

What to Expect During an ERS® Observation

Programs participating in Bright & Early ND receive the benefit of an onsite Program Quality Observation completed by a trained, reliable, and endorsed Environment Rating Scales® (ERS®) Assessor.

WHAT ARE THE ERS®?

The ERS® is a series of reliable, valid, research-based observation tools designed to assess the early childhood environment. Bright & Early ND utilizes three scales, each designed for a different segment of the early childhood field.

- The [Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale®, Third Edition \(ITERS-3™\)](#): This scale is designed to assess the quality of care environments serving children birth to 36 months and is predominately used in infant and toddler classrooms located in a center. Observations using this scale will be conducted in 33% of randomly selected classrooms.
- The [Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale®, Third Edition \(ECERS-3™\)](#): This scale is designed to assess the quality of care environments serving children age 3 to 5 and is predominately used in preschool classrooms located in a center. Observations using this scale will be conducted in 33% of randomly selected classrooms.
- The [Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale®, Third Edition \(FCCERS-3™\)](#): This scale is designed to assess the quality of care environments in family child care settings. One observation is conducted per family or group child care program. Please note, if your program separates by age groups, multiple observations may be conducted.

HOW ARE THE ERS® BEING USED IN NORTH DAKOTA?

The ERS® observation provides valuable, relevant feedback in the form of a summary report. This information can be used by the program to help identify program strengths, as well as raise awareness to areas needing development. The information gathered can be used to help create the program's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). In addition, data from the ERS® observation will provide valuable information for understanding the quality of child care in North Dakota.

PRIOR TO THE OBSERVATION

Your assigned Assessor will call to confirm 48 hours before your scheduled observation. If no one is available to answer the phone, a message will be left. An email will also be sent to the email address listed under the contact information on your Growing Futures organization profile.

On the morning of the observation, you can expect the Assessor to arrive at the program around 8:15 am. If your program has multiple classrooms or groups, a random drawing will be completed to select which classroom or group will have the observation that day.

At this time, the Assessor will need to gather the following information:

- names of the Lead Teachers or Lead Caregivers present during the observation,
- the number of children enrolled in the classroom or group,
- if there are any children enrolled with special needs, and
- the birthdates of the oldest and youngest child enrolled in the classroom or group selected.
- If infants and toddlers are enrolled, a breakdown of ages will be needed: number of children 0-5 months, 6-11 months, 12-17 months, 18-23 months, and 24+ months for the classroom or group selected.

Programs are encouraged to hold all regular indoor and outdoor activities. If something unexpected happens (i.e., a thunderstorm), follow the standard plan for that type of day.

DURING THE OBSERVATION

You can expect the observation to last 3 hours, running approximately between 8:30 am and 11:30 am. These times are subject to change due to program hours and when a majority of the children attend the program. The Assessor will let you know when they are starting and when they have finished their observation. The Assessor is trained to fade into the background and will limit their interaction with children and adults during the observation.

The Assessor may stay for a longer period beyond the 3-hour observation to observe several very specific areas of the environment. In the unusual case where routines related to Diapering/toileting or Meals/snacks were not observed during the 3 hours, the Assessor must remain until these can be observed. The interactions that occur during the extra time cannot be counted, but information about sanitary procedures for both Items and nutritional adequacy of meals/snacks must be obtained.

AFTER THE OBSERVATION

The Assessor will let you know when they have completed the observation. A CQI Summary Report will be created with the data collected from the observation. The CQI report will be emailed to the program within three (3) weeks of your observation date and will be uploaded to your RBPD events tab in your Growing Futures organization profile.

CHILD ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

To ensure the highest quality observation is as close to the typical day as possible, the following requirements regarding child enrollment and attendance must be met:

- At minimum, at least 50% of the enrolled children must be present on the day of the observation.
- All children do not have to be present to start the observation, but at least half of the children enrolled must be present for 2 of the 3 hours of the observation.