



October 2017

New USDA Meal Guidelines to be Used With Environmental Rating Scales



Environmental Rating Scales and USDA Meal Guidelines

There are many considerations for planning healthy meals and snacks in child care programs. Providers often ask questions such as:

- What is the difference between a meal and a snack?
- What components are required for meals?
- Are different components required for breakfast and lunch?
- What are the portion sizes required by age group?

To answer all these questions and more, check out the updated U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) meal guidelines. The updated meal standards for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) were published in the Federal Register on April 25, 2016.

As of October 1, 2017, the updated meal patterns are now required for all child care programs participating in the CACFP. Subsequently, the updated USDA meal guidelines

***** NEW ***
CAPS 2020**



In December 2016, the DECAL Advisory Committee adopted the following: Quality Rated eligible providers must be star rated by 12/31/2020 in order to continue to receive Child Care and Parent Services (CAPS) funding.

Quality Rated Bonus Package Deadline

Quality Rated Bonus Packages will not be awarded after December 31, 2020.

To be eligible for a bonus package, programs must meet all of the following guidelines:

- 1. Participate in Quality Rated by 6/30/18**

are required for scoring all Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) as of October 1, 2017, as well. For more information on the USDA meal guidelines concerning the ERS, [click here](#).

Key Concepts in the ECERS-3: Play Areas vs. Interest Centers



Play Areas vs. Interest Centers

In the ECERS-3 scale, programs are challenged to consider a wide range of topics that facilitate positive relationships and learning for preschoolers. For the next few months, we'll feature key concepts in the ECERS-3 scale.

A play area is a space where play materials are provided for children to use. An interest center is a more specific, clearly defined play area for a particular kind of play where materials are organized by type and stored so that they are accessible to the children.

If additional materials are present in the play area that interfere with the intent of the area's particular type of play, credit cannot be given for an interest center. In an interest center, an appropriate amount of space is provided for the number of children permitted to play and for the type of play encouraged there, and furniture is provided for use of materials if needed.

Because blocks and dramatic play are associated with more active play, interest centers for these materials should likely be larger than for other materials.

From the Review Desk: Nutrition and Physical Activity Assessment and Improvement Plan

2. Receive a one, two, or three star rating by 12/31/2020
3. Have received less than three bonus packages

*** NEW *** Quality Rated Program Manual

We're happy to share that there's an updated version of the Quality Rated Program Manual. The new program manual, which is version 2.7, features the most current and up to date policy items affecting Quality Rated. You can find the updated program manual at the bottom of the qualityrated.decal.ga.gov website or by clicking the link below.

[Quality Rated 2.7 Program Manual](#)

Quick Links

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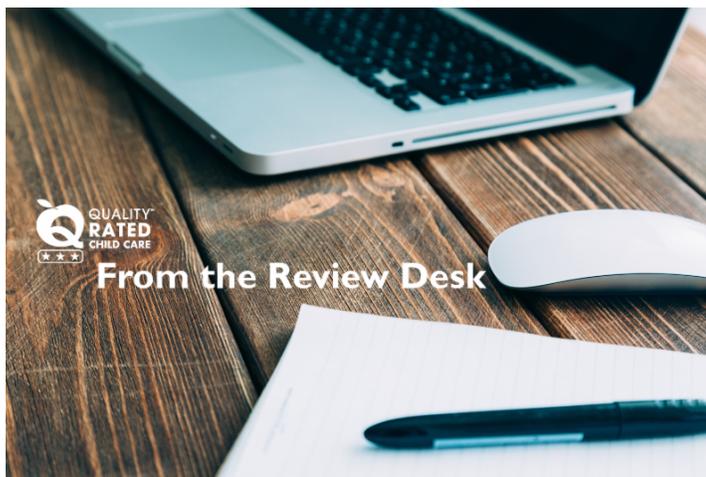
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To support your quality improvement efforts and to help your program achieve the highest star rating possible, we will, from time to time, offer helpful tips. We will further clarify or provide additional information on the five standards, that may help you in forming your responses, or in selecting the evidence you will upload.

