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Welcome to the Informational Webinar

- All attendees will be muted throughout the broadcast to ensure great audio quality and minimize background noise.

- Questions will be answered at the end of this webinar. Please type your questions in the "Questions" box on the right-hand side of your screen.

- This webinar will be available to view within 24 hours after broadcast at **EarlyLearningIndiana.org.**

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Elevate Learning Project: Focus on Transforming Environments

Eligible Early Learning Programs

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Who can participate?

Non-profit licensed child care centers, registered ministries and school-based programs can train a team member to conduct assessments and lead intervention selection.

Licensed family child care programs can join a cohort facilitated by a community partner who will conduct assessments.

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Agenda

1. Elevate Learning Project: Focus on Transforming Environments

2. Assessing Classrooms

3. How to Participate

4. Q&A

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Our Mission

Ensure every child is empowered with the essential knowledge and skills to thrive in kindergarten and beyond.

Children cannot reach their full potential, and Indiana will not be truly prosperous, if we fail to capitalize on the opportunity of learning in the early years. To help children make the most of the early years of learning, ELI aims to:

Inform

- Influence practice, funding and public policy through research insights.
- Monitor and communicate progress.
- Anticipate future needs.

Practice

- Demonstrate the art of possible by operating a network of Day Early Learning centers that continuously improve to optimize learning and development outcomes.

Enable

- Design and attract effective models and tools and incubate pilots.
- Invest in on-the-ground, community-led projects that expand access and deepen practice.
- Equip the early learning workforce to be capable of driving learning and development outcomes.

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Elevate Learning Project: Focus on Transforming Environments

Elevate Learning Project

This new multi-million-dollar effort will support the growth of classroom practice in early learning programs across Indiana and improve learning outcomes for children under the age of five.

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New Initiatives to Drive Impact

Focus on Transforming Environments:

Engage programs across the state to implement targeted improvements in their classrooms guided by environment rating scales.

Launching now!

Focus on Improving Interactions:

Engage educators and community partners in efforts to measure and improve interactions between educators and children.

Coming Summer & Fall 2025

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Great learning environments don't happen by accident— they're built.

Transforming Environments

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ASSESS CLASSROOMS
MAY-JULY

- Eligible early learning providers assess at least two classrooms using ERS tools.
- Family child care homes join cohorts for partner-led assessments using FCCERS tools.

UNDERSTAND YOUR DATA
JULY-AUGUST

- Submit relevant assessment data
- Receive technical assistance from national experts to interpret findings and identify interventions
- Select appropriate interventions

IMPLEMENT AN INTERVENTION
SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER

- Receive new classroom materials and training
- Start implementing specific improvements
- Attend specialized professional development

SEE RESULTS
DECEMBER

- Reassess classrooms
- Submit follow-up data
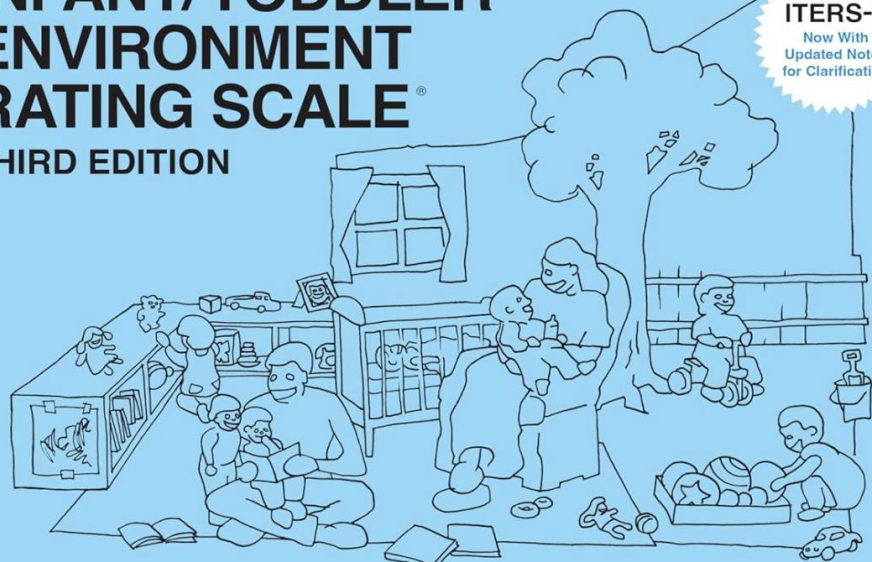- Observe measurable improvement in child learning outcomes

