Getting to Know the ECERS-3

As we navigate the transition to a new scale, it's natural to feel a mix of emotions about the changes and uncertainty about what steps to take next. Keep in mind that many of the core principles in the ECERS-3 and ECERS-R remain the same but simply show up in different items and indicators, or at different quality levels.

The scoring system continues to use the same 7-point scale where quality indicators build from the 1 level to the 7 level. Both emphasize developmentally appropriate practices and aim to promote enriching experiences for young children by offering a framework that supports teachers and programs in creating nurturing environments. The ECERS-3 continues to evaluate how the environment, including teachers, impacts children's daily experiences. Aspects of the indoor and outdoor space, materials, health and safety practices, language and interactions, and the structure of daily events are still considered. While the phrase "Substantial Portion of the Day" is not used in this scale, children still need much access to a variety of materials. It should be observed that children are offered plenty of time to become immersed in their play which leads to more opportunities for teacher engagement and intentional teaching. Specific time requirements for indoor and outdoor play can be found in various items.
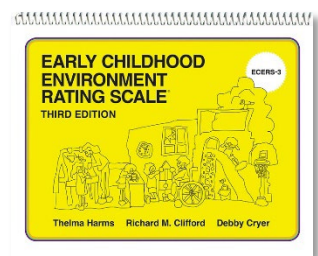
Differences

> There is greater focus on responsive, intentional teaching and language interactions with children as they use materials.

> There is no interview, and scores are based on a time-limited 3-hour observation.

> The ECERS-3 is used to assess classrooms where the majority of the children are three through five years old.

Getting started:

- Ensure you have the correct version of the scale. The third edition is spiral bound along the top of the book.
- Read through the scale becoming familiar with the terms and definitions that begin on page 10.
- Review individual items and indicators paying attention to the Notes for Clarification as these notes provide additional information about requirements.
- Consider the "why" behind the various requirements to increase motivation for building upon what's already in place and developing new habits or strategies.
- Spend time reflecting on current practices and environments, and how these relate to different items/indicators. A few examples of questions are shown on the next page, but there are many other options and areas of the scale to consider.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALE
THIRD EDITION
ECERS-3
Thelma Harms   Richard M. Clifford   Debby Cryer

The Environment Rating Scales are tools that can help establish foundational practices in a classroom to support teachers and children day to day. Change takes time, but ultimately practices that benefit children also benefit teachers, and are worth the effort.

Using the ECERS-3 to Build Upon Current Practices

Note that the left-hand column of this page describes differences in the ECERS-3 subscales as compared to the ECERS-R subscales. The right-hand side provides reflection questions to think about current practices as they relate to the subscales. This is a great way to see how your current practices align with newer items and indicators.

In **Space and Furnishings**, requirements for soft furnishings and a cozy area appear in the Furnishings and Room arrangement items. Display for children includes more details about using the display to support learning and foster positive relationships.	Write down ways the space and arrangement foster learning and growth. How do furnishings in the classroom support children's development and independence? How is the display used with the children?
The **Personal Care Routines** subscale consists of 4 items and nap practices are included in the health item. In addition to sanitation practices there is more of a focus on positive interactions during routine care such as talking with children about the handwashing process and other health practices.	During routines, what interactions occur? How are conversations and teaching included? How do children learn about safety? Review sanitation requirements and current practices including supervision.
In **Language and Literacy**, two items focus on how staff and children use books. Two other items include details to support and stimulate children's communication skills, language awareness, and vocabulary development. Another item focuses on becoming familiar with print. Positive, nurturing, responsive interactions are emphasized.	When engaging, meaningful conversations occur what types of topics are discussed? What are some new and interesting words used recently with the children? What happens when children use books independently?
Many items in the **Activities** subscale have requirements for interactions with children as they use specific materials. Sand and water is now part of the Nature/science item and there are three Math/number items that explore math, including its use in daily events, activities, and understanding written numbers.	How do you ensure children explore all play areas and use a variety of materials each day? Is there an area or certain materials that are used less? Why is this? What types of interactions/conversations happen while children use materials?
The **Interaction** subscale has many familiar requirements but also includes new and updated components. There is a new item related to the individualized teaching and learning that occurs in the classroom.	How are peer interactions encouraged? What guidance strategies are used when children disagree? How is gross motor play promoted? What ways is intentional teaching happening each day during play times?
For **Program Structure**, the Transitions and waiting times item includes additional considerations for effective and appropriate transitions and how prepared staff are for various activities. Considerations for children with disabilities are captured in other items but are no longer a separate item.	Can children choose materials that interest them every day, indoors and outdoors? If group activities are used, are they positive and engaging? Are there activities for children who are not interested in group activities?