

## GEORGIA ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR THE SACERS-UPDATED

The GA Additional Notes provide supplementary information for the School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale-Updated 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 and consistency among assessors, TA providers, and participants working within 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 SACERS-U and the SACERS- Additional Notes for Clarification created by the authors found on the ERSI website: <http://www.ersi.info/index.html>
- GA Additional Notes provide further clarification to assist in the interpretation of the scale and the ERSI Additional Notes for Clarification.
- 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 ERS Resources on the Quality Rated website: <https://qualityrated.dec.state.ga.us/>

The GA Additional Notes were compiled and further developed by members of the QR management team, including our State Anchors and QR Assessors, with permission from Debby Cryer and Thelma Harms, the authors of the ERS Rating Scales.

### GENERAL GA NOTES FOR THE SACERS-U:

**Refer to ERSI SACERS-U for “Terms Used Throughout the Scale” on pages 5-6 for frequently used definitions throughout the scale.**

**Accessible:** All children in the group should have access to the required materials and activities with appropriate modifications made based on developmental or chronological age differences. To determine whether or not materials are accessible several factors must be considered:

- *Location of the materials and the type of storage provision: Materials are placed in spaces used by children daily rather than outside of children's regular play areas (i.e. outside of the classroom or areas within the classroom used for teacher storage, routine care, or an area used only for group times, etc.).*
- *Materials within the play areas are easy to reach for children in the group. The lids on containers and drawers/doors on cabinets are easy to open for the children in the group.*

- *Children’s ages and knowledge that the materials are intended for their use: How do children know what is stored where? Consider whether the children are observed using the materials. Look for other evidence that indicates the materials are used by the children.*
- *At levels 1 (Inadequate) and 3 (Minimal), accessible means materials can be reached and used daily.*
- *At levels 5 (Good) and 7 (Excellent), accessible means materials can be reached and used at least 30 minutes daily in a 3-hour program. In a full day program, for example, in the summer, materials would need to be within reach and used for at least 1 hour daily.*
- *The overall structure of the program determines how much child choice is possible. How much independence do children have during play times? Do they select the areas that they play in? If not, how does the classroom system provide access to the specific materials for the required amounts of time? Within centers, are children free to use any of the materials? If unsure of whether or not children have access to a space that is not used during the observation, staff may be asked questions about the space, how frequently it is used, and how materials are made accessible?*
- *See ERSI SACERS Additional General Notes for scoring access to materials for programs offering special weekly activities.*

**Poor repair of materials and books:** Materials and books that are in poor repair, meaning that they are not usable as intended, are excluded when determining whether the required numbers or examples for various categories have been provided. However, if there is an inappropriate image accessible to children this is always considered regardless of whether or not a material, picture, or book is in poor repair.

**Handwashing/Hand Hygiene:** 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.*

**Sanitation:** Apply the following requirements any time that sanitizer is needed. For chlorine bleach and water solution to be effective it must be allowed to dry for a minimum of 2 minutes before being wiped, complete air drying is ideal. Other EPA registered industrial sanitizers, disinfectants, or germicides may be used if these products are non-toxic and instructions for use are followed. In order to clarify the different but related functions of cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting to remove germs, "Caring for Our Children" states the following:

- *Cleaning physically removes dirt and contamination using soap, water and applying friction, thus exposing any remaining germs on the dry, clean surface.*
- *Sanitizing reduces germs on an inanimate surface or object to a safe level.*
- *Disinfecting destroys germs on an inanimate surface or object.*

A sanitizer should be used on food contact surfaces or any object that is mouthed. A disinfectant should be used only on diaper changing tables, toilets, counter tops, door and cabinet handles. Only EPA approved products are acceptable, and all sanitizers and disinfectants must be used according to the instructions on the container in order to be safe. Caring for Our Children (2011), 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition has issued a new recommendation for use of a diluted bleach solution for sanitizing and disinfecting because many brand name companies have changed their bleach solution and there is no longer a consistent solution across different brands. The new recommendation advises us to: use only EPA registered products for sanitizing and disinfecting; follow the manufacturer's instructions for diluting the bleach solution and for the required contact time.

