

A Guide to the North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten Environment Rating Scale Assessment Process (ECERS-3)



The ECERS-3 is consistent with North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development. NC Pre-K ECERS-3 assessments are incorporated into a facility's Star Rated License.

If you have NC Pre-K funding, what does this mean for your program?

- When your next Rated License assessment process occurs, NC Pre-K classrooms will continue to be included in random selection for the ECERS-3 age group.
 - If at least one NC Pre-K room is not selected during the Rated License Assessment Process, ONE NC Pre-K assessment will be scheduled to occur as quickly as possible based on assessor availability. The NC Pre-K room to be assessed will be randomly selected from any existing NC Pre-K rooms.
 - The ECERS-3 score for any NC Pre-K room selected will be applied to the Program Standards component of your Rated License along with any other Environment Rating Scale scores based on the typical licensure process. This assessment will also be applied to NC Pre-K program requirements.
- NC Pre-K classrooms in the first year of operation are included in the random selection process as would occur during a typical Rated License assessment visit for any classrooms that operate in licensed space.
- With the exception of low-score reassessments or NC Pre-K assessments for facilities where Rated License assessments occur during times when NC Pre-K is not in operation (i.e., summer), there is no longer a separate Environment Rating Scale assessment process for the NC Pre-K classrooms. Any expansion or new NC Pre-K classrooms that are added after Rated License assessments are completed, will simply be included in the next regular assessment process, but will not be assessed separately before that time.
- The AR will be sent from NCRLAP to the program's DCDEE Child Care Consultant, typically within 10 working days following the last assessment at a facility and they will share it with you. NC Pre-K Site Administrators and Teachers may use the results to determine if, and to what extent, program improvements are needed to maintain environment quality or improve certain program components.

NC Pre-K Program Requirements, Improvement Plans, and Reassessments

Between February 1, 2025 and the start of the new QRIS, if any NC Pre-K classroom scores less than a 4.0 on the ECERS-3, an Improvement Plan is required, based on NC Pre-K program requirements. Please refer to the North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten (NC Pre-K) Program Requirements and Guidance, Section 7A (available at ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov) for specific details about NC Pre-K program requirements and improvement plans.

Subsequent assessments for these classrooms will be scheduled during the next school year after the improvement plan is completed and the DCDEE Child Care Consultant submits a reassessment request to NCRLAP. NC Pre-K classrooms must meet applicable score requirements in order to continue to be an approved NC Pre-K site.