

# Tennessee Additional Notes to ITERS-R-August 1, 2016

Revised with two new notes effective October 17, 2016

## Overview

The purpose of the Tennessee additional notes is to improve the interrater agreement among scale users and to provide further interpretation of items and indicators to assist with scoring decisions. In order to fulfill the requirements of Tennessee state law, the Tennessee Anchors wrote these additional notes as the first reference for scale clarification and scoring. These notes have been adopted for use in Tennessee assessments. The notes follow the intent of scale application as defined by Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford and Debby Cryer, authors of the scale. Some of the information used in the additional notes was adapted from the Environment Rating Scales® and All About the ITERS-R. The All About the ITERS-R is a resource for use with the Environment Rating Scales®. It is not required for scoring. These resources can be purchased or checked out from a CCR&R or TECTA office.

Be sure to replace older notes with newer notes. The most recent TN updates are:

### 10-17-16 General Notes and Item 11

#### 8-1-16: Items 3, 9, 28, 29 and 30

8-1-15: General Notes and Items 3, 8 and 11

5-5-14: Items 8 and 24

11-7-13: 8 (deleted sentence in note for 1.1), 19 and 24

5-3-13: General Notes and Items 2, 7 and 10

10-12: General Notes and Items 3, 7 and 18

4-12: General Notes and Items 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 24, 28 and 29

10-11: Items 7, 11 and 18

4-11: General Notes and Items 2, 7, 11, 28 and 29 (Removal of sentence-Item 7, Indicators 1.2 and 3.2)

9-10: Item 8

7-10: General Notes and Items 5, 7, 21 and 24

10-09: General Notes and Items 7, 11, 16, 24 and 30 (Some General Notes have been moved directly under the items)

## General Notes for ITERS-R

### Levels of quality

Levels of quality build expectations from minimal to good to excellent. Consider not only the requirements of the indicator, but the level of quality documented as general practice throughout the observation.

### Accessibility

Materials are considered accessible only if it is observed that children freely access and are permitted to use most of the materials. Ex: Some materials may not be accessible during the observation. Additional questions may be needed to gain information on other times of the day.

### Accessibility for one hour

This note pertains to Item 15, Fine motor-indicator 3.1; 16, Active physical play-indicator 5.1; 19, Blocks-indicators 3.1 and 3.2; 20, Dramatic play-indicator 3.1; 22, Nature/science-indicator 3.2; 24, Promoting acceptance of diversity-indicator 3.1; 30, Free play-indicator 3.1 and 3.3. **For materials to be counted as accessible to children, they must be able to reach and use the materials for a period of 1 hour a day in a program of 8 hours or more.** The 1 hour can be provided at one time or as a combination of several periods throughout the day. This does not mean that each child must have a full hour to use the materials. However, it is required that the majority of the children have a reasonable chance to use the materials at some time if they wish. Less time is required for programs operating less than 8 hours a day, with the amount of time calculated proportionally, based on the ratio of 1 hour for programs of 8 hours or more. For example, if a program operated for 6 hours a day, this would be  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a full-day program, so the time required would be  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the 1 hour. Use this chart to determine the approximate amount of time needed in programs operating less than 8 hours.

| Number of hours in operation                   | 2 hours | 3 hours | 4 hours | 5 hours | 6 hours | 7 hours |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Approximate minutes required for accessibility | 15      | 25      | 30      | 40      | 45      | 50      |

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### 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 how much is needed 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 one and for the five levels.

### Accessibility for much of the day

Research verifies that children learn through prolonged periods of play that allow them opportunity to make choices, discover and explore. For all programs, regardless of the hours of operation, much of the day requires that all children benefit from meaningful periods of play. **In order to meet much of the day, there should be no significant extended periods of time where structured activities prevent access to materials.** In programs that choose to provide extensive periods of outdoor play, the provider has an additional responsibility to provide access to various materials while outdoors so that children may still have significant opportunities to explore and discover. Materials and opportunities for engagement should be offered regularly to all children, regardless of age and ability. However, the caregiver’s primary responsibility is to provide safety and comfort for the children under his/her care. Holding a child for extensive periods of time can limit access to materials just as placing them in a piece of equipment. The caregiver must balance meeting the emotional needs of children while providing appropriate stimulating experiences. If a child becomes upset, he should be comforted. If children need comforting for extended periods of time, the requirements of accessibility may still be met if the caregiver provides ample opportunities for access to materials.

### Display

Display only counts as materials if it encourages active involvement through child manipulation.

