

Preparation Year: Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessments



Child care programs of all types experienced many changes due to the pandemic. To support programs that are past due or who will be due for ERS assessments, there is an option to have preparation year assessments for Cohorts 1, 2, and 3. Talk to your DCDEE Child Care Consultant to discuss the best options for your program and determine if requesting a prep year assessment would be helpful for your program.



Eligibility

Cohort 1: 2023/24 - your license was or is due in 2021 or prior.

Cohort 2: 2024/25 - your license was or is due in 2022 or 2023.

Cohort 3: 2025/26 - your license is due in 2024, 2025, or 2026.

What are preparation year assessments? During the prep year (Year 1), there are many different types of activities programs may decide to engage in related to ongoing quality improvement plans and maintaining or increasing the Star Rated License. One option is to go ahead and complete the ERS assessment process before it is required in Year 2. Programs that have an ERS assessment during the prep year:

- Will have a regular in-person observation and interview process and will receive an assessment report(s) afterwards. All typical assessment procedures will be followed by NCRLAP assessors, who will follow any health-related guidance requested by the program.
- At the request of the operator, the assessment scores will be applied to a program's license and program standards points **only** if this helps maintain or increase a star rating. A program may decide to wait until Year 2 to apply the scores. This will be determined by the program and their consultant, not NCRLAP.
- If you choose not to apply the prep year scores, your program can complete the Environment Rating Scale assessment process again the following year for your Star Rated License. There is no fee for these reassessments.

Benefits



- Programs decide whether the preparation year assessments scores count or not.
- Assessment results can help build understanding of current situations at a program and provide new information to add to ongoing quality improvement efforts.
- Programs that choose to have additional assessments later for licensure will be able to use the prep year assessment reports in prioritizing any needed changes.