



NC Additional Notes: FDCRS (10-2007)

These notes provide additional information for the Environment Rating Scales so that participants in the assessment portion of the North Carolina star rated license 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 interrater reliability or consistency among assessors working with the North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project (NCRLAP).

Participants in the NC star rated license system should be aware of the following:

- The NC Additional Notes are updated (approximately) every 6 months and NCRLAP 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 www.ncrlap.org.
- NCRLAP assessors use only the NC Additional Notes and, due to modifications and additions that occur over time, the NC Additional Notes may differ from notes provided by the scale authors at Frank Porter Graham. Participants in the NC star rated license should replace older notes with the current NC Additional Notes.

The NC Additional Notes were compiled and further developed by members of the NCRLAP’s management team, especially by our state anchors and anchor advisors. On September 1, 2003, with permission from Debby Cryer and Thelma Harms, the Additional Notes for Clarification for the ECERS-R, ITERS, ITERS-R, FDCRS, and SACERS were retrieved from the Frank Porter Graham website (<http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers/>) and used for the basis for the NC Additional notes. Since then, NCRLAP 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.

RECENT CHANGES:

Date	Where to find the change *Note: The most recent changes are italicized in this document.
10/2007	<i>General Notes, Item 5, 10, 17, 19, 23, 25, 29</i>
3/2007	General Notes, Items 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 14a, 14b, 29
9/2006	8
3/2006	No changes
9/01/2005	2, 4, 6b, 8, 10, 11, 15b, 12, 18
1/21/05	General Notes, 12, 13, 15a, 15b, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 29, 32
9/01/2004	General Notes, 1, 2, 3, 6b, 8, 10, 15b, 16, 19, 21, 23, 29, 35
5/2004	General Notes, 11, 12, 35, 40
2/10/04	General Notes, Items 2, 11, 12
11/2003	Introduction, General notes, Items 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15b, 29

GENERAL NOTES FOR THE FDCRS

Accessible: The term "accessible" requires that children can reach and use materials by themselves. 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.

The overall structure of the program determines how much child choice is possible:

- Consider how much independence 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 ask staff questions about the space, how frequently it is used, and how materials are made accessible, etc. The term "accessible" requires that all *full day* children can reach and use materials by themselves for at least one hour daily. The *after school* children must be allowed to choose materials, although there is no minimum length of time for accessibility. This definition appears the first time the word accessible is used in the scale, item 15b, and applies each time the term is used.

Ages: In all items or indicators where a particular age is required, (i.e., items 14a, 15a, 19, 21 and indicators requiring child-sized furniture for "toddlers"), some flexibility is allowed when scoring. The rule for applying the flexibility is as follows: If there is only 1 child in the group who meets the age requirement, and the child is less than 1 month older than the age requirement, then the item/indicator can be marked NA. If the child is more than 1 month older than the age requirement or if there are 2 or more children who meet the age requirement, then the item/indicator must be scored.

Careprovider: In all items involving any type of interaction, "care provider" refers to those adults that are in the home and who work with the children daily (or almost daily), for a substantial part of the day. This can include volunteers and other family members (but not other children), if they are in the home for the required amount of time. Adults who are in the home for short periods of the day, or who are not a regular daily part of the classroom, do not count in evaluating whether the requirements of the item are met. For example, if a therapist, parent, or friend comes into the home and interacts with children, for short or irregular periods, these interactions do not count in scoring the item unless they are extremely negative.

Gross motor: There are 3 items in the scale that consider what is observed in gross motor play. Item 5, Active physical play, covers safety issues such as cushioning surfaces, fall zones, and equipment hazards. Safety (13) includes physical hazards relating to both space and equipment. Supervision indoors and outdoors (26) focuses on staff protection and facilitation of play. It is important to score what is observed in the item(s) where the information applies. Details of requirements for each of these items (space, equipment, and hazards) are found in the document, "NCRLAP Requirements for Gross Motor Space and Equipment."

Handwashing: *In certain situations when a sink with running water is not accessible for the group to use, hand sanitizing products may be used in lieu of handwashing. For example, hand sanitizer may be used while staff is supervising children outdoors if hands are washed upon returning indoors. The following requirements must be met; the*

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waterless wash or wipe must be used according to manufacturer guidelines (i.e., labeled as safe for use by children, used only with adult supervision, allowed to dry properly), and the waterless wash must be stored out of reach of children. Please note that this substitution is only acceptable in certain circumstances and that the requirements for adequate handwashing including the use of running water and soap for 5-10 seconds followed by drying with an individual paper towel or air dryer still apply for routine care activities and general classroom use.

Many and variety: Terms such as "many" or "variety" are used throughout the scale. We have provided numbers to guide decision making for many of these terms. However, the actual number required will depend on number of children enrolled, and the ages and abilities of those children. In cases where there are small groups of children, the numbers provided are likely to be reasonable. However, in large family child care homes, with 10 or more children, more materials will be needed.

Poor repair: 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

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 and 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.