### Equipment

**DHS licensing rules state that the manufacturer’s safety instructions shall be followed for the use and/or installation of all indoor and outdoor equipment and appliances (1240-04-03-.08). For example, crib, bed and futon mattresses should not be used on the floor to create soft areas.**

**Assessors will not consider mattresses on the floor towards meeting requirements for soft furnishings, and if seen, assessors will notify DHS licensing and the child care agency staff of the violation (effective October 17, 2016).**

### Forced participation

When children are required to participate in an activity or lose interest during the activity, and are not allowed to leave, participation is considered forced. Children may be encouraged to join an activity, but staff should be respectful of their cues and respond appropriately if any child loses interest.

### Health

Disinfectant and/or anti-bacterial wipes do not count for sanitization purposes. Products that can be given credit as sanitizing solutions are: bleach and water solution; or a commercial product that states on the label or manufacturer’s products sheet it kills 99.9% of germs, kills HIV virus, or is an EPA registered product. All commercial products used for sanitizing must be used according to manufacturer’s instructions.

Proper hand washing requires the use of liquid soap and running water.

### Playground

The list of acceptable protective surfacing materials does not include mixed surfacing materials since these materials were safety tested individually.

All equipment and/or play structures present in Gross Motor areas will be considered when assessing playground safety unless a physical barrier (fence, cones, rope, etc. ) is present providing a visual reminder to children that an area is not to be used.

### Rotation

When rotation of materials is required, rotation should occur monthly.

### Supervision

With regards to supervision, staff must be able to hear the child at all times, must be able to see the child with a quick glance, and must be able to physically respond immediately, leaving no child unattended. The caregiver’s focus must be on the children, especially during high risk activities, such as eating, sand/water play, art, etc. in order to adequately protect children.

### Connected indicators and omitted items

The following indicators are connected indicators. When credit is not given for the first indicator, credit cannot be given for the second indicator: 3/5.1 & 5.2, 15/3.1 & 3.2, 19/3.1,3.3 or 3.2, 3.3, 20/3.1 & 3.2, 22/3.1 & 3.2.

Items to be omitted from TN scoring: #33, #34, #35, #36, #37, #38, #39.

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## Specific Notes for ITERS-R

### 1. Indoor Space

5.2 The window or sky light should be located directly in the classroom where children spend much of their day.

### 2. Furniture for routine care and play

3.2 Enough furniture for play means that the children have the developmentally appropriate seating needed to use play materials and that there are suitable ways of making materials accessible to the children on open storage shelves. Toddlers and twos, who can select toys independently, should have access to materials on low, open shelves. Appropriate seating on small chairs near very low tables is also needed to encourage more sustained play with toys for toddlers and twos.

3.4 The seating arrangement should provide back support if needed.

5.2 In order to receive credit, at least two child-sized chairs at an appropriately sized table is required.

5.2, 7.2 Tables and chairs are required for both routines and play.

5.4 Some storage means that there is at least one storage provision for routine care supplies and one storage provision for play materials on-site.

5.5 Some adult seating means that there is at least one seating arrangement provided for adults to use during routine care. Credit can be given if seats are observed being used for routine care.

### 3. Provision for relaxation and comfort

1.1, 3.1, 5.1 and 7.1 Standard bed-sized pillows or larger are considered furnishings. Smaller pillows count as materials. **To count as a furnishing, rugs/mats should be large enough to permit at least one child to stretch out and lounge comfortably.**

**5.1 Both furnishing(s) and materials should be gathered together in the designated space to create a cozy area. The cozy area should provide a substantial amount of softness that allows children using that area to completely escape hard surfaces.**

### 5. Display for Children

Display should be meaningful for children. To meet the requirements of the display item and indicators as well as the requirements of other agencies, consider the quality of the display. The requirements may be met with fewer thoughtfully chosen pieces that incorporate several meaningful components (ex. one poster may include diversity and current themes, etc.).

5.2 This indicator focuses on the three-dimensional objects hanging in space in the room. A three-dimensional object has height, width, and depth. To score this indicator "Yes", there must be at least 2 three-dimensional hanging objects in the room for use by all of the children most of the day.

5.3 This indicator requires both two-dimensional and three-dimensional items. Some of the two-dimensional items should be in easy reach. Non-mobile children may need to be moved in close proximity to the items displayed.

### 6. Greeting/departing

3.3 If children are bused to the facility, credit can be given for 3.3 if verbal communication takes place between the primary caregiver and families. This communication must be documented and take place on a weekly basis.

3.4 To receive credit at 3.4, there must be evidence that daily verbal or written communication is occurring at arrival for all children, regardless of how they arrive.

