

Maryland EXCELS: Conducting and Scoring Your SACERS-U Self-Assessment

Video Transcript

[Music]

Graphic: Maryland State Department of Education

Slide 1 Title: Conducting and Scoring Your SACERS-U Self-Assessment

Narrator: Welcome to Conducting and Scoring Your SACERS-U Self-Assessment. This is the second presentation in the series intended to help you through the self-assessment process. One of the goals of Maryland EXCELS is to encourage providers to increase the level of quality in their programs. Self-assessment is an essential part of any quality improvement process. Much of the information being presented here can also be found in the instruction section on page 4 of the SACERS-U. You should have already viewed the first presentation in this series, Maryland EXCELS and the School-Age Environment Rating Scale. It also helps if you download and/or print out the practice sample score sheet that will be used as part of this presentation. Feel free to pause the video at any point.

Slide 2: Objectives

Narrator: Before viewing this webinar, you should have already identified which self-assessment tools to use with your program and be able to recognize what the Environment Rating Scales actually measure. Having the SACERS-U accessible while you view this presentation is required. Otherwise, the content could be very confusing.

Slide 3: When should I use the self-assessment tools?

Graphic: Self-assessment tool instruction sheets for Infant and Toddlers (for observing teaching practices of groups of children ages 6 weeks to 36 months), Family Child Care (for observing teaching practices of groups of children ages 6 weeks to 5 years) and Preschool programs (for observing teaching practices of groups of children ages 3 to 5 years)

Narrator: Part of the path to achieving a quality rating in Maryland EXCELS at level 3 involves conducting self-assessments. This is your program's opportunity to reflect on current practices, choose what issues to address, and then act to make improvements. Use the self-assessment tools that match your current enrollment.

Slide 4: How to conduct your self-assessments

- Read over the entire scale carefully including the Notes for Clarification and Questions.
- Consult the scale frequently during the 3-hour observation.
- Observe and score current situations as seen during the first 3 hours.
- To score each item always start reading from 1 (Inadequate) and progress upward.
- Look at www.ersi.info.

Narrator: You should already be familiar with how to conduct your self-assessments. This information is explained on page 4 of the SACERS-U. Blank score sheets can be found at the back of the SACERS-U. You will need to make copies of those pages to conduct your self-assessments. The ideal observation plan is for one person to observe the classroom activities for three hours straight. Check on the Environment Rating Scales Institute website for new notes to paste into your book for reference. Ask the additional questions provided in the scales for indicators and items that might not have been observed. Be honest with yourself and your staff. If you are the only staff member at your program, you could video record a typical day or ask a substitute teacher or parent volunteer to observe you in action. Use the score sheet as a self-reflection on a typical day as experienced by the children in your program.

Slide 5: Overview of the Subscales and Items

Graphic: Example of SACERS-U Subscales and Items and SACERS-U Indicators

Narrator: Open your scales book to page 7 and look for the overview of the sub-scales and items. You can pause the video while you turn to that page. You will see seven sub-scales. Each sub-scale is then divided into items. Each item is divided into four columns of indicators, ranked from 1, Inadequate, to 7, Excellent. The previous presentation explored why to use the ERS. Now we will explain how to score an ERS observation.

Slide 6: Scoring the SACERS-U

Graphic: SACERS-U sample page

Narrator: The indicators in the 1 column describe inadequate care or what not to do. The 3 column, Minimal, typically reflects basic needs and minimum licensing standards, things you are probably doing already to stay licensed and in business. The 5 column describes what very good developmentally appropriate quality care looks like and is similar to accreditation standards. And the 7 column reflects excellent practices. During an observation, an item quality score is determined separately for each item, ranging anywhere from 1 to 7. As always, feel free to pause the video to review this information in more detail.

Slide 7: Scoring the SACERS-U

Graphic: SACERS-U sample scoresheet

Narrator: A rating of 1 must be given if any indicator under 1 is scored Yes. The item quality score for this item is a 1 because an indicator in the 1's column was scored Yes. Even though indicators were met at the higher levels of quality, if any indicator in the 1 column is scored Yes, the overall item quality score must be a 1. Remember the 1 column reflects inadequate care or what not to do. It is the only place where "No" is a good thing. To score accurately in this column, ask yourself, "Is this statement true?" If it is not true, mark it No. If it is true, mark it Yes. Be honest with yourself and your program throughout the self-assessment process.