**General references:** Materials that are frequently used to assist in decision making are Caring for Our Children (2011), 3rd edition (used for health, sanitation, and safety issues) and the Handbook for Public Playground Safety, CPSC Publication No. 325 (for gross motor play issues). 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**

**Indicator 3.1:** Refers to the space used by the children for most of the day.

### **ITEM 2: Space for Gross motor Activities**

**Indicator 3.1:** The term "some" mean at least 1 space required for this indicator must be provided daily, either indoors or outdoors.

**Indicator 3.2:** The term "some" means 1 or more.

**Indicator 5.1:** The space required for this indicator must be provided daily outdoors, unless severe weather prevents children from going outdoors. Provisions must also be made indoors for those days when children cannot play outdoors. The outdoor space should be large enough to allow for sufficient movement and running or engagement in large group games and sports that older children enjoy.

**Indicator 5.2:** The soft and hard surface must both be large enough for actual use.

**ITEM 3: Space for Privacy**

**General note:** Space for privacy is limited to no more than 3 children.

**ITEM 4: Room Arrangement**

**Indicators 1.4, 3.4:** Can be scored N/A if observation occurs during summer and/or other school holidays, or if doing homework is never a part of the school-age program.

**Indicator 3.3:** Take children’s ages and abilities into account. Younger or more impulsive children are likely to require more supervision.

**Indicator 5.4:** Need to see a separate space for quiet play, study, etc. with suitable furnishings.

**ITEM 5: Furnishings for Routine Care**

**Indicator 3.1:** Allow for minor touching of possessions such as book bags; however, if touching of personal items such as jackets, clothing, or blankets etc., is significant, credit cannot be given. Jackets can be placed inside book bags and then bags hung on hooks side by side.

**ITEM 6: Furnishings for Learning and Recreational Activities**

**Indicator 5.2:** At least 1 space. Credit can be given for a moveable display.

**ITEM 7: Furnishings for Relaxation and Comfort**

**Indicator 7.2** Cozy area can be verbally protected by the staff.

**ITEM 8: Furnishings for Gross Motor Activities**

**Indicator 3.1** Children must have access to one or more piece of stationary gross motor equipment daily.

**Indicator 3.2** Two or more portable equipment required.

**Indicator 5.1:** Variety means there must be different types of stationary gross motor equipment present (e.g. climber, basketball hoop, soccer goal, balance beam, swing, slide, hanging bars, etc.). Each component of a larger composite piece of equipment i.e. slide, parallel bars, climbing wall etc. is counted as 1 type of gross motor equipment providing it stimulates a different type of skill. Equipment must be age appropriate for 75% of children enrolled in the class in order to be counted. To score this indicator look at children’s overall access to stationary gross motor equipment throughout the day.

**Indicator 5.2:** Many skills means there must be stationary equipment that stimulates at least three (3) or more different gross motor skills at the appropriate developmental level for 75% of the children enrolled in the class. To score this indicator look at children’s overall access to stationary

gross motor equipment throughout the day. This indicator is scored independently of 5.1 unless the stationary equipment is almost never used. In this case, score indicator 5.2 “No”.

**Indicator 5.3:** Variety means there must be different types of portable gross motor equipment present (e.g. balls or various types, hula hoops, jump ropes, bicycles, bean bags, parachutes, racquets and balls, scooters, etc.). Sufficient quantities of portable equipment must be accessible for simultaneous activities if the portable equipment is used to make stationary equipment functional for indicator 5.1. There should be enough portable equipment accessible to stimulate at least three (3) different gross motor skills. On days when weather does not permit outside play, these materials must be provided indoors.

**Indicator 7.2:** A variety of skill levels means that different types of equipment, either portable or stationary, may stimulate the same skill type, but at varying levels of difficulty. For example large stepping stones spaced fairly close together provide for a different level of balancing skill than walking along a narrow balance beam, or hitting a ball from a T-ball stand is a different skill level than hitting a ball thrown by a peer or teacher.