### 7. Meals/snacks

1.2, 3.2 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. The guidelines also require ALL components to be served together. 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 foods served.

Foods that are perishable (including infant formula) should not be left out longer than 1 hour.

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Regardless of source or ages served, 75% of all children must receive meals and snacks that meet USDA guidelines. Providers may supplement if they choose in order to guarantee 75% compliance. Combination foods are foods with multiple components that have been packaged together or combined during the cooking process. Combination foods can be counted to meet up to two different components. Scoring consideration of combination foods should be balanced with other items on the menu. Foods that might be served together, but do not meet the definition of combination foods can count for up to 3 components (i.e. hamburgers, sandwiches, cereal and milk with added fruit). When vegetable garnishes are served in sufficient quantities, they may be considered to meet the requirement as a vegetable. Breeding on meat products may not be counted. Cooked dry beans, such as kidney or black beans which are considered to be an excellent source of protein, can count as either a protein or vegetable. However green beans, like string or lima beans which aren't considered to be good sources of protein, should only be counted as a vegetable.

For Tennessee scoring purposes, consider only foods served on the day of the assessment when determining if meal guidelines are met.

1.3, 3.3 Eating surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized prior to, and following, use for food service. Follow the "2-step" process. Eating surfaces should be: 1) washed with a soap and water mixture to remove gross soil and 2) sanitized with a bleach-water solution before and after being used for meals/snacks. To allow bleach-water solution to sanitize, it should be allowed to remain on the surface for at least 10 seconds (preferably longer) before wiping dry or allowing to air dry. For other acceptable sanitizing agents, refer to the manufacturer's labeled instructions. A fresh paper towel must be used for each step. One paper towel must be used to clean all surfaces and a second clean paper towel must be used to sanitize all surfaces. Cloth towels may be used in place of paper towels. If cloths are used for cleaning or sanitizing food prep surfaces, they may not be re-used for other purpose during the day and should be set aside for laundering.

If proper sanitary measures are clearly practiced as part of the childcare program, but an occasional lapse does occur, credit can be given.

If food is served directly on the high chair tray or table, the food should be dry (example, crackers, cheerios, etc.) for credit to be given; otherwise a plate, bowl, or paper towel, etc. should be used.

Caregivers' hands must be washed before and after feeding a child a bottle. The expectation is for children's hands to be washed before and after eating (including bottle feeding) regardless of whether they feed themselves or are fed by an adult. The use of wipes on very young infants without head/neck control is appropriate. In addition, if an infant falls asleep during the bottle-feeding, it is permissible for their hands to be wiped before laying the child down, or the child's hands can be washed upon awakening.

To allow staff to keep their focus on children while they are eating, a separate wipe may be used on each child's hands as they leave the table. However, all hands must be washed as soon as staffing allows.

1.4 Young toddlers who can sit up independently and hold their bottles may be allowed to feed themselves.

3.4 For Tennessee's purposes, mealtime supervision does not require that all children be within arm's reach. It does require that children who are eating be the primary focus of supervising staff. Other care-giving responsibilities should not be carried out by staff supervising children who are eating.

3.5 The list of food allergies and dietary restrictions must be located in the room where children eat. This information does not have to be publicly displayed; however, directions for finding this information must be publicly displayed in the room where children eat.

5.5 The posted menu should be accurate.

### 8. Nap

1.1, 3.2 If a parent requests their child to have a special sleeping arrangement due to a health condition, a dated and signed note from a physician detailing the special condition is required. Car seats are not an acceptable sleeping arrangement. A physician's statement is required for placing infants on their stomachs to sleep.

1.1, 3.2 Swaddling is considered a safe sleep issue and is not allowed by licensing. If this is observed, it will be discounted and reported.

1.1, 3.2 An alternative to meeting the space requirements is to provide solid barriers. In order to receive credit as a solid barrier, the barriers must run the length of the sleeping provision.

1.1, 3.2 Children over the age of 12 months who have been transitioned from a crib, playpen, or port-a-crib shall be provided an individual cot or a 2' mat. All sleeping provisions should be 30 inches or more apart and at least 75% of the sleeping provisions must be 36 inches or more apart.

1.2, 3.3 Sleeping infants should be checked every 15 minutes by touch.

3.2 Two coverings are required for children over 12 months of age - One to cover the type of bedding used and one for the child to have access to in order to cover up. Bedding should be washed weekly.

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### 9. Diapering/Toileting

1.1, 3.1, 5.1 Basic sanitary conditions include proper diapering procedures as outlined in the Tennessee Diapering Process. The Tennessee Diapering Process may be found at [www.tnstarquality.org](http://www.tnstarquality.org).