Some: The term "some" occurs most frequently in indicators that represent a minimal (3) level of quality, although occasionally it occurs at higher levels. In determining when to give credit for "some" in an indicator, consider the requirements in the parallel indicators at the lower and next higher level of quality. For example, if under inadequate no materials are required, then some would mean "one or more". In cases where a plural is used with the term "some", then more than one would be required to give credit. When terms such as "very few" or "very little" or "rarely" are used under inadequate, then "some" represents a mid-point between what is required for the 1 and for the 5.

Weather Permitting: The term "weather permitting" is used in several items of the scale with regard to when children can participate in outdoor activities. Weather permitting means almost every day, unless there is active precipitation, a weather advisory, or public announcements related to environmental conditions such as high levels of pollution, extreme cold or heat that might cause health problems. It is sometimes said, "There is no bad weather; only bad clothes." Therefore, children should be dressed properly and taken outdoors on most days. This might require that the schedule be changed to allow children outdoor play in the early morning when it will be very hot later in the day. Or it might require that the program ensure that children have boots and a change of clothes for a day when the grass is wet. After bad weather, staff should check the outdoor area, dry off equipment, sweep away water, or block off puddles, and so forth, as needed before children go out. Programs with protected outdoor areas, such as a deck or patio are more likely to be able to meet the requirements for allowing outdoor activity daily, weather permitting.

General references: Materials that are frequently used by NCRLAP to assist in decision making are [Caring For Our Children, 2nd 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 are found on our website www.ncrlap.org and providers are encouraged to access these.

ITEM & INDICATOR NOTES FOR THE FDCRS

Item 1. Furnishings for routine care and learning

- 1.1** To score No for this indicator, there must be some arrangement made to store children's things, such as coat hooks or a shelf for coats and diaper bags or back-packs.
- 3.4** Each child needs an individual place to store their own things.
- 5.1** To meet the requirements of this indicator, it is important that some accommodation be made so that furnishings in the home are appropriate for children's use. For example, booster seats can be used to allow children to reach an adult-sized table more comfortably, or a small children's table and chairs might be used to meet the requirement of this indicator. Even if the child-sized furniture does not meet the definition of child-sized required in 7.1, credit can be given for 5.1. Also, if all furniture used for routine care and learning is child-sized, and no adaptations are needed for children, then give credit for 5.1.
- 7.1** Any child-size furniture that is not counted in other items for example, soft furnishings, dramatic play furnishings, can count toward this indicator (Ex. child-sized wooden chair) If the furniture is a table and chair(s), there must be at least 2 child-size chairs when two or more children are enrolled.
- 7.3** N/A for infants (less than 12 months) and children aged 7 years or older.

Item 2. Furnishings for relaxation and comfort

No mid-point score of 6 is possible.

- 3.1** To give credit, children must have daily access to the soft furniture, for more than just one or two short periods. Cushions can be used as a substitute for one piece of soft furniture. To meet the requirements of this indicator at least 2 pillows or cushions (the size used on beds) must be present for children's comfort. Soft furnishings must be located in indoor space used by children to give credit.
- 5.1** Daily access for much of the day while children are awake and indoors is required to give credit. As a substitute for 2 pieces of furniture, 4 or more cushions/pillows can count to meet the requirements of this indicator.
- 5.2** "Stuffed toys" can be interpreted as "soft toys". Do not count soft books or blankets to meet the requirements of this indicator. Look for soft dolls, soft blocks, soft animals, cloth puppets, etc. The intent of requiring "many" soft toys is to allow children to have choice, without undue competition. To meet the requirement of "many" there should be about 10-20 soft toys accessible and at least two per child must be accessible in a group with more than 10 children. However, if only 1 or 2 children are enrolled in the home, there can be fewer soft toys accessible as long as sufficient choice is provided and competition over the toys does not occur.
- 5.3** N/A if no children under 24 months are in care.
- 7.1** This indicator requires at least two child-sized soft furnishings. The padded high chair in the example counts only for infants; not for older children. Note that the child-sized rocker listed in the example must be padded to give credit.

Item 3. Child related display

The display must be present in areas used by the children for more than short periods of the day.

- 3.1, 5.1 & 5.2** N/A if only infants (less than 12 months) are in care. Note: If only infants are in care, do not count 5.1 & 5.2 in scoring, and decide whether score can be 6 or higher (i.e., all of 3 plus half or more of 7).

- 5.1** Some flexibility can be used in determining whether there is enough art work displayed to give credit. First, no art work is required for any child under 12 months of age. However, art work done by children in this age group should be counted if it is displayed. Second, interpret "at least 2 items per child enrolled" to mean that the total number of displayed items should be twice the enrollment (i.e., if there are 6 children enrolled, there should be approximately 12 items displayed). Full day program children should be represented, and if certain children are not represented in the display the provider should be able to explain that all children, including the school age children, have a chance to display their work if interested. If it is not easy to determine whether the work of most children is displayed, ask the provider to tell you about who did the various items.
- 5.2** "Some" means one or more pieces of children's work displayed at child's eye level.

