

Reflective Self-Study: Instructions for Administrators



This document offers information that administrators can use as talking points with teachers to guide them through the Reflective Self-Study. Additionally, specific information and suggestions are provided for each of the required steps for you to consider and use as fits with your program. The Reflective Self-Study should be completed before the start date of your assessment window.

What is the Reflective Self-Study and why is it needed now?

It is a close look at current practices by all teaching and administrative staff. Reflection and planning on how to improve practices to offer the highest quality possible to children and families are also parts of a self-study process. Completing this process with teachers and program staff can help support ongoing quality improvement in programs. It is needed now as part of North Carolina's Temporary Assessment Process and focuses on areas that cannot be observed by assessors due to the current health restrictions.

This self-study encourages programs to use the Environment Rating Scales to identify how current practices relate to the developmentally appropriate practices considered in the requirements in specific areas. The reflective responses can be used to identify areas of strength and areas needing change to provide a foundation for goal setting. Over time, continued use of such a process provides meaningful documentation of changes that occur to meet goals set by the program.

What do I need to do for this process and how do I explain this to teachers?

To get started there is a free webinar for administrators about the NC Temporary Assessment Process, that includes specific information about the Reflective Self-Study. This is optional, but highly recommended to help you provide information to other staff and build your own understanding of the process. Completion earns one contact hour of training credit. Register and view anytime at ncrlap.org.

Read this document entirely. Also, there are other resources about the NC Temporary Assessment Process available at ncrlap.org. If your Modified Assessments are already scheduled, you will receive much of the available information in the scheduling packet as well.

My program has multiple administrators, do we all need to be involved?

That will be your decision based on how the timing will work out for your program and the different roles that each administrator provides. Having additional administrators available to help teachers during Step 2 and to complete the meetings for Step 3 is likely to be helpful for programs with a larger number of classrooms. Remember, the entire process, including completed worksheets and verification form, needs to be completed when the assessor arrives to conduct the Modified Assessment(s). Even if the reflection meetings occur with different administrators, one administrator will complete and sign the verification form, guaranteeing the process was fully completed.

What if there is staff turnover during the process and there is not a new lead teacher hired yet? Or if a teacher is out due to Covid and/or quarantine?

There is a great deal for new teachers and even floater or substitute teachers to be aware of when offering quality care and learning experiences for children. The topics included in the Reflective Self-Study address critical areas related to health and safety, interactions, language for learning, and the daily schedule. If a room does not have a lead teacher within the first week of the self-study process, let your consultant and NCRLAP know, so that everyone will be clear about what needs to occur. The expectation remains for the self-study to occur in each classroom; however, for a brand new teacher, substitute, or when there is an absence of more than one-week during the self-study, the pace may need to be different. Use your discretion to determine pacing and expectations, but activities for the Reflective Self-Study must occur in each classroom, even if the entire self-study cannot be completed before the Modified Assessment. Consider having an administrator or another teacher assist the new staff person. A note should be made on the verification form to describe what has occurred.

Step 1: Week 1



Share information about the process and expectations, including the timeline, with all teaching staff. Suggestions are provided below. When this has occurred, document the date(s) on the Reflective Self-Study Verification Form.

Make sure to include:

1. An overview of the process, why it is needed, and the timeline.
2. How teachers can access the **Environment Rating Scale (ERS)** that corresponds to the age group of children served in their classroom. The current versions being used are the spiral bound revised editions for the ITERS-R and ECERS-R, and the spiral bound updated edition for the SACERS-U. The page numbers provided in the worksheets refer to those editions specifically.
 - a. If there are questions about which Rating Scale a classroom should use, please contact NCRLAP.
 - b. For classrooms with two-year old children, check birth dates carefully because classrooms will be included for ECERS-R or ITERS-R random selection for the Modified Assessment based on children's ages, the day the assessor is there. For two's classrooms, we recommend using the worksheet based on children's ages for the time-frame of the Modified Assessment vs. the month before, if ages are very close to half ITERS-R and half ECERS-R. Remember the ITERS-R is for children, birth-30 months and the ECERS-R is for children 31 months-5 years.
3. Three **Thinking More About** worksheets must be completed by lead teachers in **each** classroom (Language/Interactions, Personal Care Routines/Health and Safety, and Program Structure). These should be shared and discussed with teachers. Lead teachers in each classroom must complete the required worksheets, but the process can be strengthened by having all teachers from the same classroom work together.
4. Other helpful information at ncrlap.org:
 - Free webinar about the Temporary Assessment Process, including details about the Reflective Self-Study (earns 1 contact hour upon completion). There is a webinar for teachers, in addition to the administrator webinar previously mentioned. ****Please note this is optional, but highly recommended. Information that will be helpful to teachers when completing the worksheets, in addition to understanding more about the process is included in the webinar.**
 - Free webinars for each of the ERS (earn 1 contact hour each)
 - Additional resources about various topics related to each of the ERS.