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Children are...
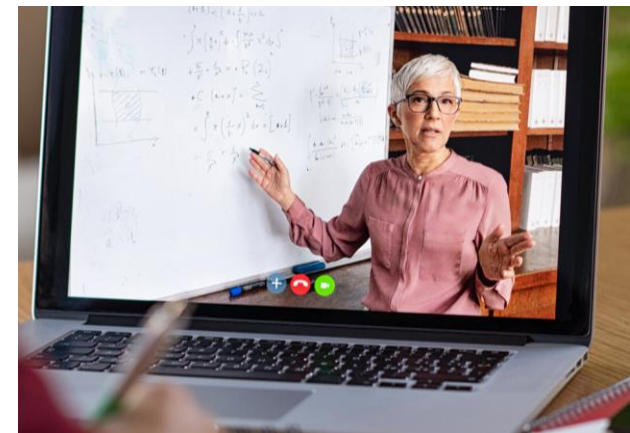
Investigators. Inquirers. Explorers. Curious. Creative. Problem-solvers. Mathematicians. Readers. Writers. Scientists. Active members of their communities.

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The Learning

THE POWER OF LIGHT

CULTIVATING INFANT CURIOSITY THROUGH LIGHT EXPLORATION

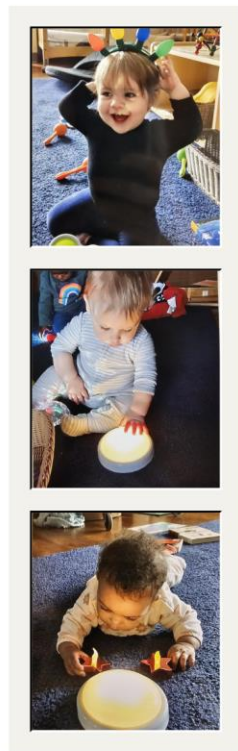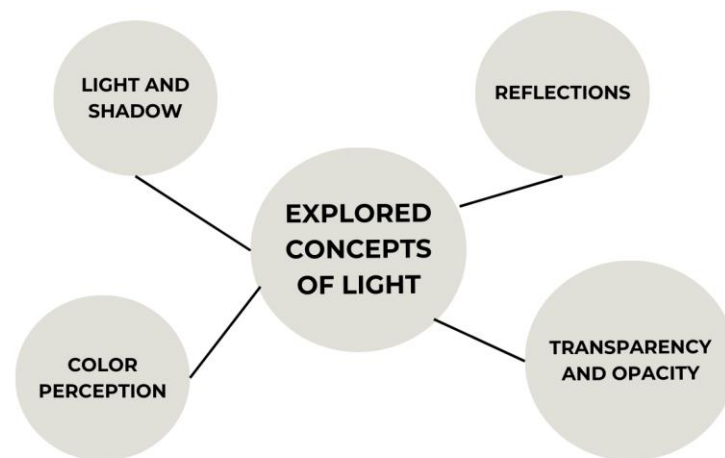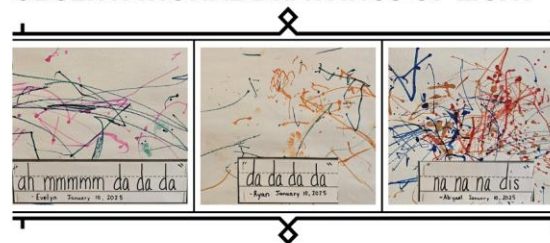### THE JOURNEY: HOW WE EXPLORED LIGHT

THE LIGHT STUDYT BEGAN WITH A SIMPLE OBSERVATION. DURING MORNING PLAYTIME, CHILDREN WERE FASCINATED BY THE WAY SUNLIGHT FILTERED THROUGH THE WINDOWS AND CAST SHIFTING SHADOWS ON THE FLOOR. THIS NATURAL CURIOSITY ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF LIGHT SPARKED OUR INQUIRY-BASED PROJECT INTO THE PROPERTIES OF LIGHT, ITS MOVEMENT, AND ITS CONNECTION TO THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT.

