

NC ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR THE SACERS



The NC Additional Notes provide supplementary 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:

- Unless otherwise specified NCRLAP assessors use both the NC Additional Notes for the SACERS and the SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification created by the authors (available at <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ecers/>).
- NC Additional Notes provide further clarification to assist in the interpretation of the scale and the FPG Additional Notes for Clarification.
- 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.

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
10/2009	<i>General notes. Items 3, 7, 8, 23, 26, 27, 40, 41.</i>
3/30/2009	Items 19, 21.
10/2008	Item 15, Formatting and grammatical changes were made to the NC notes for several items, but there were no other additions to provide new scoring information.
3/2008	Items 18, 24
10/2007	General Notes, Items 7, 8, 28, 39
4/2007	General Notes, 8, 18, 24
3/2006	Items 2, 8, 16, 17, 21, 22, 27
9/2005	Items 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 15, 16, 18, 24, 26, 27, 36

GENERAL NOTES FOR THE SACERS

Refer to FPG SACERS General Additional Notes for Clarification for definitions of terms used in the scale

Accessible: 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.

See FPG Additional General Notes for scoring access to materials for programs offering special weekly activities.

Poor repair of materials and books: 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

Gross Motor: NC assessors use the gross motor safety information sheet titled: "NCRLAP's Requirements for Gross Motor Space and Equipment". This document is available at www.ncrlap.org

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 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 still apply for routine care activities and general classroom use.

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.

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 1:

Indicators 1.3, 3.3: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators (available at www.fpg.unc.edu).

ITEM 2:

Indicators 1.2, 5.2, 7.2, 7.3: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators

Indicator 3.1: The space required for this indicator must be provided daily, either indoors or outdoors.

Indicator 5.1: The space required for this indicator must be provided daily outdoors, unless severe weather prevents children from going outdoors. Provisions must also be made indoors for those days when children cannot play outdoors.

Indicator 5.2: Determine whether the variety of surfaces required by this indicator is accessible to the children throughout the week.

ITEM 3:

Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for this indicator.

Indicator 5.1 The space required for this indicator must be provided daily.

ITEM 4:

Indicators 1.2, 1.4, 3.4, 5.5, 7.3: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators

Indicator 3.3: Take children's ages and abilities into account. If the only area that presents a challenge is a space designated or created for privacy and the rest of the play area is easy to view, this indicator should not be scored negatively. Instead, to avoid considering this issue in two items, note the difficulties associated with supervision in Item 3, Indicator 5.3. If the space for privacy creates problems for supervising other spaces in the play area (e.g., due to height or placement) then these issues will be scored in this indicator and may also be considered in item 3 as necessary.

ITEM 5:

Indicators 1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators

Indicator 5.1: Use the percentage rule for all basic furnishings as defined in the clarifying note for this item on page 8. The space provided for the children's things needs to be large enough to hold their belongings and arranged so children can reach them. In the case of oversized items that do not fit, provisions must be made to store them neatly, within easy reach, and out of the way.

ITEM 6:

Indicator 5.2: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for this indicator.

Indicator 5.1: If 75% of chairs and tables meet the requirements in Note for Clarification, page 8, give credit for 5.1.

ITEM 7:

Indicators 3.1, 7.1: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

Indicator 3.1: There must be at least one rug OR carpeted area which is large enough for children to use materials on .

Indicator 5.1: Do not apply the time requirement from FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for this indicator.

At least one of the following criteria must be met:

- Wall-to-wall carpeting
- Three or more rugs of which each are large enough for children to use materials on
- Any furnishings providing additional softness, such as bean bag, floor cushion, mattress, etc.

Indicator 7.1: If there is an area providing additional softness, and 1 other area with some softness score 6. If there is an area providing additional softness and 2 or more other areas with some softness, or wall-to-wall carpeting score 7.

Indicators 5.1 & 7.1 The space required for these indicators must be provided daily.

ITEM 8:

Indicators 1.3, 3.1, 3.2, 5.3, 7.1, 7.3: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators. Do not apply FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for indicator 5.1.

Indicators 1.3, 3.1 & 5.3: Equipment that is too heavy to be moved by children is considered to be stationary.