#### **ITEM 9: Access to Host Facilities**

*NOTE - Dedicated space is used primarily for school-age children’s activities, and any use that occurs at other times does not impact the group’s use of the space. Shared Facilities are those areas, indoors or outdoors, used by both the school-age program and other children or adults, either at separate times or at the same time. Exclusive Use of Shared Facilities means that no one else uses the space while it is being used by the after school program.*

**Indicator 3.1:** Requires 1 or more dedicated space.

**Indicator 3.2:** Requires 1 or more play space.

#### **ITEMS 10 – 13:**

**Not scored for QR purposes.**

#### **ITEM 14: Safety Practice**

**Indicator 3.1:** No major and no more than 5 minor safety hazards.

**Indicator 3.2:** Must be in the room to use or can be a cell phone.

#### **ITEMS 15 – 16:**

**Not scored for QR purposes.**

#### **ITEM 17: Meals and Snacks**

**Indicator 3.2:** Credit can be given for nutritionally adequate meals or snacks if the children can serve themselves, but not if the food components are verbally offered, and not within reach of every child.

#### **ITEM 19: Arts and Crafts**

**Indicator 3.1 and 5.1:** A sufficient number of materials must be accessible to accommodate the number of interested children without undue competition and there are no long wait times to use the materials.

**ITEM 20: Music and Movement**

**Indicator 3.1:** Some provisions means 2 or more accessible.

**Indicator 5.1:** Must be daily.

**Indicator 5.2:** Must be daily and different examples of music materials must be represented from each category.

**ITEM 21: Blocks and Construction**

**Indicator 3.1, 5.1, and 7.1:** A sufficient number of materials must be accessible to accommodate the number of interested children without undue competition and there are no long wait times to use the materials.

**Indicator 7.2:** Carpentry tools can include clamps, nails and woodworking tools.

**ITEM 22: Dramatic Play**

**Indicator 3.1:** “Some” means 2 or more materials that allow children to have meaningful play.

**Indicator 5.1:** Must be daily.

**Indicator 5.2:** Must be observed.

**ITEM 23: Language/reading activities**

**Indicator 3.1:** “Some” means 2 or more materials.

**Indicator 3.2:** Computer and homework games are OK.

**ITEM 24: Math/reasoning activities**

**Indicators 3.1:** “Some” means 2 or more materials.

**Indicator 5.2:** Has to be appropriate for the age of the child.

**ITEM 25: Science/nature activities**

**Indicator 3.1:** “Some” means 2 or more materials.

**Indicator 5.1:** A variety means that there are 3 types represented in the accessible materials. Types of science/nature materials include living things to care for (plants, pets), books and posters, games, equipment to use in simple experiments, such as measuring tools, magnets, magnifying glasses, microscope, gardening tools

*NOTE – There is a difference between science/nature materials and equipment. Materials are things that allow children to experience science and nature such as books, posters, animals, plants, toy animals (insects, sea creatures, reptiles, etc), file folder games, puzzles, board games, computer games, videos etc. Equipment allows children to engage in scientific or nature experiments and exploration such as microscopes and slides, magnifying glasses and items to explore such as rocks or shells, measuring tools and things to measure, cooking activities, test tubes, everyday objects to experiment with such as gadgets to take apart, etc.*

**ITEM 29: Staff-child communication**

**Indicator 3.1:** “Some” means 2 or more conversations.

**ITEM 30: Staff supervision of children**

**Indicators 5.1:** Supervision should not result in any major hazard to children.

**ITEM 31: Discipline**

**Indicator 7.1:** Consultant should have specialized training or technical expertise.

**ITEMS 33 - 35:**

**Not scored for QR purposes.**

**ITEM 36: Schedule**

**Indicator 3.4:** “Some” means one or more scheduled gross motor activities.

**Indicator 5.3:** Disregard the example given, this indicator emphasizes the time gross motor activities are available, not the types of activities.

**ITEM 37: Free choice**

**Indicator 3.1:** At least one opportunity to choose from two or more activities.

**ITEM 38 - 41:**

**Not scored for QR purposes.**

**ITEMS 42 - 47:**

**Special Needs Supplementary Items**

*NOTE – Only item 42 is scored when there is a child in the group with an identified disability or special need. Items 43 – 47 are not scored, although some of the indicators may be taken into account when scoring item 42. If the identification process is not complete this item is N/A. If intervention or therapy services occur this indicates that a child has special needs. It is not necessary for a child to have an IFSP or IEP to score this item, nor is it necessary to know the identity of a child with a disability. Assume that parents want their privacy protected and simply ask the questions needed to score. Requirements in this item apply to each child with an identified disability/special need or medical condition requiring special consideration.*