

**Credential AREA: Early Childhood Credential (Level 5)**  
**TOPIC: IRE Domain-Specific Assessment Example**  
**Environmental and Interactional Scan and Analysis**

**I. Assessment Competency & Standard Alignment**

Gateways Competencies Assessed	Competency Alignment			
	NAEYC Standards (Draft 2020)	NAEYC Competencies (Draft 2020)	IPTS (2013)	InTASC (2019)
<b>IRE1:</b> Describes the role of the environment in supporting children’s development	1d, 4c	1d-LVL1-2, 4c-LVL1-2	4A, 4D	3(i), 5(s)
<b>IRE2:</b> Articulates the importance of relationships in supporting positive developmental and behavioral outcomes	4a	4a-LVL1-1	-----	1(j), 2(n), 8(m), 10(n)
<b>IRE3:</b> Identifies factors that contribute to positive interactions with the environment	1a, 4a	1a-LVL2-5, 4a-LVL1-2 & 3	1F, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4F, 4G	2(l), 3(i), 3(j), 3(o), 4(q), 9(j), 10(n)
<b>IRE4:</b> Designs learning environments and activities supportive of healthy development and learning	4c	4cLVL1-1	1H, 1K, 1L, 4I, 4J, 4K, 4L	1(b), 1(h), 3(f), 3(k)
<b>IRE5:</b> Creates engaging environments that meet the diverse development and learning needs of each child	1b, 4c	1b-LVL1-2 & 3, 4c-LV2L-1, 4cLVL3-1-3	1K, 1L, 4I, 4J, 4K, 4M, 4N, 4O, 4P	1(i), 1(h), 3(b), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(i), 3(k), 3(n), 3(p), 4(d)
<b>IRE6:</b> Considers the relationship between curriculum, relationships, and child development and learning in analyzing environments	4c	4c-LVL3-1 & 2	2A, 3A, 4L, 4Q, 9Q	1(j), 2(a), 4(n), 7(g), 7(i), 8(j)
<b>IRE7:</b> Facilitates the design of engaging environments based on appropriate theory, policy, and guidelines	1d, 4a, 4c	1d-LVL3-2, 4a-LVL3-1, 4c-LVL3-2	1D, 1K, 3A, 3G, 3O, 4I, 4J, 4K, 4M, 4N, 8J, 9B, 9C	1(h), 2(a), 2(h), 3(b), 3(d), 3(f), 3(i), 3(k), 4(n), 7(b), 7(g), 9(d), 9(f), 9(h), 9(j), 9(o), 10(b), 10(i),

				10(j), 10(k)
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## II. Assessment Task Description/ Directions

In this assessment, you will compare and contrast environments and interactions in three different classrooms in at least two different settings – an infant or toddler classroom, a preschool classroom, and a kindergarten or primary grade classroom. 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.

This assessment requires that you conduct three 90-minute early childhood classroom observations. These observations should take place in DCFS licensed facilities; preferably, these will be NAEYC (or other alternative, e.g., ISBE, PFA) accredited centers.

The assessment is in 6 parts:

1. Critical overview: The role of the environment and the importance of relationships in supporting each child’s development
2. Conduct an Environmental Scan for each observation
3. Conduct an Interaction Event Sample for each observation
4. Write a summary of data collected via Environmental Scans and Interaction Event Samples for each observation
5. Reflection
6. Professional application

### Part 1: Critical Overview: The role of the environment and the importance of relationships in supporting each child’s development

Write an overview of critical considerations for each of the factors in the first rubric block below when designing engaging environments for young children. Be sure to include legal mandates, standards, and ethical principles that are essential considerations in designing learning environments. In addition, this section must include a description of factors within the early childhood environment (such as space, materials, images, sounds, language, ideas and adult behaviors and interactions) that influence classroom community and children’s development and learning.

Suggested page limit: 1-2 pages

For Parts 2 and 3 of this assessment, you will be conducting your Environmental Scan and Interactional Scan.