Indicator 3.1 Children must have access to at least one piece of stationary gross motor equipment weekly.

Indicator 5.1: Variety means there must be at least three different kinds of stationary gross motor equipment present (e.g. climber, basketball and goal, balance beam, swing, slide,). Equipment must be age appropriate for 75% of children enrolled in the class in order to be counted. To score this indicator look at children’s overall access to stationary gross motor equipment throughout the week. Children must have access to some stationary equipment daily, weather permitting, and must have access to a variety of stationary gross motor equipment throughout the week. For example, children may have access to basketball goals one day and have access to more stationary gross motor equipment on other days throughout the week.

Indicator 5.2: Many skills means there must be equipment that stimulates 3 skills at the appropriate developmental level for 75% of the children enrolled in the class. To score this indicator look at children’s overall access to stationary gross motor equipment throughout the week. This indicator is scored independently of 5.1 unless the stationary equipment is almost never used. In this case, score indicator 5.2 “No”.

Indicator 5.3: Variety means at least three types of portable gross motor equipment are accessible to the children and that there are enough portable materials for the number of children enrolled in the group. Sufficient quantities of portable equipment must be accessible for simultaneous activities if the portable equipment is used to make stationary equipment functional for indicator 5.1.

Three different types of portable equipment must be accessible daily. On days when children do not go outside, these materials must be provided indoors.

ITEM 9:

Indicators 1.1, 3.1, 5.2, 7.1: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

Dedicated space is space where the primary purpose is to meet the needs of the school-age program.

EXCEPTION: An outdoor playground at an elementary school can be considered dedicated space as long as there is NO overlap of use between programs at any time and there are NO restrictions imposed from the elementary school program in the way that the school age program can use the space.

Shared Facilities are those areas, indoors or outdoors, used by both the school-age program and other children or adults, either at separate times or at the same time.

Exclusive Use of Shared Facilities means that no one else uses the space while it is being used by the after school program.

Indicator 1.1: In order to score 1.1 “no”, the school age program has to have at least one play space where the primary purpose is to meet the needs of the school-age program, whether indoors or outdoors.

Indicator 3.1: If the school-age program has space where the primary purpose is to meet the needs of the school-age program indoors and outdoors, give credit for this indicator. If the school-age program has only 1 space, either indoors or outdoors, then they must also have access to at least 1 shared area when that shared area is not in use by others.

Indicator 5.1: Ample means that the school age program must have at least 1 space intended primarily for the use of the school-age program, either indoors or outdoors, that allows plenty of free movement for children to participate in activities. For this indicator it does not matter if the activities are child-directed or teacher directed as long as the children have sufficient space to participate in the activities.

Indicator 5.2: If the school-age program has indoor and outdoor areas that are not used by anyone else, give credit for this indicator. If the school-age program has one space of its own and one shared space, then the program must have use of at least one additional shared space as well as the first two spaces. As per the example the school age program must be able to arrange exclusive use of the additional shared space or spaces at least once a week to meet the requirements of this indicator.

ITEM 10:

Indicator 5.1: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for this indicator.

ITEM 11:

Indicators 3.1 and 7.1: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

Indicator 3.1: Staff must have access to a phone that is provided by the program.

Indicator 5.2: The group meeting space must be comfortable for adults and the space for individual conferences must be comfortable and private.

ITEM 13:

Indicator 3.3: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for Indicator. Do not apply FPG SACERS Additional Note for Clarification for Indicator 3.2

Indicator 3.1: In this indicator “set aside” means that provision must be made for sick children to be separated from the well children and community activity areas; however the sick child may be in the same classroom.

Indicator 3.2: To allow for positive scoring (rather than non-standard scoring), change indicator to read, "Same staff do not supervise both the sick child and the healthy children without proper health precautions (Ex: staff wash hands after contact with sick child)."

ITEM 15:

Indicators 1.2, 3.1, 3.3, 3.5: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

Indicator 3.1: There can be no more than 5 minor hazards to earn credit

Indicator 3.2: This indicator requires immediate access to a phone or other communication device for emergency purposes. A personal cell phone would earn credit.

ITEM 16:

Indicators 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.2, 7.1: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

Indicator 3.1: Parents of children are not required to call the staff if their child will be late or absent if the parents are responsible for bringing the child to the school age program.

