

# Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELO-P) Environmental Best Practices for Younger Students (TK/K)

## Introduction

The chart below shares considerations when designing physical spaces for younger ELO-P students. These considerations align with licensing standards to support child health and safety and environmental tools used by the California State Preschool Program to provide environments that facilitate developmentally appropriate practices.

ELO-P programs will need to consider their schedules, the limitations of their physical space, and the population of children enrolled in their program to determine how to implement best practices. For example, the youngest children in ELO-P programs may need time to rest or nap. ELO-P programs will need to consider whether students have been given rest opportunities in other parts of their day to determine whether and how to provide these opportunities in the expanded learning time.

In addition to elements of the physical environment detailed below, it is essential to consider the importance of supervision within the physical environment, including:

- Ensuring at least one adult with a child at all times. For example, TK students should not be left alone in a room or outside, and sign-in/sign-out procedures should be established for all students in the program.
- Adults should carefully monitor peer interactions within mixed-age level environments to ensure developmentally appropriate experiences for the youngest children in the group. For example, if an ELO-P program is unable to separate the younger grades (e.g., TK and kindergarten) from the older grades (e.g., grades 4-6), the adult should ensure that younger students are safe within these interactions (e.g., no bullying) and still receive learning experiences that meet their developmental needs.

### Table Key:

- "22 CCR" refers to Licensing Standards (Title 22 California Code of Regulations).
- "ECERS" refers to the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, currently used in the California State Preschool Program.
- "FCCERS" refers to the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale.

## Table: Environmental Best Practices

<i>Health Safety - Indoor</i>			
<b>BEST PRACTICE</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>CURRENTLY IMPLEMENTING / MEETING</b>	<b>PRIORITIES / ACTIONS NEEDED</b>
All food should be selected, stored, prepared, and served in a safe and healthful manner	22 CCR 101227		
Meals and snacks should be prepared and provided in a clean and sanitized area	ECERS		
Cleaning supplies should be stored separately from food	22 CCR 101238.4		
Food preparation area should be clean and free of trash and rodents	22 CCR 101227		
Uncontaminated drinking water should be available indoors and outdoors	22 CCR 101239.2		
List of allergies posted in view of staff	ECERS		
Keep disinfectants, cleaning solutions, poisons, and other potentially dangerous items inaccessible to children	22 CCR 101238, 101239		
Keep materials and surfaces available to children toxic free	22 CCR 101238, 101239		
Medicines should be labeled and properly stored away and inaccessible to children and have a log with expiration dates	22 CCR 101238, 101239		
Facility much be free of flies, insects, and rodents	22 CCR 101238, 101239		
Floors of all rooms should have a clean surface	22 CCR 101238.3		
A comfortable temperature should be maintained at all times (68-85 degrees Fahrenheit)	22 CCR 101238, 101239		
Adequate lighting, ventilation, temperature control, and sound-absorbing material, some natural lighting through windows or skylight.	ECERS		

Keep center clean, safe, sanitary, and in good repair	22 CCR 101238, 101239		
One toilet and handwashing fixture for every 15 children	22 CCR 101239		
First Aid supplies should be available	22 CCR 87923		
Isolation area (separate from areas used by other children), and include a cot, couch, or bed for each ill child	22 CCR 101626.2		
Solid waste should be stored, located and disposed of in a manner that will not transmit communicable diseases or odors, create a nuisance, or provide a breeding place or food source for insects or rodents	22 CCR 101239		
No hazardous trash accessible	ECERS		

### Physical Safety - Indoor

BEST PRACTICE	SOURCE	CURRENTLY IMPLEMENTING / MEETING	PRIORITIES / ACTIONS NEEDED
Use of protective devices such as nonslip material on rugs	22 CCR 101238, 101239		
No use of mats or rugs that slide	ECERS		
Keep all areas of potential hazard free of obstruction	22 CCR 101238, 101239		
Inaccessibility of pools	22 CCR 101238, 101239		
Water temperature should not be too hot	ECERS		
Fireplaces and open-faced heaters should be made inaccessible to children to ensure children's safety	22 CCR 101239		
No unprotected hot stove or fireplace in use	ECERS		
No play area in front of doors	ECERS		

