



## What to expect during an Environment Rating Scale (ERS) Assessment

*ITERS-R, ECERS-R, SACERS-U*



### **About the ERS assessment visit**

- The PA Key Program Quality Assessor expects to see a typical day in each classroom they visit. Teachers should do whatever they would normally do – don't feel you need to alter the schedule in any way. The Assessor will go wherever the group goes.
- You can expect the Assessor to observe in an infant, toddler, preschool, and summer school-age group for 3-4 hours. Assessments usually begin between 8:30-9:00am and typically only one assessment is completed per day. *Observations of school-age groups during the school year typically occur during afternoon operating hours and may be shorter than 3-4 hours.*
- The Assessor will need 15-20 minutes following the observation to meet with a teacher from the group to ask follow-up questions about things that can't be observed. This Q&A time may sometimes occur before the observation of a school year school-age group, if the teacher is available.



### **When the Program Quality Assessor visits, you can expect:**

- That the Assessor will not interact with the teachers or children in the classroom. Following a brief introduction to the classroom, the assessor wants to minimally effect the classroom environment. If the assessor is talking with the teacher(s) or children, the normal atmosphere of the classroom has been changed. There might be brief exchanges between the Assessor and the teacher(s) to gather information; however, most questions will be saved for the Q&A time.
- The Assessor to look at toys and materials in the classroom. Assessors will also look in closed closets or cabinets in all spaces used by the children.
- The Assessor to watch diapering/toileting, teacher and child hand washing, and meal time routines.
- The Assessor to take many notes on their tablet computer and score the items and indicators from these notes. You can expect the assessor to listen to conversations, observe interactions, and closely observe activities and routines.
- That the Assessor will look at any spaces that are used by the program, including indoor and outdoor gross motor space(s), even if they are not used on the day of the observation. The assessor will be taking measurements and observing all areas of an indoor or outdoor space used by the children.
- That two Assessors might visit the same classroom. Assessors are required to maintain reliability with one another to ensure they look at things the same way across the state. This will not impact your classroom score; it is the Program Quality Assessment team's way of ensuring all programs are assessed properly.
- That Observation feedback, including scores, will not be shared with the teacher or program on the day of the visit.

To ask a question of the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) Team, you may email the assessor who contacted you and shared this document or you may email the team at [pqa@pakeys.org](mailto:pqa@pakeys.org). Check out the PQA Team's blog, "Let's Talk Quality! Program Quality Assessment in PA" at [letstalkqualitypa.com](http://letstalkqualitypa.com) for articles and topics related to best practices in early childhood education.



## What to expect during your **ECERS-3** Assessment



### ***About the ECERS-3 assessment visit***

- The PA Key Program Quality Assessor (PQA) expects to see a typical day. Teachers should do whatever they would normally do – don't feel you need to alter the schedule in any way.
- The ECERS-3 observation is a three-hour time sample completed during the most active part of the day. Observation typically begins between 8-9am and the PQA will ask orienting questions before beginning. These might include:
  - Are at least 75% of the children in the group at least three years old? Do any children present have identified special needs? What space(s) are used for gross motor activities for this class?
- There are no follow-up questions about ECERS-3 items and indicators.
- The ECERS-3 does not use the concept of Substantial Portion of the Day (SPOD) that you may know from the ECERS-R. The ECERS-3 expects that children spend much of their time engaged in hands-on activities and that they have many opportunities to make individualized choices. The ECERS-3 reflects this developmentally appropriate practice in the expectation that children have at least one hour of access to materials during the assessment visit.



### ***When the Program Quality Assessor visits, you can expect:***

- That the Assessor will not interact with the teachers or children in the classroom. Following a brief introduction to the classroom, the assessor wants to minimally effect the environment. If the assessor is talking with the teacher(s) or children, the normal atmosphere of the classroom has been changed.
- The Assessor to listen closely to language and staff-child interactions. Because many ECERS-3 items and indicators consider language and intentional teaching, the PQA will spend most of their time listening, watching, and taking notes on their tablet computer. They might not look at materials and toys until after the three-hour time sample is completed. If you've had an ECERS-R assessment, this may seem very different.
- The Assessor to observe one snack OR meal service. If necessary, she can observe a meal/snack after the three-hour mark, but nothing else that happens during that time can be considered.
- The Assessor to watch diapering/toileting, teacher and child hand washing, and meal time routines.
- That the Assessor will look at any spaces that are used by the program, including indoor and outdoor gross motor space(s), even if they are not used on the day of the observation. The assessor will be taking measurements and observing all areas of an indoor or outdoor space used by the children.
- That two Assessors might visit the same classroom. Assessors are required to maintain reliability with one another to ensure they look at things the same way across the state. This will not impact your classroom score; it is the Program Quality Assessment team's way of ensuring all programs are assessed properly.
- That Observation feedback, including scores, will not be shared with the teacher or program on the day of the visit.

To ask a question of the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) Team, you may email the assessor who contacted you and shared this document or you may email the team at [pqa@pakeys.org](mailto:pqa@pakeys.org). Check out the PQA Team's blog, "Let's Talk Quality! Program Quality Assessment in PA" at [letstalkqualitypa.com](http://letstalkqualitypa.com) for articles and topics related to best practices in early childhood education.