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## tip|sheet

Ideas and information about child development and early education for parents, professionals and the community-at-large.

# #579

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# child care search

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# Tips for Improving Your SACERS Score!

## Part III - Activities

The Activities section of the SACERS includes eight areas: Arts & Crafts, Music and Movement, Blocks & Construction, Drama/Theater, Language/Reading, Math/Reasoning, Science/Nature, and Cultural Awareness. The following tips will help you assess your programs in the Activities component of the School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS).

### General Suggestions

- Provide enough materials in each area for three or more children to use at any one time.
- Organize materials and resources for easy access to the children.
- Ask children what activities they would like to see offered and try to incorporate their ideas.
- Remember to set up space that is conducive for messy activities. For example, station art activities near the sink or science activities near an external door.
- Be responsive and participate with the children, offering suggestions if necessary.
- Introduce children to more advanced and challenging activities when they are ready.
- Encourage children to teach others new games and to bring favorite books from home for sharing with other children.
- Encourage children to question and seek answers for science or natural phenomena and other areas. If

you don't know an answer, find out together.

- Introduce new concepts to extend children's interest. Examples may include a new musical instrument, trying a new sport, learning about recycling, endangered species, or water conservation.

Provide a variety of age-appropriate materials that are accessible for children to choose on their own. Examples include:

- *Arts & Crafts:* Paints, assorted pens, pencils, markers, crayons, glue, scissors, clay, play dough, or materials for collage, weaving, origami, jewelry making.
- *Construction materials:* Legos, erector sets and building blocks, or carpentry materials and tools.
- *Music/Movement:* Cassettes or CD's, dance props, and musical instruments.
- *Drama/Theater:* Props (dress up clothes, costumes, props, and puppets) which support many roles and situations such as adventure or fantasy.
- *Science/Nature:* Aquarium, terrarium, measuring tools, magnifying glass, magnets, plants, pets, science books.
- *Language:* Crossword puzzles, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and games such as Jr. Scrabble or Pictionary.
- *Math/Reasoning:* Puzzles, chess, checkers, board games such as Monopoly or Sratago for older children, and Chutes & Ladders for younger children.

## Tips for Improving Your SACERS Score! *Part III - Activities - con't*

### Activity Ideas

Field trips stimulate interest in all of the eight SACERS areas. For example, attend a play or a music concert, visit an art museum or tour the Federal Reserve Bank. The planetarium, a science museum such as Discovery Place, or botanical gardens are good science and nature activities. Take children to the library to borrow books. Area businesses or service providers (police or fire departments, a bakery, or TV/radio station) are also great learning opportunities.

Give children opportunities to learn new skills or complete long-range projects. Arts and crafts and blocks and construction skills can be developed through sculpting, pottery, embroidery, or soft wood projects (like building a bird house).

Provide weekly instruction in choral singing, dance, musical instruments or drama as an individual or group activity. Enrich dramatic play ideas by creating opportunities for children to develop their own productions. Children can create costumes, write dialogues, plan a production, or put on a puppet show.

Encourage children to use everyday activities or situations to practice math and reasoning, science and nature, and language and reading skills. They can record scores for games, divide snacks, water the plants, feed the animals, or

contribute to a science/nature display. Help children write a letter to a friend or pen-pal, write their own stories and poems, or read a newspaper.

Plan cultural diversity awareness activities on a regular basis. Discuss different cultures and customs as they arise in daily situations. Invite storytellers and musicians from different cultures and expose children to different cultural and religious celebrations and occasions. Encourage acceptance and understanding of differences by discouraging derogatory remarks and helping children empathize with others who are different. Use or display multicultural materials that reflect the diversity of our community. Encourage children to participate in activities that depict non-traditional "roles" such as boys in cooking or girls in carpentry.

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