



ENVIRONMENTAL RATING SCALES INFORMATION

What does “quality” mean in early childcare?

Quality early childcare provides for the 3 basic needs of all children:

- Protection of their health and safety
- Building positive relationships
- Opportunities for stimulation and learning from experience

Are some “quality” needs more important than others?

It takes all three to create quality care. No one part is more or less important than the others. No one part can be substituted for another. Each of these three basic parts of quality care can be seen in a childcare program's environment, curriculum, schedule, supervision and interactions.

How is “quality” measured in early childcare?

The key parts of quality are assessed by environmental rating scales. We will use two environmental rating scales in the Excel by 5 Initiative—each for a different early childcare environment. We will use the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) for evaluating preschool classrooms (ages 3-5) in early childcare centers and the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) for evaluating infant and toddler classrooms (ages 0-2) in early childcare centers.

How will these environmental rating scales be used to judge “quality” in early childcare?

Quality will be assessed through observation of:

- The interactions between staff, children, parents, and other adults
- The interactions among the children
- The interactions of children with the materials and activities in the classroom
- The space, schedule and materials in the environment

Why do we use these environmental rating scales?

We use these ratings because they tell us how successful children are likely to be later in life. These ratings are more predictive of child outcomes than typical indicators such as staff-to-child ratio, group size, cost of care, and even type of care, (center vs. family/home care) (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1995).



How were these environmental rating scales developed?

These environmental rating scales were developed in real-world child care environments. Each scale has a complete training program: observers are well-trained. These scales have been used in many research studies across the nation and the world.

How are these environmental rating scales used elsewhere?

These environmental rating scales have been used often in research. They are used in a variety of ways including self-assessments by center staff, preparation for accreditation, and improvement efforts by licensing agencies. The scales are used in:

- The following states use the scales for a variety of purposes: Arkansas, Connecticut, North Carolina, Colorado, Oklahoma, Tennessee, California, Massachusetts, Montana, Mississippi, Kansas, Oregon, Kentucky, New Mexico, Georgia, Florida, Wisconsin, and Nebraska
- The District of Columbia uses the scales.
- All the U.S. military services use the scales in their center and family child care homes.
- The scales are also used in many other countries including Canada, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Russia, Iceland, Portugal, England, Spain, Austria, Singapore, Hong Kong, Korea, Hungary and Greece.



Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)
Overview of the Subscales and Items of the ECERS-R
43 Items organized into 7 Subscales

Space and Furnishings

1. Indoor space
2. Furniture for routine care, play and learning
3. Furnishings for relaxation and comfort
4. Room arrangement for play
5. Space for privacy
6. Child-related display
7. Space for gross motor play
8. Gross motor equipment

Personal Care Routines

9. Greeting/departing
10. Meals/snacks
11. Nap/rest
12. Toileting/diapering
13. Health practices
14. Safety practices

Language-Reasoning

15. Books and pictures
16. Encouraging children to communicate
17. Using language to develop reasoning skills
18. Informal use of language

Activities

19. Fine motor
20. Art
21. Music/movement
22. Blocks
23. Sand/water
24. Dramatic play
25. Nature/science
26. Math/number
27. Use of TV, video, and/or computers
28. Promoting acceptance of diversity

Interaction

29. Supervision of gross motor activities
30. General supervision of children (other than gross motor)
31. Discipline
32. Staff-child interactions
33. Interactions among children

Program Structure

34. Schedule
35. Free play
36. Group time
37. Provisions for children with disabilities

Parents and Staff

38. Provisions for parents
39. Provisions for personal needs of staff
40. Provisions for professional needs of staff
41. Staff interaction and cooperation
42. Supervision and evaluation of staff
43. Opportunities for professional growth



Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS)
Overview of the Subscales and Items of the ITERS-R
39 Items organized into 7 Subscales

Space and Furnishings

1. Indoor space
2. Furniture for routine care and play
3. Provision for relaxation and comfort
4. Room arrangement
5. Display for children

Personal Care Routines

6. Greeting/departing
7. Meals/snacks
8. Nap
9. Diapering/toileting
10. Health practices
11. Safety practices

Listening and Talking

12. Helping children understand language
13. Helping children use language
14. Using books

Activities

15. Fine motor
16. Active physical play
17. Art
18. Music and movement
19. Blocks
20. Dramatic play
21. Sand and water play
22. Nature/science
23. Use of TV, video, and/or computers
24. Promoting acceptance of diversity

Interaction

25. Supervision of play and learning
26. Peer interaction
27. Staff-child interaction
28. Discipline

Program Structure

29. Schedule
30. Free play
31. Group play activities
32. Provisions for children with disabilities

Parents and Staff

33. Provisions for parents
34. Provisions for personal needs of staff
35. Provisions for professional needs of staff
36. Staff interaction and cooperation
37. Staff continuity
38. Supervision and evaluation of staff
39. Opportunities for professional growth