



**District of Columbia Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R) Observation
Frequently Asked Questions**

OVERVIEW OF THE OBSERVATION METRIC

Q: What observation metric is being used?

The FCCERS-R will be used to conduct observations to assess program quality in Family Child Development Homes (CDH) and Family Child Development Expanded Homes (CDX). The FCCERS-R is research-based in the areas of health, development, and education, as well as best practices in the early education field. The FCCERS-R is one metric used in DC’s redesigned Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), [Capital Quality](#). FCCERS-R is used to calculate the Capital Quality score for Family Child Development Homes (CDH) and Family Child Development Expanded Homes (CDX).

Q: What does the metric capture?

The FCCERS-R measures the extent to which the early care and education environments promote children’s health and safety and stimulate children through language and activities and warm, supportive interactions with providers. The FCCERS-R consists of 38 items arranged into categories called subscales.

	FCCERS-R
No. of Items	38
No. of Subscales	7
Subscales ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Space and Furnishings● Personal Care Routines● Listening and Talking● Activities● Interactions● Program Structure● Parents and Provider

Q: What does each subscale measure?

- **Space and Furnishings:** Amount and use of indoor space; space arrangement for privacy, gross motor space and equipment; furniture for routine care, play and learning, relaxation and comfort; and room arrangement of indoor space.
- **Personal Care Routines:** Organization and quality of greeting and departing routines, meal/snack, nap/rest routines, toileting/diapering processes, and health and safety practices.
- **Listening and Talking:** Aspects of provider-child communication used to help children understand and use language, as well as use of books in the classroom.
- **Activities:** Use of materials that support fine motor, active physical play (e.g., blocks, dramatic play, sand and water play), art, music and movement, nature/science, technology, math/numbers, evidence of promotion and acceptance of diversity.
- **Interaction:** The quality of the supervision and attention/guidance given to children by the



provider during play and learning times.

- **Program Structure:** The extent to which the schedule (e.g., routines and adjusting them as needed) meets the needs of all children, including children with disabilities.
- **Parents and Provider:** Examines the provisions made for parents (e.g., communications about program policies, practices) and how the provider balances personal and caregiving responsibilities, and the opportunities for professional development.

Note: The Parents and Provider subscale scores are not included in the overall Capital Quality score. Similarly, these scores will not be part of the program level report. It should be noted, however, that information from the interviews that are part of the Parents and Staff subscale may be incorporated into other aspects of the FCCERS-R items and subscales.

Q: Where can I learn more about the FCCERS-R metric?

You can learn more about the FCCERS-R by visiting <https://ers.fpg.unc.edu/>

THE OBSERVATION

Q: Why is my home/expanded home being observed?

The District of Columbia's Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) conducts annual observations in all child development homes and expanded child development homes to comply with the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 (CCDBG Act). The annual observations allow OSSE to collect indicators of program quality, as required by the CCDBG Act. As such, the annual evaluations are required for all child development homes and child development expanded homes that have entered into and maintained the Provider Agreement for Subsidized Child Care Services with OSSE. For program year 2018-19, OSSE has contracted with School Readiness Consulting (SRC), an educational consulting company, to conduct evaluations of child development homes and expanded homes using the FCCERS-R.

Q: Is the observation required? Do I have a right to decline an observation?

The annual FCCERS-R observation is required for all child development homes and expanded child development homes that have entered into and maintained the Provider Agreement for Subsidized Child Care Services with OSSE and is optional for private non-subsidy providers. These observations comply with the reauthorized CCDBG Act. Additionally, the FCCERS-R annual observations are used as part of DC's redesigned Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), Capital Quality.

Q: I am a subsidized Child Development Home/Expanded Home but do not have any children eligible to receive subsidy enrolled in my program. Do I still have to participate in the FCCERS-R observation?

Yes. The annual evaluations are required for all child development homes/expanded homes that have entered into and maintained the Provider Agreement for Subsidized Child Care Services with OSSE, regardless of whether or not the center has an eligible child enrolled during the time of the observation.

Q: How many children need to be present in order for the observation to begin?

Most observations will begin at approximately 8:30 a.m., as long as at least one child is present. Specific details will be provided at the time the observation is scheduled.

**Q: What aspects of the child development homes/expanded homes are observed?**

The FCCERS-R captures activities and interactions that occur during a “typical” day. Nearly all of the activities that take place during a typical day are observed for scoring. These include meals and snacks, language arts and/or academics, free choice, transition times and other routines, such as diapering/toileting and nap. When necessary, observers may follow the children and caregiver outside to code an activity (e.g., for a walk or science discovery lesson).

Materials will also be reviewed and sometimes measured, including books, manipulatives (e.g., for infants: grasping toys, nesting cups, etc.; for toddlers: shape sorting games, large stringing beads, etc.), art and music supplies, diapering/toileting stations, feeding/meal areas, cleaning supplies, classroom signage and parent information, outside and indoor open play areas, playgrounds, supply areas and anything else required by FCCERS-R.

Q: What is considered a “typical” day?

All observations should take place on a day that is considered “typical” or “regular” for the children. This means that any activities, events or guests that are planned for the day of the observation are familiar to the children. If your scheduled observation date is not a typical day for the home/expanded home, please notify School Readiness Consulting (SRC) by email at ersevaluations@schoolreadinessconsulting.com as soon as possible. If you are aware of dates that will not be typical within your observation window, please share them with SRC as “do not visit” dates.

Q: My Child Development Home/Expanded Home goes to a public park for outdoor activity/play. Will this be evaluated as part of the observation?

If a public park or playground is part of the children’s regular schedule, observers will consider the park/playground as a regular space that children use. Any items in the FCCERS-R that apply to play areas will be evaluated using the public park/playground.

