

# Fire Codes and Environment Rating Scale Wall Display

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In an effort to understand what must be done to keep children safe and follow all fire codes, the following information was obtained for following fire safety codes and satisfying wall display requirements for the ITERS and ECERS Environment Rating Scales. The NFPA (National Fire Protection Agency) Codes state only 20% of walls can be covered with any type of combustible material in a non-fire sprinkled school. This can be increased to 50% if a school is protected by a fire sprinkler system. It does not state the area of any wall. The main intent of this code is having separation between these materials so if a fire does start it cannot travel from one wall to another around the entire room or down the entire length of a hallway. Before 1973 no combustible materials were allowed on school walls. In 1973 this was increased to 20% for all schools. In 2003 the code was changed to allow 50% for schools that were protected with a fire sprinkler system.

## Fire Inspection Requirements:

Child care facilities without Sprinkler Systems will not be allowed to cover more than 20% of wall space. Child care facilities with Sprinkler Systems will not be allowed to cover more than 50% of wall space.

You can measure the walls within a classroom by taking the height and width of your walls and multiplying by the required 20%. This would be done visually by the Fire Inspector. They are not obligated to measure your wall space.

The Fire Inspector will determine where displays may be placed. Centers may not exceed the required percentages of space.

This may be enforced through visual inspection by the Fire Marshal. The amount of items displayed may vary from center to center which will be determined by the Fire Inspector who has the expertise in this area. The Fire Inspector has the final say in regards to the amount of materials you have placed on your walls and items hanging from the ceiling.

## ITERS Wall Display requirements: (Infant/Toddler Rooms)

The following items are needed for scoring at the 5 and 7 levels and can be easily obtained while following the needed fire inspection standards.

### 5.1 Many colorful, simple poster or photographs displayed throughout the room.

Hang simple realistic pictures/photos throughout the room using limited low wall space, the back and sides of shelves, cabinets, changing tables, cubbies, chairs, windows and doors. Make sure these items have diversity in regards to race/culture, age, gender and abilities. Remove items that are unrealistic (cartoon characters) and less meaningful to children. If using a small amount of upper wall space place items needed for DCF compliance and teacher needs such as: memos from the director, allergy list etc. Clip boards can also be used for some of these items. **Soft** picture frames and photo cubes can be placed around the room as well.

### 5.2 Mobiles and/or other colorful objects for children to look at.

ITERS requires only 2 hanging items which are 3 dimensional. Programs should check with their Fire Inspector for approval to use hanging items. If approved, use purchased items that are labeled as "flame retardant". Hanging plants may be considered as part of this indicator.

### 5.3 Many items displayed where children can easily see them, some within reach.

The majority of items should be displayed at a low level where the children can see and touch them. Items displayed with a protective cover (laminating sheets, contact paper etc.) on the floor are acceptable.

**5.4 Staff talk to children about displayed materials.**

A hanging item over the changing table often cues staff to discuss display with children. Most stuffed animals are flame retardant and can be used as a focus while changing diapers. Give the animal a name, talk about what kind of animal it is, discuss color, size etc. To meet this indicator, a stuffed animal would have to be part of the display, not something the child uses for play.

**7.1 Photographs of children in the group their families, pets, or other familiar faces displayed on child's eye level.**

This can be easily met by having class and/or family photos displayed on the back or sides of a low shelf.

**7.2 Most pictures protected from being torn.**

Use of contact paper, sheet covers, and laminating materials are acceptable. Velcro fasteners are also helpful for allowing children to pull items from the display to look at, and then they can be easily returned to display area.

**7.3 New materials added or display changed at least monthly.**

Use of tri-fold display boards that can be placed on the floor or on tables to add or change items can keep the classroom display current. These can be purchased at all office supply stores. Use for monthly themes or curriculum concepts you are currently working on. Velcro-fasteners will again come in handy to change displayed items without having to purchase additional display boards.

**7.4 Art work done by toddlers displayed.** (This item can be marked NA in classrooms where all children are under 12 months old.)

The back and sides of shelves, fronts of cabinets, changing tables, doors, and windows can be used. Use soft cloth picture frames or vinyl cubes to display some toddler artwork. ITERS does not require a percentage of children's work to be displayed. This is only required for the ECERS rooms.

**ECERS Wall Display: (Preschool rooms)**

**5.1 Much of display (30%) relates to current classroom activities and children in the group.**

30% of the items displayed should relate to current classroom activities and children in the group. Examples of materials that meet this requirement include artwork completed by the children, photographs of the children and/or their families, graphs/charts completed by the class, and commercially-produced materials related to current classroom themes/teaching topics. A minimum of two pieces of children's artwork is required

**5.2 Most of display is work done by children.**

Work done by children is more meaningful to children. Display should be child created art work, drawings, letter and number writing, and 3 dimensional children's work. These items can be placed throughout the room on the back and sides of shelves, cabinets, cubbies, windows and doors. Children's work and photos of children in various activities can also be placed in soft or plastic photo frames throughout the room.

**5.3 Many items displayed on child's eye level.**

Hang simple realistic pictures/photos throughout the room using the back and sides of shelves, cabinets, cubbies, chairs, windows and doors. Make sure these items have diversity in regards to race/culture, age, gender and abilities. Commercial and unrealistic materials (cartoon characters) are less meaningful to children and should be removed. If using a small amount of upper wall space place items needed for DCF compliance and teacher needs such as: memos from the director, allergy list, etc. Use clip boards for some of the items. Save lower wall space for word walls, job charts and class calendars if you use these items for curriculum. Personalize the items by using children's photos and printed names.

**7.1 Individual children's work predominates.**

Children's work that is displayed should be individualized which means the child chooses the topic and/or media for the child created work.

**7.2 Three-dimensional child-created work displayed as well as flat work.**

These works of art can be placed on window sills, shelves, or a display table.