

# Thinking More about Health and Safety



## SACERS-U

**Purpose:** This document addresses many of the requirements found in the Health and Safety subscale. The focus is primarily on indicators at the 3, 5, and 7 level. It is important to review each item entirely to ensure that no indicators at the 1 or “inadequate” level apply. Answering the questions and referring to the SACERS-U will build familiarity with requirements, while offering a chance to reflect on current practices and situations.

**Preparation:** Refer to the SACERS-U (spiral bound edition published in 2014) when completing the questions. To better understand the scale format and structure, review the instructions for scoring on page 4 in the SACERS-U and the definitions of common terms on pages 5-6. It will also be helpful to refer to a copy of the most current NC Additional Notes (available at [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org)). There are many questions, so completing them all will likely take several reflection/review sessions.

The items included here consider aspects of the school-age classroom routines for arrival and departure, eating, toileting, personal hygiene, and the environment's safety. These considerations and practices help maintain sanitary conditions to prevent illness for children and teachers, and provide a safe environment for children to learn. Additionally, they consider opportunities during routine care to promote independence, support learning, and build relationships.

### Tips:

- If you are confused about a question, look at the item in the SACERS-U and check any Notes for Clarification and/or NC Additional Notes to identify the specific indicator and requirement to which it refers.
- Describe the current practices that occur when answering the questions. Remember, this is not about a “right answer,” but rather a way to build understanding about what occurs every day.
- Using the worksheet on an ongoing basis can help verify that routines continue to maintain sanitary practices and safety concerns are addressed. Also, it helps ensure that children have opportunities to learn and have positive interactions during routines, as well as in play. When considering routines such as handwashing, surface sanitation, and provisions for eating, and toileting it is most helpful for all adults in the classroom to have a common understanding of the requirements.
- Answering the questions with someone else (co-teachers, administrators, technical assistance specialists, etc.) promotes sharing of perspectives and may draw attention to different details.

Date(s) completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom name/age group: \_\_\_\_\_

Worksheet completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 12 Health practices (p. 19)**

Is there a separate space for children who become sick that is not used by other children and staff during the day? **Y / N** Describe what occurs when a child is found to be ill: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

For classrooms with non-food allergies or children who require medication, is the information located where any staff member can see it? **Y / N / NA** Where is this? \_\_\_\_\_

Are concerns about abuse or neglect reported to the proper authorities? **Y / N**

To whom/where is a report made? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the person with the concern (typically the teacher) the person who makes the report? **Y / N**

Are children taught good health practices? **Y / N** If **yes**, list two examples: \_\_\_\_\_

Are parents given feedback about children's health? **Y / N** Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are parents helped if there are health-related concerns about a child? **Y / N** If **yes**, how does this occur: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 14 Safety practice (p. 21)**

Check for safety hazards in all indoor and outdoor spaces used by children. Are any of the following common hazards present? Please note this is not a complete list of possible hazards.

**Hint:** see NCRLAP's Requirements for Gross Motor Space and Equipment for specific measurements.

**Indoors:**

- Electrical outlets uncovered
- Items labeled "keep out of reach of children" accessible
- Sanitizer or disinfectant applied with children nearby

**Outdoors:**

- Not enough cushioning under gross motor equipment
- Fall zones are not large enough around gross motor equipment
- Equipment spacing is too close
- Outdoor play space is not completely fenced, or fence height is less than 4 feet

Were any additional safety concerns noted that may require action/modification? If so, describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do teachers have an accessible phone for emergencies? **Y / N** If **yes**, are emergency numbers posted near this phone? **Y / N**

Are emergency procedures posted? **Y / N**

Are evacuation procedures, such as fire drills, practiced? **Y / N** If **yes**, do school-age children participate monthly? **Y / N**

Is there a first aid kit? **Y / N** If **yes**, where is it kept? \_\_\_\_\_

If a child has an accident/injury, are parents informed? **Y / N** If **yes**, describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe measures taken to avoid safety problems indoors and outdoors: \_\_\_\_\_

Are children taught safety rules? **Y / N** If **yes**, how does this occur? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the program share safety-related information with parents? **Y / N** If **yes**, what is shared? \_\_\_\_\_

### ITEM 15 Attendance (p. 22)

If children who are bussed to the program will be late or absent, is the program notified? **Y / N / NA** If **yes**, who contacts the program? \_\_\_\_\_

If children who ride the bus are late or absent without notification, what does the program do? \_\_\_\_\_

Do teachers record daily attendance? **Y / N**

Is there an answering system or other way for parents to leave messages? **Y / N** If **yes**, who checks for messages? \_\_\_\_\_

If a child does not attend regularly, does the program contact parents? **Y / N** If **yes**, what types of things are discussed? \_\_\_\_\_

Describe plans to support the children's transition into the program each day: \_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 16 Departure (p.23) and Item 27 Greeting/departing (p. 34)**

Is each child acknowledged when they leave the facility? **Y / N**

Are parents required to come into the facility to pick up their children? **Y / N**

Are parents required to sign out their child each day? **Y / N**

If a computerized system is used, does each adult have a unique code/number so that the identity of the individual can be verified? **Y / N / NA**

