

Evaluating the Environment

An overview of ECERS



Early Years Environments

- Learning through play, continuous provision, enabling environments etc
- The environment as the “third teacher”.



- How do we ensure quality of provision, beyond the superficial?



ECERS

- ECERS stands for Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale. It is for use with environments for 2½ - 5 year old children in play based curriculums
- There is also an ECERS –E which is a curriculum extension specifically for the UK Early Years Foundation Stage framework
- Also an ITERS –R which is for babies – 2yrs.
- Have been amended and developed over many years with feedback from teachers. Most recent update is 2015.
- Provides a structure for recording what is going on in the learning environment and for showing development.



Benefits of ECERS

- Clear tool for Self Evaluation by practitioners
- Transparent and positive – not a stick to beat us with!
- Provides concrete steps for improvement
- Systematic structure and scoring allows measurement of progress.
- Can assess quality and demonstrate impact of developments.



How does it work?

ECERS 3 assesses 6 main areas which are then divided into different items

- Space and Furnishings
- Personal Care Routines
- Language and Literacy
- Learning Activities
- Interaction
- Program Structure



Scoring...

- Usually, a full audit would take ½ day for ECERS, and a full day to do ECERS and ECERS-E
- Used with 1 group of children / room at a time
- Most elements are scored by direct observation, (some of the ECERS-E by looking at planning or asking staff)
- You get a score for each area from 1-7.
- Getting a full score of 7 is extremely unlikely!
- The average overall score for individual items in the UK is 3.1.
- The highest ever average, out of 1500 schools was 6.2.
- Generally 1 – don't have it, 3 – Have it, 5 – Have it and Use it, 7 – Have it, use it and extend it.



Example

3 – Room Arrangement for play and learning

Inadequate
1

2

Minimal
3

4

Good
5

6

Excellent
7

3. Room arrangement for play and learning

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>1.1 Most play areas are so crowded that play cannot progress well.*</p> <p>1.2 Very few play materials in classroom are organized for children's independent use.</p> <p>1.3 Extremely difficult for teachers to supervise children while they play (Ex: many children frequently completely out of sight or hearing, and teachers do not circulate in room to monitor).</p> <p>1.4 No play area is accessible for enrolled children with disabilities requiring special accommodation.*
<i>NA permitted</i></p> | <p>3.1 At least 2 play areas have sufficient space for the type of play encouraged by the materials (Ex: chairs do not usually block access to materials on shelves; active areas have more space).*</p> <p>3.2 At least 3 interest centers that meet the required definition are accessible.*</p> <p>3.3 Teachers can minimally supervise children (Ex: can hear if there are problems and move to the area quickly; can see some of the children by glancing around the room).*</p> <p>3.4 Some play areas are accessible to enrolled children with disabilities.*
<i>NA permitted</i></p> | <p>5.1 Space is arranged so that classroom pathways generally do not interrupt play.*</p> <p>5.2 At least 5 interest centers are used, including a cozy area protected from active play.*</p> <p>5.3 Teachers can adequately supervise all children visually most of the time (Ex: if children are hidden, teachers move about the space often enough to ensure children's safety or to encourage learning).*</p> <p>5.4 All play areas are accessible to enrolled children with disabilities.*
<i>NA permitted</i></p> | <p>7.1 Quiet and noisy play areas are all separated from one another, not just by furniture but by physical space.*</p> <p>7.2 All play areas requiring special provisions are conveniently equipped (Ex: art and sand/water interest centers have easily cleaned surfaces and sink near-by; block center has rug to reduce noise).*</p> <p>7.3 Centers requiring more space (blocks, dramatic play, very popular or active play) have sufficient space to accommodate the type of play required and the number of children who want to participate.*</p> |
|---|--|--|---|