Indicator 3.2: Attendance must be taken by a responsible staff person in writing.

Indicator 3.3: A staff member must call the parent the same day as the "unnotified" absence unless the parent is responsible for bringing the child to the school age program. If a child is on the school's absentee list then staff does not need to call parents of children enrolled in after school programs located in elementary schools. If children have left school without parents notifying the after school program, then staff must contact the parents.

Indicator 5.2: The staff has to be allowed to check for messages or receive messages to get credit. The scoring of 5.2 is not dependent on the scoring of 5.1.

ITEM 17:

Indicator 3.2: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for this indicator.

Indicators 1.2, 3.1: Requirements must be met by any adult who is responsible for children when departing from the program.

ITEM 18:

Indicators 1.4, 3.4, and 3.5: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

Note Page 18: Since North Carolina requires that caregivers supplement food brought by parents if nutritionally inadequate according to USDA Standards, the note on page 18 should be ignored, and the nutritional adequacy of the food should be scored based on the observation.

Indicators 1.4, 3.5: Handwashing is not addressed in these indicators unless teachers or children serve food to other children without washing their hands or re-contaminate their hands before serving the food. This process contaminates food and would not be considered sanitary food service.

To maintain sanitary procedures, the table tops or other eating surfaces must be cleaned with a soapy water solution, wiped dry and then sprayed with the sanitizing solution 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.

Indicator 3.3: Credit can be given for nutritionally adequate meals or snacks if the children can serve themselves, but not if the food components are verbally offered, and not within reach of every child.

Indicator 3.4: For meals such as breakfast and lunch substitutions must be equivalent to the nutritional components of foods they are replacing. 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.

Indicator 3.6: Check to be sure the menu represents the current time period. If substitutions are made, the posted menu should be corrected, and the meal/snack should meet Meal Pattern Guidelines just as any other meal/snack would.

ITEM 19:

Indicators 1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

Indicator 5.1: Calculate hand washing for staff and children separately. Hand washing before eating is considered adequate when re-contamination is minimized.

Indicator 7.2: Toothbrushing is only required for full-day programs during the summer. Score "yes" during the school year even if children do not brush teeth during after-school program or on teacher work days and holidays.

ITEM 20

Indicators 5.3, 7.1: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

ITEM 21

Indicators 1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 5.2, 7.1: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

Indicator 5.1: Requires that music activities are available as free choice daily.

Indicator 5.2: Children must be able to independently use a CD/tape player to play the cassettes/tapes.

Indicator 5.2: Do not apply the time requirement from FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for this indicator.

ITEM 22:

Indicator 3.2: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for this indicator.

Indicator 1.1: No construction materials are ever accessible at any time.

ITEM 23:

Indicators 3.2, 5.2: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

Indicator 5.1 The materials required for this indicator must be provided daily.

ITEM 24

Indicators 3.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

Indicator 5.1: A collection is not considered appropriate for school age children if most of the collection is designed for children under 5 years of age.

Do not evaluate homework activities (books or computers). Homework is “school” work and outside of the program’s control. There is no need to look through a large set of encyclopedias or other materials in a reference section. If a single encyclopedia volume or individual reference book is accessible for general use in the book area it should be evaluated for inappropriate content. Inappropriate images intended as art materials (e.g., stacks of magazines), music, movies, or computer images, including computer games can be counted as inappropriate language materials if use is observed, but there is no need to assess content if they are not used during the assessment.

Violent (i.e., involving aggressive physical force), frightening (e.g., dreadful, shocking, terrifying), or sexually provocative content is considered inappropriate for 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 language material contains inappropriate images. By contrast, printed text should be considered only if the teacher 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.

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

Indicator 5.2: The game does not have to be a “language” game if the teacher’s interactions with children during the game enhance language development (i.e., introducing new words or concepts, encouraging children to speak, etc.) while using games or materials of any kind. If the teacher does not verbally interact with the child while playing the game, then the requirements for this indicator are not met, no matter what type of game is being played.

Indicator 5.3: Examples may include verbal encouragement during the observation or recent (within 2 weeks) posted work by children showing the use of reading and writing in practical situations, (e.g. unique stories, letters, or journal entries). Posted work that all children were required to complete does not count towards meeting the requirements for this indicator.

