5.4 Staff encourage communication among children, including those with disabilities (Ex. remind children to listen to one another; teach all children to sign if classmate uses sign language).

This indicator requires that staff make additional efforts to encourage communication between all children. Since this item focuses on informal language, in response to situations that arise spontaneously, language used during planned group times is not counted here. Although the teachers had some conversations with children, and children also talked with one another during play, the teachers did not actively encouraged the children to talk to one another. Conversations took place between the teachers and children or among the children themselves, without staff input. Since the teachers did not encourage the children to communicate with one another, credit was not earned.

Activities

20. Art

5.1 Many and varied art materials accessible a substantial portion of the day.

This indicator requires at least three to five examples from four of the following art categories (drawing, paints, three dimensional, collage, and tools) are evident and drawing is one of the categories represented. The materials must be accessible for a substantial portion of the day, calculated for this program as 3 hours and 20 minutes. Although the children have access to art materials for 4 hours and 40 minutes, no materials from paints were evident and only two from three-dimensional. Since at least three materials are not accessible from four categories, credit for this indicator was not earned.

22. Blocks

5.1 Enough space, blocks, and accessories are accessible for three or more children to build at the same time.

This indicator requires the children to have access to enough space for block play to allow three children to build sizable structures at the same time. There were enough blocks and accessories for three children. However, the space allowed for only two children to build sizable structures. Since the space used for block play did not allow three children to build sizable structures, credit was not earned for this indicator.

5.4 Block area accessible for play for a substantial portion of the day.

In order to earn credit for this indicator, indicators 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 must also earn credit. There was not enough space for three children to build sizable structures in the block area. Since credit was not earned for indicator 5.1, credit cannot be earned for this indicator.

23. Sand/water

5.1 Provision for sand and water play (either outdoors or indoors).

Credit for this indicator is earned when the children have regular experiences with sand and water. "Regular experiences" are defined as at least a ½ an hour twice a week. According to the teacher, the sand table is
accessible to the children everyday during free play both inside and out. Water play is available every 4-6 weeks. Since the children do not have regular experiences with water, credit for this indicator is not earned.

5.3 Props for at least two different themes accessible daily (Ex. housekeeping and work).
This indicator requires enough props from at least two different dramatic play themes to be accessible to the children to allow them to engage in meaningful play. The housekeeping theme was evident. A few props (envelopes, mailbox) for a post office theme were noted. However, enough props to support a second theme that allows children to play in some depth was not evident. Since enough materials to represent two dramatic play themes were not evident, credit for this indicator was not earned.

5.4 Dramatic play area clearly defined, with space to play and organized storage.
Credit for this indicator is earned when the dramatic play space is clearly defined to the children, has enough room for children to actively play and use materials without competing for space, and the materials are grouped by type so that the children know where to find them and can help to put them away. There was not enough room for three children to play freely without being crowded. Since there was not enough space in the dramatic play area to accommodate several children, credit for this indicator was not earned.

27. Use of TV, video, and/or computers

5.3 Most of the materials encourage active involvement (Ex. children can dance, sing, or exercise to video; computer software encourages children to think and make decisions).
This indicator requires that children participate in the audio/visual experience by either thinking and making decisions or by physically moving in response to the opportunities offered by the material being used. Not all TV/computer materials must meet this requirement; however, it is required that a vast majority encourages active involvement. The teacher reported that the children watch animated books for 20 minutes on Fridays. Most of these programs do not encourage active involvement of the children. Since the majority of TV programs viewed by the children do not encourage active involvement, credit for this indicator was not earned.

5.4 Staff are actively involved in use of TV, video, or computer (Ex. watch and discuss video with children; do activity suggested in educational TV program; help child learn to use computer program).
This indicator requires more action and thinking on the part of the teacher, and more interaction with the children to extend learning from the television and/or computer. The teacher stated during the interview that while children watch TV, she supervises the children who choose to participate in play activities and does not take part in watching and commenting on the TV program used by the other children. Since the teachers are not actively involved with children when they watch
television, credit for this indicator cannot be earned.

5.1 **Staff act to prevent dangerous situations before they occur** (Ex. remove broken toys or other dangers prior to children’s use; stop rough play before children get hurt).

This indicator requires the supervising adults to notice things that might cause accidents and correct them before an accident occurs. The teachers did not stop the children from running up the slides, and did not notice when three children slid down the slide together upside down. The teachers did not notice when two children on scooters crashed into each other behind the climbing equipment. The teacher reminded the children not to ride and push the bikes off the edge into the toddler play yard; however, the children continued to do so. Since the teachers did not act to prevent potentially dangerous situations, credit was not earned for this indicator.

5.3 **Staff assist children to develop skills needed to use equipment** (Ex. help children learn to pump on swing; help child with disabilities use adaptive pedals on tricycle).

This indicator requires that the teachers help children to practice what they know or learn new skills when using portable or stationary gross motor equipment. To earn credit, at least one creditable example must be observed. The teachers did not assist the children to develop new skills or to practice existing skills with gross motor equipment. Since the teachers did not help the children to develop gross motor skills while using portable or stationary equipment, credit for this indicator was not earned.

1.1 **Inadequate supervision of children** (Ex. staff leave children unsupervised; children’s safety not protected; staff attend mainly to other tasks).

