



# Go NAPSACC

## Self-Assessment Instrument

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Child Care Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## Outdoor Play & Learning

Go NAPSACC is based on a set of best practices that stem from the latest research and guidelines in the field. After completing this assessment, you will be able to see your program's strengths and areas for improvement, and use this information to plan healthy changes.

For this self-assessment, **outdoor play and learning** includes all activities done outdoors. The questions cover a range of activities, some focused on physical activity and some focused on other learning activities. These questions relate to opportunities for both children with special needs and typically developing children.

### Before you begin:

- ✓ Gather staff manuals, parent handbooks, and other documents that state your policies and guidelines about outdoor play and learning.
- ✓ Recruit the help of key teachers and staff members who are familiar with day-to-day practices.

### As you assess:

- ✓ Answer choices in parentheses ( ) are for half-day programs. Full-day programs should use the answer choices without parentheses.
- ✓ Definitions of key words are marked by asterisks (\*).
- ✓ Answer each question as best you can. If none of the answer choices seem quite right, just pick the closest fit. If a question does not apply to your program, move to the next question.

### Understanding your results:

- ✓ The answer choices in the right-hand column represent the best practice recommendations in this area. To interpret your results, compare your responses to these best practice recommendations. This will show you your strengths and the areas in which your program can improve.



Ward D, Morris E, McWilliams C, Vaughn A, Erinosh T, Mazzucca S, Hanson P, Ammerman A, Neelon S, Sommers J, Ball S. (2014). Go NAP SACC: Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care, 2nd Edition. Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and Department of Nutrition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Available at: [www.gonapsacc.org](http://www.gonapsacc.org).

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## Outdoor Playtime

### 1. Outdoor playtime\* is provided to preschool children and toddlers:

- |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 times per week or less (Half-day: 3 times per week or less) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 time per day (Half-day: 4 times per week) | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 times per day (Half-day: 1 time per day) | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 times per day or more (Half-day: 2 times per day or more) |
|--|--|---|--|

\* Outdoor playtime includes any time that children are outdoors playing and learning. Children may be very physically active or do less energetic activities during this time.

### 2. The amount of outdoor playtime provided to preschool children\* each day is:

- |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 60 minutes (Half-day: Less than 15 minutes) | <input type="checkbox"/> 60–74 minutes (Half-day: 15–29 minutes) | <input type="checkbox"/> 75–89 minutes (Half-day: 30–44 minutes) | <input type="checkbox"/> 90 minutes or more (Half-day: 45 minutes or more) |
|--|--|--|--|

\* For Go NAPSACC, preschool children are children ages 2–5 years.

### 3. The amount of outdoor playtime provided to toddlers\* each day is:

- |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 30 minutes (Half-day: Less than 10 minutes) | <input type="checkbox"/> 30–44 minutes (Half-day: 10–19 minutes) | <input type="checkbox"/> 45–59 minutes (Half-day: 20–29 minutes) | <input type="checkbox"/> 60 minutes or more (Half-day: 30 minutes or more) |
|--|--|--|--|

\* For Go NAPSACC, toddlers are children ages 13–24 months.

### 4. Infants\* are taken outdoors:†

- |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 times per week or less (Half-day: 2 times per week or less) | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 times per week (Half-day: 3 times per week) | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 time per day (Half-day: 4 times per week) | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 times per day or more (Half-day: 1 time per day or more) |
|--|--|--|---|

\* For Go NAPSACC, infants are children ages 0–12 months.

† Infants may be taken outdoors for different activities, including a walk in a stroller or tummy time on a blanket or mat.

### 5. Our program does the following types of activities with children outdoors:

See list and mark response below.

- Free play: Playtime that can be more or less energetic, depending on what activities children decide to do.
- Structured learning opportunities: Planned lessons and activities including circle time, art projects, and reading time.
- Seasonal outdoor activities: Activities that are unique to the season or the weather, including gardening, water play, collecting fallen leaves, and playing in the snow.
- Walking trips: Activities, like nature walks and neighborhood tours, that let children explore the outdoors nearby your program, but beyond the regular play space.
- Outdoor field trips: Opportunities for children to take part in outdoor activities around the community. Destinations can include local parks, farms, gardens, or nature centers.

- |                               |  |   |   |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 activity type | <input type="checkbox"/> 2–3 activity types | <input type="checkbox"/> 4–5 activity types |
|-------------------------------|--|---|---|



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## Outdoor Play Environment

### 6. The amount of our outdoor play space that is shaded by structures\* or trees is:

- No shade       Less than 1/4 or more than 3/4 is shaded       1/4 to 1/2 is shaded       1/2 to 3/4 is shaded

\* Structures that provide shade include fabric canopies or umbrellas, hard top canopies, gazebos, and arbors.

### 7. An open area for outdoor games, activities, and events is:

- Not available       Large enough for some children to run around safely       Large enough for most children to run around safely       Large enough for all children to run around safely\*

\* This refers to all children who regularly use the open area together, not necessarily all of the children in the program. For large centers, this response refers to a space large enough for at least 25 children to run around safely.

