

## 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 [https://www.ersi.info/fccers\\_notes.html](https://www.ersi.info/fccers_notes.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 6-12 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, 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 an 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 2019 edition of Caring for Our Children \(page 118\)](#) states that hand sanitizers can be used in place of handwashing unless hands are visibly soiled. Use can be by adults and children, but handwashing is preferred for children under age 2. 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 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 [through Kindergarten](#). School age children are [first grade through 12 years of age](#).
- In all items or indicators where an 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 a 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.” 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.

Appropriate group activities in which children are engaged and interested for short periods that match their abilities are permissible if they do not significantly affect access to materials throughout the rest of the day. **If any group activity exceeds 20 minutes (even if children are engaged), then credit cannot be given for “much of the day.” Additionally, if multiple group times are observed and when added together exceed 20 minutes, then credit cannot be given for “much of the day.”**

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. 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.

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.

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

**Many:** Unless the item/indicator requirements state a different amount, “many” means that materials are plentiful, and children should have access without long periods of waiting or undue competition. In the language and interaction items, “many” means the requirement is observed frequently throughout the observation.

**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 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.

## SPACE AND FURNISHINGS

### ITEM 1: Indoor Space Used for Child Care

**Indicator 5.1:** Consider all play and routine care areas. If 2 or more areas are crowded, score No. When considering the space used for naptime, ample space would allow for 36" between sleeping surfaces. It is not required that the sleeping surfaces be correct in their spacing during the observation, but space should exist for the spacing to be possible.

**Indicator 5.2:** If dark shades or blinds are closed and most natural light is blocked, score No. If light colored shades or blinds are closed and enough natural light is coming in that the room appears light even while the blinds/shades are closed, score Yes.

**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**

**General Note:** Rugs, wall mirrors, and other furnishings do not count as display. Center signs are not considered for credit in this item, unless they also provide meaningful display information to children, such as large photos of the children or commercial posters showing children playing in the centers. To count as display, items must be displayed from the beginning of the observation; items added during the observation will not be considered. 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.

**Indicator 7.2:** When scoring this indicator, consider all items displayed throughout the space and determine if children's individualized artwork predominates the display.

## **ITEM 6: Space for Privacy**

**Indicator 7.2:** Must observe.

## **PERSONAL CARE ROUTINES**

### **ITEM 9: Meals/Snacks**

**Indicator 1.2 and 3.2:** 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. If a planned snack is observed in addition to a meal, then nutritional component requirements must be met for both. If an extra, unplanned snack is offered to children, nutritional components are not required to be met. Unplanned snacks do not occur daily, and they are typically snacks provided to tie one or more children over until lunch can be served or as part of an occasional learning activity. Food served for celebratory occasions, such as birthday parties or holiday celebrations, is not required to meet the USDA guidelines for meals or snacks.

**Indicator 5.4:** If menus are posted, they must be easily seen by parents. If you do not observe a menu, you will need to ask an interview question.

### **ITEM 10: Diapering/Toileting**

**Indicator 1.1/3.1/5.1/7.1:** Caring for our Children (Pg. 111-112) - 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 have 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.

For information on proper procedures for changing soiled pull-ups/underwear, please see *Caring for our Children*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, pages 115-116. The term “soiled” refers to pull ups/underwear containing urine or feces.

Potty chairs must be rinsed in a sink that is used only for the cleaning of potty chairs. It cannot be a hand washing sink that you then sanitize and use for other purposes. For full instructions on how to clean and use potty chairs, see *Caring for Our children*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, page 263.

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**

**Indicator 3.4:** 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. If the record is not visible, ask the interview question noted on page 31 of the scale book and ask to see the fire inspection report. If it is not a local county or city ordinance that fire inspections are required, documentation from a voluntary inspection the provider requested from their community fire station will suffice.

#### **LISTENING AND TALKING**

##### **ITEM 15: Using Books**

**Indicator 1.1:** Much of the Day is not a requirement for this indicator.

**Indicator 5.2:** When considering books about people of varying races, ages, and abilities, examples of all three types of diversity are not required. Any diverse books about people of varying races, ages, OR abilities will count for this category.

**Indicator 7.4:** Books should be added or changed monthly.

## ACTIVITIES

### ITEM 16: Fine Motor

**General Note:** Larger sets of materials (smaller sets created from one large set of materials, e.g. Duplos) can count as no more than 2 examples of fine motor materials.

### ITEM 19: Blocks

**General Note:** Most 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.

**Indicator 5.1:** For toddlers, “many” means 12 blocks of the same type OR 2 sets of 6 blocks of the same type. For preschoolers/school-agers, “many” means 30 blocks of the same type.

### ITEM 20: Dramatic Play

**Indicator 3.2:** There is no specific number of materials required for this indicator. However, there should be enough dramatic play materials accessible to permit meaningful play.

### ITEM 21: Math/Number

**Indicator 1.1/3.1/5.1:** Unit blocks can count as math materials for these indicators.

### ITEM 22: Nature/Science

**Indicator 1.1/3.1/5.1:** Magnifying glasses do not require specific items to accompany them because they magnify any object a child examines. However, magnets must have something to test with them to give credit.

**Indicator 5.1:** When counting materials of the same type, if different experiences can occur with each material, count individually (e.g., five different science books would each count as one example). However, duplicates of the same material that provide the same experience for children only count as one example (e.g., a bin of color paddles).

**ITEM 23: Sand and Water Play**

**General Note:** Kinetic sand is considered an acceptable sand substitute.

**Indicator 7.1:** If the only sand/water observed is outdoors, ask during the interview what occurs when it rains. If there is no provision for sand/water play when weather does not permit outdoor play, the requirement of daily for this indicator would not be met.

**ITEM 24: Promoting Acceptance of Diversity**

**Indicator 5.1:** When crediting non-traditional gender role materials, a contrast with a traditional gender role material is not required.

**ITEM 25: Use of TV, Video, and/or Computer**

**General Note:** 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 imitate electronic devices.

**INTERACTION****ITEM 29: Discipline**

**7.3:** The term “professional” means someone who has received formal training in behavioral issues.

**PROGRAM STRUCTURE****ITEM 33: Group Time**

**General Note:** This item is only scored N/A if just one child is enrolled or if group activities are never done as part of the program. For all other instances, if a group is not observed but group times are listed on the daily schedule, then interview questions should be asked and the item scored.

**ITEM 34: Provisions for Children with Disabilities**

**3.1:** A complete copy of assessment results is not required here. Any information that the provider has received regarding the child’s diagnosed disability can be counted here.