Are parents asked to notify the program if someone different will be picking up their child? **Y / N**

What happens if an unauthorized person attempts to pick up any child? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do any children ride the bus home? **Y / N** If **yes**, describe the procedures: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do staff discuss rules for safe departures with children? **Y / N**

When children arrive at the program, what occurs? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do greetings occur for each child? **Y / N** Are children helped to transition to the program? **Y / N**

If K-1 children are enrolled, are they brought into the center by a responsible adult? **Y / N / NA**

Describe the types of information shared with parents at arrival and/or departure: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**ITEM 17 Meals/snacks (p. 24)**

Does the schedule for meals/snacks seem to meet the children's needs (e.g., they do not usually ask for food earlier, are given seconds if they ask)? **Y / N**

If the program provides meals/snacks, look at the menu for this week and the USDA meal guidelines. Are the required food components present for each meal or snack? **Y / N / NA**

For classrooms with special food considerations, such as allergies or family preferences, consider the following , or circle **NA** and move to the next set of questions:

Is this information posted in spaces where children eat, so that all staff who work with children are aware? **Y / N**

What food substitutions are made? \_\_\_\_\_

Do food substitutions meet USDA guidelines OR is a doctor's note provided that specifies what should be served? **Y / N**

For table sanitation:

Are they cleaned with soapy water and wiped clean with a single use paper towel/clean cloth? **Y / N**

Are they sprayed with sanitizer? **Y / N**

The sanitizer is left on the surface for \_\_\_\_ minutes before it is wiped off.

Is a menu posted for parents? **Y / N** Is this menu updated as changes are made? **Y / N**

Do teachers sit with the children and have conversations with them? **Y / N** If **yes**, describe two recent topics of conversation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is the typical group size at each table? \_\_\_\_\_ Is the group size small enough so that children can hear each other and have conversations? **Y / N**

Are meal/snack times used to teach children about food/nutrition? **Y / N** If **yes**, give two recent examples:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do staff share nutrition information with parents? **Y / N** If **yes**, circle all that apply:

written information/pamphlets

informal discussions

parent-teacher conferences

### **ITEM 18 Personal hygiene (p. 25)**

Are facial tissues, paper towels, soap, and water all accessible? **Y / N**

Proper handwashing includes the use of running water and soap. Does handwashing occur for both children and staff at the following times?

- Upon arrival
- After being outdoors
- Before and after eating
- After messy activities that are moist, sticky, or leave residue
- After toileting

If hand sanitizer is used, does this **ONLY** occur when soap and running water are not available, such as when outdoors? **Y / N / NA** Is it kept out of reach of children and used with supervision? **Y / N / NA**

Describe actions to check and maintain the bathroom(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do staff teach children the importance of not sharing personal items as well as general personal hygiene?

**Y / N**

Describe any personal hygiene topics or activities included to promote positive health care habits? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If the program is full-day, do children brush their teeth? **Y / N/ NA**

If **yes**, are toothbrushes stored so they do not touch and can air dry? **Y / N**

**Reflection for future planning:** After completing this worksheet, it can be helpful to go back and think more about the answers. Were there any questions that were answered “no” instead of “yes?” If so, this could help identify areas to work on. It can also be helpful to break bigger topics into smaller steps so that changes and progress can be easily recognized. Hopefully this worksheet was a helpful beginning to an ongoing self-study practice and suggest continuing with an action plan after completing the reflection questions below.

List areas where strengths were noted in personal care routines:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List areas where improvements could be made or there are new ideas to think about:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are there any issues you will work to change right away? Describe how so:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are there issues that will take more time to change? What are these and what resources may be needed?

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### Want to find out more?

Not all SACERS-U indicators are covered in this worksheet, so review the scale carefully and seek out other resources, as needed, since relying on these questions alone to prepare for an assessment will not be sufficient. We encourage you to review other resources found on the [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org) website to stay informed about any updates and continue to build your understanding of the SACERS-U and the assessment process. For example:

- Look for general information about the assessment process and also specific SACERS-U resources. These resources may offer ideas about what to focus on or supplement ideas you were already considering.
- Check out the answers to Frequently Asked Questions or send a new question to [ncrlap@uncg.edu](mailto:ncrlap@uncg.edu).
- Register for free online training webinars. Some are live webinars; others are pre-recorded and offer training credits (contact hours). Call 1-866-362-7527 or register online at [ncrlap.org](http://ncrlap.org).

When planning for program enhancement, always consider the unique features of the classroom and facility such as ages and abilities of the children enrolled, the number of teachers in the classroom, and overall goals and/or philosophy. Programs may also seek advice from their DCDEE Child Care Consultant, local CCR&R and/or Smart Start Partnerships, or other child care agencies.

<p>North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project 915 Northridge St. Greensboro, NC 27402 Website: <a href="http://ncrlap.org">ncrlap.org</a> Email: <a href="mailto:ncrlap@uncg.edu">ncrlap@uncg.edu</a> Toll-free: 1-866-362-7527</p>	
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### References:

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

NC Additional Notes (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.ncrlap.org>.