1.2, 3.2 **A thorough visual check (both front and back inside of diaper) should occur approximately every two hours.**

1.3, 3.3 If the provider's hands are washed prior to wiping the bleach solution from the diaper changing surface, and the solution has been allowed to sanitize the surface for at least two minutes, then a second hand washing is not required.

### 10. Health

3.2 When combining all categories to determine 75%, priority should be given to handwashing when dealing with bodily fluids (blood and mucous). Consider the impact upon the children.

3.4 If giving medication is part of the program's policy, the indicator is scored. If giving medication is not part of the program, the indicator would be scored NA.

7.2 Evidence of tooth brushing should be observed in order to give credit.

### 11. Safety Practices

1.1, 3.1 5.1 Indoor space for gross motor play and equipment is not held to the same standards as outside; however, safety as the primary focus should be insured. Consider the placement of equipment as well as the surface under equipment where children might fall. If indoor children's climbing equipment is used, mats or carpet are required to be placed under the equipment if it is over 12 inches in height. This is in reference to equipment specifically for climbing.

1.1, 3.1, 5.1 All sleeping surfaces must meet manufacturer's specifications and must meet federal requirements. Sleeping surfaces should not be altered in any way.

1.1, 3.1, 5.1 Following the implementation of the new crib standards, cribs that obviously do not meet the federal standards will be considered as safety hazards.

1.1, 1.2, 3.1 When considering the number of safety hazards, consider the severity and immediate risk to children. If only one hazard is present, but it is severe or life threatening, scoring can stop at the inadequate or minimal level.

For a more detailed listing of Playground Safety Hazards, refer to the Tennessee Playground Safety Sheet found at [www.tnstarquality.org](http://www.tnstarquality.org).

1.1, 3.1 If pod seats are used without a belt or tray, or on an elevated surface, it is considered a safety concern. If this is observed, it will be discounted and reported.

1.1, 3.1 Swaddling is considered a safe sleep issue and is not allowed by licensing. If this is observed, it will be discounted and reported.

**1.1, 3.1, 5.1 Due to the potential for suffocation or SIDS, the use of blankets or soft bedding is prohibited for infants (effective October 17, 2016)**

1.3, 3.2 Sleeping infants should be checked every 15 minutes by touch.

### 12. Helping children understand language

7.2 In order to receive credit, staff taking part in verbal play should be a general practice. Examples must be observed periodically during the observation.

### 13. Helping children use language

7.2 In order to receive credit, the requirements for this indicator should be a general practice. Examples must be observed periodically during the observation.

### 14. Using books

7.1 Since young children cannot read, the book area should be designed for children to view books by seeing the fronts of the books. If only the spines are showing credit cannot be given.

### 15. Fine Motor

3.1 "Some" for this item is defined as at least five examples of fine motor toys. The toys must be age-appropriate, intact, and functional. In addition, the material should have enough pieces to allow the type of activity for which it was designed.

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### 16. Active Physical Play

Indoor space for gross motor play and equipment is not held to the same standards as outside; however, safety as the primary focus should be insured. Consider the placement of equipment as well as the surface under equipment where children might fall. If indoor children's climbing equipment is used, mats or carpet are required to be placed under the equipment if it is over 12 inches in height. This is in reference to equipment specifically for climbing. For a more detailed listing of Playground Safety Hazards, refer to the Tennessee Playground Safety Sheet found at [www.tnstarquality.org](http://www.tnstarquality.org).

3.2 To give credit for some space, the space used must be large enough to permit children to move freely according to their abilities and needs. The space should not be limited due to clutter or crowding that may restrict movement.

3.3 Some appropriate materials/equipment used daily means that there are enough provisions so that children do not have to wait with no other appropriate gross motor material or equipment option.

5.4 To receive credit, there should be some appropriate gross motor materials/equipment for each child to use while engaged in active physical play.

### 17. Art

5.2 To give credit for this indicator, the majority of art activities used with the children should encourage individual expression.

### 18. Music and movement

5.4 This indicator requires that recorded music be used daily. It does not have to be observed. Music used appropriately can enhance many activities. However, music becomes a distraction when used as background noise, left on for long periods of time or played at a high volume all of which interfere with learning. In addition to music and movement activities, other examples could include activities such as painting to music, soft music during nap or meals, and listening to ocean sounds during water play. The music used should match the activity and have a purpose.

### 19. Blocks

3.2 "Some" for this item is defined as at least five accessories of two different types. Types of accessories include people, animals or vehicles. For young toddlers who like to fill containers with blocks and dump them, containers are also considered accessories.