Taking a Closer Look at Standard 2.1: Nutrition and Physical Activity Assessment and Improvement Plan

The Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care, embedded in Standard 2 of the portfolio, is a tool developed in 2002 to help child care programs assess policy, practice and environmental influences on nutrition, as well as the physical activity behaviors in young children. Over time, the use of this tool has shown that by identifying and improving certain activities, child care programs can influence healthy lifestyle changes. The recommended activities focus on making improvements in:

- the nutritional quality of food served;
- the amount and quality of physical activity; and
- the interactions between staff and children around food and physical activity

It all starts with you! By completing the assessment and developing an improvement plan, you join child care providers around the country who support the important goal of reducing childhood obesity and other health issues. As a child care provider with almost daily access to children and their families, you have an opportunity to make a real impact by practicing and encouraging healthy eating habits and increasing the physical activity habits of children and staff.

Standard 2.1: Nutrition and Physical Activity Assessment and Improvement Plan

In Standard 2.1, the assessment and planning tool helps you organize evidence of your program's willingness to look at ways you now promote healthy lifestyles. More importantly, it helps you decide what you would like to do going forward. It's not a test, there are no right or wrong answers. You are not scored on the number of policies or practices that you have in place when you decide to apply. While many programs have made significant changes around healthy activities, most programs do not check "always" or "we have a policy" to the more than 90 different questions in the survey. When you check "Rarely or never" or "Not available" as your response, it is an opportunity for change.

Here are a few simple steps your program can take to earn the maximum of six (6) points for Standard 2.1.

- Introduce the assessment to your staff for input
- Review the more than 20 indicators and check the appropriate responses
- Review the responses that show where improvements can be made
- Determine which of the areas where improvements can be made are of interest and are achievable
- Develop your improvement plan and include both long and short term goals
- Be sure to identify three or more improvement goals for both Nutrition and Physical Activity to earn the maximum of six points

*Please feel free to call or email the Help Desk should you need assistance at
855-800-7747 or qualityrated@dec.al.ga.gov.*

**Congratulations to the following
Quality Rated Child Care Programs**

Congratulations to the newest  **QUALITY RATED™** child care programs!

Carol M. Douglas, Lithonia ★★	★★ Shannon I. Moon, Columbus
The Sunshine House #63, Decatur★	★ Susan's Early Learning Center, LaGrange
Excell Preparatory Center, Lithonia ★	★ Retha R. Weatherspoon, Jesup
Bertha K. Thomas, Albany ★★	★ Prime Time Discovery - Hephzibah, Hephzibah
Prime Time Discovery - Tobacco Road, Augusta ★★	★★ Josefa Rodriguez, Grovetown
Tender Years Learning Center #14, Gray★	★★ Dougherty County Family Literacy Council Inc., Albany
Cornerstone Children's Center, Vidalia ★★	★ LaKisha M. Adams, Evans
Preferred School Care at Beecher Hills Elementary, Atlanta ★★	★ The Sunshine House #102, Snellville
Heavenly Place Childcare Learning Center, Hinesville ★	★ Prime Time Discovery Warren Road, Martinez
Smith's Day Care Center, Albany★★★	★ Flory Gustave, Stone Mountain
Tyshome T. Jones, Leesburg ★★	★★★ Ambra G. Metzger, Springfield
Academy for Little People, Chickamauga ★	

 **Congratulations to all of our
QUALITY RATED™ child care programs
who've increased their star rating
in September!**

- ★★★ Sandy's Sandbox, Macon (2 to 3 stars)
- ★★★ Jennifer Rose-Ann Porter, Jonesboro (2 to 3 stars)
- ★★★ Bettie W. Godoy, Riverdale (2 to 3 stars)
- ★★ Olubusayo O. Olujuyigbe, Lawrenceville (1 to 2 stars)
- ★★ Miss Jan's Nursery & Playschool Inc., Albany (1 to 2 stars)
- ★★★ Vvee A. Dawson, Warner Robins (2 to 3 stars)
- ★★ Kiddie Carousel, Dalton (1 to 2 stars)
- ★★★ Pure Love Learning Center, Riverdale (1 to 3 stars)
- ★★ Rainbow Child Care Center (McDonough), McDonough (1 to 2 stars)
- ★★★ Glascock Co. Head Start Center, Gibson (2 to 3 stars)
- ★★ Foundations for the Future, Kennesaw (1 to 2 stars)

*Visit qualityrated.org to find
Quality Rated child care programs in your area!*

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Sent by danielle.williams@dec.al.ga.gov in collaboration with



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