



Comprehensive Guide to using the PA Position Statements for Environment Rating Scales (ERS)

Why do the PA Position Statements Exist?

The PA Position Statements were created to support the use of the Environment Rating Scales (ERS) for Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) planning by Pennsylvania's early childhood programs. The PA Position Statements connect state-specific and scale-specific expectations:

- Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) childcare regulations are the foundation for many of the state's quality initiatives. At times, DHS regulations are higher or require more specific expectations in some areas of classroom quality than what is represented in the ERS items/indicators or in additional scoring resources or guidance. In these instances, a PA Position Statement overrides all other scoring guidance for ERS items/indicators.
- Align quality expectations developed by Pennsylvania and the expectations of the ERS. In some cases, the Pennsylvania ECE community has adopted a higher level of practice and the PA Position Statement recognizes that difference. For example, the author's Notes for Clarification for the School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale, Updated Edition (SACERS-U) do not provide detailed expectations for the amount of time access to materials is expected. PA Position Statements were created to provide a shared understanding of the indicator expectations.

How are the PA Position Statements created?

The PA Position Statements for each Environment Rating Scale were created and are regularly reviewed and updated through a collaborative process that includes:

- Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) Bureau of Certification
- Environment Rating Scales (ERS) authors and author-selected resources used with the ERS
- Early Childhood Education Linkage System (ECLS)
- Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) Bureau of Early Learning Services other early childhood experts, as needed



What is included in the PA Position Statements?

PA Position Statements are scale-specific; each has an accompanying PA Position Statement document used to guide scoring decisions and provide a connection between the ERS and Pennsylvania childcare regulations and early learning standards. You will find the following elements in each PA Position Statement document:

- A cover page that includes a purpose statement, resources consulted, and guidance on classroom type, care settings, and age ranges for use in Pennsylvania.
- The body of the document contains general scale-specific position statements as well as item/indicator-specific position statements. The document is organized based on the order of the items and indicators in the scale. This area contains the indicator description, detailed position statements that apply, along with supporting guidance.
The last page of the ITERS-R, ECERS-R, ECERS-3, and FCCERS-R PA Position Statement document () is the diaper changing and hand washing procedures based on Caring for Our Children, 4th edition. This page is provided as a reference and typically does not reflect a different procedure than the one found in Caring for Our Children, 4th edition or in the ERS supplementary resources.

When should the PA Position Statements be referenced?

The PA Position Statements impact scoring decisions for ERS assessments in Pennsylvania. To support scoring accuracy, it is important to have the position statements on hand when:

- Learning to use the scale(s) for self-assessment
- Conducting ERS assessment in a classroom
- Reviewing your ERS CQI Summary report(s) following a visit from the Program Quality Assessment team

Who should use the PA Position Statements?

Anyone using the ERS tools to support improvement or monitoring of ongoing classroom practices within facilities participating in PA's quality initiatives including classroom teachers, directors, owners, STARS Quality Coaches, Preschool Program Specialists, and Program Quality Assessors.



Where can the PA Position Statements be found?

Participants who attend in-person ERS scale-specific professional development sessions receive a paper copy of the corresponding PA Position Statements. PA Position Statements are not included in the participant materials for the ERS Foundations course. Printer-friendly files can be found on the PA Keys website at: www.pakeys.org, Program Quality, Program Quality Assessment, Resources.