OBSERVATIONAL DRAWINGS OF LIGHT

EXPLORED CONCEPTS OF LIGHT
- LIGHT AND SHADOW
- REFLECTIONS
- COLOR PERCEPTION
- TRANSPARENCY AND OPACITY

OUR FINDINGS

THE LIGHT STUDY PROVIDED A RICH OPPORTUNITY FOR INQUIRY AND EXPLORATION IN THE CLASSROOM. IT ALLOWED CHILDREN TO ACTIVELY INVESTIGATE THE CONCEPT OF LIGHT, ENGAGE IN CREATIVE PLAY, AND DEVELOP A RANGE OF SKILLS. AS ALWAYS, THE CHILDREN'S CURIOSITY AND QUESTIONS GUIDED THE PROJECT, ENSURING THAT LEARNING WAS DYNAMIC, INTERACTIVE, AND CHILD-CENTERED.

"When we begin to value who children are (not just what we want them to be), a shift happens in the way we think about learning and teaching. Our jobs become more engaging and fulfilling... We strive to make early childhood visible and valued for the ways that it can enrich our humanity and contribute to our collective identity. To bring this transformation about, we need a pedagogy (a way of thinking about learning and teaching) that mirrors our vision for children."

Deb Curtis and Margie Carter, *The Art of Awareness: How observation can transform your teaching, page 4.*

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Why use the Environment Rating Scales?

- Offers a definition of quality and uses observation "to base assessment of classroom quality" (ITERS-3, 2017, p.2)
- Used to inform program improvement
- "Emphasis on cognitive development, including language, mathematics, and science" (ITERS-3, 2017, p. 2)
- Fosters learning environments rich in possibility
- Identifies and demonstrates growth over time
- Accessibility of training

Inadequate 1	2	Minimal 3	4	Good 5	6	Excellent 7

21. Math/number*

1.1 No appropriate math/number materials are accessible.*

1.2 No math talk is observed being used by staff with children (Ex: staff do not count, say shape names, use quantity or size words, say nursery rhymes, or sing songs containing numbers or counting).

1.3 Math talk is used in a punitive or threatening manner with any child during the observation (Ex: child threatened with timeout if she does not stop talking by the time the teacher counts to five).

3.1 Some appropriate math/number play materials that show size, shape, or number are accessible (Ex: grasping toys or rattles with shapes or numbers; shape puzzles; toy telephones).*

3.2 Staff sometimes talk about shape or size when children use materials (Ex: point out differently sized dolls; name shapes of toys).
Observe once

3.3 Staff sometimes point to each item as they count for children (Ex: count objects in a book; count how many children; count number of crackers being put on plate).
Observe once

5.1 Many appropriate math/number materials are accessible throughout the observation.*

5.2 Staff correctly compare shapes, quantity, or sizes (Ex: use words "more," "less" when referring to groups of objects; use "smallest," "bigger," or other size words when referring to objects).
Observe once

5.3 Staff count objects for children in an engaging manner (Ex: playfully count child's toes when changing diaper; point to or move blocks as they are counted; pat child on head as each child is counted; count crackers as they are put onto child's plate).
Observe for two different children

5.4 Staff use number songs, chants, nursery rhymes, or finger plays with children in an engaging manner.
Observe once

7.1 Staff help twos become aware of what printed numbers mean (Ex: point to the number and count the objects pictured on the page in counting book; point to number on puzzle piece and count number of objects).*
Observe once
NA permitted

7.2 Staff use math words to describe the sequence of daily events. (Ex: "First we put on our coats, second we go outdoors."; "Our number one job now is to clean up, then number two, we can wash our hands for lunch, and number three, we can have lunch.").

7.3 Staff show number of fingers when they use number talk with children.
Observe once

ITERS-3

Why are we assessing learning environments?

- Environment is comprehension of a larger view

- "Physical environment, children's relationships with one another and with significant adults, and instruction"

14. Staff use of books with children*

1.1 Staff do not use books with children during the observation.*

1.2 Book times are unpleasant or not engaging for many of the children (Ex: children forced to listen; punitive atmosphere; children can't see book; children's reactions are treated as interruptions).