#### Prior to your observations:

- Call and schedule your classroom observations. All three observations should take place in different sites/program types. Each observation should be conducted in different age groupings/grades (i.e., PreK, kindergarten, three-year old classrooms, two-year old classrooms, etc.).
- You should plan around 90 minutes for *each* observation: 30 minutes for the environmental scan and 60 minutes for the interaction event sample.

Technology Option:  
- Video/audio record options

- 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 2: Environmental Scan (30 Minutes)**

- Conduct an Environmental Scan for each observation
- 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 indoor and outdoor environments 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

**Technology Option:**  
- Video/audio record options

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

- Conduct an Interaction Event Sample for each observation
- 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 on interactions collecting the following information:
  - A description of the interactions you observed (can include quotes)
  - The location of the interactions
  - Reason for the interactions
  - Duration of the interactions
  - Interaction type (Adult to child; Child to Adult; Child to child; Child to environment)

**Technology Option:**  
- Interactive options  
- Collaboration options

#### Part 4: Observation Summary

- Write a summary of data collected via Environmental Scans and Interaction Event Samples for each observation. Your Observation Summary is based on Parts 2 and 3 of your Assessment. Include the following for your summary:
  - Write a one-page summary of the environmental scans for each observation site. (Attach your diagram and daily schedule for each site).
  - Write a one-page summary of each event sample (attach your completed observation charts).

**Technology Option:**  
- Video/audio record options

#### Part 5: 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, language and culture?
- Based on your responses to each of the questions above, how effective do you feel curriculum was in each of the environments you observed 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 healthy social and emotional development,
  - supporting access and participation;
  - promoting positive behaviors;
  - and promoting language development (in all of child's languages).
- 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?

**Technology Option:**  
- Video/audio record options  
- Website options

#### Part 6: Professional Application

As a part of your center/school's annual program improvement plan, you, as an early childhood teacher, are going to develop recommendations for creating and facilitating a positive environment for learning in your classroom. Your classroom data analysis has indicated that your classroom is at different stages in terms of creating and maintaining an engaging environment and promoting positive, collaborative interactions between you, young children, and families.

For your professional development plan:

- Develop recommendations for one of the classrooms you observed. Discuss strengths based on your data and make recommendations for changes that you might make based on what you saw and heard. Reflect on how the various aspects that you observed and described support the children and families in this classroom, as well as how any changes you might make would be supportive for children, families, and the teachers in this classroom.
- In your recommendations include suggestions related to environmental design, curriculum planning, and collaborative interactions that you be appropriately implementing and supporting within your classroom. What instructional strategies would you suggest that would support differentiation?

Technology Option:  
- Video/audio record examples

### III. Assessment Rubric

ECE Interactions, Relationships & Environments Master Rubric							
Competency	Competent					Unable to Assess	
	Checklist Criteria						
<b>IRE1:</b> Describes the role of the environment in supporting children’s development  <b>Possible Codes:</b> D = describes, P = provides example of  <b>NAEYC:</b> 1d, 4c (1d-LVL1-2, 4c-LVL1-2) <b>IPTS:</b> 4A, 4D <b>InTASC:</b> 3(i), 5(s)	<b>0-3</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>K-3</b>	<b>How indoor environmental choices consider children’s development (individual &amp; group) ...</b>			
				arrangement			
				materials			
				organization & accessibility			
				written and verbal messaging			
				images			
		<b>0-3</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>K-3</b>	<b>How indoor environmental choices support children’s learning (individual &amp; group) ...</b>		
					arrangement		
					materials		
					organization & accessibility		
				written and verbal messaging			

			images	
<b>0-3</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>K-3</b>	<b>How indoor environmental choices build classroom community...</b>	
			arrangement	
			materials	
			organization & accessibility	
			written and verbal messaging	
			images	
<b>0-3</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>K-3</b>	<b>How outdoor environmental choices consider children's development (individual &amp; group) ...</b>	
			arrangement	
			materials	
			organization & accessibility	
			written and verbal messaging	
<b>0-3</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>K-3</b>	<b>How outdoor environmental choices support children's learning (individual &amp; group) ...</b>	
			arrangement	
			materials	
			organization & accessibility	
			written and verbal messaging	
<b>0-3</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>K-3</b>	<b>How outdoor environmental choices build classroom community...</b>	
			arrangement	
			materials	

