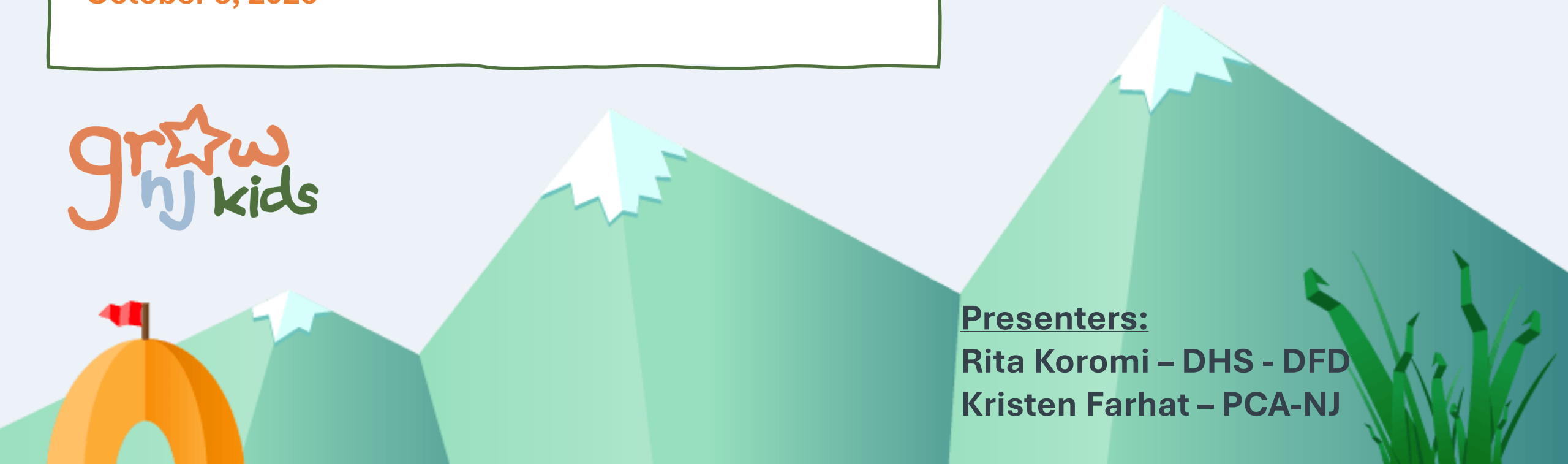
Understanding ECERS - 3 and Grow NJ Kids

Using Quality Assessment to Strengthen Everyday Practice

Community-Based Private Provider Conference

October 8, 2026



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Today's Objectives

- Understand the purpose and structure of ECERS-3.
- Explore how assessment results can inform meaningful program improvement.
- Connect quality improvement to daily practice through Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)
- Recognize how coordinated quality approach can support expectations across DOE, DHS, and DCF.

ECERS-3: A Tool for Understanding Quality

ECERS-3 helps programs look at what children experience throughout the day — not just what is written in a plan.

Observe

Looks at the environment, routines, interactions, and learning opportunities children experience.

Reflect

Provides a common lens for identifying strengths and areas that may need attention.

Improve

Turns observation and data into concrete changes in practice, materials, schedules, and supports.

Key message: ECERS-3 is most useful when it is treated as a quality-improvement resource—not a one-time "test."

Understanding the ECERS-3 Structure

ECERS-3 organizes observations into six broad areas of classroom quality:

Space & Furnishings

How the environment supports children and staff

Personal Care Routines

Health, safety, and daily routines

Language & Literacy

Conversations, books, and language-rich experiences

Learning Activities

Materials and experiences across learning areas

Interaction

Peer and adult-child interactions

Program Structure

Schedule, transitions, and opportunities for play

What does Quality Look like in Practice

Think beyond “having the materials.” Quality is reflected in how the environment is used with children.

Accessible

Children can independently reach and use materials.

Intentional

Materials and routines have a clear developmental purpose.

Responsive

Adults notice children’s cues, interests, language, and needs.

