THE ERS SCALES ARE:
• Research-based and evidence-based
• Recognized nationally and internationally
• Based on child development research
• Thoroughly field-tested

Thirty states use one or more of the scales as part of their Quality Rating Improvement System.

Additional Resources
Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
Child Care and Education for Professionals
www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/early-childhood

Environment Rating Scale Training
www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/ers

Child Care Resource and Referral of Iowa
www.iowacrr.org/

Environment Rating Scale Institute
www.ersi.info/

Iowa Quality Rating System, Iowa Department of Human Services
dhs.iowa.gov/iqrs

Making Long Lasting Changes with the Environment Rating Scale, by Thelma Harms
www.earlychildhoodnyc.org/resourceguide/resources/making_long-lasting_changes_ERS.pdf

Iowa Environment Rating Scale Project
Funding Support: Iowa Department of Human Services
ers@iastate.edu

DID YOU KNOW...
Scores are not determined by the assessor’s personal opinion. Assessors are carefully trained to be unbiased and to score the ERS tool accurately and consistently. They regularly verify their scoring abilities with the authors of the Environment Rating Scales. Assessor’s scoring skills are reviewed and verified every 10 assessments.
Information About Your Score

How was my score determined?
Assessments provide a snapshot of what a child experiences during a typical day in your program. All scores are based solely on the information provided during the observation and interview. With 7 subscales covering as many as 470 indicators, it is important to remember that it is the average total score that indicates overall quality.

How does my score relate to QRS?
In order to receive 5 stars in the Iowa Quality Rating System, each observed classroom’s average score must be a 5.0 or higher. If an overall score of 5.0 is not achieved, programs can request an ERS visit in one year. The QRS application process will need to be completed again at that time.

Why are the ERS scales used?
The Environment Rating Scales are widely accepted and recognized as a way to measure quality. The scales assess the three basic needs of all children:

1. Protection of health and safety
2. Building relationships with children, parents, extended family and community
3. Learning through developmentally appropriate experiences

Your ERS Report includes
- Average score for each subscale
- Overall summary score
- Strengths (items with scores of 5 or above)
- Areas needing improvement (items with scores less than 5)
- ERS Assessor contact information

Understanding Your ERS Report

Review Your ERS Report
Participation in ERS assessments can provide valuable learning experiences as well as the opportunity to make well-informed changes. Your report provides more than just a score, it is a blueprint to quality improvement. Carefully review all of the information provided in the report and share with program staff.

Celebrate Your Strengths
Every program has areas of strength and areas in which improvement is needed. It is very unlikely that any program will score high on all items. Take pride in the areas in which you received a high score. The second page of your report highlights items scored a “5” or higher. These are the items that received a score of good-excellent quality.

Review Your Challenges
Your report provides details about each item that scored lower than a “5.” This information will help you identify areas needing improvement. The details the assessor provides are designed to give you a clear understanding of each item scored.

Seek Clarification
If you are unclear on something or would like further clarification about how indicators were scored, contact your assessor. The assessment team is happy to help you understand your report.

What’s Next?
Your program and the families it serves are continuously changing and evolving, which makes providing quality care an ongoing commitment.

Reflect and plan—Use your ERS feedback report as an educational guide to maintain quality and plan for future improvements.

Focus on achievable changes—It is possible to “balance out” areas with lower scores by focusing on changes that are feasible. Often arranging space differently, increasing the variety of toys, or making minor adjustments to your schedule can have big impact.

Ask for guidance and assistance—Iowa Child Care Resource and Referral Consultants can visit your program and work with you to implement changes based on your ERS Report.

Continue learning—Explore additional resources and training listed on the ISU Extension and Outreach website or on the Iowa Child Care Training Registry.