Item 4. Indoor space arrangement

- 1.2** N/A if no children under 24 months are in care.
- 3.2 & 5.4** Breakables and other no-no's" may include toys and materials for older children that are inappropriately accessible to infants or toddlers. If this access often causes younger children's play to be dangerous or restricted score no for 3.2. 5.4 requires that the space be set up appropriately for different ages, so if young children have access to inappropriate materials, and this causes any problem, do not give credit.
- 5.1** Indicator 5.1 can be scored No, even if 5.3 is scored Yes. Indicator 5.1 requires an evaluation of spaces used for both play and for routines. Indicator 5.3 evaluates only the storage and space used for play activity areas.
- 5.2** If 5.2 is scored No (i.e., there are not 2 or more play areas clearly defined) it is unlikely that 5.3 would be scored Yes.
- 5.3** Indicators 5.2 and 5.3 are linked so if there are not 2 or more clearly defined play areas then the program will not receive credit for 5.3. However, if there are 2 or more clearly defined play areas indicator 5.3 refers only to those defined play areas.
- 5.4** The intent of this indicator is for all children enrolled to be able to use the space used for child care, whether there are several age groups or just one.

Item 5. Active physical play

Omit "walkers" from the list of materials in the original notes.

- 1.1, 1.3, 3.1 & 3.3** Safety of gross motor equipment is included in this item. Anything permitted by the staff to be used for stimulating gross motor activity must have an adequate fall zone if there is a potential for children to be injured from a fall. Height and velocity should be considered when determining whether a fall zone with cushioning surface is needed. Although the CPSC Guidelines apply only to anchored equipment, for purposes of scoring, similar standards should be applied to all gross motor equipment from which falls can occur. "Gross motor equipment" includes anything provided for or regularly permitted by the staff to be used for stimulating gross motor activity. This includes manufactured, custom-made and/or natural objects used for climbing, sliding, balancing or other gross motor activity. It does not include objects meant to be used for other purposes, such as benches to sit on, shade trees or shelves children are not supposed to climb. Scores should be based on observation of how the space, equipment, and supervision function. Especially with unusual, natural or innovative play opportunities, which may vary greatly, it is essential to observe carefully to see how children use these provisions and, what hazards and problems they encounter. Minor potential hazards, that do not cause any observed problems, such as tree roots, low branches, hills, benches, low outdoor stages, should not be considered as hazards. Scores below 3 should be used only in situations that are very dangerous for children. A fence is required for safety because of the hazards associated with children "wandering off," even in what appear superficially to be safe areas, or the entry into the play area of unexpected visitors, for example people who do not have the well-being of the children in mind, or animals that might be dangerous.

1.2 & 3.2 N/A if no children under 24 months are in care.

1.3 This indicator is scored Yes if there are no materials, or if some materials are in such poor repair that they are dangerous, or if most of the materials are in poor repair. A few materials may be in poor repair as long as they do not pose a serious threat to children's safety.

5.3 *This indicator requires that all children have access to at least 2 different types of developmentally appropriate gross motor materials which stimulate at least 3 different skills. Some examples of different types of equipment:*

- **Non-mobile infants** - outdoor pad or blanket, baby gym
- **Mobile infants** - balls, push/pull toys to encourage crawling
- **Toddlers** – push/pull toys to encourage walking, small riding toys without pedals
- **Pre-schoolers and school-agers** – appropriately sized basketball hoops and riding equipment, **7.2** N/A if only infants (less than 12 months) are in care.

Item 6a. Space to be alone (infants/ toddlers)

Do not score N/A because only one child is enrolled. Score this item N/A if no infants/toddlers are enrolled or if the children generally get along very well and the caregiver uses other effective means of protecting a child from being annoyed by others. For example, space to be alone is not needed (score item N/A) if the caregiver successfully redirects annoying children to use other toys, rather than the toy another child is already using. However, the item must be scored if a space to be alone is used that impedes a child's ability to explore and learn for a significant amount of time during the observation or if a child is often annoyed by others, and there is no safe space for the child to escape the annoyance.

3.2 Score N/A if caregiver does not place child into an alone space that the child can not leave independently.

5.1 Omit the word "placed" from this indicator to score.

Item 6b. Space to be alone (2 years and older)

No mid-point scores of 2, 4, are possible.

Do not score N/A because only one child is enrolled.

The primary intent of this item is to give children respite from the pressures of group care in programs where children participate in routines and play together most of the day. In a program where playing alone is enforced during much of the observation, and children are not allowed to play together, then the intent of this item is not being met at all, so score 1. In programs where there are only 1 or 2 children, there should be a space for privacy for 1 child to allow the child to have a sense of respite from interaction if wanted.

5.1 The space that is "set aside" must be observed, although children do not have to be observed using the space during the observation. If children are not observed using the space, look for evidence to show whether the provider is inclined to limit children from getting away from the group, for example by calling them back to the group when they try to go off to play alone. If the provider limits children so they can not access private space, then do not give credit.

Item 7. Arriving/ leaving

If the caregiver provides transportation to the family child care home for some or all of the children, then ask questions to find out whether the requirements of this item are met under these circumstances.