### 20. Dramatic play

5.1 These materials should be accessible for much of the day.

5.4 Some child-sized furniture means a functioning piece of play furniture that children can easily reach and manage to play independently. Child-sized furniture used for toddlers may be smaller than furniture normally used by preschoolers.

### 21. Sand and water play

Since moldable sand cannot be easily poured, it is not an acceptable substitute for sand. Moldable sand is considered a three dimensional art material.

3.3 Provisions are to be accessible for the children in order to have meaningful play with these items as they relate to sand and water.

### 22. Nature/science

3.1 The materials should be realistic and developmentally appropriate for the children in care.

5.2 "Some" means that children have daily experience with either living plants or animals located in the room where the children play the majority of the day or in an indoor area that children visit daily. In order to receive credit, living things (plants, animals, etc.) must be easily seen by the children. If these items are stored out of the view of children (on top of a shelf, behind a cabinet, etc.) the teacher must make these accessible by bringing them down to the children's eye level. There must be clear evidence that this occurs on a daily basis and that the intent is for children to have meaningful experiences with living things.

### 23. Use of TV, video, and/or computer

5.1 To be considered "good for children", materials for computer and TV viewing must be appropriate and educational.

### 24. Promoting acceptance of diversity

5.1 At least three different books, three different pictures, and three different types of materials should be accessible. Types of materials can include items such as puzzles, puppets, fine motor materials, blocks, etc. In order to meet the requirement for 3 different types, materials from three examples should be present (i.e. 1 puzzle, 1 set of puppets and 1 set of lacing cards). Multiple materials of one type (for example 3 puzzles) would not receive credit.

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5.1 In order to give credit for varying abilities, these should be depicted with people. Animal representations, such as animals with glasses, do not count for diversity.

5.1, 5.2 The requirements for accessibility should be met for much of the day. Additional sets of dolls/people figures can be given credit at 5.1 if not credited at 5.2.

### 27. Staff-child interactions

3.4 “Some” is defined as extra touches that are added for the purpose of showing children they are valued and appreciated during routines or in play. This should be a normal part of practice and should occur throughout the day.

### 28. Discipline

Discipline is defined as teaching children to exercise self-control. Discipline is ideally proactive, and reactive only when needed. The proactive steps taken to teach self-control and prevent misbehavior are part of effective classroom management. One element of classroom management is developmentally appropriate expectations for the children. This means that the expectations should be based upon the children, their ages and abilities, their experiences, and best practice about how children grow and learn. When discipline is reactive, it should be a positive teaching interaction between an adult and child. Lack of observed discipline encounters typically indicates ineffective classroom management strategies resulting in positive discipline.

**3.1 Time out is not considered developmentally appropriate for children under the age of three.**

### 29. Schedule

**1.2 In addition to what is written in the Notes for Clarification, if any routine care need for any one child is completely ignored, it would be considered here.**

**3.1 Consider “most” to mean that more than half of the children’s routine care needs (meals/snacks, nap/rest, diapering/toileting) are met.**

### 30. Free play

3.2 Some supervision to protect children’s safety and to facilitate play means that staff are present in the area being used by children and are usually paying attention to them as they play. To facilitate play means that staff help children access toys and materials and help children who become upset or uninvolved.

5.1 Time spent outdoors and indoors should be significant enough that children become engaged in meaningful free play. Length of time may vary depending on the ages of the children and their needs.

**5.3 Ample and varied toys, materials and equipment are required for much of the day. In order to receive credit, most items in the activity subscale should meet the requirements for many and varied.**

### 32. Provisions for children with disabilities

ECERS-R 37, ITERS-R 32, FCCERS-R 34, and SACERS 44 should be scored NA unless a child with a disability that has been diagnosed through a formal assessment procedure and receives (or is eligible for) early intervention services is enrolled. Across all four scales, the following aspects should be considered when scoring: modifications, parent involvement, inclusion, and use of assessment information. Look for the extent of modifications needed to the schedule or classroom to include the child in daily activities, parent and staff communication regarding the child’s assessment information and ongoing therapy, and the use of assessment information into planning throughout the day. Some parents may not share all information with staff for various reasons. Consider the levels of quality when determining if staff and parents have shared enough information to meet the child’s needs. Even if staff put significant effort into asking about a child’s needs, if parents share no information, the child’s development is compromised.

3.3 Some involvement of parents and staff can take place through formal meetings, informal conversations, phone or written communications. Goals must take place through these communications.

3.4 Some involvement means a child with disabilities sometimes participates with others in the class and other times may not. The child may be segregated from the other children at some times, but not at all times of the day.