1.3 Staff reading or use of books with children is dull, disinterested, and/or unenthusiastic.*

1.4 Inappropriate book observed being used with the children (Ex: reading a book that has frightening content, gives a negative social message, or shows prejudice; that is too long or too difficult to understand).*

3.1 Staff read a book with children at least once during the observation.*

3.2 Book time is arranged to encourage children's engagement (Ex: children can easily see the book; crowding does not cause problems; books used that interest children; appropriate length).

3.3 The majority of children appear to be engaged when book [...] may lose in [...] but then be [...] one child is [...] others are).

3.4 Staff show [...] enjoyment

5.1 Staff read books to children during the observation, either to the whole group, to a small group, or individually.*

5.2 Accommodations are made for children who require additional support during book time (Ex: children not fluent in classroom language, with developmental [...]

7.1 Appropriate books that relate to current classroom activities or themes are read to or used with children.*
Observe once

7.2 Staff and children discuss the content of a book in a way that engages children.
Observe once

Inadequate		Minimal		Good		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

15. Encouraging children's use of books*

1.1 Less than 10 intact books accessible.*

1.2 Children frequently told to use books as a time-filler during transitions, and most children are not interested.

1.3 Most accessible books are not appropriate (Ex: meant for younger or older children; have inappropriate content; frightening; give a negative social message; in very poor repair).

1.4 No obvious place to use books (Ex: books are scattered throughout the classroom, even in areas of active play where reading would be difficult).

3.1 At least 15 books are accessible to children for at least 25 minutes during the observation.*

3.2 Accessible books include some fantasy and some factual.

3.3 Most accessible books appear to be in good repair and generally appropriate for children.

3.4 Some books gathered together and stored for easy access so that children can reach them and have a place to use them (Ex: not crammed into a tightly packed shelf; not too high).

5.1 Many books accessible for at least 1 [...]

7.1 A wide selection of books is [...]

Inadequate		Minimal		Good		Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

16. Becoming familiar with print*

1.1 Print only used in a way that is not clearly associated with spoken language or pictures (Ex: word labels used without pictures; rote word or letter identification expected with no clues as to meaning).

1.2 Staff respond negatively when children show little or no interest in activities used to teach letters or words (Ex: scold child or send to time-out; make child work on letter activity until finished even though others get to play).

1.3 No connection is made between print in the classroom and its immediate function for children (Ex: word labels on furniture not used in a meaningful way; children's printed names not used to show possessions)

1.4 Children who are not yet able are often asked to identify or write letters or words (Ex: children lose interest in group during letter naming activity; struggle over writing names).
Observe twice

3.1 Some visible print is combined with pictures so that children can understand meanings or sounds that go with what they are viewing.*

3.2 Staff point out and read print to children (Ex: read names on displayed pictures; point to words in books; sing alphabet song while pointing to letters).*
Observe once

3.3 Printed names of children used in the classroom (Ex: on cubbies, put on artwork; name cards used by children to show they are present; more advanced child encouraged to write own name).*

5.1 Most visible print is combined with pictures.*

5.2 Staff show that print is a useful tool as they explain how or why they use it (Ex: label child's toy, or encourage more able child to do it to be sure that it is taken home; write note with child to remind parent to bring in snack; child asks what is for lunch and staff points to and reads menu for the day).

5.3 Staff write down what a child says, more advanced child encouraged to write (Ex: staff write what child says about artwork; makes chart based on child input during small-group time; more advanced and interested child writes in book he creates).*
Observe once.

7.1 Picture/print materials relate to current classroom topics and show a variety of words.*

7.2 Staff observed writing down what a child says in a way that engages the child.*
Observe twice

7.3 Staff frequently point out letters and words as they read print, helping children hear the sounds of the letters or words in a way that engages children.

7.4 Picture/word instructions are used to guide children through multistep activities (Ex: cooking recipes; planting seeds instruction; proper handwashing).*
Observe once

Why are we assessing learning environments?

- Improve child outcomes

- Increase awareness of quality

- Identify opportunities for professional development

- Facilitate communication and collaboration

How do the rating scales help determine next steps?

Data collected via the rating scales (via observation) identifies strengths and areas of focus.

