



How to Earn the 2-Star Rating

Directors can guide child care facilities to earn the 2-Star rating in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System by meeting the requirements for the 1-Star rating *plus* the following requirements.

- The Checklist for 2-Star Rating is an optional tool that you can use to keep track of the steps.

Complete a Director's Self-Assessment

Ongoing professional development is one sign of a true early childhood professional. Parents want to know that, as director of their children's early childhood program, you have all of the necessary knowledge and skills. When you assess your own skills, you will learn which areas may need improvement.

You have three options for completing a self-assessment:

- Use the optional Child Care Director's Self-Assessment in this workbook (which is the same as the following online assessment)
- Use an online assessment by going to www.ncchildcare.org/admin.html and clicking "Begin"
- Order and complete the *Program Administration Scale: Measuring Early Childhood Leadership and Management* by Teri N. Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom (\$17.95).

Go to: www.tcpres.com.

If you followed the steps in "How to Prepare" you will have completed some of this work already. A current copy of your self-assessment must be on file.

Plan Your Own Professional Development

Review your performance on the self-assessment you chose to complete. Be honest with yourself about the areas where you could improve your skills and knowledge.

- The optional Child Care Director Professional Improvement Plan is a form to help you decide how to improve your skills and knowledge. A current professional development plan must be on file.

Increase Staff Professional Development Hours for the Director

This step is crucial for earning your facility's stars!

Important: Training by the director does not count for Quality Step ratings. All training must be by trainers approved by the Child Care Licensure Bureau of the Mississippi Department of Health. Ask a workshop provider to show the approval letter before your employees sign up, or check the list of approved trainings in the Child Care Licensure manual.



- Use the Child Care Center Professional Development Plan to determine the best schedule for attending workshops and courses.

For a 2-Star rating, the director must receive at least **20** training hours, beginning on the date of the current Mississippi Department of Health license.

Hold Annual Staff Evaluations

Staff evaluations are for helping your employees, not for punishment. They are a time to exchange ideas and find out about concerns each employee has. At the same time, you can talk with the employee about specific ways, such as earning the Child Development Associate credential, that he or she can become more valuable to your program. The key to an effective evaluation is honest and open communication.

- The optional Child Care Employee Evaluation form is a tool for reviewing an employee's strengths and weaknesses and planning improvement steps together.

When you meet with each employee to discuss his or her evaluation, you can suggest specific workshops or courses that will help him or her improve. You may also ask the employee to report on what she learns at a workshop in a future staff development meeting. You might ask the employee to read particular articles from *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, *Young Children*, or another early childhood journal.

A copy of the signed and dated evaluation should be on file. Also file a schedule for the evaluation conferences that haven't been conducted prior to the monitoring visit.

- Use the optional Child Care Employee Professional Development Plan to record the trainings you want the employee to attend.

Prepare a Staff and Parent Handbook

It is important for all of your employees and parents to have an easy-to-read set of policies and procedures.

You can write your own facility handbook or you can use the sample Child Care Facility Handbook in this workbook. A copy of the handbook must be available for the monitor.

- The sample Child Care Facility Handbook has sections with blanks that you can complete with details about your facility. You may select some or all of the sections to complete. Then make copies and place in three-ring binders for all employees. Staple sets of pages together or place in three-ring binders for parents.

Set Up Classroom Learning Centers

This explanation of learning centers is from the book *Using the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines; A Complete Curriculum for Three-Year-Olds*:



A high-quality early childhood classroom, or family child care home, has areas for children to work and play individually, in small groups, and in a whole group with the teacher or caregiver as the learning leader. We call these areas “learning centers.”

To earn the 2-Star rating, all of your classrooms, except infant rooms, must have learning centers. An important responsibility of the director is to guide and help teachers to create learning centers in their classrooms.

The Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines include learning centers. Review the guidelines with your teachers.

The book *Using the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines* has a complete explanation for setting up learning centers in Chapter 2, “Preparing the Classroom.” You can print Chapter 2 from this web site:

[earlychildhood.msstate.edu/
usingtheguidelines/index.htm](http://earlychildhood.msstate.edu/usingtheguidelines/index.htm)

You also can refer to the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for information about learning centers. Go to:

www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad1/index.html

- Use the optional Classroom Learning Centers Plan with each teacher to plan learning centers in his or her classroom.

Implement Weekly Lesson Plans

To earn the 2-Star rating, all of your teachers must use weekly lesson plans. An important responsibility of the director is to guide and help teachers to prepare and use weekly lesson plans.

The book *Using the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines* has complete weekly lesson plans for one-month units with a variety of themes for three-year-old children. You can print the curriculum units, including the weekly lesson plans, from this web site:

[earlychildhood.msstate.edu/
usingtheguidelines/index.htm](http://earlychildhood.msstate.edu/usingtheguidelines/index.htm)

You also can refer to the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for information about weekly lesson plans. Go to:

www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad1/index.html

- The sample Weekly Lesson Plan chart is a tool that teachers can use to plan lessons.

It is important for teachers to actually use their weekly lesson plans, whether they use the plans in the book *Using the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines* or create their own. Your Quality Step System monitor will look for signs that weekly lesson plans are in use in all classrooms. Current weekly lesson plans must be displayed in all classrooms. Weekly lesson plans prior to or beginning with the date of enrollment in the Quality Step System must be in files for each classroom.