3.1 Omit "but not each one individually" to score this indicator.

3.2 This indicator must be scored No to score 5 or higher.

5.2 All parents must be greeted.

Item 8. Meals/snacks

Note, p. 16 Since North Carolina requires that caregivers supplement food brought in by parents if nutritionally inadequate according to USDA Standards, the note on p. 16 should be ignored, and the nutritional adequacy of the food should be scored based on the observation.

1.3 & 3.4 N/A if no infants (less than 12 months) are in care.

1.4 & 3.6 N/A if no children under 24 months are in care.

1.5 For NC assessors, the intent of this indicator is to determine whether the correct components of a meal or snack are being served to the children. No analysis of the nutritional value of foods served is necessary. Use the Food Guide to determine whether the components are present. Personal dietary preferences of the assessor (e.g., whole grain vs. white breads; fresh vs. canned vegetables, high vs. low sugar or fat content, etc.) are not to be used in determining the quality of the foods served.

3.1 Adequate portions of each required food component must be placed on each child's plate unless meals or parts of meals are served family style, in which case a sufficient quantity of the food served family-style must be available for all children to serve themselves required amounts. Verbally offering a food or beverage that is not within reach of a child is not sufficient.

3.2 "Eating area clean" means that the eating surface is sanitary (e.g. table tops and highchair trays). Sanitary practices must be evident and maintained at least 75% of the time to receive credit.

- Sanitary eating surfaces:

Must be cleaned with soapy water and sanitized before and after eating. For bleach/water sanitizing solution to be effective it must be allowed to dry for a minimum of 2 minutes and complete air drying is ideal. Manufacturer instructions for other sanitizers should be followed. Paper towels or a clean cloth, rather than sponges should be used. The same cloth cannot be used to wipe the soapy water and the sanitizing solution. The use of a clean cloth to wipe sanitizing solution from more than one table is acceptable as long as the sanitizing procedure was carried out correctly.

- If a table itself can not be sanitized, then a place-mat (e.g. vinyl) that is cleaned and sanitized may be used or a clean disposable place-mat may be used.

3.3 To determine whether sanitary conditions have been maintained consider the following components. Each component should be calculated separately and must be met at least 75% of the time with only occasional lapses in practice.

- Proper hand washing for adults:
Including use of soap and running water for 5-10 seconds, followed by drying with an individual paper towel or air dryer. Recontamination of hands prior to eating as well as serving seconds to children should be minimized.
- Uncontaminated foods and beverages:
Are served using sanitary utensils and containers. Food is not served directly on table tops. Contaminated foods/beverages are those that can spoil and have been non-refrigerated for more than one hour or that have been dropped on the floor, placed on an unclean surface.

3.4 Infants must be held unless they can hold their bottles independently. This means that infants can comfortably hold their bottles without the assistance of the provider.

3.5 & 3.6 Add the words "or sippy cup(s)" to the end of each indicator.

3.5 N/A if no toddler (12-23 months of age) is in care.

5.2 If only one age group is in care (different age groups are not enrolled), score for the one group.

7.1 N/A for young infants (e.g., can not sit in high chair, can not manage finger feeding or holding own bottle).

Item 9. Nap/rest

5.1 "Different age groups" should be interpreted as "each age group".

5.2 Due to new information on the transmission of respiratory illnesses 3 feet is required between cots/mats or unless solid barrier separates sleeping spaces.

Item 10. Diapering/ toileting

1.2 For proper sanitary diaper change procedure, see Caring for Our Children, 2nd edition, standard 3.014, pages 94-95 and NC assessors should now watch to see if wipes are used for both the caregiver and the child's hands after disposing of the soiled diaper and before redressing. If a regular practice of adequate basic sanitary conditions is observed, with only an occasional lapse, then score 1.2 No and 3.1-3.4 accordingly.

1.2, 3.1 Sinks and sanitation: Any sink that is used for hand washing after diapering or toileting must be sanitized BEFORE the sink is used for ANY other purpose(s). This practice prevents the germs that are associated with diapering and toileting from being spread to other classroom materials and surfaces.

Therefore, if a sink is used to wash hands after completing a diapering/toileting routine then the sink basin and faucet must be sanitized before:

- Other types of hand washing occur at the same sink (e.g., hand washing after wiping a nose, after using play dough or cleaning up from easel painting, before eating a snack, when an additional teacher or child arrives, etc)
- Any classroom materials or toys are cleaned in the same sink
- Brushing teeth in that sink
- Providing drinking water from that sink

It is NOT required that sinks be sanitized between different uses or users if:

- A sink is used only for hand washing after diapering or toileting
- Separate sinks are generally used, but some routines (diapering and mealtime) occur in immediate succession. In this case if children and staff should use a paper towel to turn off the faucet or leave the water running until all children have washed their hands to minimize the need to touch faucet or basin.

To adequately sanitize the diaper changing surface after cleaning with soapy water, bleach/water sanitizing solution must be allowed to dry for a minimum of 2 minutes and complete air drying is ideal. Manufacturer instructions for other sanitizers should be followed.

3.2 Since new research has shown that waterless washes are an inadequate sanitary measure, it is required that caregivers wash with soap and water during diapering or toileting. Therefore, disregard the statement about waterless washes in the note for this item.

