



PA Position Statements for the SACERS-U

These position statements are the result of the need to consider the impact of Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) Certification Regulations and other Pennsylvania program specific expectations on the scoring of the items in the SACERS-U scale. In the case of each statement input from multiple sources including the SACERS-U scale authors, DHS Certification, OCDEL and other experts were considered in the creation of the statement.

General PA Position Statement:

The SACERS-U will be the assessment tool used in classrooms where younger school-age (including Kindergarten) and/or older school-age children are enrolled. **In classrooms of kindergarten only enrollment the ECERS-R or ECERS-3 tool will be used.** In classrooms where school-age children are enrolled with preschool children, the assessment tool will be determined by the age level that represents the majority of children in the group.*

SACERS-U may also be used in:

- *Group child care homes which are not located in a residence and serve only school-age children.*
- *Group child care homes which are not located in a residence, physically separate children into age-based groupings (i.e., separate classrooms) and school-age children represent the highest number of enrolled children in the program.*

*Young school-age, older school-age, and preschool age ranges as defined by DHS Certification Regulations.

1/7/2021

Pennsylvania Keys to Quality

Item	Indicator	Indicator Description	Position Statement	Supporting Guidance
<p>General Statement regarding hand washing and use of hand sanitizers</p>			<p><u>General Statement regarding hand washing and use of hand sanitizers</u> Child and adult hand washing is required by regulation before meals and snacks, after toileting and diapering, and when visibly soiled. The use of a hand sanitizer is not a substitute for hand washing in these instances.</p> <p>Hand sanitizers may be used with children ages 24 months and older for hand washing unrelated to meals/snacks, toileting/diapering and when not visibly soiled (such as after blowing noses, before sensory play, and other times hand washing is expected in the environment rating scales) The program must follow the guidelines below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the label before using a hand sanitizer. If the instructions on the hand sanitizer prohibit its use for children, the hand sanitizer should not be in the facility. Also, note any age restrictions on the label and follow those restrictions. At all times, follow the directions on the product label. • The provider must obtain written parental permission for a child to use a hand sanitizer prior to permitting a child to use a hand sanitizer. The signed parental permission must be kept on file in the child’s record at the facility. • Hand sanitizers must be inaccessible to children when not in immediate use. • A staff person must be physically present with and supervising a child who is using a hand sanitizer. The staff person must remain with the child until the hand sanitizer has dried on the child’s hands. • The steps for using a hand sanitizer are as follows: 	<p>ELS/KS-09 #39, issued 9/2009</p> <p>Caring for Our Children (CFOC)</p>

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			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply an appropriate amount of the product to the palm of one hand (refer to the directions on the label of the hand sanitizer). 2. Rub hands together. 3. Rub the product over all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry. 	
#1 Indoor Space	3.1	Expects sufficient space for number of children enrolled.	There must be sufficient space for the maximum number of children who may attend at any one time.	
#2 Space for gross motor activities	3.1	Assess the space available for outdoor or indoor gross motor play.	<p>Spaces for gross motor play are expected to be safe. Scoring is based on the ERS authors' Playground Guidelines.</p> <p>For poured or installed foam or rubber surfaces, the materials must meet the ASTM F1292 requirements, which can be verified through a written statement from the manufacturer.</p>	www.ersi.info (Playground Guidelines in the Supplementary Materials list for the SACERS-U tool)
#4 Room arrangement	3.4	Expects a separate area for homework.	Space and appropriate furnishings must be designated for homework completion only, but the space may be in close proximity to other activities.	
	5.4	Expects a separate, quiet homework area.	The set aside homework space must provide appropriate furnishings and must assure that there is sufficient space and sound separation from other activities so that children engaged in homework completion are not distracted due to noise or visual stimulation of other activities.	
#5 Furnishings for routine care	3.1	Expects sufficient number of routine furnishings, including cubbies or other	"Sufficient" is defined as having enough furnishings for the maximum number of enrolled children who may attend at any one time.	

