



NCRLAP: Summary of Differences between the SACERS and the SACERS-Updated Edition

The School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale-Updated Edition (SACERS-U) replaces The School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS). This scale has been adopted by DCDEE and NCRLAP for assessments starting on July 1, 2014. The following document summarizes many changes. However, it is not intended to be a complete list of all the changes contained in the updated scale. Further information regarding the SACERS-U is available at the Environment Rating Scales Institute website (www.ersi.info). NC Additional Notes for the SACERS –U used by NCRLAP assessors are posted at www.ncrlap.org.

The SACERS-U is an updated edition of the SACERS, using the same design as the other Environment Rating Scales. While there are new requirements for some items, the updated edition is not a major revision of the SACERS scale. There are changes to formatting, wording, and content, but many SACERS requirements are included in the SACERS-U. Much of the information previously found in the online ERSI notes for clarification for the SACERS is now included in the indicators and Notes for Clarification. The following information describes the types of changes that have occurred. In some cases, specific items or indicators are included to provide an example. However, carefully reviewing the SACERS-U and NC Additional Notes will provide the most complete information about current scale requirements.

Please note that SACERS items 11 and 39 were not included in the updated edition. Because of this, most of the new item numbers do not correspond to SACERS item numbers. Some of the requirements for SACERS item 11 now appear in SACERS-U item 9. All item numbers listed below apply to the SACERS-U.

Changes that do not affect scale content/interpretation

- Indicators have been numbered
- For some items, indicators are the same but the order within a quality level is different
- There are minor changes to wording throughout the scale that do not affect indicator requirements

Items with minimal changes

- Some indicators appear at a different quality level. For example, in the Language/reading activities item, original indicators 3.2 and 5.2 were switched, so both appear at a different quality level
- “New” indicators that do not include new requirements. Most of these were derived from “splitting” original indicators. For examples of this review Item 3 and Item 5
- Requirements have been specified for types/quantities of materials or frequency of activities for some indicators. For example, there are specific requirements now identified in item 19, 3.1 and 5.1, item 21, 7.2

Items with more substantial changes

Requirements for indicators defined differently

- Item 7 Furnishings for relaxation and comfort: Additional softness required for both indicators 5.1 and 7.1
- Item 8 Furnishings for gross motor activities: For indicators 5.2 and 5.3 “many skills” means at least 5 different skills for both stationary and portable equipment
- Item 18 Personal hygiene: Indicator 5.1 Hand washing categories added
- Item 38 Use of community resources: Resource visitors are considered at the “3” level; at the “5” level field trips are required



New requirements

- Item 9 Access to host facilities: Indicators at all quality levels have been revised
- Item 21 Blocks and construction: Requires block accessories, and both blocks and small building materials
- Item 25 Science: Indicator 3.2 requires use of books with children. SACERS indicators 5.2 and 5.3 were replaced with different requirements
- Item 35 Communication between program staff and children’s classroom teachers: Defines specific types of information to be exchanged at all quality levels
- Item 36 Schedule: Indicator 3.2 Teacher facilitated daily fine motor/language activity
- Time requirement for accessibility
 - Item 7 Furnishings for relaxation: Indicator 5.2 requires access for 1/3 of the program operating hours
 - Item 20 Music: Indicator 5.2 requires at least 30 minutes daily, regardless of length of time program operates
 - SACERS requirements for accessibility also apply in SACERS-U
 - For indicators requiring “daily access,” children must be able to use materials 5 days a week
 - 30 minutes access required for programs operating 3 hours or more

Similar to the SACERS, there are some items that will not be scored at all for NC assessments. These are SACERS-U Health and Safety items 11 and 13, and Special needs supplementary items 43 through 47.

The SACERS-Updated Edition can be purchased from:

- Amazon: www.amazon.com
- Barnes and Noble: www.barnesandnoble.com
- Teachers College Press: www.tpress.com/ERS.html
- Kaplan Early Learning Company: www.kaplanco.com

Remember to visit www.ncrlap.org for:

- Current NC Additional Notes for each of the Environment Rating Scales
- Additional resources related to the assessment process
- Information about free webinars for each of the Environment Rating Scales, including the SACERS-Updated Edition.

Reference

Harms, T., Jacobs, E., & White, D. (2014). School-age care environment rating scale (updated). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.