

NC ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR THE SAPQA WITH SUPPLEMENTAL SCALES

The NC Additional Notes provide supplementary information for the School-Age Program Quality Assessment tool so 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 scales and items to improve interrater reliability or consistency among assessors working with the North Carolina Rated License Assessment Project (NCRLAP). The NC Additional Notes are developed by members of the NCRLAP's management team, especially by our state anchors, following training on the measure and additional consultation provided by the Weikart Center.

Participants in the NC star rated license system should be aware of the following:

- NCRLAP uses the version of the SAPQA that includes Supplemental Scales for Activity Structure, Homework Help, Physical Activity, Transitions, and Departure. This version is most appropriate for the school-age programming that occurs in North Carolina. The measure can be downloaded from the Weikart Center's website by filling out this quick form: [Extended School-Age PQA Download](#)
- The NC Additional Notes may be updated (approximately) every 6 months, and NCRLAP assessors conduct assessments using the most current notes. School-age professionals are encouraged to download and use the most current version of the notes from ncrlap.org.
- NCRLAP began using the SAPQA with Supplemental Scales on July 1, 2026

GENERAL NOTES FOR THE SAPQA WITH SUPPLEMENTAL SCALES

NC's SAPQA assessments are completed using the Weikart Center's "Walkthrough Method" described on page i of the measure. A continuous assessment is completed that lasts at least 2 hours and not more than 3 hours, beginning when children arrive after school or for 3 hours starting at a pre-determined time if the observation occurs on a full day. This observation length is comparable to a SACERS-U assessment.

Time requirements: For all time-requirements there is a 2-minute leeway allowed to account for possible timing differences.

Healthy Environment Item 1: In addition to primary indoor spaces, this item also considers the outdoor space used. NC assessors use the gross motor safety information sheet titled: "NCRLAP's Requirements for Gross Motor Space and Equipment." This document is available at ncrlap.org. Score 1 only when there are 3 or more major safety hazards either indoors or outdoors. A smaller number of hazards will lead to a score of 3.

Healthy Environment Item 2: In addition to primary indoor spaces, this item also considers the outdoor space used if this is applicable (e.g., snack occurs outdoors). To maintain sanitary procedures for a score of 5, 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. Table cloths or placemats can be used in lieu of cleaning and sanitizing table tops.

Healthy Environment Item 3 and 4: If no primary indoor areas are used, these items are not scored.

Emergency Preparedness Item 1: To score 5, written emergency procedures should be easily visible in each primary indoor space used and outdoors they may be located in a group leader's backpack or clipboard if these are not posted. Look for examples such as first aid information sheets, guidance, or instructions for emergencies such as evacuations, etc.

Emergency Preparedness Item 3: Per the NC Child Care Rules 10A NCAC 90.0102 Definitions, a “First aid kit” is a collection of first aid supplies (such as bandages, tweezers, disposable nonporous gloves, micro shield or face mask, liquid soap, cold pack) for treatment of minor injuries or stabilization of major injuries.

For NC SAPQA assessments, a complete first aid kit must contain at least three different supplies, and to score 5 must be easily accessible from all primary activity spaces both indoors and outdoors. Keeping the first aid kit in a backpack while outdoors is acceptable.

Accommodating Environment: If a primary indoor space is not used during the assessment, no items in this scale are scored.

Nourishment Item 3: To earn a score of 5, snack should include at least two healthy food components such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, milk, or meat/meat alternatives (e.g., lean meats, cheese, yogurt, eggs, beans, nuts, or tofu). Foods that are primarily high in added sugars, saturated fats, or sodium and provide limited nutritional value, such as candy, desserts, chips, and sugar-sweetened beverages, do not count as healthy snack components for this indicator. Foods brought from home are not evaluated for nutritional adequacy.

Warm Welcome Item 2 and 3: These items consider the atmosphere provided by staff throughout the observation and not only as children arrive.

Session Flow Item 1: If the observation ends prior to the end of the program day, the scheduled activity for that time of the day will be considered when determining if the ending time matches the schedule.

Active Engagement Item 1, 2, 3: Activity sessions can include free choice times indoors or outdoors, along with any structured activities that occur indoors or outdoors.

Skill-Building Item 1, 2, 3, 4, 5: Activity sessions can include free choice times indoors or outdoors, along with any structured activities that occur indoors or outdoors.

Child-Centered Space Items 5, 6: These items consider the materials that are accessible during the observed activity times whether these are structured or free choice activities, rather than materials used at other times, even if the materials are located in children’s space(s).

School-Age Choice Item 1 and 2: For a score of 5, most child-initiated and most teacher-initiated activities must include the required types of choices.

Activity Structure (Supplemental Scales):

- Item 1 – An intentional learning activity has a specific learning purpose, and staff must convey this purpose (e.g., guidance for ideas to think about, strategies to use), and/or the new skills that children will develop, strengthen, or master.
- Item 2 – Activity options that are time-fillers or involve only passive viewing of a screen are not counted.
- Item 4 and 5 – Intentional means this is included as part of the daily schedule and is observed.

Reference: David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. (2016). *School-age program quality assessment (SAPQA) with supplemental scales*. Forum for Youth Investment.