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		place for storing children’s things.		
#6 Furnishings for learning and recreational activities	3.1	Expects sufficient number of basic furnishings.	“Sufficient” is defined as having enough furnishings for the maximum number of enrolled children who may attend at any one time.	
	7.1	Expects full range of learning and recreational activity furnishings.	It must be obvious that, in addition to basic furnishings for learning and recreational activities, at least one additional furnishing or piece of equipment similar to those listed as indicator examples is used at least once a week.	
#8 Furnishings for gross motor activities	General Statement for this item		General Statement for this item: Athletic fields, when used in conjunction with appropriate portable equipment for the sport, are added to the list of acceptable examples of stationary gross motor equipment in the Notes for Clarification.	www.ersi.info (Playground Guidelines in the Supplementary Materials list for the SACERS-U tool) DHS § 3270.102
	3.1	Expects age appropriate stationary equipment in good repair.	Equipment should be generally safe. Refer to the Playground Guidelines for updated information.	
	5.1	Expects a variety of stationary equipment.	There must be sufficient materials for all children to have choices.	
	5.2	Expects stationary equipment is sturdy, age appropriate and stimulates many skills.	All stationary equipment is expected to be safe and age appropriate for all ages enrolled in the program. Refer to the Playground Guidelines for updated information.	

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	5.3	Expects a variety of portable materials made accessible daily.	The expectation is that children have more than 1 or 2 types of equipment (For example: two balls would not be “variety”). In addition, there must be sufficient materials for all children to have choices.	
	7.2	Expects several pieces of equipment for a variety of skill levels.	Must include variety for all ages of children enrolled.	
# 9 Access to host facilities	1.1 and 3.1	Expects dedicated space for school-age program.	Space for these indicators may be limited to storage space for school-age program materials or space for administrative functions for the school-age program.	
	3.2 and 5.2	Expects provisions for use of shared space.	Space for these indicators refers to space used for children’s activities.	
#10 Space to meet personal needs of staff	7.2	Expects storage for staff belongings.	Convenient storage does not require that the staff leave the classroom to get their belongings.	
#11 Health Policy	5.3	Staff are trained to detect AND report when necessary	New employees are required to take the Mandated Reporter training within 90 days of hire. If child abuse or neglect is suspected, the staff member who observes or suspects the abuse shall immediately make an oral report of suspected child abuse via the statewide toll-free telephone number (1-800-932-0313) or by creating an account to submit a report using electronic technologies at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis. For additional information, please visit KeepKidsSafe.PA.gov or contact your DHS certification representative.	DHS § 3270.19 Child Protective Services Law § 3270.32

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#12 Health Practices	3.4	Staff report suspected abuse/neglect.	If child abuse or neglect is suspected, the staff member who observes or suspects the abuse shall immediately make an oral report of suspected child abuse via the statewide toll-free telephone number (1-800-932-0313) or by creating an account to submit a report using electronic technologies at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis. For additional information, please visit KeepKidsSafe.PA.gov or contact your DHS certification representative.	DHS § 3270.19 Child Protective Services Law § 3270.32
# 13 Emergency and safety policy	5.1	Annual renewal of first aid required	First-aid training will be renewed on or before expiration of certification or every 3 years, as applicable.	DHS § 3270.31 and 3280.31 Age and training
	5.2	Always two adults present	Adults referenced are expected to be individuals employed by the school-age program.	
	7.2	Regular inspections required of grounds	Regular inspections means that there are staff people assigned to conduct an inspection at least daily. The inspection may be conducted by using a site developed checklist or other means that assures that all aspects of the space and equipment are included. Both a visual daily inspection and a monthly written documented inspection are required.	
#14 Safety Practice	General Statement		All areas that the facility might use for gross motor play, including off-site playgrounds, community parks, etc., are considered when scoring this item, even if children are not observed in the space on the day of the assessment. For poured or installed foam or rubber surfaces, the materials must meet the ASTM F1292 requirements, which can be verified through a written statement from the manufacturer	www.ersi.info (Playground Guidelines in the Supplementary Materials list for the SACERS-U tool)

