

# Making Every Moment Count: Tips for Solo Teachers Preparing for ECERS-3

## 1. Visit Every Center, Every Time

Children benefit when you are present and intentional in each area of the classroom. During center time:

- Circulate slowly and purposefully. Spend a few minutes in each center observing, commenting, or joining in play.
- Ask open-ended questions such as, “What do you think will happen if...?” or “Tell me about your tower.”
- Encourage play where none is happening:
  - Invite a small group to try a center that’s been quiet (“I wonder who wants to build a bridge in the block area?”).
  - Add a new material, picture, or question to spark interest.
  - Join for a few minutes to model play ideas, then step back to let children lead.

Your movement and engagement show that every center matters and that you value children’s choices.

## 2. Quick and Meaningful Small Groups

Small group activities should be short (5–10 minutes) and focused on specific goals in math or science. Examples include:

- **Math:** sorting, counting, comparing, patterning, measuring
- **Science:** observing, predicting, exploring cause and effect, experimenting with textures or materials

Keep materials hands-on and engaging, and rotate children through across the week.

Tip: Use the same materials in centers later so children can revisit and extend their learning independently.

## 3. Embed Literacy and Math in Daily Routines

Literacy and math skills are best learned in authentic, everyday situations.

Look for ways to integrate them naturally throughout the day:

- **Arrival:** help children find name tags or count how many friends are here.
- **Meals/snacks:** talk about shapes of food, compare quantities, and name beginning sounds.
- **Transitions:** count steps, clap syllables in names, or notice rhyming words.
- **Cleanup:** match labels, read signs, and sort materials.

These authentic moments make learning meaningful and connected to real life.

## **4. Keep It Simple and Consistent**

Working alone means your systems matter.

- Plan centers that children can manage independently for short periods.
- Use clear labels and routines to support self-direction.
- Have a few “go-to” small group activities ready for short attention spans or unexpected transitions.

Consistency builds confidence for both you and the children.

## **5. Quality = Interaction + Intention**

ECERS-3 focuses on what children experience. When you:

- Move among centers,
- Engage in meaningful conversations, and
- Embed learning throughout the day,

you are demonstrating high-quality practice that supports both development and positive ratings.