

Environment Rating Scale (ERS®)

What is ERS?

An ERS observation focuses on the typical daily experiences of children in early childhood and out-of-school time settings. The assessment considers how teacher engagement, the spaces and equipment used by the children, accessible play materials, and children's activities combine to enhance learning. The ERS instruments are comprised of subscales and items. ERS items include indicators that reflect consistently occurring quality practices and provisions:

- Indoor and outdoor space and furnishings and access to developmentally appropriate toys, materials, and activities
- Interactions and activities to support social-emotional and cognitive development
- Program structure including transitions and schedules
- Personal care routines including health and safety practices
- Supports for math and number concept development
- Supports for exploring nature and science
- Supports for individualized creative expression
- Supports for language and literacy development

Which program(s) could use ERS?

ERS can be used in all early childhood and school-age settings. The age specific ERS instruments used in Pennsylvania include:

- ITERS-3: Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale - Third Edition (birth-36 months)
- ECERS-3: Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Third Edition (37 months -K)
- SACERS-U: School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale - Updated (school-age)
- FCCERS-3: Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale - Third Edition (birth-school-age in a residential setting)

ERS assessment process

External ERS assessments are conducted by the Program Quality Assessment (PQA) team.

Internal ERS assessments are conducted by the program's internal assessment team. Programs partner with the quality coach and PQA assessor when planning for and conducting internal assessment, and when analyzing the information collected during the internal assessment process.

The ITERS-3, ECERS-3, and FCCERS-3 collect information during a three-hour observation in the indoor and outdoor spaces used by children. The SACERS-U observation includes an observation and an interview with program staff about unobserved practices and policies.

Please see [How to Conduct an Internal Assessment Using the ERS](#) for detailed information on using the ERS for internal assessment.

How does ERS support continuous quality improvement (CQI)?

Information gathered during an ERS observation can be used by the program to identify strengths in the classroom environment, highlight positive teacher interactions, and learn about areas for growth. The information gathered can be used to help create the program's continuous quality improvement plan and for planning professional development.

Additional information/training

- [Environment Rating Scales Institute \(ERSI\) \(ersi.info\)](https://ersi.info)
- [Environment Rating Scales \(ERS\) \(pakeys.org/pqa/poi/ers\)](https://pakeys.org/pqa/poi/ers)
- [How to Conduct an Internal Assessment Using the ERS \(pakeys.org/how-to-ERS\)](https://pakeys.org/how-to-ERS)
- [Facilitated Program Observation Instrument Orientation Request \(FPO\) \(pakeys.org\)](https://pakeys.org)
- [Program Quality Assessment Professional Development \(pakeys.org/pqa/professional-development\)](https://pakeys.org/pqa/professional-development)