Engaging

Children have meaningful choices, sustained play, and rich conversations.

How ECERS-3 Connects to Grow NJ Kids

Grow NJ Kids uses multiple sources of evidence to support a broader picture of program quality. ECERS-3 contributes an observational view of children's daily classroom experiences.

Quality Standards

Program policies, practices, professional development, family engagement, and systems.

ECERS-3 Observation

A structured look at the classroom environment and children's experiences.

CQI

A process for using evidence to prioritize, test, and sustain improvement.

Together, these pieces help programs move from compliance toward a culture of continuous improvement.

Grow NJ Kids



- Grow NJ Kids Revised Standards
- Grow NJ Kids Standards Guidance Tool (in development)
- GNJK Self-Assessment Checklist
- Grow NJ Kids At Glance Professional Development
- NJAEYC and Head Start Alignment Documents
- Standards Resource Videos
- Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Using Assessment Results Productively

Start with patterns—not a single number.

- Celebrate areas of strength and identify what contributed to success.
- Look for repeated themes across items or subscales.
- Ask what is within the program's control to change.
- Prioritize changes that will have the greatest impact on children's daily experiences.
- Use observation findings alongside other data, staff input, and family feedback.

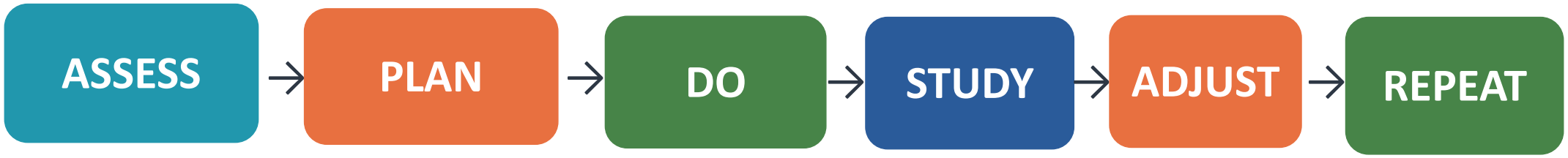
From Score to Action

Use ECERS-3 results to identify a small, practical improvement step and monitor progress over time.

1. **Notice**
   What did the evidence show?
2. **Review**
   What pattern or priority do we see?
3. **Select**
   What is one focused improvement area?
4. **Act**
   What small change will strengthen daily practice?
5. **Check**
   How will we know the change helped?

Small, specific, observable changes are easier to implement and sustain.

CQI: Making Improvement a Way of Work



Use evidence → try a change → learn → refine → repeat

CQI becomes a routine when teams regularly ask:

"What did we learn, and what should we try next?"

Evidence
Use data, observations, feedback, and rating results.

Small Tests of Change
Try a manageable change before scaling it.

Reflection
Use results to refine and repeat the cycle.

One Quality Approach—Multiple Expectations

Programs often work within requirements and guidance from multiple agencies. A strong quality-improvement system can help organize the work around shared outcomes for children.

DOE

Learning environment, teaching practice, curriculum/standards alignment, and child outcomes.

DHS / Grow NJ Kids

Quality standards, assessment, technical assistance, and continuous quality improvement.

DCF - OOL

Health, safety, licensing, and regulatory expectations that support safe care environments.

Practical message for providers:

Quality improvement is one integrated way of working across expectations.

Activity: Turn a Finding into a CQI Step

Scenario: An ECERS-3 observation suggests children have limited access to books and language-rich conversations during parts of the day.

Reflective Questions:

- What might be contributing to this pattern?
- What is one realistic change the program could try?
- What would staff need to make the change successful?
- How would you know whether the change is working?

Key Takeaways

- ECERS-3 offers a structured view of children's everyday experiences.
- Assessment results should lead to reflection and action.
- CQI is an ongoing quality improvement routine—not a one-time event.
- Strong daily practice supports alignment to multiple agency expectations.
- Start small: choose one meaningful priority, test, and review the impact.

Quality improvement is not an event.
It is how the program works every day.

Reflection

What is one idea you want to take back to your program?

Questions?