Learning Environment Training ITERS-3

CENTER FOR
EARLY LEARNING
PROFESSIONALS
Professional Development ● Technical Assistance ● Resources

1

Module Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the key components of the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-3) tool
- Identify items in the tool that assess the quality of language and interactions
- Identify ways to use the ITERS-3 for classroom self-assessment

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2

2

Module Agenda

- What is the ITERS-3?
  - Terms and definitions
  - Interactions and language
- Unpacking the subscales
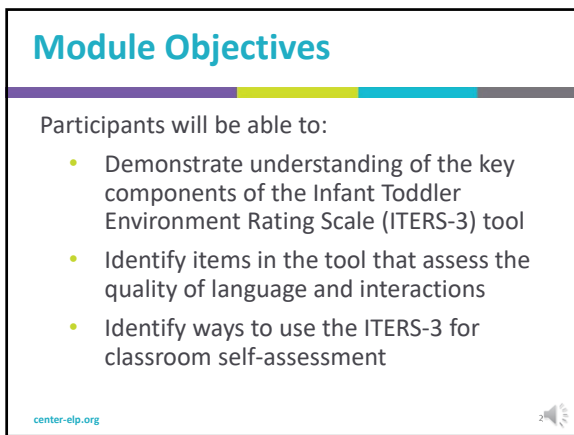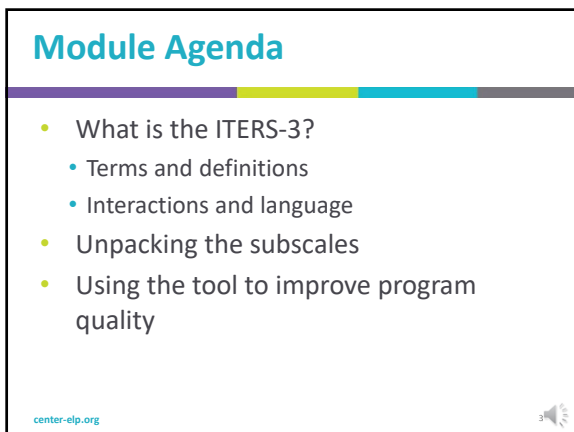- Using the tool to improve program quality

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3

3

How Do You Measure Quality?

Regulations

Standards

Assessment Tools

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4

Learning Environment Standard

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5

Research Base

- Tools have been updated and revised
- Research evidence from relevant fields: health, education, and development
- Professional views of "best practice"

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6

What does the ITERS-3 Measure?

Photo Credit: Education Development Center (EDC)

- What children directly experience
- Interactions
- How materials and space are used
- Accessibility
- Daily schedule and routines

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7

7-Point Scale

1–2	Inadequate	Children might be at risk
3–4	Minimal	Meets basic health & safety
5–6	Good	Developmentally appropriate
7	Excellent	<u>Enhanced</u> developmental care

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8

Keep in mind...

"It is the **average total score** that is related to positive child development, but not any of the single requirements by themselves."

—*All About the ITERS-R, p. xii*

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9

Slide 10

| Inadequate 1 2 | Minimal 3 | Good 4 5 | Excellent 6 7 |

SPACE AND FURNISHINGS — Subscale

1. Indoor space* — Item

1.1 Not enough space to provide adequate care for the highest number of children allowed to attend at one time (Ex: basic furniture crowds space so children and staff cannot move freely; crowding causes conflicts among children).*

1.2 Space lacks adequate lighting, ventilation, and temperature control, and is very noisy (Ex: staff or children complain about temperature; staff must talk loudly to be heard above constant noise).* — Indicator

1.3 Space is generally in poor repair (Ex: much peeling paint on walls; chipping plaster; damaged floors; large water stains on ceiling).*

1.4 Space is poorly maintained (Ex: dirt and grime on floors and rugs; sinks dirty; much built-up soil around baseboards or furniture; daily cleaning neglected).

