

## Tools for Observing the Learning Environment

Anchoring environmental observations of your program in some sort of measurement system will help ensure that trainers coach consistently across staff members and settings. It also will help you provide objective, factual feedback to staff about their learning environments. This is a brief annotated list of common environmental observation tools. This list is not exhaustive. Check with your program standards, operating procedures, state licensing, or accrediting agency for their requirements or recommendations.

- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (ECERS-R; <http://ers.fpg.unc.edu/>) by Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford, and Debby Cryer. This tool is widely used in early care and education programs. It is divided into seven subscales: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure, and Parents and Staff. It is appropriate for preschool classrooms. Each subscale is rated on a scale of 1-5.
- Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (ITERS-R; <http://ers.fpg.unc.edu/>) by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford. This tool is designed for use in settings for infants and toddlers. It is divided into seven subscales: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure, and Parents and Staff.
- Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition (FCCERS-R; <http://ers.fpg.unc.edu/>) by Thelma Harms, Debby Cryer, and Richard M. Clifford. This tool is designed to assess the quality of home-based or family child-care programs. These programs may serve children from infancy through school-age. It also has seven subscales: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure, and Parents and Provider.
- School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS; <http://ers.fpg.unc.edu/>) by Thelma Harms, Ellen Vineberg Jacobs, and Donna Romano White. This tool is designed to assess the quality of programs serving children ages 5-12 in group settings. It also has seven subscales: Space and Furnishings, Health and Safety, Activities, Interactions, Program Structure, Staff Development, and Special Needs.
- Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Toolkit (ELLCO; <http://www.brookespublishing.com/tools/ellco/index.htm>) by Miriam W. Smith, Joanne P. Brady, and Louisa Anastasopolous. This tool was designed to assess the quality of literacy environments and instruction in preschool and K-3 classrooms. It consists of a classroom observation and a teacher interview. It measures five literacy elements: Classroom Structure, Curriculum, Language Environment, Books and Book Reading Opportunities, and Print and Early Writing Supports.

- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; <http://www.teachstone.org/about-the-class/> and <http://www.brookespublishing.com/store/books/pianta-class/index.htm>) by Robert C. Pianta, Karen M. LaParo, and Bridget K. Hamre. This tool was designed to assess instructional quality and the quality of teacher-student interactions. It is designed for preschool and elementary school classrooms. It is organized into three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support.
- Inventory of Practices for Promoting Children’s Social Emotional Competence (<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/modules/module1/handout4.pdf>) by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning. This inventory is available free. It is divided into four practices: Building Positive Relationships, Designing Supportive Environments, Social Emotional Teaching Strategies, and Individualized Interventions.
- Standards for After School Programs (<http://coanet.org/standard/asp-ps/>) by the Council on Accreditation. This website describes standards for school-age care across 13 dimensions.