

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). 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 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. In the reflection section at the end, it can be helpful to add ideas about future plans or changes.
- 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, diapering/toileting, and sleeping, 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 adult staff member can see it? **Y / N** Where is this? _____

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

Who/where is a report made to? _____

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

How are children taught about health practices? _____

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

Are there ways staff and parents work together to address health-related concerns? **Y / N** Describe:

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.

Indoors:

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

Outdoors: (Hint: see NCRLAP's Requirements for Gross Motor Space and Equipment for specific measurements)

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

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? _____

Describe what happens if a child has an accident while in care: _____

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)

For children who are bussed to the program, is the program notified if these children will be late or absent? **Y / N** If **Yes**, by whom? If these children are late or absent without notification, what occurs? _____

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? _____

Do discussions occur with parents if a child does not attend regularly? 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)

Describe the plans/process for children's departure: _____

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 individual have a unique code/number so that the identity of the person can be verified? **Y / N**

During the pandemic 2021: If parents don't enter the building because of pandemic restrictions, how are sign out/departure procedures being handled? _____

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? _____

Are children bussed 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**

Describe the types of information shared with parents at arrival and/or departure (or **during the pandemic 2021** via alternative communication options) : _____

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**

For classrooms with special food considerations, such as allergies or family preferences, consider the following:

Is this information posted in spaces where children eat, so that all adults 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 allowed to stay 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 some recent examples: _____

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**

Describe ways that meals/snacks are used as a learning experience for children. _____

Do staff share nutrition information with parents? **Y / N** If **yes**, how does this occur? _____

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 adults 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** Is it kept of reach of children and used with supervision? **Y / N**

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** What topics are discussed? _____

Describe any other ways that personal hygiene topics or activities are included to promote positive health care habits? _____

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

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 about the answers. Were there any questions that were answered “no” instead of “yes?” Are there any specific aspects of personal care routines where improvements could be made? Use the space below to reflect on your answers and list any plans or ideas related to making positive changes.

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 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.
- 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.

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: ncrlap.org Email: ncrlap@uncg.edu 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>.