3.3 To receive credit 75% of the children should be checked/changed every two hours, *and there should be no major problems.*

3.4 Add the words "or after being diapered." Credit can be given if 75% of children's hands are washed.

5.2 N/A if only infants (less than 12 months) are in care.

5.3 N/A if no toddlers or children being toilet trained are in care.

7.2 N/A if only young infants (e.g. less than 6-7 months) are in care.

Item 11. Personal grooming

1.2 & 3.1 These indicators refer only to whether the children can reach the sink easily while standing at the sink. These indicators apply to children who can stand. Younger children will need assistance if steps are used to reach sink. If all standing children can reach the sink except 1, credit can still be given.

3.3 Hand washing requirements also apply to children who handle or hold their own bottles before meals and after meals if necessary.

If at least 75% of the children wash hands before and after meals/snack then give credit for this indicator. Total all children's observed hand washing before and after meals/snacks to calculate the 75%. Consider re-contamination of children's hands before eating when scoring this indicator.

- Proper hand washing for children: Includes use of soap and running water for 5-10 seconds, followed by drying with an individual paper towel or air dryer. Recontamination of hands prior to eating should be minimized.

5.1 N/A if only young infants (e.g. less than 6-7 months) are in care.

5.2 N/A if no children under 24 months are in care. Bibs are required as needed to prevent soiled clothing.

7.1 N/A for infants under 12 months. This indicator requires that a toothbrush be used for each child. Score Yes if this is true, whether or not toothpaste is used.

Item 12. Health

5.1 Please do not consider caregiver and children's hand washing for meals/snacks and for diaper/toileting when scoring this indicator. All other handwashing is considered when scoring this indicator. There are 4 categories of hand washing that must be tracked to score this indicator. These 4 categories are: 1) Upon arrival into the home, and re-entering the home after being outside, 2) Before and after water play or after messy play, 3) After dealing with bodily fluids, and 4) After touching contaminated objects and surfaces, such as trash can lids. To score, observers should be aware of times that handwashing is carried out when needed. This means that the observer should watch (and listen). For example, observers should listen for coughing or sneezing by the children and staff, or watch for noses that need wiping to see that the proper handwashing is carried out. Notes should be taken on the score sheet to indicate when handwashing has been carried out properly as needed, and when it has been ignored. The 75% of required handwashing must be calculated separately for staff and children, but the percent should be based on the total handwashing in all categories. If either group washes hands less than 75% of the time when needed, score 5.1, "No." No major problems (such as using the same sink for both diapering and other needs without sanitizing in between, animal contamination in space used by children, contents of potty chair accessible to unsupervised children, or much handwashing ignored) can exist to give credit for this indicator.

5.2 Consider food allergies in this indicator.

For meals such as breakfast and lunch: A food/beverage substitution made in case of allergies must meet the primary meal/snack nutrient contribution of the food/beverage it replaces, unless written instructions for other substitutions have been provided by the child's health care professional. For example, in the case of milk, the substitute beverage needs to be equal in calcium and protein. Therefore, water, juice, or calcium-enriched juice is not a milk substitute since it does not replace the protein, but a vegetarian milk, such as soy milk, is. To get additional information about whether substitutes can be credited, ask staff, "How are substitutes made for foods/beverages children cannot eat?"

For snacks: Two of four nutritional components from the USDA Meal Guidelines must be served to give credit for an appropriate snack. A child may be served any food that counts for a second USDA component as a substitute. For example, if the snack is milk and crackers, a child who is allergic to milk may be served juice and crackers because

the child's allergies are considered and the alternative snack still meets USDA guidelines. To get additional information about whether substitutes can be credited, ask staff, "How are substitutes made for foods/beverages children cannot eat?"

Item 13. Safety

- 1.2 & 3.6** Bleach and water solution, used to sanitize surfaces, do not have to be locked, but must be stored out of reach of young children. Cabinets that contain hazardous materials must be locked (i.e. lock and key, magnetic lock). Safety latches are not sufficient. Heating a bottle and/or infants' food in a microwave or in water warmer than 120 degrees is a safety hazard due to the possibility of hot spots created during the microwave process.
- 3.4** "Official fire safety inspection" means that there is a signed report from the fire inspector. In North Carolina counties where Fire Inspectors will not complete fire safety inspections on family child care homes ask the caregiver whether the fire extinguisher is charged, the smoke alarm is working, and monthly fire drills are completed, to meet the requirements of this indicator.
- 3.6** If adults pick up infants/toddlers by hand or arm, putting children at risk for joint injuries, then this indicator must be scored No. The same is true if infants under 12 months of age are put to sleep on their stomachs, putting children at risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. If children roll onto their stomachs by themselves, credit can be given if they were originally placed on their backs.
- 5.2** N/A if family child care provider never transports children.
- 5.4** Change "last 2 years" to "last 3 years".
- 7.1** CPR training must be renewed yearly.

