



# Introduction to ECERS-3

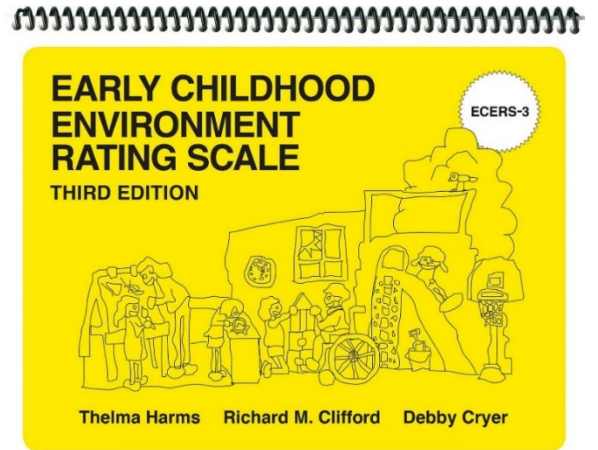
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**NJ CENTER FOR  
QUALITY RATINGS**

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# What is the ECERS-3?



- First major revision of ECERS-R since 2005
- Comprehensively measures quality in the Preschool classroom
- Relies on 3-hour observation to base assessment
- Levels of quality: (1) inadequate, (3) minimal, (5) good, (7) excellent
- Designed for use with one classroom/group for children ages 3-5

# Key Differences Between ECERS-R & ECERS-3

- More emphasis on interactions and the teacher's role
- Decreased emphasis on counting materials, more on how they are used in teaching activities
- Greater reliance on observation of ongoing classroom activity
- Eliminates teacher interview
- Eliminates Parents/Staff subscale to allow more time to focus on actual classroom practices
- Utilizes current research to determine where the indicators lie on the spectrum of quality (improved scaling)
- Increased emphasis on engaging language, literacy, and math experiences with many new items and indicators
- Distinguishes between *Play Areas* and *Interest Centers*

# What does the ECERS-3 Measure?

- How teachers use a variety of materials to support and enhance interactions with children
- Observes safe and healthy learning environments and how personal care routines are successfully managed

## ***ECERS-3 Subscales***

1. Space and Furnishings
2. Personal Care Routines
3. Language and Literacy
4. Learning Activities
5. Interaction
6. Program Structure



# Important Terms

The following 4 slides include terms or phrases that are used throughout ECERS-3. The ECERS-3 definition of these terms/phrases is included to help you to understand ECERS-3 correctly

# Observed Schedule

- Observed Schedule: what occurs during the 3-hour observation, not what will happen or has happened.
- Not schedule that is posted in classroom
- Required to calculate amounts of time during which children are engaged in various classroom activities (materials, length of waiting, group times, meals and snacks, toileting and gross motor time)
- For score of 3, need to have choice time for 25 minutes
- For score of 5, need to have choice time for 1 hour

# Accessible

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Children can reach and use materials, furnishings and equipment.

They are able to get them, use them and put them away.

Does not mean that every child has to have access at all times.

Barriers to prevent access can be physical, staff or time restriction.

If a child has to ask the teacher to get the material in order to be able to use it, that is not accessible.

If material is in a closed cabinet, it is only accessible if we see that children have independent access to it.

# Play Areas vs Interest Centers

All Interest Centers are Play Areas

All Play Areas are NOT Interest Centers

- A **Play Area** is a space where play materials are provided for children.
- An **Interest Center** is a clearly defined play area for a particular kind of play.
  - Materials are organized by type and accessible.
  - Furniture is provided for use of materials if needed.
  - Appropriate amount of space for materials & number of children.
  - Blocks & dramatic play are likely to be larger centers.
- Required Interest Centers: Cozy, Dramatic Play, Blocks, & Science; (need 5 for a score of 5).
- For 5's, in order to be "accessible", materials need to be accessible for 1 hour in a 3-hour period.

# Activity

Discuss the following questions with your neighbor. Be prepared to share what you discuss.



**Play Area or Interest Center?**

What are the differences between a **play area** and an **interest center**?

# Additional Examples of Play Area and Defined Interest Centers



Play Area



Book Interest Area



Dramatic Play Interest Area



Science Interest Area

# Terms Used Throughout Scale

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Engaged

Teaching

Individualized teaching

Usually & generally

Hand Hygiene

Weather permitting

Sanitizing & Disinfecting

# Space and Furnishings

- Indoor space well-maintained with appropriate furniture
- Furnishings provide substantial amount of softness
- Teachers can easily supervise
- Room arrangement – 5 Interest Centers
- Variety of equipment to stimulate children's gross motor skills
- Indoor space for privacy



**Classroom display includes children's work and reflects their interests/current topics of study  
Teachers talk about and use display**



Gross motor  
space and  
equipment: At  
least 30  
minutes during  
the 3 hour  
observation

What is weather  
permitting?