Example 3 – Room Arrangement for play and learning



Example 3 – Room Arrangement for play and learning



Example

22 – Nature / Science

Inadequate
1

2

Minimal
3 *

4

Good
5

6

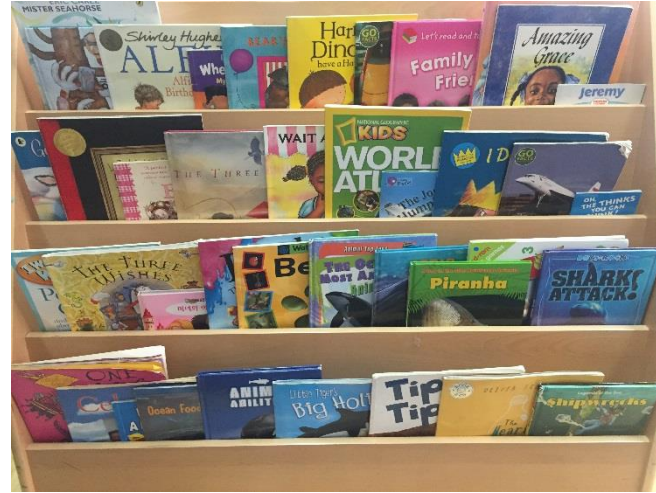
Excellent
7

22. Nature/science

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>1.1 No nature/science materials accessible.*</p> <p>1.2 Staff do not talk about nature/science with the children during the observation (Ex: mention weather, seasons; read factual book on animals; mention temperature of water).</p> <p>1.3 Staff show a lack of interest, or dislike, for the natural world (Ex: show fear of a large spider instead of cautious respect; ignore natural occurrences).</p> | <p>3.1 At least 5 developmentally appropriate nature/science materials from at least 2 categories are accessible for at least 25 minutes during the observation.*</p> <p>3.2 Staff talk about nature/science with the children during the observation (Ex: do weather chart; ask names of animals in pictures; talk about healthful food at snack).
<i>Observe once</i></p> <p>3.3 Sand or water, with appropriate toys, is accessible for at least 25 minutes during the observation.*</p> | <p>5.1 At least 15 nature/science materials, some from each of the 5 listed categories, are accessible in a clearly defined nature science interest center, for at least 1 hour during the observation.*</p> <p>5.2 Staff use and talk about nature/science materials with the children.
<i>Observe once</i></p> <p>5.3 Staff model concern for the environment (Ex: remind children to turn off water or turn off light to save resources; recycle; discuss how insects can be helpful).
<i>Observe once</i></p> | <p>7.1 Staff initiate activities for measuring, comparing, or sorting using nature/science materials (Ex: show children how to sort seashells by color, shape, or size; arrange pinecones from biggest to smallest; chart rainfall for a month to discuss dry and wet times; predict weights of various natural objects).*</p> <p>7.2 One or more pets/plants present that children can easily observe, help care for, and that are talked about with the children (Ex: classroom fish tank, hamster, gerbil; birds that are seen visiting filled bird feeder).</p> |
|---|---|---|---|



Example 22 – Nature / Science



Your own environment...

