GEORGIA ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR THE FCCERS-R

GA Additional Notes for the FCCERS-R
The GA Additional Notes provide supplementary information for the Environment Rating Scales so that participants in the assessment portion of Georgia’s Quality Rated (Voluntary Improvement System) may correctly interpret and score items found within the scale. A primary aim for the notes is to further define or explain requirements of certain items to improve inter-rater reliability or consistency among assessors working with Quality Rated (QR).

Participants in Quality Rated should be aware of the following:
• Unless otherwise specified Quality Rated assessors use both the GA Additional Notes for the FCCERS-R and the FCCERS-R Additional Notes for Clarification created by the authors (available at http://www.ersi.info/index.html).
• GA Additional Notes provide further clarification to assist in the interpretation of the scale and the FPG Additional Notes for Clarification.
• The GA Additional Notes are updated (approximately) every 6 months and QR assessors conduct assessments using the most current notes. Child care professionals are encouraged to download and use the most current version of the notes from the Quality Rated website.

The GA Additional Notes were compiled and further developed by members of the QR management team, especially by our State Anchors and Anchor Advisors. In April 2012 with permission from Debby Cryer and Thelma Harms, the Additional Notes for Clarification for the ECERS-R, ITERS-R, FCCRS-R, and SACERS were retrieved from the Frank Porter Graham website (http://www.ersi.info/index.html) and used for the basis for the GA Additional notes. Since then, Quality Rated has made modifications and additions to the notes as described below. A complete history of modifications to the notes for clarification prior to September 1, 2003 may be found on the FPG website.

General definitions for accessible, appropriate, hand washing, infant/toddler, much of the day, some and many, staff, usually, and weather permitting come directly from definitions in the FCCERS-R scale and FPG notes for clarification.
GENERAL GA NOTES FOR THE FCCERS-R
Refer to FPG FCCERS-R General Additional Notes for Clarification for definitions of terms used in the scale.

Accessible: Children can reach and are allowed to use toys, materials, furnishings, and/or equipment. Toys on open shelves must be within easy reach of the children. No barriers can be present to prevent children from using them.

- If materials are stored out of reach, they must be placed within reach to be counted as accessible. For example, if they are stored out of a non-mobile infant’s reach, the baby must be moved to reach them, or the materials must be placed close to the non-mobile infant.

- During an observation, if there is evidence that the provider regularly provides access to the variety of toys required for an item or indicator, credit can be given for “accessible”. Materials must be shown to be easily accessible to the provider.

Appropriate: Used in various items to mean age- and developmentally-suited for the children in the group being observed. In determining whether the requirements for “appropriate” are being met within the context of a particular indicator, consideration is given to whether the children’s needs for protection, stimulation, and positive relationships are being met in ways that are supportive and meaningful.

Handwashing and hand sanitizer use: The 2011 edition of Caring for Our Children (page 113) states that hand sanitizers can be used in place of handwashing unless hands are visibly soiled. Use can be by adults and children 2 years of age and older. However; GA licensing does not allow the use of hand sanitizers in lieu of handwashing, therefore QR assessors are required to only count handwashing as acceptable when scoring these indicators. If hand sanitizer is used after handwashing or when running water is not accessible (such as on the playground), the product must contain 60-95% alcohol, manufacturer’s instructions are followed, and very close supervision of children is provided to ensure proper use and to avoid ingestion or contact with eyes and mucous membranes. Be sure to check that the manufacturer’s directions for use are followed exactly, because if not, do not give credit for any time when not followed. You should ask to see the original container with directions for use, if it is not observable. If children are not closely supervised when using the sanitizer, consider in supervision-related indicators for the item specifically, and also in Safety and Supervision. To get credit for correct handwashing the time for rubbing soapy hands together (out of the flow of water), before rinsing is 20 seconds. Antibacterial soaps should not be used. Children using shared art or sensory materials must wash hands, both before and after use. Handwashing or use of a hand sanitizer is required for all ERS observers upon entering the program.
**Children:** Includes all children enrolled who are 12 years of age or younger, including the provider’s own children, children who are relatives of the provider, and children from unrelated families.

- Infants are defined as children birth through 11 months of age. Toddlers are children between the ages of 12 and 30 months. Preschool children are between the ages of 30 months and 5 years (pre-kindergarten). School age children are 5 years (kindergarten) to 12 years.

