

ITERS-3 Accessibility at a Glance

Accessible means that, during the observation, children who are awake and ready to play can reach and use the required materials or equipment. A material simply being present in the classroom does not necessarily mean that it is “accessible.” (p. 11-12)

<u>Youngest (non-mobile) infants</u>	<u>Older Non-mobile Infants</u>
<p>3-Level: Should not be routinely left in infant seats, swings, or other restrictive devices for long periods with no access to toys.</p> <p>5-Level: Must regularly have access to a substantial amount of time with access to materials. May be left in restrictive devices for some spans of time, if still frequently interacted with and no child should be left in restrictive devices without regular interaction or access to materials.</p> <p>7-Level: Little or no time in restrictive devices, some short lapses in access to materials.</p>	<p>3-Level: Access is generally required when children are awake and ready to play throughout the observation, without many long restrictions that prevent the use of materials.</p> <p>5-Level: There can be some lapses in access to materials, but most of the time should be spent with access to materials.</p> <p>7-Level: Few, if any, short lapses in access to materials.</p>
Mobile Children	Mixed Age Groups
<p>3-Level: Access to materials is required, with a few major or many short acceptable lapses.</p> <p>5-Level: A few short lapses in access to materials, but generally, children should be able to see and reach the materials.</p> <p>7-Level: No lapses in access to materials, unless children are involved in another activity they enjoy and are engaged in, such as book time, movement, etc., or being held or interacted with. Children should be able to move freely in space and access materials of their choice.</p>	<p>Access to materials is based on the youngest child(ren) in the group and the definition of accessibility for that age group.</p>

In the simplest terms, accessibility can be thought of as free play, which means that children are permitted to select the materials and companions and, as far as possible, to manage their play independently (p. 78). Since the youngest children learn the most through hands-on play, there should ideally be more scheduled free play times and fewer scheduled group play activities, which are staff-initiated and have an expectation of all children participating (p.80).

The reasoning behind this is the authors of the scales noticed that free play times were being scheduled first thing in the morning and at the end of the day, when the majority of the children are not present. The bulk of the day usually consists of different group times, and it was found that the children who arrived later or left earlier in the day did not get much free play. Teachers can take advantage of teaching opportunities as children choose materials to play with during free play and base their lessons on those opportunities. If a curriculum or theme is being followed, teachers can add different kinds of related materials in different areas throughout the classroom and then provide lessons when children choose to use the materials.