

Sylva, K., Siraj-Blatchford, I., Melhuish, E.C., Sammons, P., Taggart, B., Evans, E., Dobson, A., Jeavons, M., Lewis, K., Morahan, M. and Sadler, S. (1999). *Technical Paper 6 - The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Characteristics of the Centres in the EPPE Sample: Observational Profiles*. London: DfEE / Institute of Education, University of London.

The EPPE project investigates the characteristics of early childhood education and care through a variety of research methods; this paper reports on just two instruments. This paper describes the characteristics of the 141 centres attended by 3 and 4 year-old children in the EPPE sample. A 'centre profile' was created for each centre through systematic observation and questions to staff. The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale: Revised (ECERS-R) was used in drawing up each centre's profile along with an extension to it the ECERS - Extension (based on the Desirable Learning Outcomes). The ECERS-R rating scale consisted of seven sub-scales which provide an overview of the pre-school environment, covering aspects of the setting from furnishings to individuality of care and the quality of social interactions (described more fully later). The ECERS-E describes the curriculum within the pre-school, including areas such as maths and literacy. Each sub-scale is comprised of a range of items describing 'quality' of the specific type of provision. Each item was rated 1 (inadequate) to 7 (excellent). The ECERS-R and ECERS-E are one approach to describing the 'processes' through which children are cared for and educated.