

The Rhode Island Notes : ERS-ALL 07/31/2017

BrightStars manages all of the reliable assessors for the Environmental Rating Scales. Part of this management is to ensure that all assessors remain reliable on the tools. This reliability is two-fold. First, each assessor will have a reliability check on their tenth observation. This consists of conducting an ERS in tandem with the Senior Assessment Specialist. Second, each assessor is also reliable to the pool of assessors. Together they have created the Rhode Island Notes.

The Rhode Island Notes are a running record of Environment Rating Scale (ERS) consensus decisions BrightStars' reliable assessors have made following ERS-related questions or discussions. These notes support Rhode Island in having a cohesive assessment system that provides a comparable program experience regardless of the assessor who visits the program. Although these notes may be useful as reference on particular topics, The Rhode Island Notes do not replace either formal ERS reliability training or the Notes for Clarification provided by the ERS authors, and may be subject to change as the Environment Rating Scales are updated.

BrightStars encourages all programs and providers who are preparing for their ERS site visit to review the tool, the tool's All About book, the tool's Notes for Clarification, and the RI Notes.

Date	Type	Item	Item/Standard Name	Indicator (if applicable)	Clarification notes
12/4/2015	ERS-ALL	0	General Notes	Access	If a child misses a few minutes of time with free play materials or outdoor play because they returned late from intervention services and needed to complete another routine like snack, do not count this against the program, as long as the time lost was minimized. Consider whether the program was actively preventing time with materials (like with a firm time limit) or was simply trying to be flexible to meet the child's needs around intervention services.
11/24/2015	ERS	0	General Notes	Access/Much of the Day	Do not count off for access or Much of the Day if the only children unable to access a certain material are too young to be required access. For example, if a child under 12 months is the only one who did not have access to blocks, and all other children had sufficient access, give credit for access to blocks.
7/23/2015	ERS-ALL	0	General Notes	SPoD	If a program runs longer than reported on the day of an observation base both "access and "SPoD" calculations on how long children are actually formally in care (this time might include a formal agreement for parents to pick up later.) However, don't count time towards or against SPoD or access when a parent is simply running late for pick-up.
8/27/2015	ERS-ALL	0	General Notes	Weather permitting	Child Care Weather Watch chart does not meet the requirements of weather permitting.
4/30/2015	ERS-ALL	1	Indoor Space		If key fob reader are at the right height and the fobs are "tap & go" and can be worn on a bracelet or mounted to a device like a wheelchair, they can be considered accessible.
2/23/2017	ERS ALL	1	Indoor Space	<i>5.3 Space accessible to children and adults with disabilities.</i>	Buzzers will be accepted if they can be operated with a closed fist. We will not take off for height of buzzers unless they are over 48 inches high. Buzzers measuring more than 48 inches high will not be considered accessible because they are too high for people in wheelchairs to reach.
2/19/2016	ECERS	2	Furniture for routine care and play	3.1	Small children (under preschool age) in diapers need diapering table or other appropriate diapering furniture. (All age groups need provisions to reduce contamination & respect child's dignity)

2/19/2016	ERS-ITERS-R	2	Furniture for routine care and play	<i>3.2 Enough furniture for play</i>	If accessible materials in classroom are stacked & therefore not accessible because there aren't shelves, then we can say there aren't enough shelves, even if it only affects a few materials.
4/7/2016	ERS-ITERS-R	2	Furniture for routine care and play	<i>3.4 Seats for children are comfortable and supportive</i>	Footrests are needed for any seat that allows children's legs to dangle. Footrests are not required for chairs or highchairs where most of the child's leg is actually supported by the seat... e.g. Deep seats and short legs!
9/19/2015	ECERS-R	3	Furnishings for relaxation and comfort		A cozy space and a library/reading area may exist in the same space. However, the requirements of each must be met to give credit for these spaces, and the area would be considered <i>one</i> interest center under Item 4 Room arrangement.
12/3/2015	ERS ALL	4	Room arrangement	5.2	Reminder: Fine motor and art are quiet areas in addition to books, cozy and listening.
9/15/2015	ERS-ALL	4	Room arrangement	Interest centers	Cozy spaces and library can be the same area. Can be an interest center but only counts as one.
5/18/2017	ERS-ALL	7	Space for gross motor	3.2 Gross motor space is generally safe.	Attachments to fence latches that measure 48 inches high can be accepted to meet the latch height requirement if they prevent children from leaving the play space.
10/6/2014	ERS - ECERS-R	7	Space for gross motor	<i>3.2 Gross motor space is generally safe.</i>	Don't take off for acceptable-looking poured surfaces. Ask for the documentation. If not available, make a note in the far-right column of the program's ERS report.
1/25/2014	ERS - ECERS-R	7	Space for gross motor	<i>3.2 Gross motor space is generally safe.</i>	Fences and curbs are not adequate replacements for bollards. Fences can be crashed through by cars and curbs do not stop cars that are moving at most speeds. Hence bollards of some sort are required unless the play area is separated from the road by a significant distance (more than 30 feet) or is surrounded by trees or natural barriers that protect the fence from vehicles. Please see updated guidance from LISC for more information. Update 05/18/17: Vehicle barriers for fences are required within 30 feet of children's play spaces regardless of efforts made by staff.
12/4/2015	ERS-ALL	8	Gross motor equipment	<i>1.1 Very little gross motor equipment used for play; 3.1 Some gross motor equipment accessible to all children for at least one hour daily.</i>	"Scooting" on a low scooter can be considered a distinct skill.
6/19/2014	ERS - ECERS-R	8	Gross motor equipment	<i>3.3 Most of the equipment is appropriate for the age and ability of children</i>	CPSC reports that dome climbers would be considered inappropriate for preschool children because, like arch climbers, preschoolers may not have the cognitive ability to manage climbing down safely.