Data analysis – you are not alone!
Experts from the field will support you in identifying these areas.

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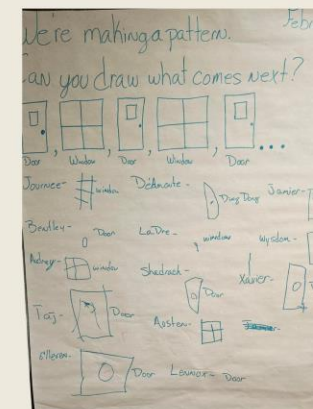# How does this information inform our instructional practices?

Architects in Action
The Building Study

Methodology

The children used various methods of inquiry to capture their learning.

- **Question of the Day**
- **Charting**
- **Webbing**
- **Hands on explorations**

How our journey into the building study began...

Children first showed interest in buildings through play in the block center. Peer to peer conversations of homes and other structures were often heard. Questions and thoughts such as, **"How big is your house?"** and **"Why are houses and buildings different shapes?"** piqued their interests even more. These questions set the foundation for the study, and the teacher began building upon their curiosities.

3D Materials

After children created detailed observational drawings of their buildings and homes they designed models with 3D materials. These representations help them understand the forms and functions of the structures they're investigating.

Drawings of Homes

Observational drawings allows for rich, multi-layered expression and understanding. It serves as a tool for children to represent what they observe and how they interpret the world.

"I have big buildings and small buildings. My windows look like tic-tac-toe."-DeAmonte

Mediums used: Cardstock along with black Sharpie markers.

Reflection

The building study was not just about constructing models or understanding architecture—it was about encouraging children to engage in a rich, multi-layered inquiry into the world of structures and spaces. It fostered creativity, problem-solving, collaboration, and a deep understanding of the physical world, while encouraging our children to express their ideas in diverse ways. It was a powerful, interdisciplinary way to integrate art, science, and social studies into the classroom.

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How to
Participate

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Who can participate?

Non-profit licensed child care centers, registered ministries and school-based programs can train a team member to conduct assessments and lead intervention selection.

Licensed family child care programs can join a cohort facilitated by a community partner who will conduct assessments.

Interest Form

In addition to basic program demographics, the interest form will gather the following:

- Number of classrooms and ages of children served
- Any previous experience conducting Environment Rating Scales assessments

Interest forms are processed on a rolling basis, but funds are limited and programs will be selected on a first-come, first served basis. Complete the interest form as soon as possible to secure the opportunity.

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Participating Programs Will :

- Receive training and resources to complete Environment Rating Scale(s), including training manuals that walk you through the process and include resources on how to complete assessments.

- Submit selected scores from your assessments.

- Participate in technical assistance facilitated by experts from the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) to explore assessment data and review a menu of interventions in areas like literacy, math, whole child curriculum and more that can foster deeper learning.

- Select and implement an intervention with funding support from Early Learning Indiana.

- Receive new classroom materials and professional development for classroom teams.

- Reassess classrooms and see the impact made.

