

Assessing and Improving Quality Using the Environment Rating Scales



Leeds Seminar
14th June 2012



What are the Environment Rating Scales (ERS)?

- Internationally recognised, evidence-based tools for improving the quality of the learning environment
- Designed for early years and childcare provision, and suitable for all sectors
- Provide a measurable profile of quality and can be used to track progress over time
- Valuable tools to support self-reflection, and to provide evidence for Ofsted
- Transparent and positive, providing concrete steps towards improvement
- Used in the EPPSE research and shown in many studies to ‘predict’ child outcomes
- Used by more than UK 50 local authorities and thousands of practitioners
- Acknowledged in the EYFS, and can help providers meet their EYFS requirements
- Recognised by Ofsted



The ERS 'toolkit'

Centre-Based Early Years Provision

- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (**ECERS-R**) & UK curricular extension (**ECERS-E**)
- Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (**ITERS-R**)



Out of School Care

- School Age Care Environment Rating Scale (**SACERS**)



Childminding

- Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (**FCCERS-R**)



Harms, Cryer, Clifford, Vineberg Jacobs, Romano White

3



How do the Environment Rating Scales work?

- Observational rating scales
- Used with one room/group of children at a time
- Information gathered during a half day observation on a 'typical day' (longer needed for ECERS-E)
- Some elements can be scored by asking a question – but the majority of evidence comes from observation
- Some settings will need two or more separate observations depending on the age of the children provided for (e.g. an ECERS-R and an ITERS-R)
- Not an inspection!

4



Which aspects of quality are considered?

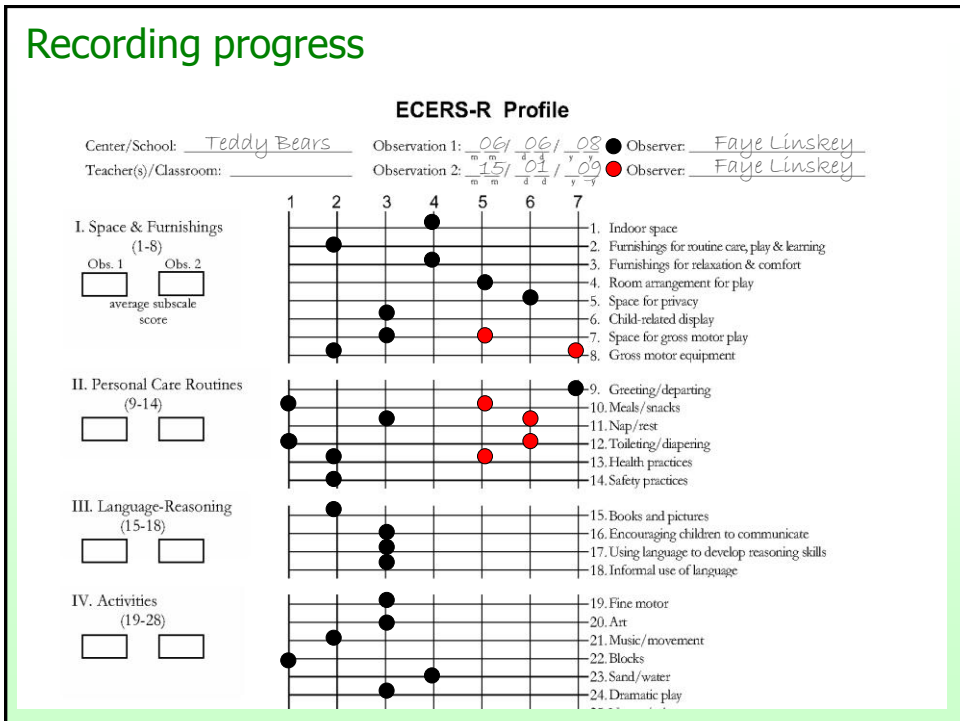
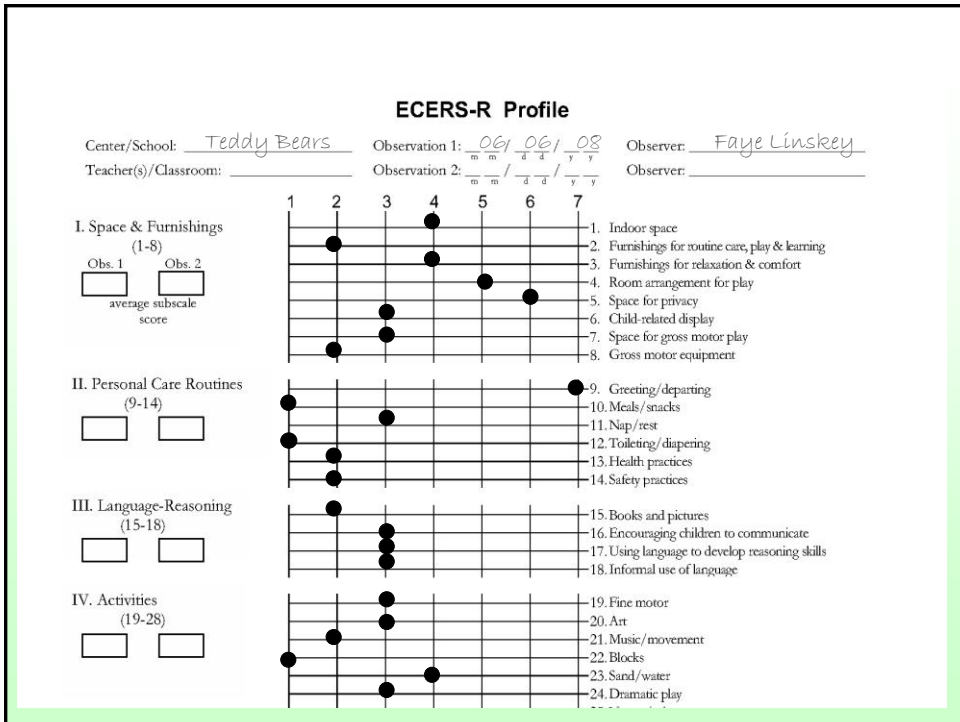
- **Welfare requirements:** e.g. daily routines, keeping safe/ healthy
- **Enabling environments:** e.g. space, furniture, resources and activities to support play, learning and exploration
- **Positive relationships:** e.g. the ‘emotional environment’, interactions between staff and children
- **Learning and development:** e.g. support for children’s developing language/thinking skills
- **Structure of the day:** e.g. balance between child initiated and adult-directed play
- **Partnership with parents** e.g. communication with parents
- **Provision for staff members** e.g. opportunities for training

