

The Rhode Island Notes: SACERS-U 7/31/17

BrightStars manages all of the reliable assessors for the Environmental Rating Scales. Part of this management is to ensure that all assessors remain reliable on the tools. This reliability is two-fold. First, each assessor will have a reliability check on their tenth observation. This consists of conducting an ERS in tandem with the Senior Assessment Specialist. Second, each assessor is also reliable to the pool of assessors. Together they have created the Rhode Island Notes.

The Rhode Island Notes are a running record of Environment Rating Scale (ERS) consensus decisions BrightStars' reliable assessors have made following ERS-related questions or discussions. These notes support Rhode Island in having a cohesive assessment system that provides a comparable program experience regardless of the assessor who visits the program. Although these notes may be useful as reference on particular topics, The Rhode Island Notes do not replace either formal ERS reliability training or the Notes for Clarification provided by the ERS authors, and may be subject to change as the Environment Rating Scales are updated.

BrightStars encourages all programs and providers who are preparing for their ERS site visit to review the tool, the tool's All About book, the tool's Notes for Clarification, and the RI Notes.

Date	Type	Item#/Standard	Item Name	Indicator (if applicable)	Clarification notes
11/15/2012	ERS-SACERS	0	General Notes	Access	In the instance of an <i>unexpected</i> special event <i>ONLY</i> : If assessors observe 20 minutes or more of acceptable materials access/free choice in at least a 2-hour period, credit can be given for daily access where appropriate and the observation can be considered valid. However, it is preferable where possible to reschedule the observation for a more typical day.
12/8/2014	ERS-SACERS	0	General Notes	Access	30 minutes of access is required for accessibility in three (3) hour programs.
12/8/2014	ERS-SACERS	0	General Notes	Expectations for behavior	The expectations for the youngest children in SA programs (5 year olds) are scored similarly to the ECERS-R.
12/8/2014	ERS-SACERS	0	General Notes	General	Shelves are not required to consider an area an interest center.
12/8/2014	ERS-SACERS	0	General Notes	Weather policy	Weather policy for SA programs is the same as other tools.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	0	General Notes	Access	For indicators that require access "weekly," assessor can give credit for teacher <i>report</i> that the item is accessible weekly.
6/19/2014	ERS-SACERS	2	Space for Gross motor	7.1 Ample, pleasant, and varied space both outdoors and indoors available daily.	Programs must have access to space for gross motor both indoors and outdoors daily but each does not necessarily need to be used daily.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	2	Space for gross motor activities	3.2 Outdoor space has some protection from the elements	Some protection, is required in 3.2, but it need not be sufficient.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	2	Space for gross motor activities	5.1 Ample space outdoors and some space indoors accessible daily.	Programs must have access to space for gross motor both indoors and outdoors daily but each does not necessarily need to be used daily. 5.1 requires that children have <i>outdoor</i> gross motor play daily if the weather permits. (At 3.1 credit can be given for indoor <i>or</i> outdoor play as long as some kind of outdoor GM happens daily.)
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	2	Space for gross motor activities	5.2 Outdoor space has at least one soft and one hard surface suitable for different types of play.	Outdoor space is required to give credit for 5.2.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	3	Space for privacy	3.1 Children are allowed to find space to be alone. 5.2 Children are permitted to create their own private spaces.	At 5.2 children be allowed to influence the space for play by moving something like cushions, or other furniture or materials. TH states: Staff provide suitable space for privacy.

