

**Meeting Licensing Rules and Environment Rating Scales Indicators  
School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale – Updated (SACERS-U)  
June 2020**

The Environment Rating Scales (ERS) provide an overall picture of the environment that has been created within an early childhood setting. The ERS tools should be used in connection with Wisconsin Licensing Rules. This document provides clarifications for ERS items as they pertain to Wisconsin Licensing Rules. Information in bold print is from DCF 251 Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers with Commentary. Information following the Licensing Rules are guidelines for scoring indicators for that specific item.

Item 1. Indoor space – temperature control

**251.06(1)(d) The inside temperature may not be less than 67°F.**

**251.06(1)(e) If the inside temperature exceeds 80°F., the licensee shall provide for air circulation with fans, with air conditioning, or by other means.**

Licensing regulations for inside temperature will be followed when scoring indicator 1.2 and 3.2

Item 14. Safety practices – safety of gross motor space

**NOTE:** From December 1 to March 31, if children do not use outdoor equipment with platforms over 18 inches tall, insufficient cushioning will not be cited as a safety hazard when scoring this indicator. ERS Observers will not cite insufficient cushioning as a safety hazard if they have observed the program at times when children are not present because they would be unable to know if the children use the equipment with platforms over 18 inches tall.

Rationale: Accumulated snow does not provide adequate cushioning to protect against head injuries. Additionally, surface types such as loose-fill cushioning (wood mulch and rubber mulch), sand, pea gravel, and poured-in-place cushioning can freeze and lose their shock absorbency in winter/cold weather. Children can be permitted to use other equipment that does not require a cushioned fall surface. Other safety hazards in the gross motor space may still be cited as a safety hazard when scoring this indicator.

Note: For programs with fenced gross motor areas. When snow is cleared/moved and piled next to the fence, it can reduce the effective height of the fence. Licensing requires that fences are 48 inches high. Fence height should be considered when deciding where cleared snow will be placed, so that the required fence height can be maintained. Reduced fence height will be cited as a safety hazard.

This information will be used when scoring indicators 1.2 and 3.1.

Item 18. Personal hygiene - hand hygiene

**251.07(6)(i) 7. Disinfecting hand sanitizers may not replace the use of soap and water when washing hands.**

Item 21. Blocks and Construction

**251.06(2)(d) Materials harmful to children, including power tools, flammable or combustible materials, insecticides, matches, drugs, cleaning supplies, bleaches, and other hazardous, toxic, or poisonous articles shall be appropriately labeled and stored in areas inaccessible to children.**

This information will be used when scoring indicator 7.2

Item 33. Interactions between staff and parents

**251.04(4) (c) The center shall make opportunities available at least twice each year for parent and staff communication regarding the child's adjustment to the program, and the child's growth and development**

Licensing regulations will be followed when scoring indicator 5.2. If parent/teacher conferences are not offered twice a year, indicator 5.2 will be scored "No."

Item 36. Schedule – weather permitting

**251.03(14r) "Inclement weather" means stormy or severe weather such as any of the following:**

- (a) Heavy rain.**
- (b) Temperatures above 90 degrees Fahrenheit.**
- (c) Wind chills of 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below for children age 2 and above.**
- (d) Wind chills of 20 degrees Fahrenheit or below for children under age 2.**

Licensing regulations for inclement weather will be followed when the scale references weather permitting for indicators 3.4 and 5.3.

The following items are not scored during a YoungStar Observation:

Item 35. Communication between program staff and children's classroom teachers

Item 38. Use of community resources

Staff Development Subscale, Items 39-40.

### **Resources**

- DCF 251: Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/205.pdf>
- School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale, Updated (SACERS-U) - Thelma Harms, Ellen Vineberg Jacobs, and Donna Romano White: <https://www.ersi.info/sacers-u.html>
- ERSI Website: <https://www.ersi.info/index.html>
- Playground Information to Use with the Environment Rating Scales: <https://www.ersi.info//PDF/playground%20revised%207-31-18.pdf>
- Public Playground Safety Handbook: <https://cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/325.pdf>
- Supporting Families Together Association: <https://supportingfamilies.together.org/formal-rating-in-youngstar/>
- YoungStar Website: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar>

**\*\*Final determination of any Wisconsin modified scoring must continue to meet all Wisconsin licensing and certification health and safety standards.**