

August 7, 2015

Dear Keystone STARS Participant:

First let me open by thanking you for your ongoing commitment to providing high quality services to children and allowing me to share with you some exciting changes that are coming to Keystone STARS.

Beginning August 2015, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning, (OCDEL), is changing the tool it uses to assess early learning environments. We will begin using the Environment Rating Scale, 3rd Edition (ECERS-3) as the assessment tool for preschool classrooms. In order to collect data, allow programs an opportunity to participate in professional development and have an opportunity to participate in the trial assessment, OCDEL is implementing a two-year transition schedule for all renewal sites. Information regarding the changes to how the ECERS-3 impact STARS participation is attached.

One of the main reasons for the transition is that the new ECERS-3 tool focuses on preschool age children engaging in activities and the interactions that support developing the critical pre-academic skills important to success in school. While access to a wide range of quality materials is still expected, the emphasis of the assessment process is on how children get to interact with those materials, with each other and how the teacher supports and extends children's learning through teacher-child interactions. It is those important teacher supports and interactions that Keystone STARS programs, stakeholders and research have indicated are critical in quality early learning programs.

Since the ECERS-3 is for preschool the transition will not impact home-based programs assessed with the FCCERS-R, programs offering only school-age care, or programs not offering programming for preschool-age children.

Again, thank you for working with OCDEL, the ERS assessment team and the Regional Keys in implementing the ECERS-3. If you have questions please reach-out to your STARS Specialist.

Best wishes on your continued path for improvement.

Sincerely,



Tracey Campanini, Director  
Bureau of Early Learning Services

Enclosure/Attachment

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