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	1.1 and 1.2	Considers exposure to safety hazards indoors or outdoors.	<p>1.1 and/or 1.2 will be scored “yes” if any of the following is observed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of 4 indoor or 4 outdoor safety hazards • A safety hazard exists that is also a licensing violation • Any product or material labeled, “Keep out of reach of children,” is not stored in locked areas or containers, including medicines and cleaning materials. <p>Spaces for gross motor play are expected to be safe. Scoring is based on the ERS authors’ Playground Guidelines.</p> <p>For poured or installed foam or rubber surfaces, the materials must meet the ASTM F1292 requirements, which can be verified through a written statement from the manufacturer.</p>	PA DHS Certification regulations.
	1.3 and 3.2	Expects access to a phone.	Private cell phones of staff cannot be considered as meeting the expectations of these indicators.	
	3.2	Expects convenient access to a phone.	The intent is that the school-age program provides a phone for staff use that is accessible on the same floor as the school-age group’s primary space.	
	5.1	Expects regular inspections of the facility.	Frequent inspections means that there are staff people assigned to conduct an inspection at least daily. The inspection may be conducted by using a site developed checklist or other means that assures that all aspects of the space and equipment are included. Both a visual daily inspection and a monthly written documented inspection are required.	
# 15 Attendance	5.2	Staff check messages frequently.	Staff must check for messages at least once per session. For example, if the program offers before and after school-age care, the requirement is that messages are checked before school and after school.	

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<p># 17 Meals/snacks</p>	<p>1.2</p>	<p>Expects nutritional meals and snacks.</p>	<p>Food served by the program at meals/snacks must meet at least 50% of the meal/snack component requirements of CACFP or USDA.</p>	<p>CACFP/USDA Guidelines</p>
	<p>1.4. 3.5</p>	<p>Assesses sanitary food service.</p>	<p>Tables should be cleaned and sanitized before and after food service.</p> <p>All containers/spray bottles used for <u>sanitizing</u> must be inaccessible to children when not in use and labeled with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of the product • The product’s intended use (sanitizer or disinfectant) • Product EPA registration number • Dilution recipe • Contact time required to effectively sanitize • Other directions relevant to proper usage <p>Bleach/Water: It is no longer possible to provide a generic bleach recipe for sanitizing in early care and education programs. Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered bleach. Follow label instructions for use. When label instructions are not provided, use the following link to enter the EPA number of the product. https://iaspub.epa.gov/apex/pesticides/f?p=PPLS:1</p> <p>These instructions may also be found in the online (updated version) of <i>Caring for Our Children</i>, 4th edition in Appendix J at https://nrckids.org/Files/Appendix/AppendixJ2020.pdf</p>	<p>CFOC STANDARD 4.9.0.9: Cleaning Food Areas and Equipment CFOC Appendix J “Selecting an Appropriate Sanitizer or Disinfectant” Definitions: Sanitizer is a product that reduces germs on inanimate surfaces to levels considered safe by public health codes or regulations. A sanitizer may be appropriate to use on food contact surfaces (dishes, utensils, cutting boards, high chair trays), toys that children may place in their mouths, and pacifiers. Commercial Products: Use an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered product for sanitizing and disinfecting. Follow label instructions for use.</p>

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	3.2	Expects nutritional meals and snacks	Food served by the program at meals/snacks must meet all nutritional components of CACFP or USDA guidelines.	CACFP/USDA Guidelines
#18 Personal Hygiene	5.2	Expects staff to check bathrooms for cleanliness/ supplies.	There is no minimum or maximum number of restroom checks required. The expectation is that staff is aware of and replaces supplies when there are none available, ensure that toilets are flushed, and address problems as they arise.	
<u>Activities Subscale</u>	General Statement for all items in the Activities subscale		When considering items and indicators referring to materials, it is expected that materials meet the developmental needs of all children enrolled and include appropriate materials for each age group as well as materials for children who may be functioning below chronological age.	
#19 Arts and Crafts	5.1	Expects a variety of art materials accessible daily.	Materials must be accessible for at least one third of the total operating hours.	
	7.1	Expects opportunities for children to learn new skills	Opportunities to learn new skills must be provided at least quarterly.	
# 21 Blocks and construction	5.1	Expects some blocks or at least one interlocking construction materials accessible daily.	Materials must be accessible for one third of the total operating hours.	
#22 Drama/theater	5.1	Expects a variety of props accessible for dramatic play.	Variety of props is defined as sufficient props to carry out two different themes. Materials must be accessible for one third of the total operating hours.	