This indicator is scored "yes" when teachers severely compromise children’s health or safety needs by not watching, guiding, or intervening as is required by the children’s abilities or the nature of the hazards present, or if teachers leave children alone even for a very short time. The restroom was located down the hallway and the children were allowed to walk down the hall unsupervised. At 10:25 AM a child walked out of the classroom and returned a minute later; the incident was not acknowledged by the teachers. While the teachers were finishing setting up for nap the children walked out in to the hallway unsupervised to line up to go outside. Since supervision of children was inadequate, this indicator must be scored "yes."

5.2 **Program is set up to avoid conflict and promote age-appropriate interaction** (Ex. duplicate toys accessible; child with favorite toy given protected place to play).

This indicator looks at whether the children’s environment is arranged to allow them to get along with one another without unnecessary restrictions that cause difficulties; this includes maintaining a dependable
routine; keeping children busy, interested, and
challenge; and avoiding competition and crowding. The
children were expected to participate and remain still
and/or quiet through lengthy (35 minutes) group
activity/circle time. Children were not allow to leave the
whole group activity for alternative play when they
became disinterested. One child was restrained in the
lap of a teacher during the group time. During free play
a child became upset with the noise another child was
making with a musical instrument. The teachers
observed and allowed the child playing the instrument to
upset the child who screamed out and rolled around on the
rug before they intervened. Another child had recently
returned to school from summer vacation and the
teacher would not let him cuddle with his teddy bear
during free play, even though he asked several times.
Since expectations for the children were not always
appropriate for the age and developmental level of the
children, credit was not earned for this indicator.

32. Staff-child interactions

5.3 Staff respond sympathetically to help children who
are upset, hurt, or angry.
Credit for this indicator is earned when teachers notice
and validate a child’s feelings, even if the child is
showing emotions that are often considered
unacceptable, such as anger or impatience. A child
who had recently returned from vacation was not
allowed to cuddle with his teddy bear during free play.
The bear was put up after breakfast (9 AM) and even
though the child asked, whined, and cried for the bear
on at least four separate occasions, he was not given a
chance to cuddle his bear until 10:47 AM, and then had
to put it back up again when they went outside at 10:55
AM. The children were expected to participate and/or
remain quiet during a large group activity. Although
most of the children lost interest and were able to sit
quietly, a few children had a very difficult time remaining
with the group and the teacher would not let them leave
the activity. Since the teachers did not always validate
or respond sympathetically to the needs for the children,
credit for this indicator was not earned.

33. Interactions among children

5.2 Staff help children develop appropriate social
behavior with peers (Ex. help children talk through
conflicts instead of fighting; encourage socially
isolated children to find friends; help children
understand feelings of others).
This indicator requires teachers to help children develop
positive interactions with their peers, through making
children aware of the effect of their actions on others,
suggesting ways to cooperate, and guiding children who
are involved in conflicts to use discussion and
negotiation, so that useful learning comes out of the
negative interactions. The teachers frequently corrected
and redirected children when they were involved in
conflicts, but did not use the opportunity to guide them
in working through their problems themselves. Since
the teachers did not help children develop appropriate
social behavior with their peers, credit was not earned
for this indicator.
**Program Structure**

34. Schedule

5.1 Schedule provides balance of structure and flexibility (Ex. regularly scheduled outdoor play period may be lengthened in good weather).

To earn credit for this indicator there must be flexibility with in the dependable routine to meet the individual or special/circumstantial needs of a child. At 8:47 AM most of the children were engaged in free play, and some were eating at the table, the teacher abruptly ended free play and called the children to circle. When the children protested and/or ignored her she reminded them that they must follow the rules. The teacher lead the children in a lengthy group activity, and no attempt was made to end the activity even though all the children had lost interest. Since there was not enough flexibility to lengthen or shorten scheduled group events to meet individual needs of the children, credit for this indicator was not earned.

5.4 No long period of waiting during transitions between daily events.

To earn credit for this indicator, the schedule must be organized so that there are no long periods of waiting between daily events. A long period of waiting means waiting without any activity for 3 minutes or more. According to the teacher interview, the children sit at the tables, with no access to materials, from 5:20-5:30 PM while they are waiting for their parents to pick them up. Since children experience a lengthy transition with no reported play activities while they wait for their parents to pick them up, credit was not earned for this indicator.

36. Group time

5.1 Whole-group gatherings limited to short periods, suited to age and individual needs of children.

This indicator requires that whole-group times are limited to periods that are short enough to hold children’s attention, and otherwise meet the needs of all children required to participate (as seen through their interest and willing participation). A group activity occurred from 9-9:35 AM. About 10 minutes into the teacher directed group activity children began to show disinterested by moving around, interacting with each other, and laying on the floor. Twenty minutes into the activity the teacher recognized the children’s disinterest and reminded them that it was almost over, but continued with the activity for another 14 minutes. Since whole-group gatherings were not limited to short periods, or suited to the age and individual needs of the children, credit was not earned for this indicator.

37. Provisions for children with disabilities

3.3 Some involvement of parents and classroom staff in setting goals (Ex. parents and teacher attend IEP or IFSP meeting).

This indicator requires that the teachers and parents of the child with special needs communicate in some way to decide on the goals for the child. According to the teacher interview, she has not discussed with the parent any goals for the child with special needs. Since the teachers and parents are not involved in setting goals,
credit for this indicator was not earned.