Receive Environmental Rating Scale Assessments

For your facility to earn the 2-Star rating, Environmental Rating Scale Assessments will be conducted in two classrooms. The two scores will be averaged and must equal at least **3.0-3.5**.

The Partners for Quality Child Care program of the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Office for Children and Youth, may be able to help you and your teachers succeed on these assessments.

For more information about Partners for Quality Child Care, go to:

earlychildhood.msstate.edu/initiatives/partners.htm

What Is the ECERS-R?

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) (Harms, Clifford, Cryer, 1998) provides a comprehensive assessment of quality child care for preschool classrooms with children 2.5 through 5 years of age. The scale includes 43 items that the observer rates from 1 to 7. Specifically outlined characteristics must be met to receive a rating of 1 (inadequate), 3 (minimal), 5 (good), or 7 (excellent). Midpoint ratings of 2, 4, or 6 are given when the entire characteristic of the lower number and only part of the higher number are present. Each rating is based on what is observed or what is reported by the

teacher to have occurred on the day of the visit. The 43 items are included in one of the following subscales: space and furnishings, personal care routines, language-reasoning, activities, interaction, program structure, and parents and staff. The observation can be completed in approximately 3 hours.

What Is the ITERS-R?

The Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R) (Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 2003) is modeled after the ECERS (Harms & Clifford, 1980) and the Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS) (Harms & Clifford, 1989). The ITERS-R is slightly different than the ECERS-R in that it addresses the quality concerns for children birth to 2.5-years-old. The ITERS-R is comprised of seven subscales: space and furnishings, personal care routines, listening and talking, activities, interaction, program structure, and parents and staff. There are 39 items that are used to evaluate the quality of child care settings for children up to 30 months of age. Similar to the ECERS-R, each item is based on a 7-point scale with 1 representing inadequate, 3 representing minimal care, 5 representing good, and 7 representing excellent. Like the ECERS-R, the observation using the ITERS-R usually lasts for approximately 3 hours.

Start a Monthly Calendar for Parents

A monthly calendar should include any days that the center will be closed and all upcoming



events such as volunteer work days and special programs. Produce the calendars on charts with numbered boxes or as a simple list:

- Oct. 26 Playground Clean-Up Day
 (9 a.m. – Noon)
- Oct. 31 Harvest Lunch

The calendars should list daily learning activities related to the monthly curriculum themes that parents can do with their children. Distribute each calendar around the 15th day of the month before. A file with copies of the calendars must be available. Calendars must begin prior to or as of the date of enrollment in the Quality Step System.

Start a Quarterly Newsletter for Parents

A facility newsletter does not have to be a fancy publication. The most important thing is to send some news home to families. Here are some simple ideas:

- Write a “Dear Families” letter from yourself to parents and guardians. Focus on recent good news at your facility and important upcoming events.
- Include a title such as “Happy Days News” and the month and year at the top.
- Include a “tip of the month” on literacy activities at home or a health and safety reminder.
- Sign the letter with your name and title.
- Staple your letter to the monthly calendar.

A copy of the newsletter and documentation of the method of dissemination must be available.

Set Up a Bulletin Board for Parents

Install a bulletin board in a convenient location. Post each monthly calendar and newsletter. Add other interesting items:

- Flyers about upcoming events in the community
- Photocopies of interesting articles
- Snapshots of children learning and playing
- A space for parents to write their own suggestions, questions, comments

Take down out-of-date material and add new items frequently.

Hold Parent-Teacher Conferences Once a Year

Work with your teachers to schedule a series of conferences with parents and guardians. It may help to plan one conference per week so teachers are not overwhelmed by this additional responsibility.

Teachers should gather dated work samples by each child and plan how they will discuss each with parents and guardians.

If teachers are using developmental checklists, they can share those, too.

➤ Teachers can use the sample Parent-Teacher Conference Record to document each conference.

Each child's file should indicate that a parent-teacher conference has occurred or is scheduled within a year of the center's enrollment in the Quality Step System.

Facility Name: _____
 Facility MDH License Number: _____
 Date for Monitoring Visit: _____

To Be Completed by Director

Done	Target Date	Task
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	File current MDH license (with no probationary conditions)
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Complete and file a Director’s Self-Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Complete and file a Director’s Professional Development Plan
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Conduct an evaluation of each employee and file copies of documents signed by the employees
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	File copies of training certificates for yourself and all teachers: a minimum of 15 general hours for each teacher and assistant teacher and 20 hours for the director
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Prepare a handbook and provide copies to all employees and parents
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Create learning centers in all classrooms for one- through four-year-olds
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Review and file weekly lesson plans by all teachers
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Receive ECERS-R and ITERS-R evaluations, in at least two classrooms, with minimum average scores of 3.0-3.5
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Prepare and file an annual plan for distribution of calendars and newsletters to parents
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Prepare and file monthly calendars of facility activities for parents and distribute to all parents
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Prepare and file quarterly newsletters for parents and distribute to all parents
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Install a bulletin board and post each calendar and newsletter and other information for parents
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	Review and file copies of parent-teacher conference forms, completed once each year and signed by parents and teachers, for all enrolled children