

How Do You Measure Quality?

Regulations



Standards



Assessment Tools



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Use of ECERS-3 in Rhode Island

Standard 1: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

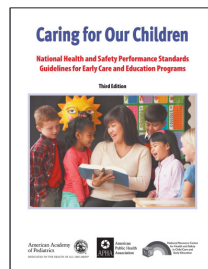
Daily activities and interactions show that the program is providing a safe, healthy, and stimulating environment. The program provides indoor and outdoor spaces to support varied and ongoing experiences for children. Daily interactions demonstrate that staff respect, care for, and enjoy working with children. The program supports the inclusion of children with disabilities and developmental delays, supports the cultural and linguistic diversity of the population it serves, and promotes the acceptance of diversity among staff, families, and children.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
Program is licensed by RI DPHE Center for Child Care Services Regulation	Programs use ECERS-3 training Regulation	Programs use ECERS-3 training Regulation	Programs use ECERS-3 training Regulation	Programs use ECERS-3 training Regulation
Basic Regulation Program (BRP) Fundamental	Basic Regulation Program (BRP) Fundamental	Basic Regulation Program (BRP) Fundamental	Basic Regulation Program (BRP) Fundamental	Basic Regulation Program (BRP) Fundamental
Learning Environment Training	Learning Environment Training	Learning Environment Training	Learning Environment Training	Learning Environment Training
Program ECERS-3 score (2018) score of 10 or greater, with no reported observations lower than 5.0	Program ECERS-3 score (2018) score of 10 or greater, with no reported observations lower than 5.0	Program ECERS-3 score (2018) score of 10 or greater, with no reported observations lower than 5.0	Program ECERS-3 score (2018) score of 10 or greater, with no reported observations lower than 5.0	Program ECERS-3 score (2018) score of 10 or greater, with no reported observations lower than 5.0

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Research Base

- Research evidence from relevant fields: health, education, and development
- Professional views of "best practice"
- Overall quality to promote children's development



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What Does the ECERS-3 Measure?



Photo Credit: Education Development Center (EDC)

- What children directly experience
- Interactions
- How materials and space are used
- Accessibility
- Daily schedule and routines

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7-Point Scale

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1–2 Inadequate | Children might be at risk |
| 3–4 Minimal | Meets basic health & safety |
| 5–6 Good | Developmentally appropriate |
| 7 Excellent | <u>Enhanced</u> developmental care |

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Scoring Levels

- Minimal Quality Level: sometimes, few, some attempts
- Good Quality Level: Frequently, many
- Excellent Quality Level: Many, consistent, regular practice, intentional focus

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Keep in mind...

“It is the **average total score** that is related to positive child development, but not any of the single requirements by themselves.”

—All About the ECERS-R, p. xii

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LANGUAGE AND LITERACY Subscale

Inadequate	2	3	4	5	6	7	Excellent
Item							
15. Encouraging children's use of books*							
1.1 Less than 10 intact books accessible.		3.1 At least 15 books are accessible to children for at least 25 minutes during the observation.		5.1 Many books accessible for at least 1 hour during the observation.		7.1 A wide selection of books is accessible.	
1.2 Children frequently told to use books as a time filler during transitions, and most children are not interested.		3.2 Accessible books include some funny and some factual.		5.2 Children show interest in accessible books (Ex: child chooses to use books in the copy area during free play; looks at book in advice center).		7.2 At least 5 books that relate to current classroom activities or themes are accessible and easily observed.	
1.3 Most accessible books are not appropriate (Ex: meant for younger or older children; have inappropriate content; frightening; give a negative social message; in very poor repair).		3.3 Most accessible books appear to be in good repair and generally appropriate for children.		5.3 Books are organized in a defined reading interest center, with a place to store the books for easy access and a space with comfortable furnishings to use them.		7.3 Most accessible books are displayed in order to encourage book use (Ex: books not crowded on shelf; many covers easily seen).	
1.4 No obvious place to use books (Ex: books are scattered throughout the classroom, even in areas of active play where reading would be difficult).		Indicator 3.4 Together children can reach them and have a place to use them (Ex: not crammed into a tightly packed shelf; not too high).		5.4 Staff show positive interest when children choose to use books independently.			

