



Washington Early Achievers Transition to ECERS-3

Context and Comparison with Current Measures Information Sheet

Background

In Washington State, early childhood program quality is ensured through the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), Early Achievers. In 2020, the Early Achievers program is transitioning from using the Environment Rating Scale Revised Edition (ERS-R) suite of tools and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) suite of tools to just the Environment Rating Scale Third Edition (ERS-3) suite of tools for measuring the quality of learning environments. One of the reasons for the change was due to stakeholder feedback that resulted in the following legislation being passed:

“The department must adopt administrative policies in the Early Achievers program to eliminate rating scale barriers, to the extent possible, within the assessment tools and data collection methodologies used in the Early Achievers program and weight Early Achievers points to incentivize providers to serve infants and toddlers.” (RCW 43.216, Section 9, 1).

In addition to the revised learning environment assessment, the records review component has also been updated to allow more one to one correspondence between indicators of quality and points granted for implementation of quality practices.

ECERS-3 Compared to the ECERS-R and the CLASS

For classrooms where most of the children are at least three years old, the ERS-3 version used is called ECERS-3. Table 1 shows the items in the ECERS-3, which consists of 35 items into 6 subscales. Unlike ECERS-R, which focuses more on materials and the overall environment, “ECERS-3 places much more emphasis on the role of the teacher in helping children develop cognitive and social skills. The indicators at the upper end of the scoring continuum focus on staff providing higher level learning opportunities that help young children develop advanced skills related to math and literacy, which were not included within the ECERS-R” (Early et al, 2018).

A validation study done for ECERS-3 found that almost all correlations among ECERS-3 total score, ECERS-3 subscales, and CLASS Pre-K domains were significant and moderate (Early et al., 2018). These results are not surprising as past studies looking at the relationship between ECERS-R and CLASS Pre-k have also found significant correlations between ECERS-R total score and CLASS subscales (Denny, Hallam, and Homer, 2012; La Paro, Pianta, and Stuhlman, 2004).

Although the state will not be using CLASS as an assessment tool starting in the 2020-2021 school year, much of the information gained from using this tool (mainly teacher-child interactions) will not be lost, as there is significant overlap between CLASS and ECERS-3. There are also several practical advantages of using ECERS-3 over CLASS for a state’s quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) system including:



More comprehensive suite of data for programs

ECERS-3 provides a comprehensive suite of data to programs and their coaches (35 items representing 468 data points vs. CLASS with 3 Domains-representing 10 data points). ERS-3 includes components not represented by the CLASS tool, such as domain specific teacher/child interactions, provisions for children with special needs, promoting acceptance of diversity, and attention to the provision of physical activity and health. ERS-3 provides the comprehensive data that Washington State needs to strategically deploy resources.



Coaches and teachers receive more specific information about what is going well and what needs to improve in the classroom

The “ECERS-3 focuses on very specific and tightly defined components of teaching and children’s experiences in the program itself. CLASS, on the other hand, was designed to measure interactions between teachers and children in the classroom and is more broadly aimed at concepts that lead to high-quality instruction” (Early et al., 2018). This can be seen clearly when you compare the Learning Activities domain in ECERS-3 with the Instructional Learning Formats and Concept Development domains in CLASS.



More information on physical environment and provision of materials

“CLASS does not measure the physical environment or provision of materials, such as high-quality physical facilities, well-established and robust health and safety practices, and use of a varied, well-developed curriculum” (Early et al., 2018). Again, having this information available to coaches and teachers will aid in facilitating improvement.

In addition, classrooms who do not receive the full 3-hour ECERS-3 observation will be observed using a subset of the ECERS-3 or ITERS-3 indicators in a protocol called the [Environmental Rating Scale 3rd Edition – Interaction \(ERS3-i\)](#). The ERS3-i is a process for using a subset of the ECERS-3 or ITERS-3 indicators to assess a classroom during a one-hour time sample. The subset of ERS3-i indicators focuses on interactions children experience across learning domains and will be primarily used for coaching and quality improvement purposes.

