

## ITERS-3 Accessibility at a Glance

**Accessible** means that during the observation, children can reach and use the required material or equipment. A material simply being present in the classroom does not necessarily mean that it is “accessible” (p. 11-12)<sup>i</sup>.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Youngest (Non-mobile) Infants</b></p> <p><b>3 Level:</b> Should not be routinely left in infant seats, swings, or other restrictive devices for long periods with no access to toys.</p> <p><b>5 Level:</b> Must regularly have 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 <b>and no child</b> should be left in restrictive devices without regular interaction or access to materials.</p> <p><b>7 Level:</b> Little or no time in restrictive devices, some short lapses in access to materials.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Older Non-mobile Infants</b></p> <p><b>3 Level:</b> 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><b>5 Level:</b> There can be some lapses in access to materials, but most of the time should be spent with access.</p> <p><b>7 Level:</b> Few, if any short lapses in access to materials.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mobile Children</b></p> <p><b>3 Level:</b> Access to materials is required, with a few major or many short lapses acceptable.</p> <p><b>5 Level:</b> A few short lapses in access to materials, but generally children should be able to see and reach materials.</p> <p><b>7 Level:</b> 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 the space and access materials of their choice.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mixed Ages Groups</b></p> <p>Access to materials is based off 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 materials and companions and, as far as possible, to manage play independently (p. 78). Since the youngest children learn the most through 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).**

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.



<sup>i</sup> Harms, T., Clifford, R.M., Cryer, D. (2015). Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Third Edition. New York, NY: Teacher College Press.