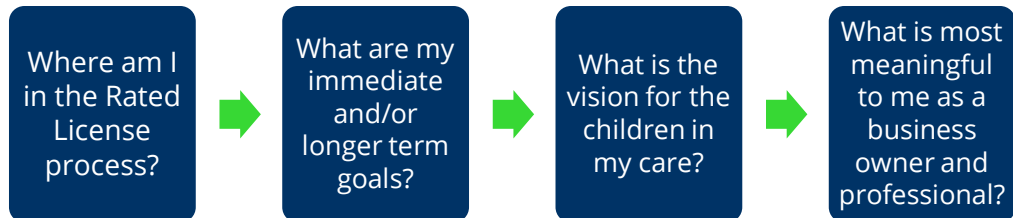


GETTING STARTED WITH A SELF-STUDY



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:

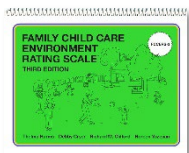


Once you've reflected on the big picture, it's time to zoom in. Gather information collected from either the Self-Assessment: Using an Outreach Assessment Report form or Thinking More About worksheets: Activities OR Language and Books. Use the FCCERS-3 as your guide. Take a snapshot of where you are today, what's working, and what can grow. From there, your next steps will become clear.

What do I need?



Time: A self-study will take three months. 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.



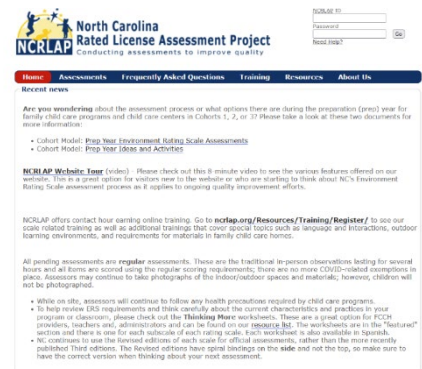
A plan and documentation: NCRLAP offers a variety of tools to support your self-study, including "Thinking More" worksheets, various training videos and recorded webinars, a reflection form, planning form, and an action plan document. Whichever strategies you use, remember to document your efforts over the course of three months.

Learning more about the FCCERS-3 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.
- ❖ Did you participate in an Outreach assessment? Use your 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. Using the Thinking More Worksheets or your Outreach Assessment along with the corresponding scale, pick one or two topics to start with and narrow your ideas down to manageable steps and actions. The steps of a self-study should be repeated, so focus on what is realistic 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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