- In all items or indicators where a particular age cut-off is given (e.g. “Score NA when all children are younger than 12 months of age”), some flexibility is allowed. If there is only one child in the group who exceeds the age cut-off, and that child is less than one month older than the age requirement, then the item/indicator can still be marked NA. If the child is more than one month older than the age cut-off, or if there are two or more children who meet the age requirement, then the item/indicator must be scored. An exception to this rule is if a child with disability is enrolled. In this case, the necessity for a requirement will depend on the child’s abilities and disabilities.

**Much of the day:** In most items, “much of the day” is associated with the children’s access to materials typically used indoors (e.g., books, art materials, fine motor or dramatic play toys). It means most of the time that any child may be awake, ready, and able to play. If children are prevented from using materials for long periods by overly long routines when the children have to wait with nothing to do, being kept in groups that they are not engaged in, or being kept in areas where access is not possible, then credit cannot be given for “much of the day.” Appropriate group activities in which children are engaged and interested for short periods that match their abilities are permissible as long as they do not significantly affect access to materials throughout the rest of the day. If children (or any child) who are ready to play are prevented from reaching and using materials for a total of 20 minutes during a 3-hour observation, then “much of the day” cannot be given credit. The 20 minutes can be calculated as one 20-minute time period, or may be calculated as a combination of smaller time periods that equal 20 minutes. “Much of the day” should be considered separately for each item where the requirement appears. In some cases, credit might be given on one item for much of the day while not given for another item. If children are kept outdoors for extremely long periods (1/3 of the day or more), thus limiting access to materials typically used indoors, then to give credit for “much of the day”, such materials must be provided outdoors as well. Special attention should be paid to individual children who may not have the same access to materials as do the other children. For example, non-mobile children or children who are confined in a playpen may not have the same access to play materials as the other children in a group. For non-mobile infants, all required toys or materials do not have to be accessible at the same time during the whole observation because of problems with clutter. However, there must be clear indications that the required variety and numbers of materials are accessible at various times during the day. A cranky baby who needs close physical
contact to be soothed may not be “ready to play” and thus not require access to materials during the “cranky” times. When children are taken for stroller rides, do not count the time spent riding as part of the 20 minutes when children do not have access to materials for “much of the day” as long as children are generally engaged (one child may be less engaged than others for some part of the ride, but most children should show interest, and no child should show distress), and the actual stroller ride is no longer than 20 minutes. Some children may fall asleep in the stroller, but in this case they are not awake and ready to play, so falling asleep should not count in the timing for much of the day. Sometimes there are delays in putting children into strollers, and after the walk, removing them. If children have to wait for long periods (over 3 minutes with no access to play materials) while waiting in the strollers, then the time waiting should be counted towards the 20 minute limit that will disallow crediting “much of the day.” If the stroller ride is more than 20 minutes, do not give credit for “much of the day” in the Active Physical Play item, indicator 3.1, since children are not able to freely move around when confined in a stroller.

**Some:** Denotes presence in the environment, and at least 1 example must be observed, unless the guidelines require more examples.

**Many:** Usually means more than one example, with specific numbers listed for different items and generally includes a variety of materials. Children should have access without long periods of waiting or undue competition.

**Provider:** Generally refers to the adult who is directly involved with the children, caring for and educating them for much of the day. Adults who are in the home for short periods of the day, or who are not a regular daily part of the program, do not count in the evaluating whether the requirements of the items are met unless they have a substantial negative impact in the operation of the group, or on one or more specific children.

**Supervision:** The provider is only allowed limited momentary lapse in supervision (2-4 minutes), and when children are out of sight, they must be within hearing range. In addition, children must be in a safe place, involved in low-risk activities (eating is a high risk activity) while not within view, and checked on frequently. Children under the age of 6 generally cannot be outdoors unsupervised, and older children must be checked on regularly.

**Usually:** Used to indicate the common or prevalent practice observed, that is carried out with only a few lapses.
Weather permitting: Children participate in outdoor activities almost every day, unless there is active precipitation or public announcements that advise people to remain indoors due to weather conditions such as high levels of pollution and extreme cold or heat that might cause health problems.

General references: Materials that are frequently used to assist in decision making are Caring for Our Children, 3rd edition (used for health, sanitation, and safety issues), the Handbook for Public Playground Safety, CPSC Publication No. 325 (for gross motor play issues) and the All About ECERS-R and ITERS-R. Links to these resources can be found in ERS Resources on the Quality Rated website: https://qualityrated.decal.ga.gov/ and providers are encouraged to access these.

ITEM 1: Indoor Space Used for Child Care
Indicator 7.2: Score “No” if there is carpet under the table where meals are served and they are not easy to clean.