Q: Are substitutes or assistants working in Child Development Homes/Expanded Homes considered in scoring?

The FCCERS-R observations focus primarily on the environment and experiences that children typically encounter on a typical day. In all items involving any type of interaction, “staff” refers to those adults/caregivers who are in the home and who work with the children daily (or almost daily) for a substantial part of the day.

Q: Are volunteers working with children in Child Development Homes/Expanded Homes considered in scoring?

Any adults including volunteers who work with the children daily (or almost daily) for a substantial part of the day will be considered in scoring. Adults who are in the home for short periods of the day, or who are not a part of the regular daily routine do not count in evaluating whether the requirements of the item are met.

Q: Why am I, the caregiver, being interviewed?

The FCCERS-R metric is detailed and comprehensive. Observers interview caregivers after the observation to gather additional information that he/she was not able to obtain from direct observation, but is needed to complete scoring.

Q: How will the observation be conducted for Spanish and Amharic immersion Child Development Homes/Expanded Homes?

SRC has hired observers proficient in both Spanish and Amharic to conduct observations in child development homes and expanded homes where Spanish or Amharic is the primary language. The observation processes are the same for English, Spanish and Amharic observations, and the caregiver interview can be conducted in Spanish or Amharic if requested.

Q: How will the observation be conducted if a language other than English, Spanish or Amharic is spoken in the program?

SRC has hired observers proficient in several languages. It may be possible for the observation and/or teacher interview to be conducted in other languages if requested. Please contact SRC for more information.

Q: How are mixed-age homes/expanded homes observed?

Child development homes and expanded homes that have children up to 12 years of age enrolled will be observed.

Q: I am a Child Development Home/Expanded Home provider and do not have infants or toddlers enrolled. Will I still be observed?

Yes. The FCCERS-R is appropriate for children up to 12 years of age child development homes and expanded homes.

Q: When will I be notified of my observation date?

Child development homes and expanded homes are notified by email of their observation window (the two-week period randomly scheduled using an automated generator) at least two weeks before the first business day of the observation window. The exact date of the observation is sent to caregivers via email at least one week before the scheduled observation.

Q: What should I expect on the day of the observation?

- The observer will arrive in the morning for the scheduled observation and will begin at approximately 8:30 a.m.
- The observer will introduce him/herself to the provider and will ask for the dates of birth for all the children enrolled in the child development home/expanded home.
- The observation usually takes between three and four hours, but not less than three hours. During the visit, the observer will observe a wide variety of interactions, activities and materials as indicated by the rating scale. For example, the observer will observe and review indoor and outdoor space, materials used by the children, room arrangements, health practices, provider/child interactions and so on. The observation will require the observer to examine many of the materials including books, art and music supplies and items and equipment.
- The observation will include a 30-40 minute caregiver interview. If there is an associate caregiver, separate from the caregiver, s/he may be interviewed as well.

Q: What can I do to prepare for my visit?

Observers will need to gather information from the home/expanded home caregiver on the day of the observation, including the birthdates of the children currently enrolled. Having this information prepared ahead of time will help ensure the observation begins on time. There is no additional preparation needed. All activities and interactions that that happen on a “typical” day should proceed as normal.

TRAINING, CERTIFICATION AND RELIABILITY OF OBSERVERS

Q: What are the prerequisites to be an observer?

Observers hired by SRC must have a bachelor’s degree and SRC prioritizes candidates who have experience in early childhood education. In addition, all observers have passed a background check, have a current negative tuberculosis screening and receive training on their role as mandated reporters for child abuse and neglect.

Q. What are observers’ training requirements regarding FCCERS-R?

Observers receive training by the trainers from the Environment Rating Scales Institute (ERSI) at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute/University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill on FCCERS-R. Two additional days of training are provided by SRC for review and practice on the ERS and on project-specific protocols, such as procedures to follow when on-site at programs, professionalism in conducting observations and mandated reporting of potential child abuse and neglect.

Q: How do you ensure that observers are reliable?

Before observing independently, observers participate in at least three certification visits with an ERSI-reliable SRC Master Coder. To attain certification to conduct observations for this project, observers must reach an average of an 85 percent agreement (within one point) to consensus scores with the Master Coder, across three visits. After being certified, observers receive additional reliability visits every 15th observation with an ERSI-reliable SRC Master Coder. The observer must achieve 85 percent agreement (within one point to consensus scores) with the Master Coder on this observation. In the event that an observer does not meet 85 percent agreement requirement during a reliability visit, the SRC Master Coder’s ERS scores will be used for that child development home’s/expanded child development home’s FCCERS-R score.

Q: Why might there be more than one observer during the observation?

More than one observer may sometimes conduct the observation in child development homes/expanded homes. In these instances, two observers are observing the same activities to document how similarly they are scoring the FCCERS-R. These visits are randomly selected and are scheduled throughout the observation window. In these instances, the second individual is monitoring the observer to ensure they are following the protocols correctly.

AFTER THE OBSERVATION

Q: How are my scores being used?

The scores of the observation will be used to: 1) calculate each facility’s Capital Quality Rating; 2) identify areas of strength and places for improvement in homes/expanded homes; and 3) inform OSSE’s professional development offerings and technical assistance strategies.



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Q: When will I be given the results of the observation?

It is anticipated that providers in the Capital Quality pilot, Group Two and Group Three will receive score reports by the end of December 2018 and Capital Quality Group Four will receive score reports by the end of January 2019.

Q: Is there a process to appeal scores?

Child development homes/expanded homes have the right to appeal their scores if they believe that the stated process for observations detailed in the District of Columbia Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R) Observation Data Collection and Quality Assurance Protocols was not followed. Please refer to the [District of Columbia Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised \(FCCERS-R\) Observation Data Collection and Quality Assurance Protocols](#) for more information.