Table 2 and 3 is a summary and detailed description of how the CLASS dimensions and ECERS-3 and ERS3-i items overlap. These tables were developed by Cultivate Learning’s Early Achievers team. The process included having a staff member review each ECERS-3 and ERS3-i item to see which indicators, if any, matched the way specific CLASS dimensions was described. Next, the same staff member reviewed each CLASS dimension description to see if it matched the language of any ECERS-3 or ERS3-i indicator. Then, another staff member reviewed the work using a similar process. Once the review was complete, disagreements were discussed, and final decisions were made with the senior director. All staff members who participated in the review process are trained and reliable on both instruments.

Works Cited

- Denny, J. H., Hallam, R., & Homer, K. (2012). A multi-instrument examination of preschool classroom quality and the relationship between program, classroom, and teacher characteristics. *Early Education & Development, 23*(5), 678-696.
- Early, D. M., Sideris, J., Neitzel, J., LaForett, D. R., & Nehler, C. G. (2018). Factor structure and validity of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale–Third Edition (ECERS-3). *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 44*, 242-256.
- La Paro, K. M., Pianta, R. C., & Stuhlman, M. (2004). The classroom assessment scoring system: Findings from the prekindergarten year. *The Elementary School Journal, 104*(5), 409-426.

Supplementary Tables

Table 1: Overview of ECERS-3 Items

ECERS-3 Subscale	ECERS-3 Items
Space and Furnishings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indoor space 2. Furnishings for care, play, and learning 3. Room arrangement for play and learning 4. Space for privacy 5. Child-related display 6. Space for gross motor play 7. Gross motor equipment
Personal Care Routines	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Meals/snacks 9. Toileting/diapering 10. Health practices 11. Safety practices
Language and Literacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Helping children expand vocabulary 13. Encouraging children to use language 14. Staff use of books with children 15. Encouraging children's use of books 16. Becoming familiar with print
Learning Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Fine motor 18. Art 19. Music and movement 20. Blocks 21. Dramatic play 22. Nature/science 23. Math materials and activities 24. Math in daily events 25. Understanding written numbers 26. Promoting acceptance of diversity 27. Appropriate use of technology
Interaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 28. Supervision of gross motor 29. Individualized teaching and learning 30. Staff-child interaction 31. Peer interaction 32. Discipline
Program Structure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 33. Transitions and waiting times 34. Free play 35. Whole-group activities for play and learning

Table 2: Summary of Overlap between CLASS Dimensions and ECERS-3 Items
(Items in italics indicate an item is also on the ERS3-i)

CLASS Domains & Dimensions	ECERS-3 Items
Emotional Support	
	Items
Positive climate	8, 13, 19, 23, 30, 31
Negative climate	4, 30, 31, 32
Teacher sensitivity	4, 9, 13, 17, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35
Regard for student perspectives	8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 26, 27, 31, 34, 35
Classroom Organization	
	Items
Behavior management	4, 11, 17, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34
Productivity	10, 33, 34
Instructional learning formats	3, 8, 12, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 29, 33, 34, 35
Instructional Support	
	Items
Concept development	12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27
Quality of feedback	8, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 31, 34
Language modeling	8, 12, 13, 18, 20, 21, 24, 34

Table 3: Detailed List of Overlap between CLASS Dimensions and ECERS-3 Items
(Items in italics indicate an item is also on the ERS3-i)