Item 14a. Informal use of language (infants/ toddlers)

- 1.1, 3.1 & 3.2** 1.1 is scored Yes when the caregiver does little or no talking of any type to infants/toddlers. 3.1 is scored Yes when there is some, or even much, talking throughout the observation, but the talking that occurs is used mainly to control children. 3.2 is scored Yes when there is some social talking (not necessarily much) throughout the observation in addition to that used for controlling children.
- 3.1** This indicator must be scored No to get a score of 5 or higher. To give a score of 3 or 4, this indicator may be scored Yes.
- 5.1** Interpret "infants" as "infants and toddlers". This requirement applies to both age groups.
- 7.1** At least 2 instances must be observed.
- 7.2** At least 2 instances must be observed. N/A if only infants (less than 12 months) are in care.
- 7.3** At least 2 instances must be observed. N/A if only infants (less than 12 months) are in care.

Item 14b. Informal use of language (2 years and older)

- 3.2 Remove the word “primarily”.
- 5.4 At least 2 instances must be observed
- 7.2 Interpret "preschoolers" as children 3 years or older. N/A if children are less than 3 years of age.

Item 15a. Helping children understand language (infants/ toddlers)

- 1.1 Interpret "picture games" as "pictures" for this age group. Games are not required for this age group, but pictures are.
- 3.3 For this indicator, pictures can include those in books.
- 5.1 To give credit for this indicator, there must be evidence that the books are accessible to each of the children and appropriate for the age group. Violence or other frightening content in books and pictures is not appropriate for infants, toddlers. If there are any books accessible to children that show violence in a graphic or frightening way, or that glorify violence, then credit cannot be given for this indicator.
- 5.2 To give credit for this indicator, many of these types of interactions must be observed, but not all that are listed in the indicator. For example, credit will be given for 5.2 when the provider does not say nursery rhymes with the children, but she has many of the other types of required interactions.

Item 15b. Helping children understand language

- 3.1 & 5.1 Any children's books for age 2 and older are acceptable for this indicator. Books do not have to exactly match ages of children in care. Games without pictures that promote language development may be counted for this indicator for school-age children who can read.
- 5.1 There needs to be several (3-5) different picture games to give credit. Multiples of the same game do not count as several. Different versions of the same type of game are counted, such as 3 different sets of flash cards, 3 different versions of a memory game.
- 5.2 This indicator requires that both books and picture games be appropriate for all age groups considered in this item (i.e., all age groups enrolled). Some materials may be appropriate for more than one age group. At a minimum, 5 or more books appropriate for each age group are required, but some books might be appropriate for more than one age group. At least 2 picture games should be accessible for each age group, understanding that there might be overlap in the games that can be used by children of different ages.
- 5.2 To determine whether books, language materials, and activities are appropriate for children, assessors should consider only books, pictures and language materials that are accessible to children in the group. Language materials obviously not meant to be included in the program’s book collection should not be considered unless these materials are used during the observation (e.g., stacks of magazines for use in art). A collection is not be considered appropriate for preschool and kindergarten children if most of the collection is intended for school age children (e.g., chapter books, books with large amounts of text, advanced content, and/or many small pictures),
Violent (i.e., involving aggressive physical force), frightening (e.g., dreadful, shocking, terrifying), or sexually provocative content in books and pictures is considered inappropriate for preschool or kindergarten children who, compared to older individuals, may be unable to understand it and become confused, fearful, or engage in unsafe behaviors based on what they have seen.

Because most children in preschool and kindergarten cannot read, a distinction is made between inappropriate images and inappropriate text. Credit should not be given if ANY accessible book or picture contains inappropriate images. By contrast, printed text should be considered only if the provider is observed reading inappropriate content to children or if a child capable of reading is observed reading the inappropriate text.

Because most school age children can read, NO distinction is made between inappropriate images and inappropriate text for school age children.

Occasionally there are books that are important to the provider and/or parent (e.g., some therapeutic books, some books that teach morality or lessons) that are of use even though they would not be appropriate to leave out for children's independent use. When using these books, providers should ensure that children are not exposed to inappropriate content by keeping the book out of children's reach (i.e., making it inaccessible) and by rewording or not showing developmentally inappropriate content when reading to children.

Item 16. Helping children use language

No mid-point score of 6 is possible.

3.1 This indicator must be scored No to get a score of 5 or higher.

3.2, 5.2 To give credit for these indicators, the activities must be adult-initiated.

5.1 There must be evidence that the materials are accessible to each child to give credit for this indicator.

Item 17. Helping children reason

5.1 Interpret the phrase "games and materials" as "games and/or" materials. Games earn credit for this indicator, but they are not required. Developmentally appropriate materials for all ages, including infants and toddlers are required. Variety requires 3-5 different materials for each age group. In a very large family child care group, more would be needed. This requirement can be met by either games or materials. There must be evidence that the games or materials are accessible to each child in the appropriate age group.

Item 18. Eye-hand coordination

3.2 & 5.2 As long as there is variety, there can be duplication in the number of materials required for these indicators. For example, a family child care home may have two different busy boxes, a pegboard with big pegs, and two different simple puzzles to meet the requirement for 3.2 for toddlers. In addition, there can be some overlap of materials for the different age groups. For example, both toddlers and younger preschoolers may enjoy using large interlocking plastic blocks, and so the blocks would count for each age group.