			organization & accessibility		
			written and verbal messaging		
Competency	Distinguished	Competent	Developing	Unacceptable	Unable to Assess
<p><b>IRE2:</b> Articulates the importance of relationships in supporting positive developmental and behavioral outcomes</p> <p><b>NAEYC:</b> 4a (4a-LVL1-1)</p> <p><b>IPTS:</b> -----</p> <p><b>InTASC:</b> 1(j), 2(n), 8(m), 10(n)</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>	
Competency	Distinguished	Competent	Developing	Unacceptable	Unable to Assess
<p><b>IRE3:</b> Identifies factors that contribute to positive interactions with the environment</p> <p><b>NAEYC:</b> 1a, 4a (1a-LVL2-5, 4a-LVL1-2 &amp; 3)</p> <p><b>IPTS:</b> 1F, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4F, 4G</p> <p><b>InTASC:</b> 2(l), 3(i), 3(j), 3(o), 4(q), 9(j), 10(n)</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 environment</p>	<p>Identifies factors within early childhood environments but does not consider influence on behavior and interactions</p>	
Competency	Distinguished	Competent	Developing	Unacceptable	Unable to Assess

<p><b>IRE4:</b> Designs learning environments and activities supportive of healthy development and learning</p> <p><b>NAEYC:</b> 4c (4cLVL1-1)  <b>IPTS:</b> 1H, 1K, 1L, 4I, 4J, 4K, 4L  <b>InTASC:</b> 1(b), 1(h), 3(f), 3(k)</p>	<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>		
<p><b>Competency</b></p>	<p><b>Competent</b></p>					<p>Unable to Assess</p>
	<p><b>Checklist Criteria</b></p>					
<p><b>IRE5:</b> Creates engaging environments that meet the diverse development and learning needs of each child</p> <p><b>NAEYC:</b> 1b, 4c (1b-LVL1-2 &amp; 3, 4c-LV2L-1, 4cLVL3-1-3)  <b>IPTS:</b> 1K, 1L, 4I, 4J, 4K, 4M, 4N, 4O, 4P  <b>InTASC:</b> 1(i), 1(h), 3(b), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(i), 3(k), 3(n), 3(p), 4(d)</p>	<p><b>0-3</b></p>	<p><b>3-5</b></p>	<p><b>K-3</b></p>	<p><b>Creates indoor environments that consider children’s diverse developmental needs (individual &amp; group) in...</b></p>		
				<p>arrangement</p>		
				<p>Materials</p>		
				<p>organization &amp; accessibility</p>		
				<p>written and verbal messaging</p>		
				<p>images</p>		
	<p><b>0-3</b></p>	<p><b>3-5</b></p>	<p><b>K-3</b></p>	<p><b>Creates indoor environments that support children’s learning needs (individual &amp; group) ...</b></p>		
				<p>arrangement</p>		
				<p>materials</p>		



			organization & accessibility	
			written and verbal messaging	
			images	
<b>0-3</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>K-3</b>	<b>Creates outdoor environments that consider children’s diverse developmental needs (individual &amp; group) in...</b>	
			arrangement	
			materials	
			organization & accessibility	
			written and verbal messaging	
<b>0-3</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>K-3</b>	<b>Creates outdoor environments that support children’s learning needs (individual &amp; group) ...</b>	
			arrangement	
			materials	
			organization & accessibility	
			written and verbal messaging	

Competency	Distinguished	Competent	Developing	Unacceptable	Unable to Assess
<b>IRE6:</b> Considers the relationship between curriculum, relationships, and child development and learning in analyzing environments  <b>NAEYC:</b> 4c (4c-LVL2-1, 4c-LVL3-1 & 2)	Analyzes indoor and outdoor environments for incorporation of current research-based strategies supportive of children’s learning and development  Analyzes relationship between curriculum, environmental design, children's interactions and relationships, and children's	Analyzes indoor and outdoor environments for incorporation of current evidence-based strategies supportive of children’s learning and development  Analyzes relationship between curriculum, environmental design, children's interactions and relationships, and children's	Examines indoor and outdoor environments for incorporation of practices supportive of children’s learning and development  Explicit attention to the relationship between curriculum, environmental design, children's interactions and relationships, and children's	Analysis of indoor and outdoor environments for incorporation of current evidence-based strategies supportive of children’s learning and development absent	