5



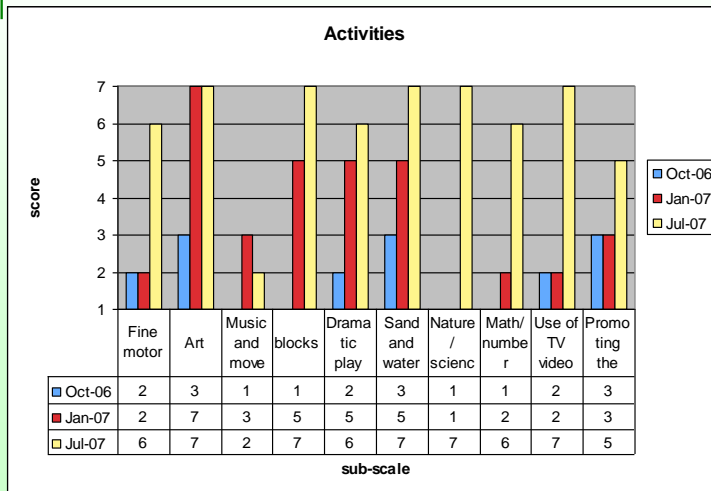
Using the items to develop quality

Inadequate	06/06/08	Minimal		Good		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Gross motor equipment						
1.1 Very little gross motor equipment used for free play.	<i>na</i>	3.1 Some gross motor equipment accessible to all children for at least 1 hr daily.*		5.1 There is enough gross motor equipment so that children have access without a long wait.*		7.1 Both stationary and portable gross motor equipment are used.
1.2 Equipment is generally in poor repair.	<i>na</i>	3.2 Equipment is generally in good repair. *		5.2 Equipment stimulates a variety of skills. *		7.2 Gross motor equipment stimulates skills on different levels.
1.3 Most of the equipment is not appropriate for the age and ability of the children.	<i>na</i>	3.3 Most of the equipment is appropriate for the age and ability of the children. *		5.3 Adaptations made or special equipment provided for children in group with disabilities.*	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Green = achieved Red = target</i>