1/5/2017	ERS= ITERS and ECERS	9	Greeting/departing	<i>3.3 Parents allowed to bring children into the classroom.</i>	The intent of the indicator is that parents are easily able to enter the classroom to help their child make the transition to school and to allow the possibility of information sharing between parents and staff. Programs that have policies around who is allowed in the classroom such as, 1) Only if the parent has received a background check 2) Only if the parent is accompanied by an administrator (this must be scheduled in advance) or 3) Only at certain times/special occasions (like open house nights) will not be given credit for this indicator. Even though the above restrictions are in place for safety reasons, they make it difficult for parents to come into the room as part of the arrival routine.
2/19/2016	ERS= ITERS and ECERS	9	Greeting/departing	3.1	Greeting by new staff entering can be very subtle if all are in group. At least 2-3 kids should be greeted, but don't be picky. Intent Important.
4/7/2016	ERS-ALL	9	Greeting/departing	<i>3.1 Most children greeted warmly.</i>	Eye contact can be considered a greeting if the child perceives it as a welcome to the class. Eye contact from across the room would not meet this standard and therefore would not count.
4/22/2015	ERS-ALL	9	Greeting/departing	<i>3.1 Most children greeted warmly.</i>	New staff entering a child care space (such as assistants) must greet at least some of the children when the staff arrives (as would be appropriate for the ongoing activities.) Staff should announce themselves and greet children in a way that is appropriate to the ongoing activities of the children, but the greeting should be directed to the group, either all together or at an individual level. This includes maintenance staff who may be cleaning something in the classroom.
4/13/2017	ERS-ALL	10	Meals/snacks	<i>3.2 Well-balanced meals/snacks.</i>	New USDA Meal Guidelines have been released. Both new and old USDA Meal guidelines will be used to score meal requirements. Programs currently have until October 1, 2017 to meet the new requirement guidelines. On October 1, 2017, BrightStars will begin to use only the new USDA Meal Guidelines.
1/5/2017	ERS ALL	10	Meals/snacks	<i>3.5 Allergies posted and food/beverage substitutions made.</i>	Allergy information must be posted where food is prepped and where children eat, if these are two separate spaces. It should be PROMINENTLY posted on the wall in these areas. Having the information in a binder or inside a cupboard is not sufficient. The posting can be covered by a confidentiality sheet, but the allergy information should be very easy to see when needed.
8/27/2015	ERS-ALL	10	Meals/snacks		If programs have less than 1/2 the components required for a meal or snack, take off at the 1s. If they have half but not all, take off at the 3s.
4/27/2015	ERS-ALL	10	Meals/snacks		The use of placemats does not replace the need to wash and sanitize tables (and the placemats!) properly.
4/13/2017	ERS-ALL	11	Nap/rest	<i>Sanitary conditions</i>	Children need some sort seasonally appropriate covering, including a bottom sheet or other covering, in order to be considered sanitary, even if there is a sensory issue, accommodations can be made but children cannot sleep directly on the bare uncovered nap surface.
9/15/2015	ERS-ALL	11	Nap/rest	Sanitary conditions	Take off for a lack of bottom sheets at 3.2 in the ECERS and ITERS.

