Introduction to ECERS-3
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

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
- Science Interest Area
- Dramatic Play Interest Area
Terms Used Throughout Scale

Engaged

Individualized teaching

Teaching

Hand Hygiene

Usually & generally

Sanitizing & Disinfecting

Weather permitting
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?
3 Health Practices Observed during Meals and Snacks:

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

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

• 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
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
ASKING QUESTIONS
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
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

Positive peer interaction facilitated and encouraged

Individualized teaching
MORE ABOUT INDIVIDUALIZED TEACHING & LEARNING

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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