Environment Rating Scales:
Implementation of Program Structure Practices

Why these practices are important for children's development

A strong program structure of clear and simple schedules and routines creates a foundation where children are more likely to be engaged, interact positively, and participate confidently. Careful planning helps to ensure the days will go smoothly and children will be more productive, which supports their learning and development.

Key Implementation Practices

Schedules

Adults can:

- be prepared for what comes next in the day
- ensure the schedule meets the needs of all children
- create a balance between active and quiet play
- be flexible and willing to adjust the schedule to meet children's needs

Transitions and Wait Times

Adults can:

- provide active supervision during transitions
- plan ahead to limit wait times for children
- engage positively with children during transitions
- provide gradual, individualized transitions

Free Play

Adults can:

- provide ample and varied materials for play which are easy to see and reach for children
- show interest in and have conversations with children while they play
- give children the opportunity to play independently or with others
- provide children enough time to complete activities to their satisfaction
- support children in choosing and participating in play activities

Group Times

Adults can:

- plan group activities that are interesting, engaging, and developmentally appropriate
- support children's engagement in positive ways
- adapt or end a group time if children are not interested and engaged
- offer an alternative activity or activities during group times

Additional Resources

- How to Help Your Child Transition Smoothly Between Places and Activities https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/backpack/BackpackConnectionroutines_transitions.pdf
- Rocking and Rolling: It's Never Just Play https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/jul2016/rocking-rolling