CLASS Domains and Dimensions	ECERS-3 Items									
Emotional Support										
Positive climate	Item1	Item2	Item3	Item4	Item5	Item6	Item7	Item8	Item9	Item10
Relationships	8.7.2	13.5.2	19.3.3	23.5.2	30.3.3	30.5.1	30.5.2	31.5.3		
Positive affect	30.3.1	30.3.3	30.5.1							
Positive communication	30.5.3	30.7.1	30.7.2	31.7.1						
Respect	30.5.1	30.7.1	31.3.3	31.7.1	31.7.2	32.5.2				
Negative climate	Item1	Item2	Item3	Item4	Item5	Item6	Item7	Item8	Item9	Item10
Negative affect	30.1.2	32.5.4								
Punitive control	4.1.1	30.1.3	32.1.1							
Sarcasm/disrespect	31.1.3	32.3.4								
Severe negativity	4.1.3	31.1.3	32.1.1							
Teacher sensitivity	Item1	Item2	Item3	Item4	Item5	Item6	Item7	Item8	Item9	Item10
Awareness	4.5.3	4.7.1	13.3.4	30.7.3	34.7.3	35.5.1				
Responsiveness	4.7.2	9.7.3	30.7.2	32.7.1						
Addresses problems	13.5.4	17.3.2	31.5.2	32.7.3	34.7.3					
Student comfort	13.3.5	13.5.1								
Regard for student perspectives	Item1	Item2	Item3	Item4	Item5	Item6	Item7	Item8	Item9	Item10
Flexibility and student focus	14.5.2	19.7.1	26.3.3	27.3.3	31.3.1	34.3.3	35.5.1	35.5.2	35.7.3	
Support for autonomy and leadership	10.7.2	16.5.3	8.5.4	9.5.1	9.7.1					
Student expression	8.5.5	13.3.2	13.3.4	13.5.3						
Restriction of movement	35.3.4	35.5.1	35.7.3							
Classroom Organization										
Behavior management	Item1	Item2	Item3	Item4	Item5	Item6	Item7	Item8	Item9	Item10
Clear behavior expectations	4.5.3	31.7.2	32.3.3	32.5.1	32.5.2	32.5.3	34.5.4			
Proactive	11.3.3	11.5.2	11.7.3	17.3.2	30.7.3	31.7.1	31.7.2	32.7.2	33.3.3	
Redirection of misbehavior	11.3.4	17.3.2	31.3.2	31.7.1	32.7.1					
Student behavior	31.1.3	31.5.3	32.5.1							
Productivity	Item1	Item2	Item3	Item4	Item5	Item6	Item7	Item8	Item9	Item10
Maximizing learning time	34.5.3	34.5.4								
Routines	10.7.2	10.7.3	33.5.1							
Transitions	33.3.3	33.5.1	33.7.1	33.7.2						
Preparation	33.3.2	33.5.2								
Instructional learning formats	Item1	Item2	Item3	Item4	Item5	Item6	Item7	Item8	Item9	Item10
Effective facilitation	12.1.3	12.3.3	12.5.3	14.5.4	19.5.4	20.5.5	21.5.3	22.7.1	29.5.2	
Variety of modalities and materials	3.5.2	14.7.3	29.5.1	34.3.4	34.5.3	35.5.1	35.3.3			
Student interest	14.3.2	14.3.3	14.5.3	34.3.4	35.3.1	35.5.1	35.7.1			
Clarity of learning objectives	8.7.3	22.7.1	23.7.2	29.1.1	29.3.1	29.7.1				

CLASS Domains and Dimensions	ECERS-3 Items									
Instructional Support										
Concept development	Item1	Item2	Item3	Item4	Item5	Item6	Item7	Item8	Item9	Item10
Analysis and reasoning	13.1.1	13.3.1	13.5.1	13.7.1	22.7.1	23.7.2	23.7.3	24.7.2	24.7.3	27.5.1
Creating	18.1.2	18.3.2	18.5.2	19.7.3						
Integration	12.7.3	14.7.2	20.7.3	23.7.1	25.5.3					
Connections to the real world	13.7.3	14.7.4	16.5.2	18.7.2	21.7.2					
Quality of feedback	Item1	Item2	Item3	Item4	Item5	Item6	Item7	Item8	Item9	Item10
Scaffolding	10.5.1	10.7.2	22.7.1	23.7.3	34.7.2					
Feedback loops	8.5.5	13.3.3	13.5.2	13.7.2						
Prompting through process	8.5.4	13.7.1	22.7.1	24.7.2	24.7.3					
Providing information	14.7.4	17.7.3	18.7.1	19.7.2	20.7.3					
Encouragement and affirmation	13.5.3	31.7.1								
Language modeling	Item1	Item2	Item3	Item4	Item5	Item6	Item7	Item8	Item9	Item10
Frequent conversations	8.5.5	13.1.3	13.3.2	13.3.3	13.5.2	13.7.2	20.5.5	21.5.3	24.5.2	
Open-ended questions	13.5.3	18.5.3	21.5.3	23.7.2	24.7.2					
Repetition and extension	12.5.2	12.5.4	12.7.3							
Self-and parallel talk	12.3.1	12.3.2	12.5.1	21.3.3	21.5.3					
Advanced language	12.5.2	12.5.3	12.7.3	13.5.4	34.7.2					

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