5.1 The variety in this indicator requires at least 3-5 different types of materials for each age group and there must be evidence that each child has access to the materials during the required time, so children have different experiences.

Item 19. Art

No mid-point score of 2 is possible.

5.1 "Preschoolers" means children over 30 months.

5.2 If materials other than drawing materials (e.g., play dough, paint, collage materials) can be used independently by children then give credit for this indicator. If these types of materials cannot be used independently then they need to be offered at least 3 times a week.

7.1 If children can reach and use materials such as those listed in the indicator without help from the provider, then give credit for this indicator. "Preschoolers" means children over 30 months. Score this indicator "N/A" if all children enrolled are 30 months or younger.

7.2 If children can reach and use materials such as those listed in the indicator without help from the provider, then give credit for this indicator.

Item 20. Music and movement

No mid-point score of 2 is possible.

5.1 & 5.3 To give credit, musical experiences in addition to informal singing (given credit in 5.2) must be provided.

5.2 At least one instance must be observed.

5.3 If all age groups participate in any of the musical experiences observed, give credit for this item.

7.2 For this indicator, only musical toys are required for children under 24 months of age. Dance props can include scarves, hats, musical instruments that can be held, and generally anything a child is allowed to use while dancing.

Item 21. Sand and water play

No mid-point scores of 2 or 6 are possible.

1.1 This indicator means that neither sand nor water is available to children. If one of these is present, a higher score will be given.

5.2 Interpret "toys for sand and water play" as "toys for sand and/or water play".

7.1 This does not mean sand 3 times a week and also water 3 times a week. However, each must be provided weekly, and between the two, this should happen 3 times a week.

Item 22. Dramatic play

3.2 For this indicator, interpret "few" as "some".

5.1 Change the word "available" to "accessible" in this indicator. "Variety" requires materials for acting out family roles, such as dolls, doll beds, pots & pans, dress-ups, etc. The variety required will vary by age group in care, with less variety needed to meet the needs of toddlers, but more will be required for preschoolers and school-age children to act out more complicated roles.

- 5.2** The accessible materials must be sufficient for meaningful play, both indoors and outdoors. For example, an outdoor playhouse must be accompanied by something to use as furniture, a toy farm building must have toy animals or people, a baby carriage must have a doll).
- 5.3** This requirement is for dramatic play props for more than just housekeeping. Examples of such props include dress-ups for various roles, plastic carpentry tools, doctor kit, things to use to play store, small trucks or plastic zoo animals.

Item 23. Blocks

No mid-point scores of 2 or 6 are possible.

- 3.1** Enough blocks must be present for simple block building, such as stacking blocks or putting blocks in a line to make a road. Interlocking blocks (such as Lego, Duplo) are acceptable for this indicator. For toddlers, at least 6 blocks must be present to score "Yes", while for older children at least 20 blocks are required. Lincoln Logs are not counted for this item, as they are small building materials considered under the Fine motor item.
- 5.1** Change the word "available" to "accessible." The separate sets of blocks and the variety of accessories must be stored close together so the separate sets of blocks and variety of accessories may be used at the same time.
- 5.2** Credit can be given if blocks are used on a table or in a corner of the room where block play will not be interrupted (i.e., a place that is not in traffic). It must be obvious during the observation that blocks are generally used in the protected space, rather than in traffic. If 2 or more spaces are used for blocks, only 1 must meet the requirements of this indicator.

Item 24. Use of T.V.

Note: If caregiver does not use TV while children are in care, score 7.4 Yes, and mark N/A for all other indicators. If caregiver uses TV while children are in care, 7.4 is N/A, and all other indicators must be scored.

- 3.1 & 3.3** Must be No to score 5 or higher. (However, a score of 4 can still be considered).
- 3.1** is "true" (score Yes) when no other activities are provided when the TV is used with the children.
- 3.2** If 3.2 is No, give a score of 2.
- 5.1** All programs must be appropriate.

Item 25. Schedule

- 3.1** To receive credit all routines should meet the needs of *75% of the children in each age group, and there should be no major problems. For example if diapers are checked/changed every two hours for 75% of the children then give credit. If there are any major problems (for example one child does not have diapers changed for 3 hours) then credit wouldn't be given for this indicator*
- 5.1** In order to meet the requirement "for children's choice", a variety of play activities must be provided simultaneously, so children can choose from among a variety of play options. The adult may make selections of the materials offered, but children must have a variety from which to choose.

- 5.2** The 2 special activities do not have to be completed during the observation. Look for evidence of 2 activities (e.g., on schedule or activity plan) and ask caregiver to get more information. "Special activity" means something that the caregiver initiates that goes beyond what is regularly accessible to the children. This is not intended to mean an overly controlled or adult-directed activity.
- 5.3** Determining whether there is a balance of indoor and outdoor activities will depend on a number of factors, including the ages of the children in care, the mood and needs of the children, and the weather. The balance will change somewhat from day to day, so no specific amount of time can be applied to this indicator. However, it is expected that most very young babies would get to go outdoors for some time during the day, and as children get older, this time would increase. If the weather is especially nice, the balance would require that more time is spent outdoors. At least an hour of outside activity would be expected for all except the very youngest babies, in a full-day program (6 or more hours). This does not have to be provided all at one time but rather in several shorter periods. For this item, "outdoor activities" can include both active physical play or more quiet activities, such as riding in a stroller or having a picnic.

