



FAQs: The Transition to the Third Editions of the Environment Rating Scales (ERS)

What are the 3s that I keep hearing about? Are these new measures?

These measures are different, updated versions of the Environment Rating Scales that we have used in NC for many years. The newer measures are the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition (ECERS-3), the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition (ITERS-3), and the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition (FCCERS-3). These titles are often abbreviated as the E3 for preschool, the I3 for infant/toddler/twos, and the F3 for FCCH. Collectively the measures are referred to as the 3s.

The 3s can be purchased at the same booksellers as the Revised Editions (e.g., Kaplan, Teacher's College Press, Amazon), and may also be available in some county ECE lending libraries.

When do assessments using the 3s start?

NC will begin using the 3rd Editions of the Environment Rating Scale, or the 3s, on February 1, 2025, for all DCDEE assessments that contribute to a program's Star Rated License.

What happened to the ECERS-R, ITERS-R, and FCCERS-R?

The revised editions are still published and NCRLAP will continue to complete Rated License assessments using these versions until January 31, 2025, so take advantage of the many resources we already have for the revised editions.

Why are there new measures?

The 3rd editions are based on more recent research and knowledge about developmentally appropriate practice. It was important to incorporate these ideas in the 3rd editions to provide information about the newer ideas and confirm the existing practices that are still important in providing quality child care environments for children.

Why isn't there a new scale for school-age groups?

There is not yet a 3rd edition of the SACERS. However, we understand there is a revision in process, but it is not ready to be published. When it is published, DCDEE, the Child Care Commission, and NCRLAP will consider its adoption. For now, programs participating in Rated License assessment with school-age classrooms should continue to be familiar with the SACERS-U.

Are Outreach Assessments available for the 3s?

Yes, beginning in September of 2024. There have been a few changes to the process, and this is a great way for a program to learn more about the 3rd editions, check in about current situations, and speak to an assessor for feedback about the assessments.

Are the 3s, the new assessment pathway?

The 3s are simply the updated measures that will be used for Star Rated License ERS assessments beginning February 1, 2025. They will be used in the modernized QRIS for the new assessment

pathway when that begins, but it is very important to note that the new system does not begin in February. Instead, the current Star Rated License will continue with points being determined based on Program Standards and Education components, along with a Quality Point until the new system is in place. DCDEE will provide more information about the new system as it becomes available.

Can I do a prep year assessment for Cohort 2 using the 3s

The Cohort Model is no longer in place. All official assessments occurring after it ended, including when 3s assessments begin February 1 will be applied to a program's points for their Star Rated License in our current system. If programs want to have a reassessment, similar options will exist for the 3s as occurred for the revised editions, as needed.

If programs want to have practice with a 3s assessment before doing their official assessment, reach out to NCRLAP or visit ncrlap.org to learn more about Outreach Assessments, which are practice-only assessments that do not impact a program's license.

Will everyone need to do an assessment with the 3s right away?

No, although we welcome programs who want to have assessments currently (using the Revised Editions) or beginning February 1, 2025, for the 3rd editions, programs can remain in hold harmless until the new system begins.

If programs are within their window right before the 3s start in February, will the Revised version of the scale be used, or will there be a pause in the window for when the 3rd Edition use begins?

NCRLAP does not plan to schedule a split window. A window should begin and end before February 1 or your window will start after February 1. Programs do not have to worry about changing to a different scale in the middle of their window.

What happens if a program has a rated license assessment in December or January used the Revised Edition and decides to have a reassessment in February?

All assessments after February 1, 2025, will occur with the 3s, even for reassessments. The overall average score requirements will be different for the 3s because we and DCDEE recognize there will likely be some unfamiliar requirements (this only applies to 3s not the SACERS-U). If a program is considering a reassessment, it is always good to take some time to process and implement at least some of the feedback from the first assessment, while also learning about the requirements in the 3s that are different.

Are there resources for providers about the 3rd Editions on the NCRLAP website?

Yes, there is a page specific to the 3rd Editions, "[Get Ready for the 3s](#)" that includes general information about the 3s, along with different resources and webinars for each scale. You will find updated versions of some familiar documents like the Thinking More Worksheets along with new webinars about each scale and an introductory document for each scale. As we have time, additional resources will continue to be added.

Are NCRLAP assessors trained and ready to use the 3rd Editions?

Yes, we began using the ECERS-3 in 2015 and the ITERS-3 in 2017 for research studies and completed initial training prior to the studies for a group of our staff. Since then, we've continued to do additional research observations and reliability checks to maintain consistency. After the pandemic, a core group completed training on the FCCERS-3 and has been conducting research observations for FCCHs as well. In the fall of 2023, we began offering training for all assessors on the 3rd Editions in anticipation of this transition. We continue to provide additional training and complete ongoing reliability checks for all assessors on the 3rd Editions, just as we did over the years with the previous editions. We recognize how important it is for programs to have reliable, valid assessments and take this responsibility very seriously.

How should I prepare for a 3s assessment?

You are starting strong by reviewing documents such as this one! The best way to prepare is to become familiar with the various items and indicators. There are many similarities, so everything you already know about the Revised Editions will serve you well. There are also new details and requirements that will further elevate quality practices when caring for groups of children. We have various tips for learning more about the 3rd editions on our ["Get Ready for the 3s"](#) webpage.

It is also helpful to let the children and parents know there will be a visitor. For the children, this can help them feel more comfortable during the assessment. Often teachers are concerned that children act differently when there are visitors in the classroom. In our experience, children are often interested in new faces initially, but when their familiar adults can go about their day as typical, children settle down very quickly. Since assessors do not interact with them, most children quickly lose interest. Teachers and providers should be aware of their own reactions to the stress/pressure of an assessment and make sure to avoid changing their own behaviors or expectations for children when there is an assessor present. Children tend to react more-so to changes in their teacher's actions or expectations than they do to the presence of a new adult, because teachers are the adults they know and trust.