



## Interpreting BrightStars Environment Rating Scale Scores and Reports

The data contained in Environment Rating Scale (ERS) reports is intended to provide programs with objective feedback to help guide quality improvement; programs decide what areas are their own priorities. BrightStars encourages programs to read their reports more than once and take note of strengths as well as areas for potential improvement. Programs may have a tendency to focus on areas where they have scored the lowest, such as “Health and Safety” indicators, though these areas are often the most challenging to improve. Instead, programs may wish to focus on areas where small changes can lead to meaningful quality improvements.

In the following ERS report, each Subscale is presented as a chart that lists the Item number, the Item name, and the score the Item received (please see Page 2 for more information on scale terms and scoring.) The indicators where credit was not received are listed in the far-right column. The chart is followed by a narrative that may include comments regarding ‘Areas of Strength’ and comments regarding ‘Areas of Improvement.’ Below is an example of the chart you will find in a report to present each Subscale:

### Space and Furnishings:

#	Item	Score	Indicators credit not received:
1	Indoor space	2	3.2
2	Furniture for routine care and play	2	3.1
3	Provision for relaxation and comfort	2	3.2
4	Room arrangement	4	5.3
5	Display for children	3	5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4

Because of the way items are scored, sometimes individual items scores may not seem to reflect all of the positive practices in a program. However, in the narrative of your ERS report, you will notice comments highlighting these positive practices. Strengths listed are often the high-level scores that the observer noticed, but for which they could not give credit. It is very common and expected to receive individual item scores of 1, 2, or 3. However, because a program’s final ERS score is an *average* of all the individual item scores, areas where programs scored lower can be balanced by items where the program scored higher.

The Environment Rating Scales are well-tested and researched, based on indicators of quality that research has determined to benefit children, and are the tools that Rhode Island has incorporated into its early care and education system for program assessment. BrightStars assessors are trained to high levels of ERS reliability so that programs may use this objective information to help inform their quality improvement process. More information on the Environment Rating Scales and definitions of the above underlined terms can be found on the next page. In addition, your BrightStars Navigator is available to assist you in understanding your scores and how they can be used as your program moves forward in the quality improvement process.

## More information on The Environment Rating Scales

### Background:

The Environment Rating Scales (ERS) were developed at The University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill at the Frank Porter Graham Institute. The scales are commonly used by Quality Rating and Improvement systems like BrightStars, and are used extensively in the United States and internationally in a variety of settings, including:

<b>Scale</b>	<b>For Use in:</b>
<i>Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale</i> (ITERS-R)	center-based infant and toddler classrooms serving children aged 0 to 30 months.
<i>Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale</i> (ECERS-R)	center, preschool and public-school- based classrooms serving children are 30 months to 5 years.
<i>Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale</i> (FCCERS-R)	family child care homes serving children from birth to 12 years.
<i>School Age Environment Rating Scale</i> (SACERS-U)	before & after-school programs serving children 5 to 12 years.

### Important Terms:

The Environment Rating Scales consist of:

**Subscales:** Broad categories of similar/related items with titles such as “Activities” or “Personal Care Routines.”

**Items:** Individual categories such as Indoor Space or Fine Motor.

**Indicators:** The individually numbered criteria used to determine a program’s score on a particular Item. These criteria are all marked either “yes” or “no.”

### Scoring:

The ERS uses a seven (7) point rating scale with indicators that build upon each other. When scoring an item, assessors start reading from a 1 (Inadequate) and progress upward until the correct score is reached. Once a program has missed an indicator within an item, the program will not be rated on the indicators above the one missed. For example, if a program does not receive credit on an indicator in the “three” (3) level, the score would be a two (2.) The score will not reflect indicators in the higher-level indicators, even if the program is meeting some of the higher-level requirements. Programs will want to refer to the narratives of their ERS reports for more information on higher-level practices observed above the program’s score.