### 8. The outdoor play space for preschool children includes:

- 1–2 play areas\*       3–5 play areas\*       6–7 play areas\*       8 play areas\* or more

\* Each play area offers different play opportunities. An area might include a swing set, sandbox, climbing structure, pathway, garden, house or tent, small inflatable pool, easel, or outdoor musical instruments like pots, pans and pipes for drumming. A play area does not need to be permanent; it can be created by bringing equipment outside.

### 9. Describe your program's garden:\*

- There is no garden for herbs, fruits, or vegetables       It grows only herbs       It grows some fruits and/or vegetables for children to taste       It grows enough fruits and/or vegetables to provide children meals or snacks during 1 or more seasons

\* A garden can be planted in the ground or in containers like window boxes or pots. A garden can include vines growing on fences or arbors, or fruit trees planted in the outdoor play space.

### 10. In our program, the path for wheeled toys is:

- No path       Unpaved and any width       Paved and less than 5 feet wide       Paved and 5 feet wide or wider

### 11. Describe the shape of the path for wheeled toys:

- No path       Straight       Curved but not looped       Curved and looped\*

\* A curved and looped path allows children to ride around multiple loops, not just one large circle.

### 12. Describe how the path for wheeled toys connects to different parts of the outdoor play space:

See list and mark response below.

- Connects to building entrances
- Connects the building to play areas
- Connects different play areas to each other

- No path       1 type of connection       2 types of connections       3 types of connections



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**13. Our program has the following portable play equipment\* available and in good condition for children to use outdoors:**

*See list and mark response below.*

- Jumping toys: jump ropes, jumping balls
- Push-pull toys: wagons, wheelbarrows, big dump trucks
- Ride-on toys: tricycles, scooters
- Twirling toys: ribbons, scarves, batons, hula hoops, parachute
- Throwing, catching, and striking toys: balls, bean bags, noodles, rackets
- Balance toys: balance beams, plastic “river stones”
- Crawling or tumbling equipment: mats, portable tunnels
- Other “loose parts”: sticks, shovels, pales

- None                       1–2 types                       3–5 types                       6–8 types

\* Portable play equipment includes any toys that children can carry, throw, push, pull, or kick, as well as “loose parts” that help children explore and learn about the natural world. This equipment can be homemade or store bought. Portable play equipment does not include equipment fixed into the ground like jungle gyms, but does include fabric tunnels, mats, and other larger items that teachers can easily move and switch out.

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**14. Portable play equipment is available to children during outdoor active playtime:**

- Rarely or never                       Sometimes                       Often                       Always

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**15. The amount of portable play equipment available to children during outdoor active playtime is:**

- Very limited                       Limited                       Somewhat limited                       Not limited – there is always something available for each child to play with

## Education & Professional Development

**16. Teachers and staff receive professional development\* on outdoor play and learning:**

- Never                       Less than 1 time per year                       1 time per year                       2 times per year or more

\* Professional development can include taking in-person or online training for contact hours or continuing education credits. It can also include information presented at staff meetings.

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**17. Professional development for current staff on outdoor play and learning has included the following topics:**

*See list and mark response below.*

- Recommended amounts of outdoor playtime for young children
- Using the outdoor play space to encourage children’s physically active play
- Communicating with families about outdoor play and learning
- Our program’s policies on outdoor play and learning

- None                       1 topic                       2–3 topics                       4 topics



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**18. Families are offered education\* on outdoor play and learning:**

- Never                       Less than 1 time per year                       1 time per year                       2 times per year or more

\* Education can be offered through in-person educational sessions, brochures, tip sheets, or your program’s newsletter, website, or bulletin boards.

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**19. Education for families on outdoor play and learning includes the following topics:**

*See list and mark response below.*

- Recommended amounts of outdoor playtime for young children
- Using the outdoors to encourage children’s physically active play
- Our program’s policies on outdoor play and learning

- None                       1 topic                       2 topics                       3 topics

## Policy

**20. Our written policy\* on outdoor play and learning includes the following topics:**

*See list and mark response below.*

- Amount of outdoor playtime provided each day
- Ensuring adequate total playtime on inclement weather† days
- Shoes and clothes that allow children and teachers to play outdoors in all seasons
- Safe sun exposure for children, teachers, and staff
- Not taking away outdoor playtime in order to manage challenging behaviors
- Professional development on outdoor play and learning
- Education for families on outdoor play and learning

- No written policy or policy does not include these topics                       1–2 topics                       3–5 topics                       6–7 topics

\* A written policy includes any written guidelines about your program’s operations or expectations for teachers, staff, children, and families. Policies can be included in parent handbooks, staff manuals, and other documents.

† Inclement weather includes very high and very low temperatures, hazardous air quality, storms, and any other factors that make the outdoors unsafe for children.



*The Outdoor Play Environment items represent a collaboration between Go NAPSACC and the Natural Learning Initiative at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC.*



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