

Focus on Strengths



Highlighting what's working well allows teachers and administrators to celebrate successes, reinforce effective practices, and build confidence. These strengths provide a strong foundation to build upon and can inspire creative ideas for improving other areas.

Strengths can be identified on your assessment report in two ways. First, look for items that scored 5 or higher, indicating that developmentally appropriate practices are in place in these areas. Second, identify specific indicators that earned credit with a green box and check mark.

Directions: For this section identify at least 3 items and indicators per subscale that earned credit and identify current practices in the classroom that should be maintained for these specific items and indicators to remain a strength.

Subscale 1: Space and Furnishings

Item	Indicator	Current practices:
5	5.4	<i>E.g., I talk with children about the display that relates to the theme while they play, and I talk with them about the pictures on the wall in the block center related to what they are building.</i>

Subscale 2: Personal Care Routines

(Health and Safety for SACERS-U)

Item	Indicator	Current practices to maintain:

Subscale 3: Language and Books (Or Literacy)

(This subscale is not applicable for SACERS-U)

Item	Indicator	Current practices to maintain:

Subscale 4: Learning Activities

Item	Indicator	Current practices to maintain:

Subscale 5: Interactions

Item	Indicator	Current practices to maintain:

Subscale 6: Program Structure

Item	Indicator	Current practices to maintain:

The Subscale Comparison Chart is a helpful visual tool that shows how each subscale scored in relation to others. Listing the subscales in order from highest to lowest scoring may serve as a useful guide as you move into the next section of this document.

Remember, recognizing current strengths helps build a solid foundation for growth. Continue to celebrate and build on these effective practices as you begin to identify areas for growth.

Opportunities for Growth



Identifying areas for growth isn't about focusing on what's wrong—it's about uncovering opportunities to enhance the overall classroom experience. With a few intentional changes, these insights can strengthen teaching practices, improve the environment, and support children's development over time.

Areas for growth are noted on the assessment report by a score of 4 or below or by a grey box marked with an "X." Use this section of the self-assessment document to review the report and highlight areas to focus on for future improvement.

Helpful Hint: Topics such as the amount of time spent in indoor/outdoor free play, children's access to materials, and the use of language can have a significant impact and may be reflected across multiple items.

Directions: For this process, select up to five items and indicators noted as areas for growth, and write down what was mentioned in the report. Referring to the NC Additional Notes or Notes for Clarification can help provide more context about the requirements. See example below:

Item	Indicator	What was noted in the report?
4	5.2	<i>Children could use spaces for 47 minutes during free play... need 1 hour. This showed up several times.</i>

Putting it all together

Take time to think through the following as you prepare to head into the reflection step of the self-study process:

1. How can areas identified in the strengths section be used as model for improvement in other areas?

2. Identify items or indicators where a small change could likely have a big impact?

3. What challenges or barriers may be contributing to specific items and/or indicators scoring lower?

4. Are there any topics where you would like to gain more understanding?

Visit our website ncrlap.org for additional resources and free training opportunities.