



**QUICK FACTS: Provider Update
February 2011**

INFANT-TODDLER ERS ASSESSMENT (ITERS-R) Scoring Change Effective March 1, 2011:

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control have recommended that children under 2 years of age should refrain from TV and video viewing. Research has demonstrated that infants and toddlers who are exposed to TV may suffer from delays in cognitive and language development, and have an increased risk of obesity, poor sleep, irregular sleep schedules and aggression. In response to these recommendations, the authors of the ITERS-R have recently implemented a change in scoring of item 23, **Use of TV, video and/or computer**. The Additional Notes for Clarification, which were disseminated by the authors of the scale in December 2010, state the following:

"Since the American Academy of Pediatrics states that children under the age of two should not be allowed to view television, due to persuasive research indicating negative effects for these youngest of children, change the age listed in these indicators from 12 to 24 months."

Beginning March 1, 2011 the ERS assessment team will comply with this directive and will score accordingly:

- 1.3 - This indicator must be scored "yes" if television, video and/or computer is used with children under 24 months of age.
- 3.3 - This indicator will be scored "no" if the time allowed for children over 24 months of age to use TV/video is not limited to 30 minutes in a full-day program or computer turns are not limited to 10 minutes.

What this means for child care providers:

Infant and toddler classrooms that are assessed using the ITERS-R will earn a score of 2 or below for item 23 if:

- children under the age of 24 months have any use of TV, video or computers
- children over the age of 24 months are allowed to view TV/video for more than 30 minutes in a full-day program
- children over the age of 24 months are allowed to use computer for more than 10 minutes in a full day program

If you have questions about this change to the ITERS-R, please contact Angela Keyes at akeyes@tulane.edu or email dcfs.childcare@la.gov

Quality Assurance: Unannounced Visits

The Quality Start Child Care Rating System will be implementing quality assurance measures beginning July 1, 2011. As Quality Start moves forward, we want to assess how well our processes do what they are intended to do - assess quality indicators in child care centers. If your center is selected, you will be notified via email and an unannounced verification visit will be conducted by a Child Care Quality Start Specialist (CCQSS) that was not involved in the awarding of your current star rating. This unannounced visit will occur within 30 calendar days of your notification by email. The purpose of this unannounced visit is to assess the accuracy and consistency of the DCFS verification visit process.

Quality Assurance: Identification Verification

The Verification Visit by the Child Care Quality Start Specialist now includes viewing and verifying the identification of at least 50% of the staff on the premises. The Environment Rating Scale (ERS) assessor will also ask for identification before conducting the classroom assessment.

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER:

1. No guarantee is given by DCFS that a center will be awarded a particular Star Rating within a certain timeframe or by a certain date.
2. All complaints or inspection results received after the application has been submitted but prior to an award decision may be considered by the Department in determining a center's rating.

Practice Environment Rating Scale Assessments

ERS assessments are available "year round". However, official assessments are always scheduled and conducted before practice assessments. In addition, due to LA Department of Revenue deadlines for the SRTC, available time slots for practice assessments may be limited in April, May, and June.

CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS, AND INTENTIONAL PROGRAM VIOLATION - FRAUD

Prevention of fraud and improper payments using Child Care and Development Funds has become a focus of the federal Office of Child Care. It is more important than ever that staff qualifications are verified by program owners and directors and records and documentation are maintained for four federal fiscal years for review in an audit.

Is your child READY TO READ?

This flyer from the Louisiana Department of Education is available at <http://www.louisianaschools.net/lde/uploads/17210.pdf> .

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AUDITS

To ensure the accuracy of these audits, please remember to update staff "new hires" and departures, certificates, clock hours, transcripts, professional memberships, and service to an organization with LA Pathways, if applicable. Follow this link to [Guidelines for Preparing and Submitting Training Certificates to Pathways](#).

MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION AVAILABLE

- When faced with difficult situations caring for the social and emotional needs of young children, Mental Health Consultation can provide a classroom teacher as well as center administration with support and guidance.
- Centers are eligible for 6 months of mental health consultation after application is complete and submitted. Contact Marylynn Gagnon at mgagnon@tulane.edu or 504-988-7387 to request mental health consultation or to request more information.

HAVE ANY QUESTIONS...CALL FOR ASSISTANCE

It is the owner/director's responsibility to maintain knowledge and understanding of the steps and requirements and to submit applications and information in a timely manner. If you have any questions regarding a qualification or requirement of Quality Start, you are encouraged to contact your regional Child Care Quality Start Specialist or the Quality Start state office at the phone number listed below.

Check the Quality Start website for updates and other information www.qrslouisiana.org .

For assistance call the Quality Improvement Unit at (800) 680-9098 or (225) 342-0694 or send an email to dss.qualitystart@la.gov.