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#23 Language/ Reading Activities	5.1	Expects many appropriate books/language games accessible daily.	Many means at least two types of materials for each age group served (materials for children in primary, intermediate and middle school if all three age groups are enrolled). Materials must be accessible for one third of the total operating hours.	
	5.3	Expects that children are encouraged to use reading/writing in practical situations.	Reading in practical situations may include reading homework instructions, answering homework questions, etc., as well as other practical reading opportunities.	
	7.1	Expects that children are taken to the library weekly.	Access to a bookmobile or on-site lending library (such as a school library or community library bringing books to the school-age program) also meets the requirements of this indicator.	
#24 Math/reasoning activities	5.1	Expects a variety of math/reasoning materials accessible daily.	“Variety” means 3-5 appropriate materials for each age group served (materials for primary, intermediate and middle-school-age children if all three age groups are enrolled). Materials must be accessible for one third of the total operating hours.	
#25 Science	5.1	Expects a variety of science/nature games accessible daily.	The variety of materials must be accessible for one third of the total daily operating hours.	
#26 Cultural Awareness	1.1,3.1 and 5.1	Expects multicultural materials.	Materials should not present race/culture/gender in stereotypical ways.	
# 30 Staff Supervision of Children	General Statement for this item		All classrooms operated by the facility are expected to meet DHS ratios regardless of licensure, including those not certified under DHS or dually certified (such as, but not limited to, Department of Education classrooms).	

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#31 Discipline	7.1	Expects staff can seek advice from consultants regarding behavior problems.	Consultants are defined as professionals with the appropriate education, experience and expertise in a particular field. Consultants may be employees of the school-age program (such as the director or another staff person) as long as the definition of consultant is assured.	
#34 Staff interaction	5.2	Expects time set aside for staff communication.	The time set aside for staff communication may be during normal operating hours but not distract from responsibilities with children.	
	7.1	Expects bi-weekly planning time for staff.	Planning time may not be while staff is responsible for caring for the children and must be a time designated by the school-age program administration when staff is compensated for their time.	
#36 Schedule	5.3	This indicator references the term “weather permitting.”	Children are expected to go outside when the forecast temperature/wind chill are above 25 degrees, the forecast temperature/heat index is less than 90 degrees, there is no precipitation falling, and there is no current air quality alert. It is understood that given these parameters there may be portions of some days that do not meet the conditions of weather permitting since forecasts are generally targeted to a point in time in the day.	This term is also referenced in PA DHS Certification regulations for centers and group child care homes. It relates to children’s opportunities to engage in outside play and activities. However, there is no definition in PA DHS Certification regulations of what constitutes weather permitting. Caring for Our Children Standards state that children should play outdoors unless weather poses a significant risk and includes wind chill at or

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	3.2	Expects a written, posted schedule.	A schedule specific to the operating hours and needs of the school-age children must be posted in the space(s) regularly used by the school-age program.	below 15 degrees, heat index above 90 degrees and/or an air quality alerts exist.
	7.2	Expects field trips and special activities.	The expectation is that field trips occur off-site but special events may be held on site.	
#38 Use of community resources	3.1	Expects some use of recreational and cultural resources.	May be limited to school holidays and other vacation days when children attend the program for a longer daily time period and may include service learning opportunities either on site or off site.	
#39 Opportunities for professional growth	3.2	Expects in-service training.	In-service trainings may be held at another location such as the parent organization’s main facility or a community workshop as long as there is an expectation that all care giving staff attend at least one event annually.	
	5.1	Expects thorough new staff orientation.	To score “yes”, the orientation must be in accordance with the Keystone STARS Standards for Keystone STARS orientation at STAR 2, Staff Qualifications.	Keystone STARS standards SQ.2.1
	5.2	Expects on-site in-service training.	Videos and online learning developed and presented by content experts may also be considered to meet the expectation of on-site training. Participation in video-based, web-based, and/or other virtual and distance learning formats does not need to be on-site.	
#41 Supervision and evaluation of staff	5.1	Expects an annual supervisory observation.	Incidental, brief observations of classrooms are not considered as a supervisory observation. The purpose of the observation is to collect information for the written evaluation. It should be sufficient in length to collect that information and should be	

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based on the written evaluation criteria.				
#42 Provisions for exceptional children	N/A	Expects responsive and developmentally appropriate programming for all children.	This item will be scored only when there is a child with an IEP or a Behavioral Plan present during the observation.	
Items #43, #44, #45, #46, #47	N/A		These items will be scored NA.	