3.1 Enough indoor space for children, adults, and furnishings.*

3.2 Adequate lighting with some direct natural light, ventilation control, comfortable temperature, and reasonable noise level. (Ex: staff and children usually do not need to raise their voices to be heard; room is not too dim or gloomy).*

3.3 Space is generally in good repair with no major issues.

3.4 Space is reasonably clean, with durable and easy-to-clean indoor surfaces, and is well-maintained.*

3.5 Space for children is accessible to all children and adults currently using the room.

5.1 Ample indoor space for routine care and play that allows children and staff to circulate freely, for routines and group times, and for play activities.*

5.2 Ventilation can be controlled by room staff (Ex: windows can be opened; fan available; heat/AC controls located in room).*

7.1 Natural light can be controlled (Ex: adjustable blinds or curtains).*

7.2 Space for children is accessible to children and adults with special needs, even when no such children or adults are present.*

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10

Slide 11 — Notes for Clarification

(small text, largely illegible)

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11

Slide 12

Continuous Quality Improvement, Not Perfection

"The scales assist program staff to make well-informed choices as to which areas the staff might emphasize in program improvement. It is not required that all things be perfect…"

—Debby Cryer, "Understanding the Meaning of Environment Rating Scale Scores"

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12

Key Components of the ECERS-3

- Designed for use up to 36 months.
- Reliance on observation of ongoing classroom activity
- Uses the 3-hour observation only to base assessment

INFANT/TODDLER ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALE
THIRD EDITION
ITERS-3

Thelma Harms   Debby Cryer   Richard M. Clifford   Noreen Yazejian
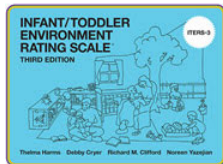
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13

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What the ITERS-3 Measures

- Focus on interactions and teacher's role (**29 items!!**)
- Emphasis on language, interactions, accessibility, and supervision
- Less focus on number of materials
- Heavy focus on **how** teachers use materials with children
  - Different expectations of use based on child's age and developmental ability

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14

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Important Terms

ITERS-3 terms:
- Definition of age groups
- Accessible
- Staff
- Engaged
- Weather permitting
- Negative, positive, neutral
- Observed
- Play area and interest area

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15

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Age Ranges

- Infants
  - Young infants (0-5 months)
  - Older infants (6-11 months)
- Toddlers
  - Younger Toddlers (12-17 months)
  - Older Toddlers (18-24 months)
- Twos
  - Younger Twos (24-29 months)
  - Older Twos (30-35 months)

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16

Accessible

- At a minimum, children must have access to materials, free play, and equipment, based on age expectations, with few major lapses.
- Access with only a few short lapses is considered good.
- And children having access with no lapses and almost no restrictions is considered excellent.

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17

Accessibility Considerations

Different Expectations for:
- Young infants
- Older infants
- Young Toddlers
- Older toddlers
- Younger Twos
- Older Twos

"Playing" by Quinn Dombrowski (Flickr) is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0   18

18

Barriers to Accessibility

- Infant seats, swings, and other restrictive devices
- Time spent with nothing to do
- High shelves
- Non-mobile infants
- Limited materials
- Long routines

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19

Is It Accessible

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20

Play Area vs. Interest Area

All interest areas are play areas, but… all play areas are NOT interest areas.

- **Play Area:** a space where play materials are provided for children
- **Interest Center:** a clearly defined play area for a particular kind of play

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21

BA8   Note about the narration- I hadn't mentioned COVID in any of the ECERS module, just so that it could live on past COVID regs and guidance. Just pointing out a difference between the two modules.

Bickerstaff, Ashleigh, 4/15/2021

Interest Areas

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22

22

Negative, Positive, Neutral

Negative interactions often carry messages of anger, coldness, disrespect, impatience, lack of interest, or unhappiness.

Positive interactions carry messages of happiness, contentment, relaxation, patience, respect, and interest.

Neutral interactions do not give strong messages of any type.
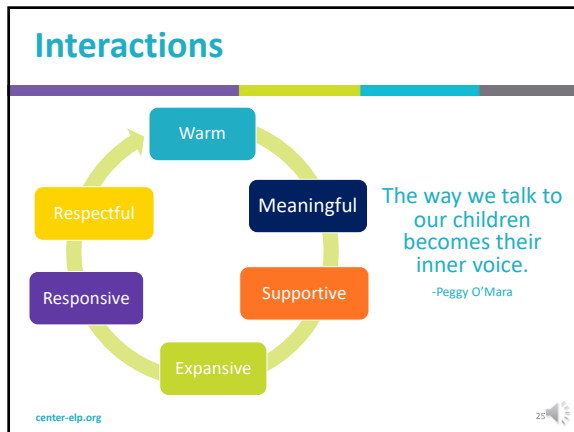
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23

