



Go NAP SACC

Self-Assessment Instrument for Family Child Care



Date: _____

Your Name: _____

Child Care Program Name: _____



Outdoor Play & Learning

Go NAP SACC 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, the outdoor play space includes anywhere you regularly take children for outdoor playtime. This can include parks or playgrounds off-site if no play space is available right outside your home. These questions relate to opportunities for both children with special needs and typically developing children.

Before you begin:

- ✓ Gather parent handbooks, schedules, or any other documents that state your policies about outdoor play and learning or outline your 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.



Outdoor Playtime

1. I provide time for outdoor play:*

- 3 times per week or less (Half-day: 2 times per week or less) 4 times per week (Half-day: 3 times per week) 1 time per day (Half-day: 4 times per week) 2 times per day or more (Half-day: 1 time 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 time I provide for outdoor play each day is:

- Less than 30 minutes (Half-day: Less than 10 minutes) 30–44 minutes (Half-day: 10–19 minutes) 45–59 minutes (Half-day: 20–29 minutes) 60 minutes or more (Half-day: 30 minutes or more)

3. I use the outdoors for the following types of activities:

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, 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 or field trips: On walking trips, children explore the outdoors nearby your home, but beyond the regular play space. On field trips, children can enjoy various outdoor activities around the community.

- None 1 activity type 2–3 activity types 4 activity types

Outdoor Play Environment

4. The amount of my program's 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

* The outdoor play space includes anywhere you regularly take children for outdoor playtime. This can include parks or playgrounds off-site if no play space is available right outside your home.

† Structures that provide shade include umbrellas, gazebos, arbors, and covered porches.

5. The open area that I use for outdoor games and group activities is:

- No open area 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

6. My program's outdoor play space includes:

- 1 play area* 2 play areas* 3 play areas* 4 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 and pans for drumming. A play area does not need to be permanent; it can be created by bringing equipment outside.



7. Please describe the garden* in your outdoor play space:

- I have 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.

8. My 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
- Crawling or tumbling equipment: mats, portable tunnels
- Other “loose parts”: sticks, shovels, pails

- None 1–2 types 3–5 types 6–7 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 swing sets and jungle gyms, but does include fabric tunnels, mats, and other larger items that can easily be moved around by adults.

9. I offer children portable play equipment during outdoor active playtime:

- Rarely or never Sometimes Often Always

10. 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

11. I complete professional development* on outdoor play and learning:

- Never Less than 1 time per year 1 time per year 2 times per year or more, including at least 1 in-person or online training, when available

* Professional development can include taking in-person or online training for contact hours or continuing education credits. It can also include reading brochures, books, or online articles from trusted organizations.



12. I have covered the following topics as part of this professional development:

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
- Talking with families about outdoor play and learning

None 1 topic 2 topics 3 topics

13. I offer families information* on outdoor play and learning:

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

* Information can be offered through brochures, tip sheets, or your program’s newsletters, website, or bulletin board. Information can be offered informally or during meetings or educational sessions with families.

14. The information I offer families on outdoor play and learning covers 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
- My program’s policies on outdoor play and learning

None 1 topic 2 topics 3 topics

Policy

15. My program’s 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 to play outdoors in all seasons
- Safe sun exposure for children
- Not taking away outdoor playtime in order to manage challenging behaviors
- My participation in 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 can include any written guidelines about your program’s operations or expectations for assistants, children, and families. Policies can be included in parent handbooks 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 NAP SACC and the Natural Learning Initiative at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC.



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, Family Child Care Edition. Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention and Department of Nutrition, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Available at: www.gonapsacc.org.

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