Speaker icon

Notes for Clarification

*An inspection of each and every book is not necessary to complete this Item. When there are large numbers of books accessible (more than 35), select a random sample of those the children are most likely to access. For example, do not closely inspect books that are packed tightly onto shelves or at the bottom of baskets or crates. Do not give credit for books that are incomplete, badly torn, or otherwise in poor repair; books are considered appropriate when the level of content is right for the ages and interests of the children. Inappropriate books may contain topics and illustrations that are frightening, show violence, or give negative social messages, such as a biased point of view or using aggression to solve problems.

1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1 Score 1-3: If books are accessible for less than 25 minutes of the observation in a program of any length. The 25-minute requirement in 3.1 is required during the observation for a program of any length.

5.1 "Many" means at least 20 books for 10 children, or 30 books for 15 children, plus one more for each additional child. Calculate based on the highest number of children attending at any time.

5.3 The reading interest center must meet the requirements of "interest center" found in the Explanation of Items Used Throughout the Scale. It may be acceptable as a comfortable furnishing if accompanied by some other softness, such as pillows, a large soft toy that children can lean on, or a child-sized bean bag; some book furnishings, such as a cushioned chair with wooden arms or a child's wooden rocking chair, would also count here.

5.4 Do not consider children's use of books when children are required to each book as a book as a large group.

7.1 To determine whether a wide selection is accessible, each book does not have to be inspected in detail. It is not required that observers go through books to see if certain topics are represented within a book. Rather, look at the general topics covered (usually by looking at a sample of the covers) to find out whether there is significant variety among the books. For example, look for books about people, feelings, nature/science, math, colors, recycling, race, males and females, jobs/work, health or self-help skills, sports/recreation, abilities. All topics do not need to be present, and other topics might be included to enrich the variety.

7.2 "Current classroom activities" requires that subjects being discussed due to special interests in the classroom change, either due to curriculum plans, children's interests, or times of the year. If the books are not obvious in the environment, do not rely on an executive search to find them.

Speaker icon

Continuous Quality Improvement, Not Perfection

“The scales assist program staff to make well-informed choices as to which areas the staff might emphasize in program improvement. It is not required that all things be perfect...”

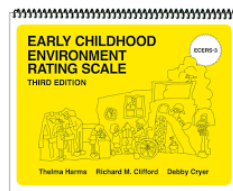
—Debby Cryer, “Understanding the Meaning of Environment Rating Scale Scores”

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Key Components of the ECERS-3

- Designed for use for ages 3–5
- Reliance on observation of ongoing classroom activity
- Uses the 3-hour observation only to base assessment



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Key Components of the ECERS-3

- Large focus on interactions and teacher’s role- **20 items**
- Emphasis on language, literacy, and math
- Heavy focus on **how** teachers support children’s use of classroom materials

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Important Terms

- **Observed schedule**
- **Accessible**
- Engaged
- Hand hygiene
- **Individualized teaching**
- **Play area and interest center**
- Sanitizing and disinfecting
- Staff
- Teaching
- Usually and generally
- Weather permitting

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Observed Schedule

- A continuous 3-hour block of time
- Begins during the most active part of day, when most children have arrived
- Only what is observed during that period will be used to determine scores
- The written schedule is not used to score

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Accessible

Children can reach and use materials, furnishings, and equipment with no barriers

What might be some barriers?

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Is It Accessible?



Access and Time

- At the **minimal quality level**, children must have access for **25 minutes**
- At the **good quality level**, children must have access for **1 hour**
- Gross motor space and equipment:
 - At minimal quality level, for 15 minutes
 - At good quality level, for 30 minutes

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Play Area vs. Interest Center

*All interest centers are play areas, but...
all play areas are NOT interest centers.*

- **Play Area:** a space where play materials are provided for children
- **Interest Center:** a **clearly defined** play area for a particular kind of play

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Interest Centers



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Photo Credit: Education Development Center (EDC)



Subscales

- Space & Furnishings
- Personal Care Routines
- Language & Literacy
- Learning Activities
- Interaction
- Program Structure

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Space and Furnishings

7 Items:

- Indoor space
- Furnishings for care, play, and learning
- Room arrangement for play and learning
- Space for privacy
- Child-related display
- Space for gross motor play
- Gross motor equipment

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Item 3: Room arrangement for play and learning



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Gross Motor Space & Equipment

Item 6: Space for gross motor play

- Outdoor and indoor spaces
- Enough space for running
- At least 30 minutes (good quality level)

Item 7: Gross motor equipment

- Equipment stimulates at least 7 different skills
- Access for 30 minutes (good quality level)
- Helmets required for wheel toys (highest quality level)