A rating of 2 is given when all indicators under 1 are scored No and at least half of the indicators under 3 are scored Yes. Since half or more of the indicators in the 3 column were met and scored Yes, the item quality score is a 2. However, a rating of 1 must also be given when all indicators under 1 are scored No but less than half of the indicators under 3 were scored Yes. In other words, since less than half of the indicators in the 3 column were met and marked Yes, the item quality score goes back down to a 1.

A rating of 3 is given when all indicators under 1 are scored No and all indicators under 3 are scored Yes. An item quality score of 3 is earned when all indicators in the 3 columns are met. Of course, all the indicators in the 1 column had to first be marked No.

A rating of 4 is given when all requirements of 3 are met and at least half of the indicators under 5 are scored Yes. Since two out of four indicators or at least half of the indicators in the 5 column were met and marked Yes, the item quality score is a 4. The score would also be a 4 if three out of the four indicators were met and therefore marked Yes. However, a rating of 3 must be given when all requirements of 3 are met but less than half of the indicators under 5 were scored Yes. If only one of the four indicators or less than half had been met and marked Yes, the item quality score would go back down to a 3.

A rating of 5 is given when all requirements of 3 are met and all indicators under 5 are scored Yes. An item quality score of 5 is earned when all indicators in the column are met. Of course, all the indicators in the 1 column had to first be marked No and all the indicators in the 3 column were met and marked Yes.

A rating of 6 is given when all requirements of five are met and at least half of the indicators under 7 are scored Yes. Since two out of the three indicators in the 7 column were met, which is at least or more than half, the item quality score is a 6. However, a rating of 5 must be given when all requirements of 3 and 5 are met but less than half of the indicators under 7 are scored Yes. If only one of the three indicators or less than half had been met and marked Yes, the item quality score would go back down to a 5.

A rating of 7 is given when all requirements of 5 are met and all indicators under 7 are scored Yes. An item quality score of 7 is earned when all indicators in the 7 column are met. Of course, all of the indicators in the 1 column had to be first marked No. And all the indicators in the 3 and 5 columns were marked Yes. Higher scores are not very common for most items. The goal for your self-assessment is to have an honest and objective starting place for your Program Improvement Plan. Even accredited programs do not receive all 7s.

Slide 8: When to score "Not Applicable"

Narrator: Indicators and items might be scored Not Applicable based upon the ages of the children being observed or variety in program schedules. A score of NA may only be given for indicators or for entire items when "NA Permitted" is shown on the scale and there is an NA on the score sheet. Indicators that are scored NA are not counted when determining the rating for an item. An item scored NA are not counted when calculating average sub-scale scores and overall assessment scores.

Slide 9: Focus on Progress

Graphic: Line graph with arrow moving up

- The ERS use hundreds of indicators of quality.
- A perfect score on the entire ERS is not a realistic goal. An average score of 5.00 is considered the benchmark for high quality.
- The ERS scores DO NOT impact your Maryland EXCELS Quality Rating.

Narrator: You will be able to observe how your classrooms are actually functioning. This self-assessment will help you discover those issues that cannot be changed, which practices you want to spread throughout your program, and what procedures need to be adjusted. It is a starting point. There is always room for improvement even after you achieve accreditation. You will have some items scored a 1 or 2. Accept what you cannot change and focus your efforts on the areas you can improve. In Maryland EXCELS, the assessment process is really not about the scores. What's important is what you choose to do with the information that you've gathered. The focus is on progress, not perfection.

Slide 10: Practice Scoring Sample

Graphic: Sample of completed SACERS-U scoresheet

Narrator: Now is the time to use the attachment practice sample score sheet PDF that was mentioned at the start of this presentation. Pause the video and take a moment to look over the notes the assessor wrote during this observation of a family childcare program. Those notes explain and justify the item quality scores assigned. Based upon these notes, we will decide how to score the following sample items. The scoring system is the same no matter which Environment Rating Scale you're using.

Slide 11: Sample Item 20: Dramatic Play

Graphic: SACERS-U sample item scoresheet

Narrator: Look at item number 20, Dramatic Play. Indicator 5.1 was marked No because the criteria was not met based upon the few materials accessible for school-aged children. Indicator 5.2 was marked No because of the length of time several children did not have access to any materials. Since at least half of the indicators in the 5 column were scored yes, the item quality score is 4.