<p><b>IPTS:</b> 2A, 3A, 4L, 4Q, 9Q  <b>InTASC:</b> 1(j), 2(a), 4(n), 7(g), 7(i), 8(j)</p>	<p>unique developmental strengths 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>unique developmental needs in analysis not evident</p>		
<p><b>Competency</b></p>	<p><b>Distinguished</b></p>	<p><b>Competent</b></p>	<p><b>Developing</b></p>	<p><b>Unacceptable</b></p>	<p><b>Unable to Assess</b></p>
<p><b>IRE7:</b> Facilitates the design of engaging environments based on appropriate theory, policy, and guidelines</p> <p><b>NAEYC:</b> 1d-LVL3-2, 4a-LVL3-1, 4c-LVL3-2  <b>IPTS:</b> 1D, 1K, 3A, 3G, 3O, 4I, 4J, 4K, 4M, 4N, 8J, 9B, 9C  <b>InTASC:</b> 1(h), 2(a), 2(h), 3(b), 3(d), 3(f), 3(i), 3(k), 4(n), 7(b), 7(g), 9(d), 9(f), 9(h), 9(j), 9(o), 10(b), 10(i), 10(j), 10(k)</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>	

Yellow = Level 2

Green = Level 3

Orange = Level 4

Blue = Level 5

#### IV. Data Collection & Analysis Tool

Competency & Standards Alignment					Cumulative Assessment Data				
Competency	NAEYC Stand. (Draft 2020)	NAEYC Comp. (Draft 2020)	IPTS (2013)	InTASC (2019)	Distinguished	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Unable to Assess
<b>IRE1:</b> Describes the role of the	1d, 4c	1d-LVL1-2,	4A, 4D	3(i), 5(s)					

environment in supporting children's development		4c-LVL1-2							
<b>IRE2:</b> Articulates the importance of relationships in supporting positive developmental and behavioral outcomes	4a	4a-LVL1-1	-----	1(j), 2(n), 8(m), 10(n)					
<b>IRE3:</b> Identifies factors that contribute to positive interactions with the environment	1a, 4a	1a-LVL2-5, 4a-LVL1-2 & 3	1F, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4F, 4G	2(l), 3(i), 3(j), 3(o), 4(q), 9(j), 10(n)					
<b>IRE4:</b> Designs learning environments and activities supportive of healthy development and learning	4c	4cLVL1-1	1H, 1K, 1L, 4I, 4J, 4K, 4L	1(b), 1(h), 3(f), 3(k)					
<b>IRE5:</b> Creates engaging environments that meet the diverse development and learning needs of each child	1b, 4c	1b-LVL1-2 & 3, 4c-LV2L-1, 4cLVL3-1-3	1K, 1L, 4I, 4J, 4K, 4M, 4N, 4O, 4P	1(i), 1(h), 3(b), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(i), 3(k), 3(n), 3(p), 4(d)					
<b>IRE6:</b> Considers the relationship between curriculum, relationships, and child development and learning in analyzing environments	4c	4c-LVL3-1 & 2	2A, 3A, 4L, 4Q, 9Q	1(j), 2(a), 4(n), 7(g), 7(i), 8(j)					
<b>IRE7:</b> Facilitates the design of engaging environments based on appropriate theory, policy, and guidelines	1d, 4a, 4c	1d-LVL3-2, 4a-LVL3-1, 4c-LVL3-2	1D, 1K, 3A, 3G, 3O, 4I, 4J, 4K, 4M, 4N, 8J, 9B, 9C	1(h), 2(a), 2(h), 3(b), 3(d), 3(f), 3(i), 3(k), 4(n), 7(b), 7(g), 9(d), 9(f), 9(h), 9(j), 9(o), 10(b), 10(i), 10(j), 10(k)					

**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						
Interaction #10						