

# Preparation Year: Activities and Ideas for Cohorts 1, 2, and 3



The preparation year is an opportunity to focus on your Star Rated License and consider strategies to help maintain or increase your star rating. So many changes and challenges for programs across the state have occurred due to the pandemic, it will likely be helpful to set aside dedicated time to consider areas where refresher information might be helpful. These ideas can then be incorporated into any ongoing training, action planning, and professional development plans as you prepare for Year 2 when the regular star rated license reassessment process is required. Some preparation year ideas to consider related specifically to the program standards component of the Star Rated License are offered in this document.

## Review Requirements

- Be familiar with the NC Child Care Law and Rules that apply to your program.
- Review the ECERS-R, ITERS-R, SACERS-U, and/or FCCERS-R for your setting.

## Gather Resources

- Look for assessment related resources at [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org)
- Have copies of the rating scales applicable to the age groups your program serves.
- Seek out webinars and/or in-person trainings related to topics of interest.
- Check out various provider resources and download NC's Foundations for Early Learning and Development at DCDEE's website: [ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov](http://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov)

## Create a Plan of Action

- Start a self-study process to become more familiar with the ERS or priority areas relevant to your program.
- Brainstorm and collaborate with others about questions or current challenges you would like to address.

## Reach Out

- Share your ideas and needs with others that can help with resources of various types
- Get your questions answered by contacting your local CCR&R, Partnership for Children, Child Care Health Consultant, NCRLAP, or your program's DCDEE consultant depending on the topic areas.
- Talk with your consultant about completing a prep year ERS assessment to get more information about current situations at your program.

## Administrators

- Use staff meetings to discuss topics related to the Environment Rating Scales or other quality initiatives. For example, if transitions are challenging, ask everyone to share what strategies help, or which transitions take longer and why?
- Support and encourage staff during a self-study process. Connect them with resources at [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org) including contact hour earning webinars and Thinking More worksheets for every rating scale. Engage to brainstorm, offer support and clarification, and set goals to help everyone become more familiar and confident with the assessment process. Allocate resources so they can focus on self-study as part of the workday.



1. **First and foremost, approach this as a learning process. There will always be things to work on, but make sure to acknowledge areas of strength along the way, communicate with others, ask questions, and be open to new or different ideas.**
2. **Always remember that you know the children and families and the program's culture, current situations, priorities, and challenges. When considering the requirements, use your own expertise when deciding how best to focus time and energy.**