Georgia Child Care Licensing Study: Validating the Core Rule Differential Monitoring System

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Commissioned study to examine validity of licensing compliance determination.
- All licensed child care centers and family child care homes are given an annual compliance determination.
- Compliance determination is used for eligibility purposes in many of the state’s early care and education initiatives.

Zellman and Fiene’s methodology is used to guide Georgia’s Quality Rated validation model.

All validation activities are paired with interrater reliability activities.
Current Compliance Determination System

Compliance determination is based on “core rules.”
- Subset of licensing rules that are “theoretical” determinants.
- Observed multiple times during the year
- When a core rule is cited, a severity level (low, medium, high, extreme) is assigned.

A program compliance status is computed by counting the number of core rule categories cited and weighting the level of risk.
- An annual compliance determination worksheet is used to compute a program’s compliance status.
- The formula is complex and not always easy to communicate.
- All programs receive their compliance determination on July 1 and the determination remains in effect for the next fiscal year.
- In FY13, approximately 8% of programs were determined to be non-compliant.
Examined a subset of programs’ licensing history data for a four-year period.

Extracted key indicators from licensing history data. Correlated to Georgia Core Rules and to program quality data.

From 2007-2009, Georgia commissioned an independent study to measure quality among a representative statewide sample.

This data was correlated with the licensing data for validity study.

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**Key Definitions**

**Core Rules** = The rules determined to be of greatest importance and that place children at greatest risk if not complied with. This approach is defined in the licensing literature as a risk assessment approach.

**ACDW** = Annual Compliance Determination Worksheet, the compliance decision-making system based on the Core Rules.

**Key Indicators** = A differential monitoring approach that uses only rules that statistically predict overall compliance with all the rules.

**Rule Violations or Citations** = Occur when a program does not meet a specific rule and is cited as being out of compliance with that rule.
Key Definitions

**Differential Monitoring** = A relatively new approach to determining the number of licensing visits made to programs and to what rules are reviewed during these visits. Two measurement tools drive differential monitoring: one is a Weighted Risk Assessment and the other is a Key Indicator checklist.

**Licensing Study** = A comprehensive review of a program where all child care rules are reviewed.

**Monitoring Visit** = An abbreviated form of a visit and review in which only a select group (Core Rules) of child care rules are reviewed.

**Program Quality** = For the purposes of this study, quality was measured in child care centers by the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) and the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R) and in family child care homes by the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R).

Specific Research Questions

- Do the core rules for child care centers and family child care homes serve as overall key indicators of compliance?
- Does the annual compliance determination worksheet appropriately designate programs as compliant or non-compliant related to health and safety?
- Are the core rules for child care centers and family child care homes related to program quality?
Research Questions Not Addressed in Study

Does “compliance” truly indicate the overall health and safety of programs?
- Since most programs are “compliant,” data set is skewed.
- Need a large sample of programs with injury/fatality data. This requires many years of longitudinal licensing data.

Should core rules or core rule categories be used in determining compliance?
- Study did not test out different models of compliance determination.

How should multiple visits be computed in a compliance determination system?

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Key Indicator Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Providers In Compliance on Rule</th>
<th>Programs Out of Compliance on Rule</th>
<th>Row Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| A = High Group + Programs in Compliance on Specific Rule. |
| B = High Group + Programs out of Compliance on Specific Rule. |
| C = Low Group + Programs in Compliance on Specific Rule. |
| D = Low Group + Programs out of Compliance on Specific Rule. |
| W = Total Number of Programs in Compliance on Specific Rule. |
| X = Total Number of Programs out of Compliance on Specific Rule. |
| Y = Total Number of Programs in High Group. |
| Z = Total Number of Programs in Low Group. |

**High Group = Top 25% of Programs in Compliance with all Rules.**

***Low Group = Bottom 25% of Programs in Compliance with all Rules.**
General Conclusions of Compliance Validity Study

“Statistical” key indicators correlate with “theoretical” core rules.

“Statistical” key indicators correlate with compliance determination.

Some correlations were found with quality data. Like much good research, this raised as many questions as answers.

Recommendations

Use key indicators with core rules.

“Using both risk assessment and key indicator rules together is an ideal differential monitoring approach. Most states use one or the other but generally not together.” (Fiene, 2014, p. 10)

Simplify the annual compliance determination worksheet.

Utilize recent quality data for family child care homes to re-analyze the relationship between compliance and quality.
Next Steps

- Review core rules.
- Review compliance determination formula.
- Continue interrater reliability.
- Streamline compliance determination validity with Quality Rated validity.
  - Is “compliance” an appropriate entry point?
  - Combine licensing data with portfolio and observation data from Quality Rated.
  - Connect both compliance and Quality Rated data with Pre-K data.

Richard Fiene. (2014). *Georgia Child Care Licensing Study: Validating the Core Rule Differential Monitoring System*. Middletown, PA: Research Institute for Key Indicators.