10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	4	Room arrangement	3.1 <i>At least one interest center with clearly defined purpose accessible to children.</i>	Separate tables and separate rooms can both be considered interest centers.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	4	Room arrangement	3.3 <i>Easy visual supervision of play spaces.</i>	This indicator considers both arrangement and supervision; if children switch rooms without supervision, take off.
6/19/2014	ERS-SACERS	4	Room arrangement	3.4 <i>Separate area for homework or other quiet study.</i> 5.4 <i>Separate area is quiet, not crowded, and has suitable furniture for homework or other quiet study.</i>	A separate table used for homework in the primary space used is sufficient to give credit for 3.4. However the table needs to be away from more active choices to give credit for 5.4.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	4	Room arrangement	3.4 <i>Separate area for homework or other quiet study.</i> 5.4 <i>Separate area is quiet, not crowded, and has suitable furniture for homework or other quiet study.</i>	How many children must be accommodated by the quiet study area? There is no minimum number, so give credit for 1.4, 3.4 if there is a separate area, but may take off at 5.4 if it seems crowded or like more children need it.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	5	Furnishing for routine care	3.1 <i>Sufficient number of routine care furnishings.</i>	At 3.1, credit can be given for hooks as cubbies, even if there is modest touching. At 7.2 credit cannot be given <u>if children's belongings touch</u> . Individual baskets can count even at 7.2, even if different children use different baskets different days.
5/2/2014	ERS-SACERS	5	Furnishings for routine Care	3.1 <i>Sufficient number of routine care furnishings.</i>	Cubbies can be shared among siblings. If no dividers, then hooks need to be far apart. BS will allow sharing between up to 2 siblings.
11/17/2014	ERS-SACERS	5	Furnishings for routine Care	3.1 <i>Sufficient number of routine care furnishings.</i>	Bags for cubbies? It is recommended that programs get appropriate cubbies that are large enough to hold children's possessions without touching. Bags provide dubious protection and must not touch one another. BS will accept bags only if they are completely sealed
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	6	Furnishing for learning and recreational activities	3.1 <i>Sufficient number of basic furnishings in good repair for learning and recreational activities.</i>	Open shelves are not required to be considered an interest center, but in order to be considered sufficient, the furniture provided must allow easy access to materials for children. If the only furniture provided makes it so that children are not allowed to reach and use the learning and recreational materials, or they are stored in a way that makes their access very challenging then the furniture is not sufficient. (Materials stored on tables for easy reach are acceptable.)
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	6	Furnishing for learning and recreational activities	5.1 <i>Basic furnishings for learning and recreational activities of appropriate size, accessible for daily, and well maintained.</i>	"Appropriate size" is the same as "child-size" in other scales. Also consider appropriateness of recreational equipment like basketball hoops.
3/18/2015	ERS-SACERS	8	Furnishings for gross motor activities	<i>Multiple</i>	BrightStars will use internal policy for guidance on how assessors will score access to gross motor spaces and equipment in the event that the playground is inaccessible due to extreme snow conditions.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	8	Furnishings for gross motor equipment	3.2 <i>Some portable equipment/materials in good repair, accessible to play individual and group gross motor games.</i>	Equipment for both individual <i>and</i> group gross motor equipment is required.

10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	8	Furnishings for gross motor equipment	5.3 Variety of portable materials in good repair accessible to play individual and group gross motor games that stimulate many skills.	The variety of equipment must be clearly <i>accessible</i> to children even if they do not choose to use it.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	9	Access to host facilities	5.1 School-age child care has ample dedicated space for storage and administration.	The "ample" administration and storage must be on-site to be considered for this indicator. Consider whether the space provided comfortably meets the program's needs.
7/13/2016	ERS-SACERS	9	Access to host facilities	7.2 School-age care program has its own classroom.	The expectation is that children have their own, separate space that they may arrange and decorate and not generally have to accommodate any other group in the space.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	10	Space to meet personal needs of staff	3.2 Some storage for personal belongings.	The space must not be completely private to provide sufficient storage. For example, a shared staff locker would meet this minimal level.
7/13/2016	ERS-SACERS	10	Space to meet personal needs of staff	5.1 Lounge area available separate from children's area.	Can a space still be considered a lounge even if parent conferences occur there? As long as the conferences are not during program hours or other times the staff would usually use the lounge.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	10	Space to meet personal needs of staff	5.2 Adult furniture in lounge.	A lounge can be shared with daytime teaching staff in a public school or community center as long as the school-age staff can use it.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	12	Health practices	5.2 Children taught about health practices.	Score evidence of knowledge of health practices based on whether the program providers instruction or shares health information, not on actual practice.
6/19/2014	ERS-SACERS	16	Departure	5.2 Children are helped to prepare for departure.	If children are self-sufficient and have easy access to belongings; staff do not need to assist the children. As long as everything goes smoothly and children do not need help, credit can be given.
6/19/2014	ERS-SACERS	17	Meals/ snacks	3.4 Children's allergies and other food restrictions posted and appropriate substitutions made.	It is expected that food allergy information will be posted where children eat - a binder kept elsewhere is not sufficient.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	17	Meals/snacks	3.6 Menus for meals and snacks posted for parents' information.	N/A is possible if children supply all foods (must mark on own score sheet.)
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	18	Personal hygiene	3.1 Some attention paid to personal hygiene. 5.1 Hand hygiene is generally practiced as part of daily routine.	3.1 - Some attention is a low bar; give credit if children wash hands in some instances (e.g. before lunch.) 5.1 is a higher bar and requires proper procedure at the appropriate times.
7/1/2016	ERS-SACERS	18	Personal hygiene	3.3 Bathrooms are clean	Do not be overly perfectionistic about bathrooms - some water on the floor, a paper towel that missed the wastebasket are not sufficient to take off here.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	19	Arts & Crafts	1.2 Regimented use of materials.	Must be very strict, very regimented use of art materials to take off here.