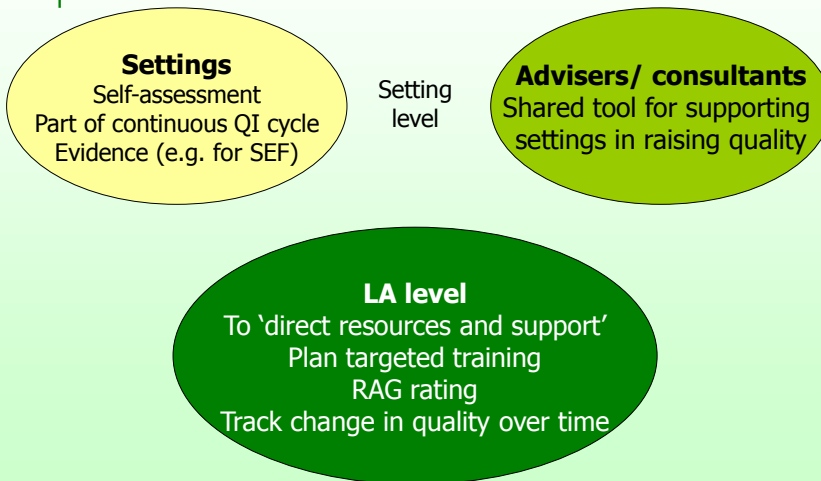
Improvement over time: activities subscale



9



Levels of implementation



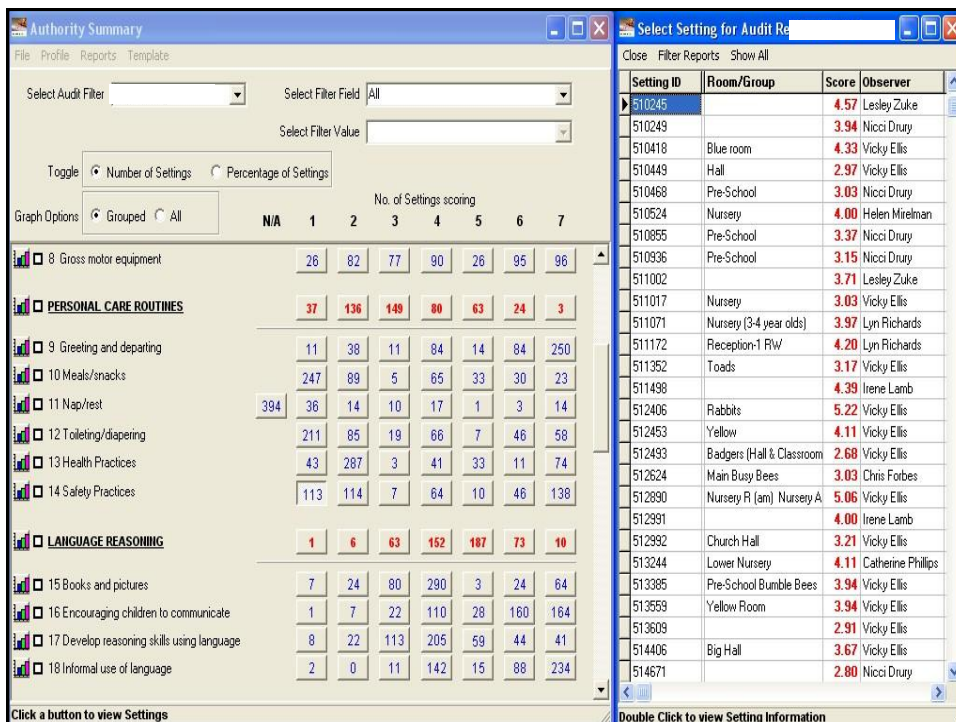
10



Using the audit data at the authority level

- Allocation of resources
- To prioritise support and training provision *e.g. contribute to RAG rating, plan training and target training based on need*
- To provide evidence of improvement
- To measure change over time *e.g. to assess the impact of new training, funding or policies*

11



Authority Template for PERSONAL CARE ROUTINES - Safety Practices

Close Print

Summary Type
 Number of Items
 % Positive Results

No. of Items with
 Y N N/A

PERSONAL CARE ROUTINES Positive results

14 Safety Practices

Item	Y	N	N/A
1.1 Several hazards that could result in	36	456	
1.2 Several hazards that could result in	28	464	
1.3 Inadequate supervision to protect	54	437	
2.1 No major safety hazards indoors or outdoors	333	156	
2.2 Adequate supervision to protect children's safety in	393	97	
2.3 Essentials needed to handle emergencies	453	25	
3.1 Staff anticipate and take action to	374	96	
3.2 Staff explain reasons for safety rules to	384	89	
4.1 Play areas arranged to avoid safety	283	150	
4.2 Children generally follow safety rules	400	42	

Hover over Indicator to view as a Hint.