4/22/2015	ERS-ALL	12	Toileting/diapering	3.2 <i>Basic provisions made for care of children</i>	If any children in a preschool classroom are in diapers, changing mats that are large enough to prevent contamination of other surfaces are an acceptable changing surface. Mats also meet requirements for sufficient furniture in Item 2. Furniture for routine care, play, and learning. Item 12 is score yes on 1.2 if there's NOTHING and children are sitting on the floor. For Item 2, if that's the only say no to 3.1.
7/23/2015	ERS-ALL	13	Health Practices		Do we take off for bare feet in the sandbox? If only in the sandbox this is okay. Children should have some kind of covering on their feet when using the classroom or rest of the playground. (Socks and slippers are acceptable alternatives indoors.)
7/23/2015	ERS-ALL	13	Health Practices		If children wear shoes with heels (their own shoes) check to see whether this is causing them safety issues.
4/14/2015	ERS-ALL	14	Safety Practices		Bleach and water and soap and water solutions, if mixed according to directions on the bleach container, need to be stored out of reach but not locked. Other chemicals including medication and sunscreen do need to be locked away.
4/7/2016	ERS	14	Safety practices		BrightStars will take off if loose plastic bags are clearly visible and within reach of the children.
4/22/2015	ERS-ALL	14	Safety Practices		Do not automatically count off for stroller rides on busy streets. Consider how the walk is handled (based on observation or report) and only take off for significant issues.
4/30/2015	ERS-ALL	14	Safety Practices		How to view plastic bags as hazards? Size of bags? Ages of children? For example, we do not usually take off for large zip lock bags of linens stored on cots. Bags left around carelessly are hazards for infants and toddlers. For other circumstances and older age groups, check impulsiveness of children and overall supervision.
4/30/2015	ERS-ALL	14	Safety Practices		If a paper towel holder requires children to pump the lever after handwashing is this a recontamination hazard? What if the program practices proper handwashing consistently? Paper towel holders that require touching the handle are a recontamination hazard.
4/30/2015	ERS-ALL	14	Safety Practices		Is it a safety hazard to use real (but empty) prescription or medicine bottles in dramatic play? For now, BrightStars will leave a "Note" in the Comments section of reports indicating that this may be confusing and unsafe.
4/27/2015	ERS-ALL	14	Safety Practices		Microwaves are specifically a hazard for infants and toddlers because they may cause hot spots in food, but do not take off if used with preschoolers.
11/5/2015	BS Policy	14	Safety practices		Pacifiers are not a hazard when used for sleeping children - these actually reduce SIDs
4/28/2015	ERS-ALL	14	Safety Practices		Safety covers on plugs - some kinds do not look like they are protected but they are (see picture examples.)
7/23/2015	ERS	14	Sand/water		Beans are not an acceptable sensory materials for children under age 3. Kidney beans are not acceptable for any age group because they are toxic. The authors have acknowledged the art and sand/water indicators are inconsistent on the issue of food materials.

12/4/2015	ERS	22	Blocks	<i>5.3 Special block area set aside out of traffic, with storage and suitable building surface</i>	Do not take off for books stored in the block area, as long as they are not observed taking up needed floor space/causing traffic problems and there is another dedicated space for reading. For additional items like hard hats, play tools or a play house, that might be okay in small quantities or if stored out of the way, it is critical to consider how those materials might be used in the space and whether they would interfere. If not clear during the observation, ask.
1/25/2014	ERS-FCCERS-R	26	Active physical Play	<i>3.2 Spaces for active physical play are generally safe.</i>	FCC requirements are not any different from Center based programs. Fences and curbs are not adequate replacements for bollards. Fences can be crashed through by cars and curbs do not stop cars that are moving at most speeds. Hence bollards of some sort are required unless the play area is separated from the road by a significant distance (more than 30 feet) or is surrounded by trees or natural barriers that protect the fence from vehicles. Please see updated guidance from LISC for more information.
5/8/2015	ERS-ALL	27	TV, video and/or computers		Are there any considerations for staff using a voice-projecting device (as observed by Sharon)? None at this time, but BS will observe to see how it may affect children.
2/18/2016	ERS	28	Promoting acceptance of diversity	<i>5.1 Many books, pictures, and materials showing diversity.</i>	Music from different countries and cultural instruments can count as diversity material if accessible.
7/6/2016	ERS - ALL	36	Group time		"Not engaged" is defined by the observed behaviors exhibited by children and staff. For example, children observed to need constant reminders to participate, or who are rolling on the ground, trying to play with other materials, or causing problems for peers are not considered to be engaged.
12/22/2013	ERS-ITERS; ERS-FCCERS	36	Group time		If only one child is enrolled or only one child is present during observation, score this item n/a as no group gatherings occur.