

QCCN emphasizes the use of the Environmental Rating Scale as a tool that is designed to enhance the quality of the learning environment to support children’s development. The scale is used for educators to reflect on the environment and program not focusing on the score as an assessment of quality.

Item	Tips
<p>1. Space and Furnishings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the children, families and educators feel they belong and can make valuable connections? • Does the space support a sense of self and well-being for the children, families and educators? • Does the space support the engagement of children, families and educators in creative experiences, meaningful exploration and positive inquiry? • Do children, families and educators feel they can make contributions to the space and express their interests?
<p>2. Personal Care Routines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do children, families and educators feel a sense of belonging, and security through the implementation of personal care routines in the program? Ex: considering culture/nutrition with meal time, mental health and well-being, age appropriate expectations • Do the personal care routines create positive experiences for health and well-being for children families and educators? • Do the personal care routines engage children in exploring their minds and bodies through stimulated senses and asking questions? Ex: exploring new and healthy food options, participating in culinary activities, discussing sanitary practices and engaging children in conversation about emotions • Do educators practice understanding and responding to children and families when expressing their wishes related to self-care and personal care routines?
<p>3. Language and Literacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the program encourage language and literacy as a way to help children, families and educators feel a sense of belonging and connection to the program through active participation and communication? • Do language and literacy experiences offer children a chance to gain increasing levels of independence and learn to persevere contributing to a better sense of self and well-being? • Are educators supportive of the right of children and families to engage in language and literacy experiences that are inclusive to their strengths and needs? • Are there opportunities for children and families to explore the creative expression of their ideas, feelings and interpretation using a variety of language and literacy materials?

<p>4. Learning Activities/Experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are materials fostering a sense of belonging for children, families and educators through individuality uniqueness and acceptance of diversity? • Do children, families and educators have the opportunity to explore an environment that reduces stressors and encourages well-being through natural and self-regulating elements? • Do children have the opportunity to engage in learning activities and experiences, that recognize a variety of capabilities and cognitive skills? • Are the children provided with opportunities for creative and imaginative expression through exploration of music and movement, visual art and interpretation?
<p>5. Interactions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the educators in the program encourage the maintenance of reciprocal relationships viewing children and families as important contributors and promoting a sense of belonging? • Do the educators in the environment support a sense of well-being through strength-based approaches that recognize and value the capacities of children and families? • Do educators spend time engaging in interactions that nurture children’s curiosities and theories to help them gain a deeper understanding and knowledge of the world? • Do the educators ensure that every child and family member can express themselves and their thoughts of the program regardless of his or her communication abilities?
<p>6. Program Structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the program structure support seeing children and families in a positive way to strengthen relationships and build a sense of belonging? • Does the environment support the children’s well-being by considering children and families varied sensitivities, arousal states and need for maintaining a calm and focused state? • Do the transitions within your program structure provide minimal interruptions and provide ample opportunity for engaging with others through complex play and inquiry? • Do the transitions and time for free play within your program structure encourage expression and conversation among children as well as support listening skills by allowing time for communication?
<p>7. Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider items that cannot be changed, but maybe adapted • Consider your philosophy and program structure when filling out Environmental Rating Scales ex: Montessori, Waldorf, Reggio, Eclectic, School-age, Co-operative • The Caregiver Interaction Scale is a great tool that can go hand in hand with the completion of the Environmental Rating Scales