



Peer Interaction

ITERS-R Indicator	Why is this important?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer interaction is possible much of the day. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-mobile infants have supervised play near others. ○ Toddlers allowed to form natural groupings. <p>Definition: Much of the day – is associated with the children’s access to materials typically used indoors (books, art materials, and fine motor or dramatic play toys). It means that most of the time that any child is awake and able to play. No wait times or inactive times longer than 3 minutes. They must have access to materials for Much of the Day.*Observation note* If any child is prevented from reaching and using materials for a total of 20 minutes during the 3 – hour observation much of the day cannot be given credit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When children are free to interact appropriately with one another in play and routines they have the opportunity to learn necessary social skills, such as recognizing their effects on others, cooperation, sharing, and understanding another’s feelings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff usually stop negative peer interactions (hitting, biting, grabbing toys). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mild negative interactions 75% of the time but all major problems where children are being hurt stopped immediately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When children are given the freedom to play near one another, some problems will occur naturally due to undeveloped social abilities. It is up to the staff to intervene quickly to stop the problem. Staff need to intervene within a reasonable amount of time to keep things from getting out of control or to prevent a child from being harmed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff facilitate positive peer interactions among all children – see pages 328-329 in All About ITERS for examples. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Remember that the children are extremely limited in social skills. ○ Arrange play and any group routines to avoid conflict and allow interaction. ○ Guide children through interactions with one another. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive peer interactions are seen when children play well next to, or with, one another. Positive interactions are also seen when older infants and toddlers pleasantly participate in routines together, such as lunch/snack, in very small groups. • Setting up simple activities that toddlers can do together for example helps teach the beginning of how to cooperate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff model positive social interaction with children and other adults. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff is warm and affectionate, uses gentle touching, and is polite to children and not “bossy”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children copy what they see adults doing. If adults are physically and verbally aggressive with others, then it is likely that the children who see this will also act out the same behavior. When adults are kind, gentle, and respectful of others, children will be more likely to copy this type of behavior.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff explain children's actions, intentions, and feelings to other children.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Help children recognize facial expressions of sadness or joy.○ Explain that other child did not mean any harm.○ Praise child for getting own duplicate toy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When staff explain children's actions, intentions, and feelings to other children they put into words why children have done something, what they intended to do, and why the other child responded in a particular way. If children begin to understand what is going on, eventually they will have more of the understanding required to behave appropriately with others.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff point out and talk about instances of positive social interaction among children or between adults and children. 1 instance within the first 3 hours of the observation.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Help children notice comforting.○ Smile and talk to baby who notices other children.○ Praise 2 year olds for working together to bring chairs to table.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• By focusing attention on the positive social interactions that other people do children will want to model the positive behavior with others to receive the same attention.

SOURCE: Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS)