Step 2: Weeks 1-4



All Lead Teachers complete the three Thinking More About worksheets at a rate of approximately one per week. The total time to complete one worksheet is estimated to be around 2-4 hours. Some teachers will move through the worksheets quickly, while others may need longer, and you can vary the pacing and expectations within your program based on your knowledge of which teachers may need to get started quickly or who may need more encouragement to finish on time.

You will be able to provide as much guidance as you would like and should be available to help them answer questions. This is a new process with a required timeline, so frequent check-ins are likely to be helpful.

Key points to remind teachers of:

- To refer to the appropriate scale with the most recent version of the NC Additional Notes while completing the worksheets.
- Even though current health restrictions may alter some usual classroom practices, they should report on current practices unless a question refers to pre-pandemic practices specifically.
- This is not about a “right answer” but rather an honest reflection of what they do every day. The answers provided will not be evaluated by NCRLAP.
- At times questions can seem repetitive and this means the topic appears multiple times in the scale and are especially important.
- The Language and Interactions worksheet is a little longer and more complex. Have teachers start with the shorter Personal Care Routines/Health and Safety worksheet to help them become familiar with the process.

Key points for administrators to consider:

- Teachers may need time outside of the classroom to work on the worksheets. Since they are long and cover many topics, working in smaller increments of time rather than trying to complete a worksheet all at once is recommended. This also allows time to think about the topics between work sessions.
- It may be helpful to have more experienced teachers work with less experienced teaching staff for this process.
- Having teachers work with a Technical Assistance Specialist from the local Partnership for Children or Resource and Referral agency can also be beneficial when this is possible.

Step 3: Weeks 3-4



Administrators review the completed Thinking More About worksheets with each lead teacher and discuss goals and next steps for improving classroom quality. This may be done over multiple meetings as worksheets are completed or all at once based on what works for the schedules of teachers and administrator(s).

Completing this process, including the reflection at the end of each worksheet allows teachers to identify practices that may benefit from change. Administrators and teachers can then use the worksheets to identify and discuss changes that are quick and easy, changes that may take more time, or barriers that will not allow for change. Goal setting can occur with short and/or long-term goals in mind.

Discussions can include:

- Review of the Thinking More About worksheets, noticing areas of strength and areas for growth, that would be helpful to work on further.
- An opportunity for teachers and administrators to ask questions.
- A review of requirements in the relevant ERS.
- Making note of questions to ask your Child Care Consultant, TA, NCRLAP, etc.
- Initial planning for next steps or goal setting. Beyond the space for writing included in each worksheet, your program may already have forms for making action plans or goal setting that you would like to incorporate. Additionally, the local CCR&R or Partnership for Children may have ideas or forms that would be helpful to use over time.

To complete Step 3 make sure:

- All three Thinking More About worksheets are fully completed with individualized responses for each classroom.
- To collect all completed Thinking More About worksheets. NCRLAP assessor(s) will verify that all worksheets were completed, with individualized responses. They will collect a copy, if you can make one, or will scan the worksheets from the randomly selected classroom(s) when they arrive. Forms should be completed prior to the Modified Assessment window starting date.
- To complete and sign the Reflective Self-Study Verification Form and have available for the NCRLAP assessor when they arrive.

If there are any questions related to the completion of the Reflective Self-Study, please contact NCRLAP toll-free at (866) 362-7527.

After completing the Reflective Self-Study, you may decide to use the worksheets over time with newer staff or to encourage ongoing reflection about day-to-day practices in all classrooms. The worksheets are posted at ncrlap.org for easy download and can be used at any time. There are also two other Thinking More About worksheets for the Space and Furnishings and Activities subscales that could be helpful. These were not required for this process because those items are part of the Modified Assessment.