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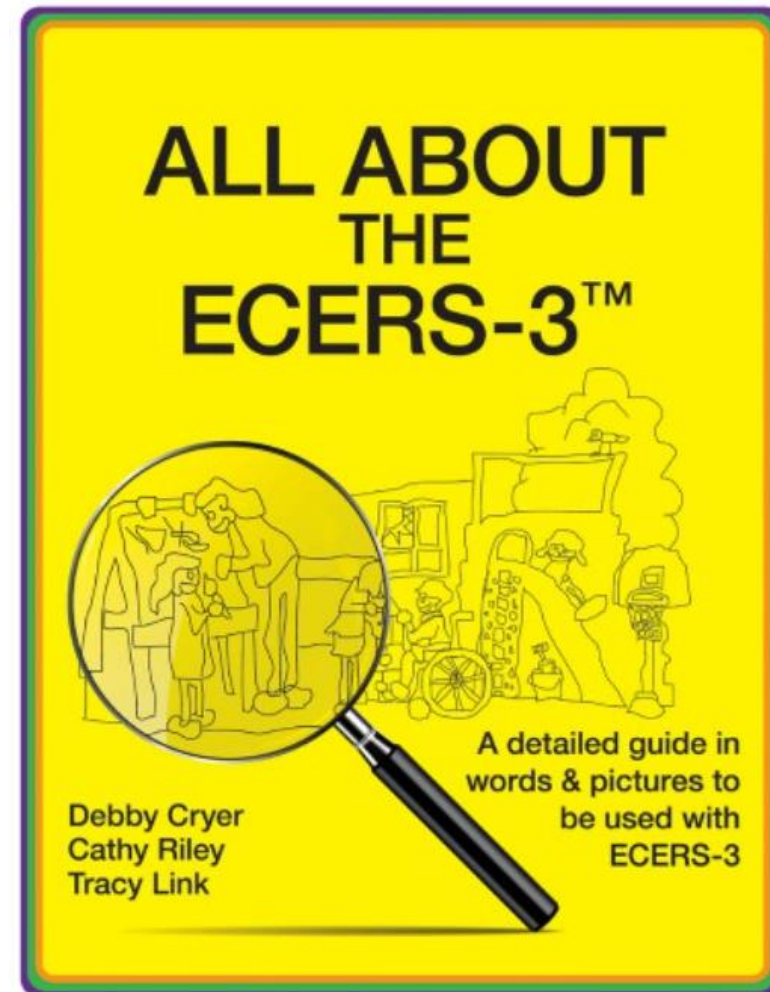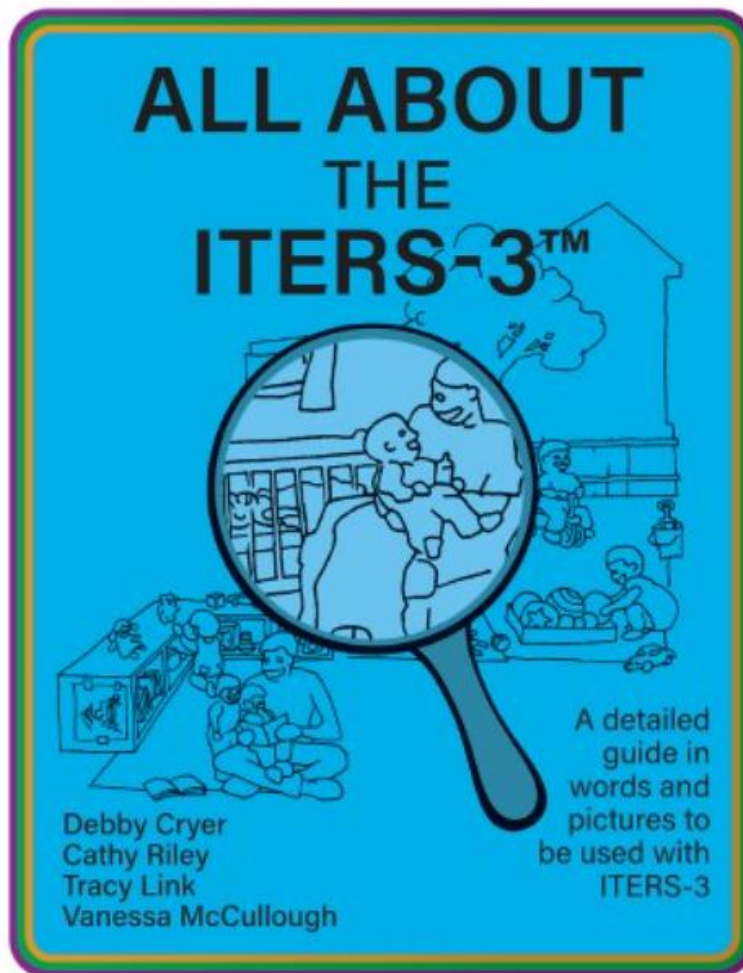
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Early Learning Indiana provides:

- Code for one-time 5 hour technical training*

- Environment Rating Scale(s)

- All About the ITERS-3 and/or All About the ECERS-3 book(s)

Programs must designate an individual to:

- Complete one-time technical training*

- Conduct individual assessments for at least 2 classrooms*

*Per Environment Rating Scale. Programs serving across multiple age ranges will need to take training for both ITERS and ECERS, and assess 2 classrooms per age range.

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Thank you!

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