ITEM 25:

Indicators 3.1, 5.1, 5.2, 7.1: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

ITEM 26:

Indicators 3.1, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

Indicator 5.2 Activities must occur weekly.

ITEM 27:

Indicators 1.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 7.2: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

Indicator 5.1: Materials must include at least 10 examples across books, pictures, and other games/toys that show diversity in cultures, races, gender, age, and ability or other characteristics.

The materials required for this indicator must be provided daily.

ITEM 28:

Indicators 1.1, 3.1, 5.1, 7.1: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators. Do not apply FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for Indicator 3.2

Indicator 3.2: To allow for positive scoring (rather than non-standard scoring), change indicator to read, "Acknowledgement of children's arrival and departure is consistent."

Indicator 5.3: Apply FPG Additional Note for Clarification for indicator 5.2 to indicator 5.3 instead.

ITEM 29

Indicator 3.1, 3.2: Do not apply FPG Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators

Indicator 3.1: To allow for positive scoring, (rather than non-standard scoring), change indicator to read "Staff respond consistently."

Indicator 3.2: To allow for positive scoring (rather than non-standard scoring), change indicator to read, "Staff does not favor or dislike particular children."

ITEM 30

Indicators 3.1, 3.2: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

ITEM 31:

Indicator 7.2: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for this indicator.

ITEM 32:

Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for this item

ITEM 34:

Indicator 3.2: Use FPG SACERS Additional Note for this indicator.

Indicator 5.2: In this indicator “regularly scheduled” means that the program takes the initiative to schedule individual parent conferences at least twice a year.

ITEM 35:

Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for this item.

Indicator 5.2: This indicator only applies when one staff member is arriving to take responsibility for a group of children, and another staff member is leaving. To get credit for this indicator, their time must overlap somewhat, so that one can tell the other the information needed to meet the children’s current needs. This indicator does not apply when one staff member joins another and they work together for a long period of time, during which communication about the children could take place. Score this indicator yes if at least two teachers work with the children together for long periods or if the morning teacher and the afternoon teacher have a “time set aside” to communicate about the needs of the children.

ITEM 36:

Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for this item.

Score N/A if assessing a summer program.

ITEM 37:

Indicators 3.2, 5.2, 5.3: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

Indicator 5.4: The space required for this indicator must be provided daily outdoors, unless severe weather prevents children from going outdoors. If the children cannot go outside due to weather, then provisions must be made for active physical play indoors for the duration of the gross motor period on the daily schedule.

ITEM 38:

Indicator 3.1: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for this indicator.

ITEM 39:

Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for this item.

Indicator 7.1: For this indicator “regular meetings” means that the director or a staff member meets at least three times a year with a representative of the facility that provides space for the school-age program.

ITEM 40:

Indicators 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 5.1, 5.2: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

Indicator 5.1 *The requirements for use of community resources can be met either by taking field trips or by using outside resources to provide special on-site events. Regular use means at least twice during the year, once during full-day summer programs and once for programs that offer full-day programs during the school year. Having special events or trips only during the summer, if children are present for full days during the school year would not earn credit.*

Indicator 5.3: *At least one field trip must be planned if the program operates during full days, such as teacher workdays, holidays or summer vacation.*

ITEM 41:

Indicator 5.2 *On-site professional development must be offered at least twice a year.*

ITEM 42:

Indicators 3.1, 5.1, 7.1: Refer to FPG SACERS Additional Notes for Clarification for these indicators.

ITEM 44:

Score this item when there is a child in the group with an identified disability or special need. If the identification process is not complete this item is N/A. If intervention or therapy services occur this indicates that a child has special needs. It is not necessary for a child to have an IFSP to score this item, nor is it necessary to know the identity of a child with a disability. 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.

Indicator 3.2: Upon enrollment or upon learning about a recent diagnosis, staff should seek basic information about the child's identified disability, medical condition or other special need.

Indicator 5.1: Staff should have that information within 30 days. In circumstances where staff report that a parent is reluctant to share this information, staff should be able to explain what continued follow up attempts are occurring including providing explanations about the importance of having this information. 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 or specialists who have specific knowledge regarding the child's needs.