

The Quality Connection

Issue 3 - November / December
2019



CCLC – 591-1-1-.03(5)(b)(c)

FCCLH – 290-2-3-.09(1)(b)(c)

Beyond the Rule

A Path to Quality Care

Each month, the Quality Connection will identify a foundational licensing requirement and demonstrate how it relates to Georgia's Pre-K and Quality Rated Standards. It will also show how all DECAL programs are part of a quality continuum and are designed to work together for continuous quality improvement.

This issue will focus on the importance of balancing two different types of activities, active and quiet activity periods and supervised child free-choice activities and caregiver-led activities.



Along the *Quality* Continuum

The following charts contain examples of how the activities requirement would be implemented across the continuum of care between Licensing, Quality Rated and Georgia's Pre-K.

Foundational Practices - Child Care Licensing

- *Post a schedule in each classroom that reflects different types of play
- *Outdoor time scheduled:
 - *1-hour minimum per day; children less than 12 months old (Two 30-minute sessions acceptable)
 - *1-hour 30 minutes per day; children 1-year and older (Two 45-minute sessions acceptable)
- *Provide nap time
 - *Quiet time; children 5-years and older
- *Plan appropriate activities
 - *GELDS can be used as a resource)
- *Supply variety of engaging, accessible, age-appropriate learning materials
- *Caregivers:
 - Interact with children as they play with materials or engage in routine care

Special Considerations - Georgia's Pre-K and others

- **Components from foundational practices block followed, in addition to:
 - *Posted schedule allows for 1-hour early morning free-play to fully optimize children's learning
 - *Outdoor time is weather permitting; (no active precipitation or weather warnings (ex: tornado), extreme temperatures, etc.)
 - *Gross-motor opportunities should be made available indoors with adequate space if weather is not permitting
 - *Planned appropriate activities using GELDS:
 - *Are engaging
 - *Allow for small group opportunities with teacher-directed learning
 - *Caregivers:
 - *Allow children to have quiet or alone time when needed
 - *Provide individualized learning opportunities that foster children's unique skills and abilities

Quality Practices - Quality Rated

- **Components from foundational practices and Pre-K blocks followed, in addition to:
 - *Posted schedule allows at least one-hour of indoor free play
 - *Posted schedule includes periods of quiet play and active play
 - *Planned appropriate activities using GELDS:
 - *Are individualized for children
 - *Group activities adjusted based on children's interests
 - *Caregivers:
 - *Engage children in conversations during child-directed play
 - *Introduce new words and concepts
 - *Link spoken words to written language

On the scale...

Balance



What is a balanced daily schedule?

A balanced daily schedule provides a wide range of developmentally appropriate activities that support the individual growth and development of all children in a classroom. An appropriate classroom schedule reflects routine care (ex. diapering, feeding, etc.) and different types of play activities; including indoor and outdoor learning, periods of active and quiet play; and opportunities for individual, small, and large-group play.

Why is balance important?

Developing a balanced daily schedule of child and caregiver-directed activities provides the consistency and predictability young children need. Young children learn through play, so a wide variety of activities and materials should be offered to capture all children's individual interests and abilities, allow children to freely choose their own type of play, afford opportunities to include children with special needs and enhance all children's social skills.

The other part of a balanced daily schedule is caregiver-directed and large group activities, which are most beneficial for older preschool children. These activities provide opportunities for teachers to introduce new concepts, encourage the development of language, and support new skill development. However, to maintain the interest of all children; especially in younger preschool classrooms, the schedule should be balanced to favor free-choice, child-directed activities over teacher-led activities.

BY THE NUMBERS

Balanced Schedules and Activities by Age Groups

How does a balanced schedule connect to child development and the classroom environment?

Infants	Toddlers & Twos	Preschool 3's and 4's	School age Children
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•A variety of toys and materials should be accessible when:<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Not in routine care and when ready to play•Non-mobile infants are in a protected space to explore	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•A wide variety of age-appropriate, engaging materials should be accessible when:<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Children are not engaged in routine care•Children are not engaged in group activities•Teacher-directed group times are:<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Brief•Allow for active engagement•Kept to a minimum daily•End when children lose interest•Small groupings of interested children work better than whole group activities<ul style="list-style-type: none">•(Ex: a small group of toddlers sit on a cushion while the teacher sits next to them and reads a story book, while another group of toddlers stacks blocks on the floor nearby)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Children experience an extended center time:<ul style="list-style-type: none">•5 clearly defined learning areas equipped with a wide variety of materials to encourage exploration•Children engage in active learning•Teacher-led small groups:<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Offer opportunities to develop specialized skills or introduce new concepts•Are short and engage children (Ex: a teacher works with 3-4 children on a cooking activity, while another teacher reads to a few children in a book center)•Large group activities are:<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Brief•Engaging for all children•End when children lose interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Children have ample room to move and gather in different areas of a classroom containing appropriately sized equipment (Ex: children may complete homework or explore art materials at tables, while other children quietly read books on soft furniture; or a corner of the room is set up for dancing activities, or a game of Twister)•A wide variety of materials are accessible and similar toys are grouped together and labeled

How does a balanced schedule connect to interactions with adults and peers?

A balanced schedule allows activities that help children learn to play independently and enhance adult and peer interactions. For example, non-mobile infants are placed where they can see other children and explore toys, while the teacher sits with them naming objects and other children close by. In toddler and two-year-old rooms, teachers help children learn to use simple art materials, or sit around the children and name foods being served during lunch. In preschool rooms, teachers rotate around the room during center time and outdoor time, asking open-ended questions as children engage in self-directed play. In school age classrooms, teachers carry on conversations with children



Resources

Please see the following links, which provide more specific information and guidelines regarding Quality Rated and Georgia's Pre-K.

- Environmental Rating Scales Institute - <https://www.ersi.info/>
- Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning/Quality Rated - <http://qualityrated.org/>
- Features of Pre-Kindergarten Programs, Classrooms, and Teachers: Do They Predict Observed Classroom Quality and Child-Teacher Interactions? <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/policy-statement-ece-expulsions-suspensions.pdf>
- The Many Benefits of Continuity of Care for Infants, Toddlers, Families, and Caregiving Staff: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/jul2018/benefits-continuity-care>
- CAPS Quality Rated Deadline: <https://caps.dec.state.ga.us/en/CAPSQualityRatedDeadline>
- For Provider assistance/inquiries regarding children's behavior, please contact the Inclusion and Behavior Support Specialist Helpline, by phone at: 1-833-354-4357 or email inclusion@dec.state.ga.us.