# Personal Care Routines

## 3 Health Practices Observed during Meals and Snacks:

1. Washing/sanitizing eating surface
2. Hand hygiene before/after eating
3. Serving uncontaminated foods



- Responsive and positive staff supervision
- Children and staff wash hands at appropriate times
- Major vs. minor hazards: Seriousness of hazard and how likely it is to result in an accident

## Toileting/Diapering Sanitary Procedures

1. Hand Hygiene
2. Flushing toilets
3. Sanitizing toilet sinks when used for multiple purposes
4. Maintaining sanitary conditions in the area



# Language and Literacy

- Staff use wide range of vocabulary
- Add information and ideas to expand language
- Open-ended questions
- Many staff-child conversations
- Responsive to children's attempts to communicate
- Staff read appropriate books to children



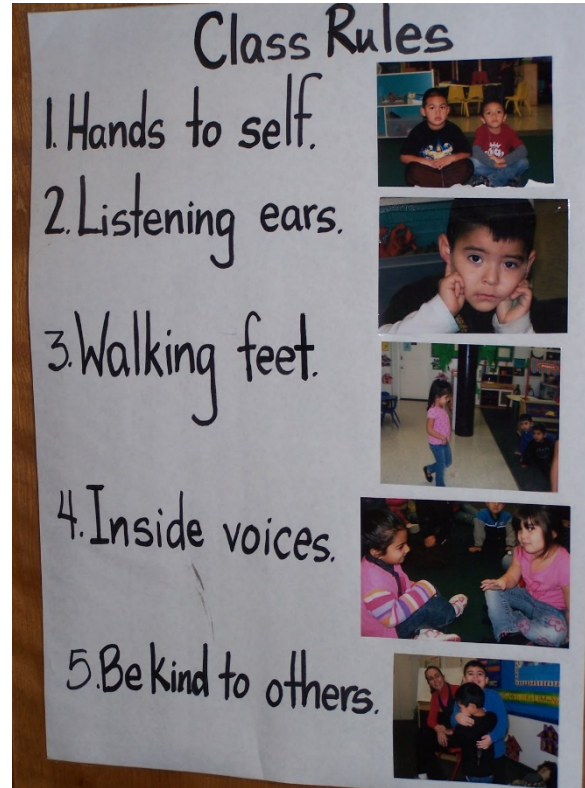
**Children are engaged during Story Time**



# Language and Literacy (con't)



A defined reading interest center with a variety of accessible books is set up



Visible print in the classroom is purposeful and combined with pictures



Staff point out letters and words as they read print with children

# EXPANDING VOCABULARY

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# ASKING QUESTIONS

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# Learning Activities

*What does ECERS-3 observe?*

Diverse, appropriate materials accessible

Clearly defined interest centers

Organized for children's independent use

Time children have access to materials

Teaching and interactions as children use materials



**FINE MOTOR**



**NATURE/SCIENCE**



**ART**



**MUSIC AND MOVEMENT**



**BLOCKS**



**DRAMATIC PLAY**

# Learning Activities (con't.)

- Teaching of math concepts supported by use of materials
- Staff use math talk throughout day
- Print numbers on play materials



**Appropriate use of technology**



**Diversity represented in play materials**

# Learning Activities

## More about the three new math items

### **1. *Math in Daily events***

- Not about having math materials but how math is drawn into the lives and activities of the children

### **2. *Understanding written numbers***

- How staff introduce numbers to children in a meaningful way

### **3. *Math materials and activities***

- Not just about access to materials, but instead about how staff use and teach with the materials in a way that engages children

# Interactions

- Verbal and nonverbal communications between staff and children, and peer-to-peer
- Positive, negative or neutral interactions
- Interactions observed throughout many ECERS items
- Open-ended activities and questions
- Appropriate expectations for children



**Individualized teaching**



**Positive peer interaction  
facilitated and encouraged**

# MORE ABOUT INDIVIDUALIZED TEACHING & LEARNING

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More emphasis on matching teacher interactions with the children's abilities and interests to engage them!

- **Level 1:** *Teaching content is the same for all the children (days of the week recited, writing your name, same book for all)*
- **Level 3:** *Staff ask children questions that they are able to answer during free play activities*
- **Level 5:** *Staff ask questions as general practice (identifying shapes, colors, counting) children respond well during activities*
- **Level 7:** *Interested & meaningful learning going beyond academic skills. Staff do this as they circulate around the classroom. This is a regular part of what they do*

# Program Structure

- Smooth transitions: Teachers prepared for next activity
- At least 1 hour of free play observed (indoor and outdoor)
- Ample and varied materials accessible
- Appropriate and engaging whole group activities
- No more than 3 minutes wait time



**Clear systems to regulate participation in activities used**



# ECERS-3 Wrap Up

- Helps inform appropriate preschool teaching practices
- Comprehensively assesses program quality across six subscales
- Measures how successfully child outcomes are met
- Consider what you can easily change/improve in your classroom and program
- Extremely rare that a classroom gets an overall score of 7
- Good to check *Additional Notes* on ERSI website for updates: <http://www.ersi.info/>



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