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Item 5: Child-related display

- Display is:
 - Children's individualized artwork
 - Related to children (i.e., rules, helper jobs)
 - Related to current topics and interests
- Staff:
 - Talk about display in ways that interest children
 - Use display to encourage informal conversations
 - Point out and read the words in the display

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Child-related Display Example



Photo Credit: Education Development Center (EDC)
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Personal Care Routines Subscale

4 Items:

- Meals/snacks
- Toileting/diapering
- Health practices
- Safety practices

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Language and Literacy Subscale

5 Items:

- Helping children expand vocabulary
- Encouraging children to use language
- Staff use of books with children
- Encouraging children's use of books
- Becoming familiar with print

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Item 15: Encouraging children's use of books

- Easy access and time
- Wide selection of books
- Reading interest center
- Children show interest in books



Photo Credit: Education Development Center (EDC)

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Item 14: Staff use of books with children

- Book reading must happen (large or small group, or individually).
- Staff show interest and enjoyment in reading.
- Children are **engaged** during reading.
- Staff use books informally.

Is book reading part of the classroom culture?

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Learning Activities Subscale

11 Items:

- Fine motor
- Art
- Music and movement
- Blocks
- Dramatic play
- Nature/science
- Math materials and activities
- Math in daily events
- Understanding written numbers
- Promoting acceptance of diversity
- Appropriate use of technology

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Important Practices

- Need access for at least 1 hour during the observation.
- Access impacts **most** Learning Activities items.
- Children need to use Learning Activities materials.
- Interactions are assessed in most items.

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Item 23: Math materials and activities

- Three categories of math materials:
 - Counting/comparing numbers
 - Measuring/comparing sizes and parts of wholes
 - Familiarity with shapes
- Teacher interactions
- Use of fingers to count

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Item 24: Math in daily events

- Mathematize!
- Math talk is used throughout the day:
 - Daily routines
 - Play with non-math materials/areas
 - Large group times
 - Encourage reasoning
 - Environment

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Item 25: Understanding written numbers

- Math materials with numbers and pictures
 - Signs with quantities for play areas
 - Play materials with numbers (telephones, play money, puzzles)
- Teacher interactions
 - Teachers model and show children how to use materials

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Interactions: Progression of Quality

Minimal Quality	Good Quality	Exceptional Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff solve problems when they arise • Staff have positive involvement with children using materials • Staff are responsive to children's needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff show interest when children use materials • Staff have many conversations about children's play • Staff positively encourage children's participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff use comments and questions to expand knowledge of concepts and words • Staff write children's words • Staff encourage problem-solving • Staff point out math or language concepts and talk about print and numbers



A Closer Look at Interactions



Photo Credit: Education Development Center (EDC)

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A Closer Look at Interactions

- Stop for a moment and say, “Wow! What a tall tower you built together. Bravo!”
- Sit down in the block area and comment, “Wow that is so tall and sturdy! How did you get it to stay up?”
- Sit down and as the child is building, say, “Look at all of the triangles you used on both sides. You made it symmetrical. It’s the same on both sides.”

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Interaction Subscale

5 Items:

- Supervision of gross motor
- Individualized teaching and learning
- Staff-child interactions
- Peer interaction
- Discipline

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Item 29: Individualized teaching and learning

- Individualized approach to teaching
- Open-ended and appropriate activities and materials
- Children experience success with teacher-directed activities
- Teachers intentionally circulate in the classroom

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Program Structure Subscale

3 Items:

- Transitions and wait times
- Free play
- Whole-group activities for play and learning

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Item 33: Transitions and Wait Times

- Plan for transitions; be prepared
- Supervision for productive engagement
- Gradual and individualized
- Positive interactions



Photo Credits: Head Start National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning

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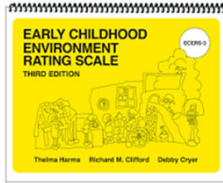
Item 35: Whole-group activities for play and learning

- **Whole-group activities:** play and other learning activities where all children do the same thing at the same time (e.g., circle time)
- Child engagement
- Staff flexibility and responsiveness

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Next Steps



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Resources

- ECERS-3 manual
- Self-assessment using quality indicators
- Materials Checklist
- Professional development (literacy and math)
- Additional ECERS-3 PD Opportunities
- ERS Institute: Online training www.ersi.info
- CELP Technical Assistance
- BrightStars

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Contact Information

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