Item 26. Supervision of play indoors and outdoors

Since the intent of this item is to evaluate general supervision of children, omit the word "play" from the item title.

- 3.1** In family child care, it is usually necessary for providers to leave children for short periods of time for example to use the toilet, prepare food, answer the door or phone, etc. To meet the requirements of 3.1, the provider is only allowed limited momentary lapses 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 higher risk activity) while not within view, and checked on frequently. Children under the age of 6 generally can not be left outdoors unsupervised, and older children must be checked regularly. Flexibility is allowed in determining the amount of supervision children require, based on how safe the environment is, the ages of the children and their abilities.
- 3.2** Replace the word "mainly" with the word "given" when scoring this indicator.

Item 27. Tone

- 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3** A score of 3 is given when nothing in the 1 is scored Yes, and all indicators in the 3 are scored Yes (even though the indicators listed in the 3 represent minimal or less than good practices). All indicators in 3 must be scored No to consider a score of 5 or higher because of the negative nature of the indicators in the 3. However, if 2 of the Minimal indicators are scored No, give a score of 4 (because more positive practices are being used, but not enough to give credit for the 5). This is to recognize the more positive practices (even if nothing in the 5 can be scored "Yes"). The rationale for this scoring decision is that scores of No, on the negative indicators in 3, represent better practice than if all of 3 are scored "Yes".
- 5.1** To give credit for this indicator, physical contact to show affection must be observed for each child present during the observation. For some older children this can be shown through something as simple as a hand on the child's back or shoulder, while for infants/toddlers, it should be more substantial and frequent.

Item 28. Discipline

- 3.2** Both social/emotional and physical hurting of others is included in this indicator. If children persistently tease, harass, or show discrimination against others and the care provider ignores this behavior, score No on this indicator.
- 7.3** N/A if only children under 24 months are in care.

Item 29. Cultural awareness

No mid-point score of 6 is possible.

- 3.1** Interpret "dolls" broadly to include small figures such as Lego or Playmobile figures, doll house figures, or even paper dolls being used by older children. To give credit materials must be present and used.
- 5.1** "Many" requires 3-5 examples of each (dolls, pictures and books). To give credit materials must be accessible to each child and none of the accessible materials can be violent, negative or stereotypical.
- 5.4** Pictures must be where children can easily see them, although not necessarily on the child's eye level. Consider the size, clarity and placement of pictures. Books must be accessible *to each child*. To give credit for "people of all ages" at least 1 example of the following must be observed in a book and a displayed picture: baby or toddler, older child, teen-ager, younger adult, senior adult.

Item 31. Balancing personal and caregiving responsibilities

3.1, 3.2 & 3.3 These indicators must be scored No to score 5 or higher.

Item 32. Opportunities for professional growth

Each teacher/caregiver that is considered a "care provider" must meet the requirements of this item.

- 3.1** Interpret the word "limited" as "some".

Item 35. Adaptations for special needs

No mid-point scores of 2 or 4 are possible.

Note: Omit the word "other" from the title of this item, and consider all special needs under this item. Include needs of children with physical handicaps in scoring, as well as all others.

Note that this item cannot be scored unless there is a child in the group with an identified and/or diagnosed disability, with a completed assessment. If the diagnosis and assessment have not been completed on the child, score this item N/A. If the child is receiving services, this can be accepted as evidence that a diagnosis and assessment exist. Existence of an IEP/IFSP is not required to score this item. The child care provider need not point out the child or tell the observer about the particulars of the disability for this item to be scored. As you question the teacher about how the identified child's special needs are handled, you do not need to know which child is being discussed. Do not ask the child care provider to give you any information that a child's parents might consider private. 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.

If the child care provider replies that no modifications are needed for the child with the diagnosed disability score this Item N/A; however if you see that modifications are needed but not used, then score the appropriate indicator negatively.

Item 40. Caregiver preparation

Note that this item cannot be scored unless there is a child in the group with an identified and diagnosed disability, with a completed assessment. If the diagnosis and assessment have not been completed on the child, score this item N/A. If the child is receiving services, this can be accepted as evidence that a diagnosis and assessment exist. Existence of an IEP/IFSP is not required to score this item. The child care provider need not point out the child or tell the observer about the particulars of the disability for this item to be scored. As you question the teacher about how the identified child's special needs are handled, you do not need to know which child is being discussed. Do not ask the child care provider to give you any information that a child's parents might consider private. 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

- 3.1 Upon enrollment or upon learning about a recent diagnosis, the child care provider should seek basic information about the child's identified disability, medical condition or other special need.
- 5.1 The child care provider should have information about the child's special need to use within 30 days of enrollment or upon learning about the child's special need/diagnosis. This indicator does not require that staff have actual copies of any assessments or developmental plans. The information may be provided by parents/guardians, other staff and specialists who have specific knowledge regarding the child's needs.