No pot handles or controls accessible	ECERS		
No heavy objects or furniture child can pull down	ECERS		
Safety caps on electrical sockets and no loose electrical cords	ECERS		
No unsafe walkways or stairs	ECERS		
No easy access to road	ECERS		
Equipment, materials, and toys should be maintained in a safe condition, free of sharp, loose, or pointed parts	22 CCR 101239		
Play equipment should not be too high, not well maintained, unanchored or pose a threat of entrapment, or injury from pinch points or projections	ECERS		
All furniture is sturdy and in good repair	ECERS		
For indoor space, at least 35 square feet per child	22 CCR 101238.3		
All window screens should be in good repair	22 CCR 101239		
Furniture and equipment, including cots and mats used for napping, should be arranged so that no exit is blocked	22 CCR 101239		

### Age-Appropriate Materials and Practices - Indoor

BEST PRACTICE	SOURCE	CURRENTLY IMPLEMENTING / MEETING	PRIORITIES / ACTIONS NEEDED
Cots and floor mats used for napping should be in safe condition and cleaned weekly or when soiled/wet Floor mats should be at least ¾ inches thick, covered with vinyl or a similar material, and marked so that the sleeping side can be distinguished	22 CCR 101239.1		
Cots/mats at least 18" apart	ECERS		

Children should have access to many developmentally appropriate activities (ex. Fine motor, art, music/movement, blocks*, sand/water, dramatic play, nature/science, math/numbers) *Legos or blocks with most sides less than 2” do NOT count as blocks	ECERS		
Materials should be complete and in good repair.	ECERS		
Materials should be developmentally appropriate for each age group in the classroom	ECERS		
More than 20 appropriate books are accessible with at least 6 for each age group	FCCERS		
Materials and most learning / decorations and displays are at eye-level for children Materials and most learning / decorations and displays should be culturally-relevant to the students and represent diversity	ECERS		
Materials should be well organized	ECERS		
Provide a variety of materials (i.e. different levels of difficulty, represent diversity, promote individual expression, sizes and texture, etc.)	ECERS		
Tables and chairs, play equipment and materials should meet the needs of children	22 CCR 101239		
Sufficient furniture for routine care, play and learning (includes soft furniture, each child has a chair or place to sit, designated cozy area)	ECERS		
Furniture that is child-sized	ECERS		
Furniture and space accessible to individuals with disabilities	ECERS		
Shelves and containers should have labels that are meaningful to children <a href="#">(Example picture)</a>	ECERS		

## Outdoor Space (Some repeats from above sections)

BEST PRACTICE	SOURCE	CURRENTLY IMPLEMENTING / MEETING	PRIORITIES / ACTIONS NEEDED
Provide a shaded rest area	22 CCR 101238.2		
Uncontaminated drinking water should be available indoors and outdoors	22 CCR 101239.2		
Permit children to reach the space safely	22 CCR 101238.2		
Equipment and activity areas should be arranged so there is no hazard from conflicting activities	22 CCR 101238.2		
Surface of the outdoor activity space is maintained in a safe condition, and free of hazards including, but not limited to, holes, broken glass and other debris, and dry grasses that pose a fire hazard	22 CCR 101238.2		
Areas beneath swings, slides, climbing, and similar equipment should be cushioned with a material to absorb falls	22 CCR 101238.2		
Sandboxes should be monitored daily and kept free of hazardous foreign materials	22 CCR 101238.2		
Playgrounds should have a fence (4 ft. minimum) to protect children and keep them in the area	22 CCR 101238.2		
First aid supplies	22 CCR 87923		
Play equipment should not be too high, not well maintained, unanchored or pose a threat of entrapment, or injury from pinch points or projections	ECERS		
Equipment, materials, and toys should be maintained in a safe condition, free of sharp, loose, or pointed parts	22 CCR 101239		
For outdoor spaces, at least 75 square feet per child	22 CCR 101238.2		