10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	19	Arts & Crafts	<p>3.1 At least one type from two different categories of art materials accessible for free choice, daily.</p> <p>5.1 At least one type from three different categories of art materials accessible daily.</p>	THE FOLLOWING APPLIES TO ANY TYPE OF MATERIAL: If children must ask permission to use materials, there must be observed evidence that after asking children can take the requested materials out and use them. Note: Asking is not best practice for "accessible" and the materials are only accessible as long as they are out and in use. DO not give credit simply because staff "report" that children can ask.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	19	Arts & Crafts	5.2 Individual expression and free choice encouraged.	Can give credit for creativity <i>within</i> a project. (Per BS: Since "crafts" are a required category of materials in the SACERS-U, this is different than how we see it in other scales.)
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	23	Language/reading activities	<p>3.1 Some appropriate materials accessible to enhance the development of language/ reading skills.</p> <p>5.1 Many appropriate books and language games accessible daily.</p>	3.1 ONLY: Don't take off for inappropriate materials but do not <i>count</i> inappropriate materials. 5.1 ONLY: Do not give credit for this indicator if inappropriate materials are accessible.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	26	Cultural awareness	5.1 Many multicultural materials visible that reflect the diversity of peoples.	Visible materials are found without too much digging. Each "example" means a "contrast" (e.g. two dolls of different skin tones count as one example.)
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	27	Greeting/departing	3.2 Some acknowledgment of children's arrival and departure is made by school-age program. 5.1 Each child is greeted warmly and helped to join in program.	Indicator 3.2 can be a <i>general</i> greeting to the group. At 5.1 each child must be individually greeted.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	27	Greeting/departing	<p>5.1 Each child is greeted warmly and helped to join in program.</p> <p>5.3 Staff members take responsibility for greeting, integration, and departure of children.</p>	5.1 Requires that each child is individually greeted but 5.3 requires <u>that the staff members responsible for the children's care</u> are the ones who greet the children.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	28	Staff-child interactions	3.2 Staff treat children fairly and equally.	Need significant evidence to take off here. (BS Staff may consider against example from most recent SACERS-U author training.)
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	29	Staff-child communications	5.4 Children are asked "why, how, what if" questions that require longer, more complex answers.	At 5.4 these kinds of questions should be observed to be regular practice.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	30	Staff supervision of children	5.1 Careful supervision of all children adjusted appropriately for different ages and abilities.	How do you handle supervision of children <i>between</i> classrooms? TH indicates that this score depends on the provision of supervision in the program. Children should be in visual or auditory range, except for single-person bathrooms in very close proximity to the area used for play. (In this instance the bathroom door should be visible while staff move about the primary space used by children.) Staff may also use other means of communication (e.g. walkie talkies) to safely coordinate children moving between spaces.

10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	31	Discipline	3.3 <i>Staff never use harsh discipline.</i>	Are time-outs considered harsh discipline? Depends on how the "time out" is handled - there is a difference between asking children to spend some time calming down apart from the group versus commanding children to "Go to time out!" Consider tone and whether children are removed physically.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	32	Peer interaction	5.3 <i>Staff help children develop appropriate social behavior with peers.</i>	This should be regular practice, and if conflict arises staff should support children in coming to a resolution. If no conflict is observed and children already exhibit appropriate social behavior, credit can be given.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	35	Communication between program staff and children's classroom teachers	3.1 <i>Some communications between school-age child care staff and the children's classroom teachers about practical concerns.</i>	At programs where children are bussed from multiple sites, there may be lots of communication with some teachers and none with others.) Give credit for "some" if there is any communication with teachers at 3 level, take off at 5's if the communication is not with all sites.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	35	Communication between program staff and children's classroom teachers	7.1 <i>School-age child care staff and classroom teachers communicate bi-weekly.</i>	Bi-weekly means two (2) times per month for this indicator.
7/1/2016	ERS-SACERS	36	Schedule	3.3 <i>At least one fine motor/language activity scheduled daily.</i>	One or the other must be observed set up and accessible to children. Please note that both are not required daily at the minimal level.
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	36	Schedule	3.4 <i>Some scheduled gross motor activity time indoors or outdoors (weather permitting) daily.</i> 5.3 <i>Regularly scheduled gross motor time daily for all children on a year-round basis outdoors or indoors.</i>	Is going outdoors always required even if the gym is always available? 3.4 requires some gross motor time every day indoors <i>or</i> outdoors; 5.3 requires some <i>outdoor</i> gross motor activity every day, weather permitting. (The play can be indoors instead <i>only</i> if weather does not permit.)
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	38	Use of community resources	5.1 <i>Regularly scheduled use of recreational and cultural community resources.</i>	This specific indicator considers resources that go beyond the usual, daily resources. For programs like YMCAs, credit can be given for resources under the agency umbrella, like a swimming pool, as long as this resource goes beyond the usual offerings and opportunities. Special full-day activities count as well (e.g. field trips during school vacations.)
10/18/2014	ERS-SACERS	42	Provisions for exceptional children	3.1 <i>Minor modifications made to the physical environment, program, and/ or schedule to permit child to attend.</i> 5.2 <i>Staff use assessment information about needs of exceptional children and make modifications in environment, program, and schedule so that children can participate in many activities.</i> 7.2 <i>Center staff follow through with activities and interactions</i>	Since assessors may not know which children have disabilities, ask additional questions about which children have special needs if there is evidence that those needs are not being met/ accommodations aren't being made. As always weigh observations of accommodations more heavily than report.