Staff/Child Interaction

ITERS-R Indicator	Why is this important?

• Frequent positive staff-child interaction throughout the day in both play and routines with every child. Positive must outweigh the neutral and no negative interactions observed.
    o Initiate verbal and physical play.
    o Respond when child initiates interactions.
    o Show delight in child's activity.
	• In order for children to thrive they must form loving relationships with adults who care for them. This allows them to bond and form attachments. Close relationships are shown to have a strong association with children's developmental success across a wide range of outcomes.

• No harsh verbal or physical staff-child interaction. o Harsh can be physical contact or through verbal communications that reprimands, abruptly orders children about, shouts or uses unkind tones.	• Harsh treatment of children has never been proven to put a permanent stop to inappropriate behavior, sets adults against children, creates anger or hurt in the child, may lead to child abuse, discourages the use of more appropriate teaching, and presents an antisocial message to children.
• Staff usually respond sympathetically (notice and validate feelings) to help children who are hurt, angry, or upset.	• Often when a child's feelings are validated through a sympathetic response by staff, the problem a child is having is vastly reduced, and the problem can be solved more easily than if the staff had responded with anger or impatience. A negative response tells the child he/she is not understood and no one cares.
• Staff and children are usually (most of the time) relaxed, have pleasant voices and are frequent smiling.	• In an infant toddler classroom, sometimes is seems that it is impossible to see everyone relaxed, with pleasant voices, and smiling. There is always crying and upset with very young children. However, in a classroom that is good quality where children do not have to wait too long to have their needs met, where there are enough staff who know how to soothe or satisfy all children, where children are protected and can learn, this is very possible.
• Much holding, patting, and physical warmth shown throughout the day.	• You must consider each child's need and want to have physical contact in this indicator. Warm interactions can be physical (holding, cuddling, or putting arm around child) or it can be expressed by smiling, looking pleased, making eye contact, sharing an interest, or using a pleasant tone of voice.
• Interaction is responsive to each child's mood and needs. o Soothing with tired child, more active with playful child, and reassuring with frightened child.	• When staff modify how they treat a child, based on each child's current physical and emotional state they are providing interaction that is responsive to each child's moods and needs.

• Staff are usually (most of the time) sensitive about children's feelings and reactions. Approach children from a more sensitive point of view. o Avoid abrupt interruptions, warn baby before picking him/her up.	• When staff do things abruptly to children, such as picking them up, pulling out a pacifier, taking away a toy, wiping their nose, or handing them off to another person, it may upset the child. If an adult had to experience such treatment without warning or explanation, it is very likely that the adult would complain or feel insulted or mistreated.

SOURCE: Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS)