



GA Additional Notes for the ITERS-3

The GA Additional Notes provide supplementary information for the Environment Rating Scales to further define or explain requirements of certain items and indicators to assist in correctly interpreting and scoring items found within the scale.

Participants in Quality Rated should be aware of the following:

- Unless otherwise specified, Quality Rated assessors use the GA Additional Notes for the ITERS-3 and the ITERS-3 Additional Notes for Clarification created by the Environment Rating Scales Institute (ERSI) (available at <http://www.ersi.info/index.html>).
- 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.

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 Environment Rating Scale Institute (ERSI) website (<http://www.ersi.info/index.html>) and used for the basis for the GA Additional notes. Since that time, ongoing content of GA Additional Notes has been developed by Quality Rated for intended use in Georgia.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCALE, Item 4, page 9.

To calculate whether required amounts of time were provided for children, it is best to wear a digital watch or use the digital clock on your tablet. Even though required times are a minimum, because of possible timing error, we allow a 2-minute exception for group times and gross motor times because it is so difficult to track time to the second for these longer periods of time. However, no more than 2 minutes can be found to be lacking or exceeded to meet time requirements.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS USED THROUGHOUT THE SCALE, Age Ranges for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos, pages 11-13.

When scoring indicators with a specific age range requirement, if a child in that age group is enrolled but not present during the observation, score any indicators that can be scored based on observed evidence, such as room arrangement and furnishings. Score any that have access requirements as NA, if the indicator only asks about the age group that is not present. If the indicator asks about other age groups and children in those age groups are present, score based on the groups that are present.

GENERAL GA NOTES FOR THE ITERS-3

Refer to Environment Rating Scale Institute (ERSI) website ITERS-3 General Additional Notes for Clarification for definitions of terms used in the scale.

Accessible- During the observation, children can reach and use the required toy, furnishing, material, or equipment. ITERS-3 has varied guidelines for determining access for nonmobile children and mobile children found on pages 11-12 of the scale book. An additional GA resource, entitled *ITERS-3 Access Summary*, has been developed to further clarify ITERS-3 access guidelines and can be found on the Quality Rated website at www.qualityrated.ga.gov in the ERS Resources section.

Appropriate: Used in various items to mean safe and suitable for the age and developmental needs of 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 safety, protection, stimulation, and positive relationships are being met in ways that are supportive and meaningful.

Engaged: Children are observed to be interested and paying attention. Although children may be well behaved, look closely to determine whether they are actually engaged in what is going on. Scoring decisions are made based on the children’s level of engagement and whether staff can positively re-engage children if they do lose interest.

Forced Participation: “Forced to participate” means children are strongly encouraged or made to participate in group play activities. If children are not engaged or enjoying an activity, are often reminded to participate, and there is no alternative of leaving and doing something else that is interesting to children, then children are being forced to participate.

Conversation: Multiple back and forth verbal or nonverbal exchanges of communication that are meaningful to the child, typically occurs between a teacher and child or between children.

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, but handwashing is preferred. 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, unless running water is inaccessible, such as on the playground. If hand sanitizer is used during an observation when running water is not accessible, the product used and how it is used must be considered in scoring. The product must contain 60-95% alcohol, and manufacturer’s instructions must be followed exactly. Very close supervision of children is provided to ensure proper use and to avoid ingestion or contact with eyes and mucous membranes. If the manufacturer’s directions for use are not followed exactly, do not give credit for any time when not followed. If children are not closely supervised when using sanitizer, consider in supervision–related indicators for the item specifically, and in Safety and Supervision. Handwashing or use of a hand sanitizer is required for all ERS observers upon entering the classroom.

Some/sometimes/occasionally: Denotes a presence in the environment, and at least 1 example usually must be observed unless the guidelines for specific indicators require more examples.

Moderate: Denotes that something can be sporadic but should not be unusual to observe throughout the observation.

Most: Means more than 50% unless the guidelines for specific indicators require more.

Usually/generally/frequently/often/much: Denotes a regular or prevalent practice, meaning that things occur for 75% of the time during the 3-hour observation period, unless the guidelines for specific indicators require more.

SPACE AND FURNISHINGS

ITEM 1: Indoor Space

General note: This item refers to the indoor classroom only; consider only spaces used within the classroom for routine care, play, and learning.

Indicator 3.1 and 5.1: Base scoring on the indoor space available to accommodate the maximum number of children allowed and consider the schedules of the children. If all children sleep during the same scheduled nap time, then only some space for play is required to be available when mats/cots/cribs are in use for children who may not fall asleep. If children are on individual sleeping schedules, then the space must exist for mats/cots/cribs to be in use without sacrificing any play space. Requirements for distance between sleeping surfaces are 18" for 3.1 and 36" for 5.1.

Indicator 3.2: Adequate ventilation must be present to ensure the space does not have lingering odors or stuffy air; ventilation control is not required until Indicator 5.2. If dark shades or blinds are closed and most natural light is blocked, score No. If frosted glass, light colored paper, or closed light colored shades or blinds are used and enough natural light is coming in that the room appears light even while the blinds/shades are closed, score Yes.

Indicator 3.2 and 7.1: For natural lighting to be considered direct natural light, it must be from a window, door, or skylight within the classroom being observed. Natural light from hallways or neighboring classrooms, even if only a half wall separates the two, do not count.

Indicator 5.2: Ventilation methods must impact ventilation for the whole classroom. Ventilation control cannot be limited only to small, confined spaces within the classroom, such as a bathroom. If windows/doors are used for ventilation purposes, screens are required; additionally, bars or other safety barriers are needed in classrooms with mobile children if the classroom is located high enough off the ground that children could be injured if they fell. Further, bars or other safety barriers are needed in other situations when the risk is high based on children's ages and abilities and the classroom set up.

ITEM 2: Furnishings for care, play, and learning

Indicator 3.1: Enough furniture of each type is required for the number of children present: routine care, play, and learning.

Indicator 5.1: All furniture needs are based on the maximum number of children allowed to enroll. Consider individual storage needs required throughout the year.

Indicator 5.2: At least one example of furniture that supports self-help is required for each age group present during the observation. It is possible that one example may meet the needs of more than one age group.

Indicator 7.1: All routine care furniture used should encourage personalized care of children, and no issues can be observed due to lack of personalization.

ITEM 3: Room Arrangement

Indicator 5.1: Math materials may be included in a fine motor interest center if they encourage the use of fine motor skills. One or two materials that do not encourage fine motor skills are acceptable if they do not interfere with fine motor play. A cozy area that meets the four requirements of an interest center as defined on page 20 in the ITERS-3 scale book can also be counted.

ITEM 4: 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 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.

Indicator 3.3: “Some” means one or more pieces of children’s artwork.

Indicator 5.1: Children’s artwork is not considered for this indicator.

Indicator 5.3: “Some” = about half of the displayed items

Indicator 7.1: Two or more photos of currently enrolled children, their families, pets, or other current familiar faces are required. Photos of previous teachers or children do not count.

PERSONAL CARE ROUTINES

ITEM 5: 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 breadings to count towards grain requirements cannot be determined by observation.

Indicators 1.2, 3.2, and 5.2: 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 3.2: All required components must be offered to at least 75% of the children. For snacks, to help prevent choking, water or another healthy beverage must be offered if two food options are chosen.

Indicator 3.3: Any attempt in any category can receive credit.

Indicator 5.2: All required components must be served together to all children. For snacks, to help prevent choking, water or another healthy beverage must be offered if two food options are chosen.

Indicator 5.3: Much attention in all categories must be observed to receive credit.

Indicator 7.1: A teacher must remain within arm’s reach of any child who is eating or drinking and provide personal, positive supervision throughout the eating/drinking.

ITEM 6: Diapering/ Toileting

General Note: Diapering procedures are based on best practices outlined in Caring for Our Children, 4th edition, and a list of the procedures can be found on the Environment Rating Scale Institute (ERSI) website (<http://www.ersi.info/index.html>). When using these procedures, please note that use of a paper liner is optional. It is permissible to use a non-porous changing surface that is cleaned and sanitized between each use. When cleaning the diapering surface, spray the surface with a soapy water solution prior to wiping it with a paper towel or use a soapy water solution directly on the paper towel and then rinse. Either cleaning procedure must then be followed with a bleach-water solution allowed to sit for at least 2 minutes or a disinfectant applied according to label directions.

General Note: Observed instances of parents/family members who change diapers or assist with toileting should be considered in the samples taken to score these indicators.

Indicator 3.2: All children must have diapers visually checked or changed or are encouraged to use the toilet within the 3-hour observation and no obvious problems are observed.

Indicator 5.2: All children must have diapers visually checked or changed or are encouraged to use the toilet at least every 2 hours and no obvious problems are observed.

ITEM 7: Health

General Note: Observed instances of parents/family members who assist with handwashing should be considered in the samples taken to score these indicators.

Indicator 1.3: Consider all nap evidence observed, regardless of whether cots/mats are set up for use during the observation. If any lapses in sanitary provisions are observed, consider how significant the lapses were in preventing sanitary nap/rest provisions. If most observed evidence did not ensure sanitary nap/rest provisions, score this indicator as Yes.

Indicators 3.3 and 5.3: Sleeping surfaces must be observed set up for use to score these indicators. If nap set-up is not observed, score these indicators NA.

ITEM 8: Safety

General Note: Raised edges on diapering tables measuring less than 6 inches from the top of the diapering surface are considered indoor safety hazards. When scoring this item, consider all indoor and outdoor spaces used.

Indicator 5.2: “Usually” = common practice, few if any lapses. “Easy reach” = a few steps away, can get to child quickly if needed.

Indicator 5.4: If no unsafe actions are observed, score Yes.

Indicator 7.1: “Few” = no more than 4.

Indicator 7.3: No major safety hazards of any kind are present indoors or outdoors. Teacher must physically set up, maintain, and actively supervise spaces to avoid safety problems.

LANGUAGE AND BOOKS

ITEM 9: Talking with children

Indicator 7.1: “Most” = about 75% of all talking, and no child goes without one-on-one interactions.

ITEM 10: Encouraging vocabulary development

Indicator 5.2: Teachers must be observed repeating words during single interactions with children, and examples should be heard often during the observation.

ITEM 11: Responding to children’s communication

General note: Ignoring is considered a negative response.

Indicator 7.1: Consider all communication, including both upset and non-upset communication.

ITEM 12: Encouraging children to communicate

General note: Ignoring is considered a negative response.

Indicators 5.1, 7.1: Examples must be observed in play and routines.

ITEM 13: Staff use of books with children

General note: If no books are observed to be used with children, score 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 Yes. Score 1.4, all 3’s, all 5’s, and 7.1 and 7.2 as No. Score 7.3 as NA if all children observed are infants, otherwise score it as No also.

Indicator 3.2: Consider only the children participating in book time(s).

Indicator 5.3: The two examples required here must be from two different pictures with two different children, but it can occur during the same book time.

Indicator 5.5: Multiple books are not required but extended interest must be observed at least once. If multiple books are read/used, must see extended interest in all instances.

ITEM 14: Encouraging children’s use of books

Indicator 5.2: There is no access time requirement for this indicator. The term “accessible” in this indicator refers to whether children can reach and use the books.

ACTIVITIES

ITEM 15: Fine motor

Indicator 5.1: More choices are required for larger groups of more than 5 children when children are not satisfied by the 10 different choices provided and show signs more choices are needed.

Indicator 5.2: “Usually” = almost always

ITEM 16: Art

Indicators 1.2, 3.3, and 5.2: Do not make assumptions about what art materials are accessible, used, or how they are supervised from looking at the display only. If unsafe materials in the display are within reach of children but not accessible during the observation, consider these in the Safety item instead.

Indicator 3.5: “Individual expression” means that children are allowed to use art materials in their own creative way, and children are given the opportunity to select the subject matter of the art, the medium in the art activity, or use their own ideas in creating the art. General topics for art work or the art materials used can be selected by the adult, but the child should be able to decide the way in which they are used, within the rules of acceptable use. Craft projects that all look the same and coloring sheets do not count as examples of individual expression.

Indicators 5.3 and 7.3: If only one child enrolled 18 months or older, observe two different instances with same child.

ITEM 17: Music and movement

Indicator 3.2: Only discount if background music obviously interferes with other activities, including when reading or singing unrelated music is observed.

Indicator 3.4: Consider only the children participating in the group music activities. Do not consider children who have been allowed to leave the group and choose another activity.

Indicator 5.3: If children show disinterest, at least two alternate activities that children are interested in must be accessible for the duration of the music activity.

ITEM 18: Blocks

Indicator 3.1 and 5.1: Need age-appropriate blocks for each age group present.

Indicators 3.2 and 5.2: Accessories must be stored near blocks and be obvious that they are intended for use with block play. Accessories must add to and not interfere with block play. Large vehicles cannot count as accessories unless large blocks accompany them.

Indicator 5.1: Access to blocks is required throughout the observation, at the level required for the ages of children being observed.

Indicator 5.2: Although the note for clarification in the scale book on page 50 mentions unit blocks for this indicator, unit blocks are not specifically required. Blocks used should be age-appropriate for the ages of children they are used with. The guidelines in the note for clarification should be followed for any blocks of varied shapes.

Indicator 7.2: There is no time requirement for access for this indicator.

ITEM 19: Dramatic play

Indicators 1.1, 3.1, 5.1, and 7.1: Dress up clothes are not required for infants. Older infants are not limited to only soft dolls.

Indicator 3.1: Dolls must represent humans; mermaids or other half-human representations do not count. Soft stuffed animal puppets can count as soft animals here.

Indicator 5.1: “Many” is based on amount needed for meaningful play appropriate to the age of children observed using them. Less materials may be needed for infants. “Varied” means children have a variety of options and materials represent all but 2 of the examples listed on page 52 in the scale book.

Indicator 5.2: “Some” = at least 5

ITEM 20: Nature/science

Indicator 5.4: Kinetic sand is considered an acceptable sand substitute.

ITEM 22: Appropriate use of technology

General Note: “Electronic media” includes any device used that has a screen with moving images, pictures, or print, including toys that are designed to imitate electronic devices.

Indicators 1.2, 3.2, and 5.2: The term “short” found in the note for clarification on page 58 of the scale books means “no more than 5 minutes.”

ITEM 23. Promoting acceptance of diversity

Indicators 1.1, 3.1, and 5.1: When crediting non-traditional gender role materials, a contrast with a traditional gender role material is not required.

Indicators 1.1, 3.1, 3.3, and 5.1: Materials presenting images of people, such as dolls, toy people, pictures, and books, must represent humans; mermaids or other half-human representations do not count.

Indicator 5.1: For non-mobile infants, credit can be given for accessibility if they are able to see the diverse materials.

Indicator 5.2: Cultural music played during the observation counts as one example.

ITEM 24: Gross motor

General note: The location of *stationary equipment* is not moved by the children as part of their play, such as but not limited to climbing structures, swings, spring rockers, and slides. The location of *portable gross motor equipment* moves as a part of gross motor play, such as but not limited to wheel toys, balls, and wagons.

Indicators 1.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 5.2, and 7.2: If no outdoor space is used during the observation because weather did not permit outdoor play, evaluate any on-site outdoor space that is ever used by the group. If toddlers/twos never use an outdoor gross motor space, score these indicators as No.

Indicator 3.3: On the CPSC playground sheet, beneath the Age-Appropriate Equipment chart, note the list of equipment that is not appropriate for specific age groups. This equipment is never appropriate and is considered “extremely dangerous” for this indicator.

INTERACTION

ITEM 25: Supervision of gross motor play

Indicator 3.1 and 5.1: Evidence observed must include providing outdoor gross motor play for toddlers and twos, when weather permits outdoor play.

Indicator 7.1: “Vigorous” = an age-appropriate activity that makes children breathe harder

ITEM 26: Supervision of play and learning (non-gross motor)

Indicator 3.2: Teachers must stop all major problems.

Indicator 5.4: Must be observed twice in two different instances, and content must differ.

Indicator 7.2: Individualized supervision must occur throughout the observation.

ITEM 27: Peer interaction

Indicator 3.2: Teacher must stop negative peer interaction in positive or neutral manner, and the guidance provided must be effective.

Indicator 5.3: Intentional attempts to guide and facilitate appropriate peer interactions are required and must be observed often.

Indicator 5.4: Individual and small group play should be observed to be the prevalent practice in the classroom during the observation. Although large groups can occur, they should be limited, and individual and/or small group play should occur more frequently.

Indicator 7.1: Observe twice for two different children.

ITEM 28: Staff-child interaction

Indicator 5.4: There must be several instances of playfulness or appropriate humor with children observed throughout the observation. Singing with children counts as an example of playfulness.

ITEM 30: Guiding children’s behavior

Indicator 5.1: Telling a child “no” is not an automatic discount. Only when “no” is said excessively and controllingly would it be considered a negative verbal response. Consider tone, context, yelling, criticizing, sarcasm, etc. to determine what is a negative response.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

ITEM 31: Schedule and transitions

Indicator 1.5: “Children” = almost all children

Indicator 5.1: “Often” = most observed transitions, must be typical procedure

Indicator 5.3: If ignoring is observed to cause distress, consider it a negative interaction.

Indicator 7.3: Waiting times with nothing engaging to do never exceed 3 minutes for any child.

ITEM 32: Free Play

Indicator 3.1: Free play is expected to occur for every child.

Indicator 3.2: Supervision is required for all children; interaction is required for some children.

ITEM 33: Group play activities

Indicators 1.1 and 5.1: For nonmobile children, look to see if the children are interested in the group play, as evidenced by their facial expressions, where their attention seems to be, and body language. If they are not interested and are not moved to an alternate activity they are interested in, they are being forced to participate.

Indicator 5.3: If children show disinterest, at least two alternate activities that children are interested in must be accessible for the duration of the group activity.