23

Subscales

ITERS-3 (6 subscales)
- Space & Furnishings
- Personal Care Routines
- Language & Books
- Activities
- Interaction
- Program Structure

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24

24

Interactions

Warm

Respectful

Meaningful

Responsive

Supportive

Expansive

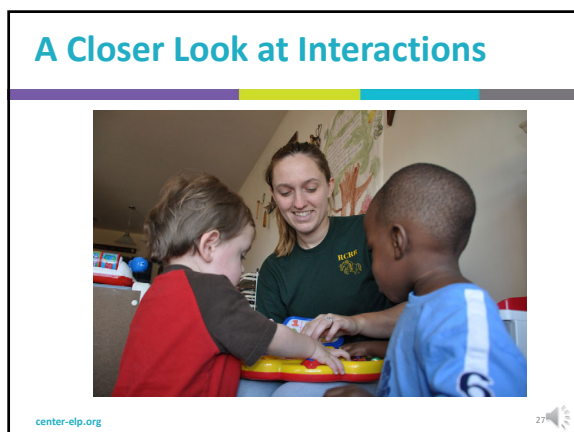The way we talk to our children becomes their inner voice.
-Peggy O'Mara

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25

Interaction Subscale

6 Items*:*
- Supervision of gross motor play
- Supervision of play and learning
- Peer interaction
- Staff-child interaction
- Providing physical warmth/touch
- Guiding children's behavior

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26

A Closer Look at Interactions

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27

Language and Books Subscale

6 Items:
- Talking with children
- Encouraging vocabulary development
- Responding to children's communication
- Encouraging children to communicate
- Staff use of books with children
- Encouraging children's use of books

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28

Item 10: Encouraging vocabulary development

Minimum: Staff sometimes.....
- Use specific words
- Talk about materials or experiences

Good: Staff frequently.....
- Repeat words
- Make comparisons and contrasts

Excellent: Staff generally....
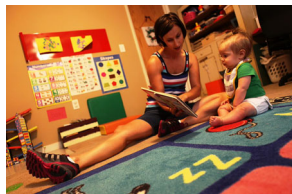- use a wide variety of words
- verbally explain

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29

Item 13: Staff use of books with children

- Access and how often
- Wide selection of books
- Interest and enjoyment
- Staff involvement and interaction

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30

Activities Subscale

10 Items

- Fine motor
  - Art
  - Music and movement
  - Blocks
  - Dramatic play
  - Nature/science
  - Math/number
- Appropriate use of technology
- Promoting acceptance of diversity
- Gross motor

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31

Item 21: Math/Number

Space and Furnishings Subscale

4 Items:

- Indoor space
- Furnishings for care, play, and learning
- Room arrangement
- Display for children

*Softness and cozy space within items above

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33

BA13   Do you want the math/number bullet bolded?
Bickerstaff, Ashleigh, 4/15/2021

Item 4: Display for Children

- Display is:
  - Interesting and familiar to children
  - Colorful, simple
  - Individualized artwork of older toddlers and twos
  - Visible for children to see and touch
- Staff:
  - Talk about display in ways that interest children
  - Use display for extended talk
  - Point out and talk to children about displayed materials

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34

Display for Children

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35

Program Structure Subscale

3 Items:
- Schedule and transitions
- Free play
- Group play activities

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36

VIDEO: Schedules and Routines
Picture Cards

37

Personal Care Routines Subscale

4 Items:

- Meals/snacks
- Diapering/toileting
- Health practices
- Safety practices

Photo Credit: "Child Messy 8207" by David R. Tribble
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Caring for our Children: **cfoc.nrckids.org**

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38

How will I get my classroom ready?

Resources:

- ITERS-3 manual
- Self-assessment using quality indicators
- Materials checklist
- Professional development and support (routines, schedules, language, interactions)
- Additional ITERS-3 PD Opportunities
- ERS Institute: Online training www.ersi.info
- CELP Technical Assistance
- BrightStars

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39

Contact Information

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40

40