Signatures/Date:

#1 – EHS Supervisor/Date:

#2 – EHS Supervisor/Date:

(Sources: ITERS-R, TPITOS, Creative Curriculum for Infants, and Creative Curriculum for Toddlers)