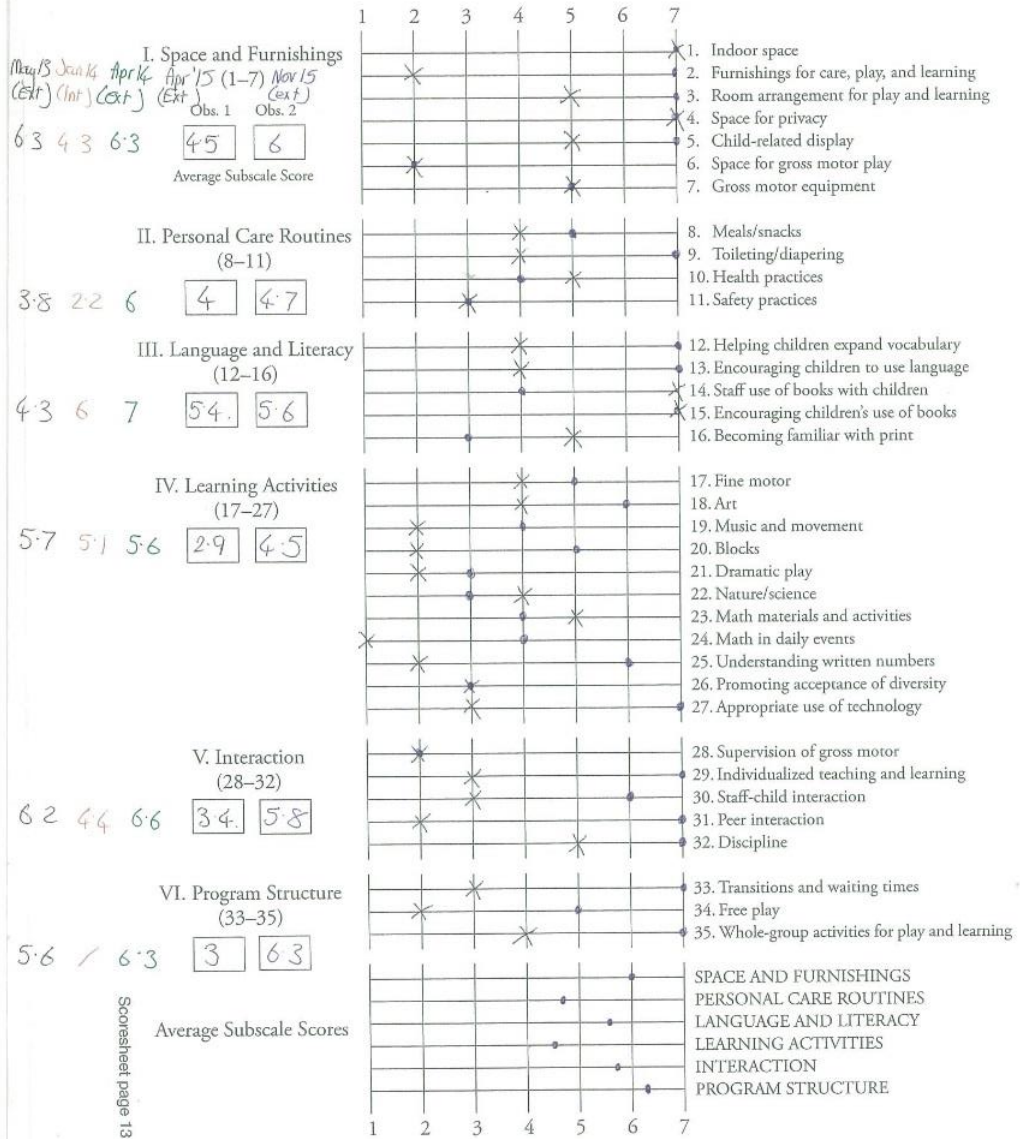
- Where do you think you are currently?
- What can you do to develop? – Tomorrow? Next week? Next year?



April '15 - External
Nov '15 - External

ECERS-3 Profile

Center/School: DCSL Observation 1: ___/___/___ Observer(s): _____
 Teacher(s)/Classroom: Reception Observation 2: ___/___/___ Observer(s): _____
m m d d y y



Tracking Progress...




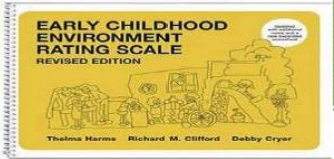
Implementation...

- Start small – use one item at a time – Learning Activities can be a good place to start.
- Build up experience and culture
- Choose priorities
- Time!



Further info...

A UK ECERS NETWORK RESOURCE



HOME


- THE ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALES
- THE UK ECERS NETWORK
- NETWORK SEMINARS 2012
- LINKS
- THE UK ADDENDA
- ECERS and EYFS
- A+ EDUCATION LTD
- CONTACT

THE UK ECERS WEBSITE

The aim of this website is to provide a support tool for local authorities, settings and other organisations in England using the Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R, ECERS-E, ITERS-R, FCCERS-R and SACERS) for quality improvement. It is closely linked to the UK ECERS Network – a group of local authorities and other organisations who use the Environment Rating Scales.

The website is hosted and maintained by A+ Education Limited, but is intended as a resource for everyone to use and is not restricted to local authority practitioners who work with A+.

We very much welcome your comments and have set up an email address for responses, suggestions and questions (ecers@ecers-uk.org). We can



Environment Rating Scales Institute

[ECERS-3 online training course now available!](#)


Quick Links

Updated Notes for Clarification:

- ECERS-3> (updated 8/2015)
- ECERS-R> (updated 1/2014)
- ITERS-R> (updated 9/2013)
- FCCERS-R> (updated 9/2013)
- SACERS> (updated 6/2013)
- SACERS-U> (none at this time)

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ECERS-3
Early Childhood

ECERS-R
Early Childhood

ITERS-R
Infant Toddler

FCCERS-R
Family Child Care

SACERS
School-Age Care

SACERS - Updated Edition

Children thrive when their health and safety needs are met and healthful habits are established for a lifetime.



Questions?

