

# Early Childhood Professional Credential

## Demonstrated Competencies FAQ



To recognize the skills that professionals demonstrate in their everyday work with young children, the Early Childhood Professional Credential has a Demonstrated Competencies pathway. Through this pathway, professionals can earn points toward their Credential if they are observed with an approved observation tool and receive a qualifying score.

### How many points can you earn?

Initially, an individual can earn up to 10 points for Demonstrated Competencies. However, the total points for the credential remains 100 points and the maximum points for Formal Education, Ongoing Professional Development and Experience also remain the same. The Demonstrated Competency points can be earned as 'extra' points. The overall scoring system will now be:

- Formal Education up to 50 points
- Ongoing PD up to 30 points
- Experience up to 20 points–
- Demonstrated Competencies up to 10 'extra' points

Credential Levels based on a 100 point scale remain the same:

Early Childhood Professional I	10-20 points*must have points from at least 2 pathways
Early Childhood Professional II	21-35 points*must have points from at least 2 pathways
Early Childhood Professional III	36-50 points*must have points from at least 2 pathways
Early Childhood Professional IV	51-60 points*must have points from all 3 pathways
Early Childhood Professional V	61-70 points*must have points from all 3 pathways
Early Childhood Professional VI	71+ points *must have points from all 3 pathways

**\*Points for Demonstrated Competencies do not count toward minimum pathways required for each credential level.** Additionally, points can be earned for multiple tools. For example, if a professional participates in an ITERS-R observation as well as an Infant CLASS observation and earns a qualifying score for each observation, points can be earned for both of those tools (up to the maximum of 10 points). Please see the Demonstrated Competencies Scoring Requirements documents for more information on the points that can be earned for each tool.

### How was the scoring approach developed?

The ECPD Team worked with partners and stakeholders across the state to develop this scoring approach. To begin, Clayton Early Learning conducted an in-depth Literature and Practice review of potential observation tools to use in this area. Specifically, Clayton Early Learning explored:

- Which tools have good alignment with the ECE competency domains and strong validity as measures of these competencies?
- Which tools have systems for ensuring reliability so that we can trust that the scoring is fair for all providers and across community contexts?

- Which tools are accessible across Colorado and across types of providers (districts, community centers and family homes)?
- Which tools do professionals find useful and relevant for their ongoing work in early childhood education?

The team at Clayton Early Learning reviewed dozens of tools across a range of domain areas. This included tools that measure global teaching practices, tools that focus on specific instructional practices or home visitation practices along with tools that look closely at administrative and leadership practices. As part of this process, a detailed bibliography and reference tool was created for the state leadership team to access information on each tool along with strengths, limits and considerations unique to each tool. The team then selected a few tools from the bibliography to pilot as measures of demonstrated competency within the Colorado Early Childhood Credential System.

The next step in developing this approach was gathering feedback and input from professionals across the state. To achieve this, a Demonstrated Competencies Presentation was made available on the Professional Development Information System (PDIS). All professionals registered in the PDIS had the opportunity to view the presentation and respond to survey questions in order to share their feedback. 92% of survey respondents indicated that they agree with this scoring approach. Additionally, survey respondents shared critical feedback in the following areas:

- This scoring approach should align with the Colorado Shines QRIS system.
- Statewide access to these observation tools is an area of concern.
- The CLASS Tool is considered the most valuable of the tools for informing professional practice and professional development.

Results of these survey responses were shared with the ECPD Advisory who provided additional guidance for initial implementation.

Based on the feedback from survey respondents and the ECPD Advisory, the ECPD Team adjusted scoring ranges to align with Colorado Shines QRIS and are developing strategies to increase access to observations over the next year.

## Which tools are included?

In this first phase, the following tools are included in the Demonstrated Competencies scoring. Additional tools will be added over time:

- ITERS-R
- ECERS-R
- FCCERS-R
- Infant CLASS
- Toddler CLASS
- PreK CLASS
- K-3 CLASS
- Colorado State Model Teacher Evaluation System
- TPOT

## How were the scores and points determined?

Based on information gathered through the Literature and Practice Review, initial scoring ranges were determined in collaboration with the research team at Clayton Early Learning. This review included details about average scores earned on the tools nationally and in validation studies. Scoring ranges were then finalized to reflect stakeholder input to align with Colorado Shines QRIS and to align with scores that research shows indicate meaningful levels of quality.

## How are scores submitted?

To earn points toward the EC Professional Credential, an observation must be completed by a qualified/certified observer. The approved protocol and observer qualification requirements can be found on the Demonstrated Competencies Scoring Requirements document for each tool. After the observation is completed and qualifying scores are documented, the observer must complete the Demonstrated Competencies Scoring Submission Form and send this along with copies of the score sheet and their qualification documentation to the PDIS Help Desk. Once these materials are received, PDIS Help Desk Staff will enter the information into the PDIS so that points are awarded toward the professional's credential.

## Who can earn the points?

Any professional who is listed as part of the observation can earn points for Demonstrated Competencies.

## How do professionals who don't work directly with young children earn these points?

At this point in time, the most widely used observation tools that have a strong research base and have been through rigorous validation studies are tools focused directly on the learning environment or program administration. However, the ECWD Team is committed to developing opportunities for Early Childhood Professionals who do not work directly in the learning environment or as a program administrator to be recognized in the Demonstrated Competencies component. If you have ideas for how this might be done in a consistent and reliable way, please contact Jennifer OBrien at [Obrien\\_jennifer@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Obrien_jennifer@cde.state.co.us).

## How long are the points valid?

Implementation guides for the approved tools recommend that observations be conducted annually. Additionally, to earn points toward a Colorado Shines QRIS program rating, CLASS observations must have been completed in the last 12 months. To align with these recommendations, the Demonstrated Competency points will be valid for one year from the date of the observation.

## Who can do the observation?

Any individual who meets the qualifications requirement for the specific tool being used can conduct the observation for the purpose of Demonstrated Competencies scoring. To ensure the accuracy of an observation, programs are encouraged to use outside observers; however scores will initially be accepted from either internal or external observers. Over time, scores received from internal observers will be compared to scores received from external observers to ensure that scores represent a truly objective observation.

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## What do I do if a tool I use is not on the list of accepted tools?

The ECWD Team is interested in adding to the list of approved tools and will be working with the EC Professional Credential Evaluation Committee and the ECPD Advisory to develop criteria for these additions. Please contact Jennifer O'Brien at [Obrien\\_jennifer@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Obrien_jennifer@cde.state.co.us) to recommend additional tools for consideration.

## What if I don't earn a high enough score for points?

Ultimately, the most important use of these observation tools is to inform professional development and continuous quality improvement. Feedback from the observation should always be used to set individual and program goals for increasing skills and improving practice. If you don't initially earn a high enough score to be awarded credential points, give yourself time to learn and try out new practices that will increase your score.

## My program is getting an ERS evaluation as part of the QRIS Rating, can my Demonstrated Competency points be entered in time to affect my Credential that will then affect my program's QRIS Rating?

Unfortunately, because of ERS appeals issues and timing around the production of the QRIS Rating, we cannot do this.