Select Setting for Authority

Close Filter Reports Show All

Setting ID	Room/Group	Score	Observer
	Hall	2.97	Vicky Ellis
	Nursery	3.03	Vicky Ellis
	Badgers (Hall & Cl	2.68	Vicky Ellis
		4.00	Irene Lamb
	Church Hall	3.21	Vicky Ellis
	Pre-School Bumble	3.94	Vicky Ellis
		2.91	Vicky Ellis
	Big Hall	3.67	Vicky Ellis
		3.23	Lyn Richards
		3.59	Lyn Richards
		3.21	Nicci Drury
		3.66	Vicky Ellis
	Big Triggers	5.41	Vicky Ellis
	Pre-School	4.58	Vicky Ellis
	Pre-School	4.54	Vicky Ellis
		3.29	Nicci Drury
	Hall	3.06	Vicky Ellis
	Ladybirds	3.49	Vicky Ellis
	FST Unit	4.58	Lyn Richards
	Badgers	4.39	Vicky Ellis
	Bumble Bees	3.89	Ana Maria Ar
	Pre-School / Sunf	4.05	Vicky Ellis
	3-5	2.94	Nicci Drury
	Nursery	3.80	Vicky Ellis
	Pre-School	4.72	Vicky Ellis
	Big Room	3.97	G Schofield
	All Used	4.67	Vicky Ellis
		4.49	Vicky Ellis
		4.28	Vicky Ellis

Double Click to view Setting Information

Authority Summary

File Profile Reports Template

Select Audit Filter Select Filter Field All

Select Filter Value

Toggle Number of Settings Percentage of Settings

Graph Options Grouped All

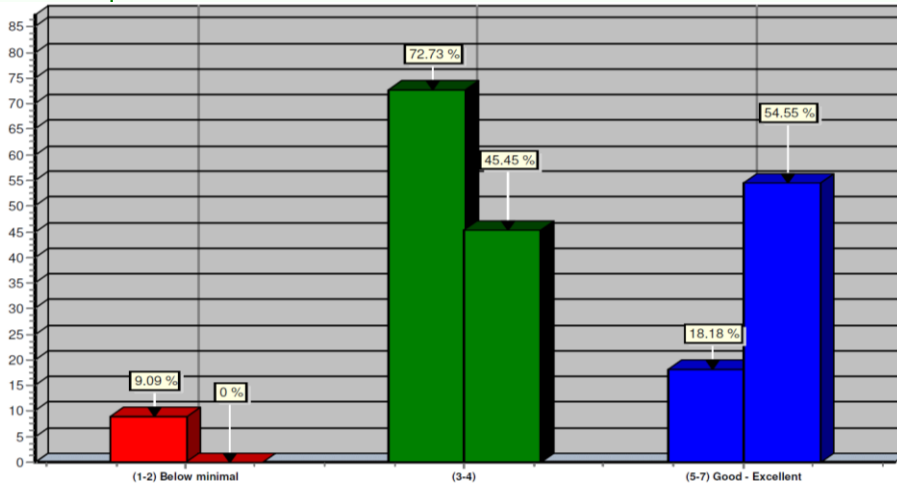
No. of Settings scoring

	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
LANGUAGE REASONING		1	6	63	152	187	73	10
15 Books and pictures		7	24	80	290	3	24	64
16 Encouraging children to communicate		1	7	22	110	28	160	164
17 Develop reasoning skills using language		8	22	113	205	59	44	41
18 Informal use of language		2	0	11	142	15	88	234

Click a button to view Settings



Proportion of settings in each quality band (progress from previous year)





Our philosophy

- The Environment Rating Scales are most effective when used:
 - positively and inclusively
 - reflectively
 - objectively and rigorously
 - as an integral part of the work of practitioners and local authorities rather than adding to the workload
 - as one tool in a toolkit rather than a single blue-print for quality



17



Planning a successful ECERS/ITERS project

- Clear aims and objectives
- Thorough planning and a strategic approach
- Long term view
- Whether ECERS/ITERS has an impact in your Local Authority will depend on how effectively you implement it – clear shared purpose and commitment to making a change (and therefore raising outcomes for children)

18



What will the challenges be?

- Capacity to:
 - Carry out the observations
 - Support settings in making improvements and using the ECERS/ITERS as an effective self-evaluation tool
- Consistent and rigorous use
- Engaging practitioners
- Using the data effectively