

GETTING STARTED WITH A SELF-STUDY



Getting started on a new process can be intimidating, but keep in mind that self-study is all about your ideas and needs. Everything done should be helpful for you, so planning based on your own priorities and desired learning is all that is expected. Considering a few overarching questions may be helpful:



Where am I
in the Rated
License
process?



What are my
immediate
and/or
longer term
goals?



What is the
vision for the
children in
my care?



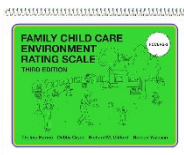
What is most
meaningful
to me as a
business
owner and
professional?

During the first part of a self-study, after reflecting on these broad questions, it is important to identify a focus area or two. To do this, some familiarity with the FCCERS-3 will be needed along with self-assessment of current practices related to the focus area. This helps identify where you are, so that reflection and then planning can happen next. We hope this document will offer some ideas as you begin to think about completing a self-study process.

What do I need?



Time: A self-study will take some time, but how much time is up to you. Make sure to consider how much time to spend on planning and implementing the process and how this can be balanced with other obligations and priorities.



The scale: You will need a copy of the FCCERS-3, at least for the duration of the self-study process. Some suggested retailers are Amazon.com, Barnes and Nobles, Kaplan, or Teacher's College Press. Local CCR&R's and/or Smart Start Partnerships may have copies you can borrow. The scale is also available in Spanish.



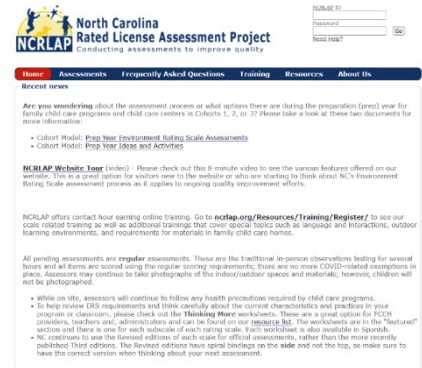
A plan and documentation: It is fine to use many different strategies to build your process. Whichever strategies you use, remember to document your efforts over the course of 3-months. Some examples are included in this document, but there are many others you may want to consider as well.

Learning more about the FCCERS-R and how to start

The FCCERS-3 is the assessment tool used as part of NC's Star Rated License. The entire FCCERS-3 is divided into 6 subscales that include space and furnishings, personal care routines, language and books, activities, interaction, and program structure.

Here are some ideas to gather information and spend time learning about the FCCERS-3. All of these are not required but picking a few is likely to be helpful.

- ❖ Visit the NC Rated License Assessment Project website, ncrlap.org. You do not need a user ID or password to access the site and there are many resources, including a section specific to the FCCERS-3. There are worksheets, videos, and documents that cover various topics. These resources can offer ideas about what to focus on or supplement ideas you already have for planning and changes.
- ❖ Watch a recorded, contact hour earning FCCERS-3 webinar (see ncrlap.org for more information) to learn about many of the items and requirements. Take notes about topics learned or ideas to try in your program and include the completed date (or the certificate) as part of your documentation.
- ❖ Read through the FCCERS-3, noticing some of the details and requirements. Are there areas you know you already have in place? Are there areas you want to learn more about or already know you would like to focus on? Make notes as you read through the scale to begin planning.
- ❖ Were you assessed with the FCCERS-3 in the past? Use your previous assessment report as a starting point. Make sure to consider your current arrangements, schedule, materials, and enrollment. Pay attention to the previous high and low scores to fully understand what may have changed since the previous assessment.



Pick a focus area

The FCCERS-3 is broad and covers many areas, so it is likely there is a way to connect your interests or those of the children and families. Pick one or two topics to start with and narrow your ideas down, to manageable steps and actions. The steps of a self-study can be repeated, so focus on what is realistic for right now. This will also help you notice accomplishments along the way.

- ❖ After reviewing the FCCERS-3 and thinking about your current practices, focus on a general topic, subscale, or even a specific item, making small easy changes first and implementing bigger changes along the way before moving on to another topic.
- ❖ Recent trainings or professional development trainings often spark ideas for improvement and may provide inspiration as you begin to develop a plan.

- ❖ Consider the interests and needs of the children enrolled in your program. This can be a way to incorporate their interests, especially if changes pertain to activities, materials, or the curriculum. There may be a portion of your schedule you want to focus on such as meal times, transitions, or group time.
- ❖ Allow the parents of the children enrolled to give feedback about the program. Check to see if some of their ideas line up with the FCCERS-3 requirements you may already be starting to think about. If so, this could be an opportunity to address their ideas.

Use other resources

- ❖ Review past DCDEE visit summaries and seek advice from your DCDEE Child Care Consultant to identify topics you would like to include or that relate to a content area for the FCCERS-3. For example, consider health, safety, room arrangement, or interactions. This will help make connections between what you may already be working on and have discussed with your consultant.
- ❖ Get help and ideas for continuous quality improvement from local TA resources at the CCR&R or Smart Start Partnership in your area.
- ❖ You may decide to work with a friend or colleague during this process; sharing ideas and brainstorming with another FCC educator can be helpful and supportive.
- ❖ If you are not already involved in a Family Child Care Provider organization, consider finding out if there is a local organization or work group in your area. Sharing ideas and information with a group of early childhood educators can be helpful. For example, questions that arise can be submitted to child care consultants or NCRLAP and the responses shared with the whole group, so everyone can use the same information vs. relying on the rumor mill.
- ❖ Are there other strategies that you have investigated that may benefit a part of your self-study process? Write them down and refer to them throughout the 3-month duration.

What comes next?

This document was developed to address questions about a self-study process and is not intended to be a guide for a specific type of process, since each FCCH provider's process will be based on individual priorities and situations. Additional steps that continue beyond reading this document are required and should be documented accordingly.

Please remember that small changes ultimately lead to big changes along the way. While a 3-month self-study may seem overwhelming at first, take it day by day and focus on one task at a time. If at any point you have questions about the FCCERS-3 or need direction on where to find information on our website, don't hesitate to reach out to NCRLAP.

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