ITEM 3: Provision for relaxation and comfort
Indicator 3.2: Soft toys must be accessible for at least 1 hour, daily in an 8-hour program.
Indicator 5.1: Do not consider Non-mobile infants for Much of the Day requirements.
Indicator 5.3: Consider the number enrolled.

ITEM 4: Arrangement of indoor space for child care
Indicator 3.3: This indicator looks at any household hazards found in the spaces used for child care activities or areas that are easily accessible to the children. Hazards here do not include safety issues regarding activity materials used by the children.

ITEM 5: Display for Children
Consider all age groups enrolled when scoring this item
Indicator 3.1: Children’s artwork can be considered in this indicator.
Indicator 3.3: Can include pages from coloring books/ditto pages.

ITEM 6: Space for Privacy
Indicator 7.2: Must observe.
ITEM 9: Meals/Snacks

**General Note:** USDA guidelines will be credited only by evidence observed during the observation. Items that are required by the food program to have nutrition labels to determine the adequacy of guidelines met will not be credited. As such, breaded meats, including chicken nuggets and fish sticks, will only be credited for proteins since adequacy of the breading to count towards grain requirements cannot be determined by observation.

**Indicator 5.4:** If menus are posted, they must be easily seen by parents. If you don’t see a menu, you will need to ask the question.

ITEM 10: Diapering/toileting

**Indicator 1.1:** Caring for our Children (Pg. 104) - If cloth diapers are used, the diaper should have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. An alternative is the use of cloth diapers that contain a waterproof cover that is adherent to the cloth material. If a cloth diaper with a separate lining is used, the outer covering and inner lining should be changed together at the same time as a unit and should not be reused in the child care facility. No rinsing or dumping of the contents of cloth diapers should be performed at the child care facility. Soiled cloth diapers should be completely wrapped in a non-permeable material, stored in a location inaccessible to children, and given directly to the parent/guardian upon discharge of the child.

Gastrointestinal tract disease caused by bacteria, viruses, parasites, and Hepatitis A virus infection of the liver are spread from infected persons through fecal contamination of objects in the environment and hands of caregivers/teachers and children. Procedures that reduce fecal contamination, such as minimal handling of soiled diapers and clothing, thorough hand hygiene, and containment of fecal matter and articles containing fecal matter control the spread of these diseases.

**Indicator 1.2:** “Yes” if there are more than 2 major problems meeting diapering/toileting needs

**Indicator 1.3:** “Often neglected” means handwashing for adults and children is completed less than 50% of the time when needed

ITEM 11: Health Practices

Over the counter topical medications require a parent signature, any oral medications require a doctor’s prescription.

ITEM 12: Safety Practices

**Indicator 1.1:** Is scored “Yes” if more than 6 minor hazards or 4 or more major hazards indoors.
Indicator 1.2: Is scored “Yes” if more than 6 minor hazards or 4 or more major hazards outdoors.

Indicator 1.3: “Inadequate supervision” means supervision severely compromises children’s safety.

Indicator 3.1: No more than 6 minor hazards or no more than 3 major hazards.

Indicator 3.2: “Adequate supervision” can mean ‘zone’ supervision.

Indicator 5.1: No more than 1 minor hazard and no major hazards indoors or outdoors.

Indicator 5.3: A record of an official fire inspection must be observed to give credit for this indicator. Providers should follow their city or county ordinances. If it is not a local requirement the provider may request documentation and a review from their community fire station.

ITEM 15: Using Books
Indicator 1.1: Much of the Day is not a requirement for this indicator.

ITEM 16: Fine Motor
For infants and toddlers, larger sets of materials (smaller sets created from one large set of materials, for example: Duplos) can count as no more than 2 examples of fine motor materials.

ITEM 19: Blocks
The majority of block sides must be at least 2 inches and have smooth sides (blocks can have minor uneven sides if still stackable); accessories must be stored with blocks and add to, rather than interfere with block play.

ITEM 22: Nature/Science
Indicator 1.1, 3.1, 5.1: Magnifying glasses must have something to look at and magnets must have something to test with them to give credit.

ITEM 25: Use of TV, video, and/or computer
Electronic media evaluated in this item includes any device used that has a screen with moving images, pictures, or print, including toys that are designed to emulate electronic devices.
ITEM 26 Active Physical Play

Indicators 1.2, 3.2, 5.4: Gross motor/active physical play equipment used indoors shall have appropriate surfacing and fall zones according to ATSM to help prevent serious injuries. Note: Mats and special carpets can be used if they meet certifications and standards of ASTM.