Slide 12: Sample Item 21: Math/Number

Graphic: SACERS-U sample item scoresheet

Narrator: Look at item number 21, Math/Number. Credit was not given for 5.1 based upon the types and amounts of materials observed. 5.2 also had to be scored No because 5.1 was scored No. Also, the materials were not accessible for much of the day. 5.4 was scored No because number talk was not heard during any free play activities. Therefore, the item quality score is 3 because fewer than half of the indicators in the 5 column are met.

Slide 13: Sample Item 21: Nature/Science

Graphic: SACERS-U sample item scoresheet

Narrator: Look at item number 22, Nature/Science. Credit was not given for indicator 3.1 because very few materials were accessible for preschool or school-aged children. Therefore, the item quality score is 2.

Slide 14: Sample Item 21: Sand and Water Play

Graphic: SACERS-U sample item scoresheet

Narrator: Look at item number 23, Sand and Water Play. Indicator 7.1 was scored No based upon information gained during the teacher interview. Therefore, the item quality score is 6.

Slide 15: Sample Item 21: Average Subscale Scores

Graphic: SACERS-U sample subscale scoresheet

Narrator: On certain score sheet pages after you finish scoring each item in that sub-scale, there are places to help you determine the average sub-scale score for that particular sub-scale. You will consult this data when creating your Program Improvement Plan. To calculate the average sub-scale scores, combine the item quality scores earned for each individual item in that sub-scale to get one total A. Divide that total by B, the total number of items you scored in that sub-scale. Then you will have the average score for that particular sub-scale. You will find a chart to help you determine the overall score of the entire observation. The chart is at the back of the SACERS-U on score sheet page 11. To calculate the overall score for the entire three-hour observation, add together all of the column A total sub-scale scores. Then, divide that total by the total number of items scored during the entire observation. That will give you the overall average score for the entire self-assessment. Remember, do not include any items scored NA in the sub-scale average or in the total average scores.

Slide 16: Supplemental materials

Graphic: Found on the Environment Rating Scale Institute website (www.ersi.info)

- Expanded Score sheet (12 pages)
- Playground Guidelines (2 pages)
- USDA Meal Guidelines (1 page)
- Substantial portion of the day chart (1 page)
- Diapering and Handwashing Procedure (1 page)
- Table Washing Procedure (1 page)
- *Caring for Our Children 3rd edition*
- *All About ITERS/ECERS (from Kaplan, Barnes & Noble, or Amazon, etc.)*

Narrator: To help you in scoring and for teacher training purposes, these supplementary materials are very useful. The ERS health and safety information is based on *Caring for Our Children*, sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The all-about books cost about \$50 each. They provide much more detailed explanations of each indicator, along with photographs and other resources.

Slide 17: Next Steps

Graphic: A cycle showing: Self Assess, Develop Level 3 PIP, Utilize PIP and returning to Self Assess

Narrator: Maryland EXCELS promotes continuous quality improvement through the standards as you aim to move up to higher levels of quality. The next step after all of your self-assessments have been completed and scored is to create your Program Improvement Plan based upon the sub-scale averages in your assessments, your school readiness goals, and your program's priorities. Maryland EXCELS Quality Assurance Specialists and the Child Care Resource and Referral Centers can provide support and technical assistance for ongoing improvement based upon your self-assessment.

Slide 18: The gift of feedback

Graphic: A cycle showing: Share Goals, Share Ideas, Find best way to approach goal, Help & Support of others, Success! Feel Good and returning to Share Goals

Narrator: The feedback you provide your staff after the SACERS self-assessment and the Program Improvement Plan you develop together will be very useful towards increasing your Maryland EXCEL quality rating. It will also be helpful when aiming to achieve any accreditation. Many of the items and indicators in the SACERS are also evaluated by many of the accrediting bodies.

Slide 19: For more information

- Quality Assurance Specialists (QAS)
- Program Coordinators (PC)
- Child Care Resource & Referral Centers
- [www.ersi](http://www.ersi.org)
- info@marylandexcels.org

Narrator: For additional information about conducting your self-assessment, visit our website for additional presentations. Contact your Maryland EXCELS Quality Assurance Specialist program coordinator or your local Child Care Resource and Referral Center. Look at the Environment Rating Scales Institute website or send an email directly to Maryland EXCELS. Thank you for your commitment to continuous quality improvement and to improving the outcomes of the children you serve.

[Music]

Slide 22: Follow @Maryland EXCELS, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram