



# SCHOOL AGE UPDATE



SWCDC

School Age Program

NC CCR&R Council

Fall 2018

## Upcoming Trainings

### SACERS-U

November 1 & 8, 2018

7:00 - 8:30 PM

Cost: \$25



### Crunching & Munching

Moving & Grooving

November 6 & 13, 2018

9:00 - 10:30 AM

Cost: Free

## Professional Development

School is back in session across the state. Apart from preparing classroom environments, learning student names, and crafting engaging curriculum, it is time for school age educators to reengage with solid training. The School Age Program is here to provide school age professionals with a wide range of DCDEE approved training options for all adult learners.

For programs with new teachers and coordinators, or those wishing to refresh themselves on the fundamentals, the SAP is offering its School Age Care Environmental Rating Scales (SACERS) course this fall. Our SACERS training explores the intricacies of school age learning. It highlights the basics of the SACERS assessment tool, and provides practical insight on how your school age program can excel when going through reassessment. To help with accessibility, we are offering SACERS-U during the evening and through our GoToMeeting format. This course is conducted with in-person instruction, and is developed with all learning styles in mind.

One hurdle for many school age providers is securing funding for professional development. The SAP is happy to announce that we are providing a free CEU training for all providers. Crunching & Munching, Moving & Grooving offers an in-depth look at the childhood obesity epidemic among American youth, and provides tips on how to help school age programs steer children towards a more healthy lifestyle. This course fills up fast, so make sure to register while space allows.

The School Age Program is constantly adding new trainings for educators looking to develop their teaching skills. Remember to visit our training registration site at [swcdcinc.org](http://swcdcinc.org) for up-to-date information on upcoming training dates and courses.

The registration deadline for all of our courses ends one week before the start of the training. For questions please contact Jonathan Williams, The School Age Program Coordinator, by email at [williams.jon@swcdcinc.org](mailto:williams.jon@swcdcinc.org).

# What to Do?

## Sharing an outdoor play area with another group

One of the most difficult aspects of running an effective school age program is sharing. From materials and food prep counters to classroom environments and bathroom areas, many school age coordinators must share their program space with other care groups. This process proves most difficult when thinking about age appropriate play area outdoors.

### **The Struggle**

School age programs that are required to share outdoor spaces mainly fall into two camps. The first camp encompasses school age programs that are incorporated into smaller child care centers with younger children. Many of these facilities have limited outdoor space, and more often than not, have these spaces fitted for children five years of age or younger. This is an issue for school age children looking to explore and create with age appropriate outdoor materials. It also creates behavioral situations for school age teachers attempting to engage students with effective cognitive play.

The other camp involves school age groups incorporated into formal school settings, and have to share access to school play areas, playgrounds, and gymnasiums. While these outdoor areas offer more age appropriate gross motor choices, student's play options may be limited both by the area available for use and the materials provided for play. These situations also provide extra stress for teachers and program directors who must conform formal school setting outdoor areas to DCDEE regulations.

In both situations, sharing an outdoor space provides fundamental obstacles for educators seeking to develop age-appropriate, high quality school age programs.

### **There is Hope**

Hope is not lost. Being able to adapt and compromise with other organizational programs is key to forming a successful shared space school age outdoor environment.

One key strategy for success is to get organized. Devote a special closet, storage unit, or roller cart specifically to school age materials and activities. Many schools and child care centers have an overabundance of unused storage containers that can be converted strictly to school age use and transport outdoors. For programs looking for storage options, thrift stores and reuse stores offer great opportunities to find organizational units at reasonable prices. Some reuse organizations might even gift these items to school age programs with public or non-profit status.





Once you have secured a separate organizational area, take some time to label materials, and get everything in order. Sticker labels or markers and tape are great ways to keep outdoor materials organized and secured. Labeling school age materials will help teachers know exactly what materials they can use outside. It also helps with material circulation to keep students engaged and active each day.



Apart from organization, another tactic to ensure a successful shared outdoor space is to establish an open communication relationship with other staff and program administration. Having an open line to positively voice concerns and issues is essential to keeping staff morale up and effective school age teaching in the forefront. Communicating problems surrounding issues like broken toys, lost outdoor materials, and shared playground etiquette provides positive social-emotional examples for school age students to follow. It highlights healthy problem solving skills for students, and emphasizes skills like compromising and conflict resolution.



If sharing an outdoor space creates perpetual tension with program teachers and students, work cooperatively with other program staff and administration to create a universal outdoor schedule. Having a scheduled school age outdoor time slot provides structure for older students who might struggle playing with younger children still in childcare. Moreover, a scheduled outdoor time also creates boundaries for teachers who overextend their outdoor time at the expense of other classrooms.

### **Thrive Or Survive**

While sharing outdoor spaces presents difficulty for many school age programs, it is important to look past program hurdles and stay positive. Setting up an organized school age program with good communication practices will help turn any school age shared space from an area that is simply surviving to an environment that is thriving for students and teachers.



# Managing School Age Stress Like A Professional



## **STRESS**

Being a school age program director or coordinator is a stressful job. Managing parents, children, and staff provides enough tension in itself. However, these aspects do not include the pressures associated with food program mandates, state licensing regulations, organizational files, and having the flexibility to jump head first into a classroom when a teacher is sick or absent. With all of these stress factors, personal care and mental health hygiene often fall to the way side. Below are some easy tips to help you stay effective as a school age manager, and at the same time remain healthy and emotionally sound.

### **Take a Break**

Many times managers have a hard time taking breaks throughout the day. Job responsibilities and looking out for staff often gets in the way of taking a short breather.

Psychologist Meg Selig highlights the importance of stepping back and taking a quick break. She highlights the fact that taking a break can help improve mood, reduce stress, and eliminate poor decision making (Psychology Today, April 2017). Taking time to rest your mind will help make you a stronger leader for your students and teachers.

### **Start Your Day Organized**

Nothing is worse as a school age program director than looking for a document or a form and not being able to find it. Being disorganized is one way to induce unwanted stress both as a director and as a person.

Starting your program day off in an organized manner is not difficult. Take some time at the start of each work period making a list of the goals that need to be accomplished that day. If you have some extra time, record and track longer term goals that might easily sneak up on you in the future. Having your day planned is a great way to stay focused and keep from getting distracted.

Organizing your program materials and play spaces is another way to reduce stress. Placing materials in easy to access boxes and totes is great for keeping inventory of your program's items, and helps teachers during transitions. Having an organized play area also reduces behavior issues among students, and will help eliminate many of the stressful issues associated with student discipline.

### **Separating Work from Home**

Being a school age program coordinator or director requires some administration responsibilities that must be completed outside of program hours. It is easy to take these responsibilities too far and bring them home. Failing to separate work from other aspects of life can easily increase stress and induce burnout.

Rob Dube from Forbes highlights that the best way to maintain a healthy work/home relationship is to set clear boundaries with yourself (Forbes, 2018) He states that managers should keep a mental note of what work responsibilities need to stay at the office...and not to compromise. He also states that managers should not feel guilty about leaving projects at work. By freeing ourselves from this type of guilt, Dube asserts that managers can bring their "most authentic, genuine, and present selves" in everything they do.

# Rules to Remember

With hurricane season in full swing in North Carolina, it is a great time for programs to look at their emergency kits and restock on essential safety items. Here are some items that the DCDEE requires for each emergency kit. For more information on emergency kits and school age care, refer to the NCDHHS Form 16 at [ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov](http://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov)

## Medical Supplies

- Non-porous gloves
- Sterile bandages
- Cotton swabs
- Tweezers
- Popsicle sticks
- Bandage tape
- CPR face mask
- Thermometer
- Eye bandages
- Scissors

## Paper Work

- Emergency contact information
- Student allergy information
- Attendance sheets
- Student transportation approvals
- Emergency prep plan
- Any other important documents

## Other Materials

- Radio
- Communication device
- Flashlight
- Play materials
- Reading materials
- Nonperishable food
- Water
- Liquid soap
- Cups
- Paper and pen

Always remember to keep your emergency kit in a safe area with no child access (best practice), and make sure to train staff on its location. It's best to do a bag check regularly to keep contents fresh and information up-to-date.





## NC CCR&R Statewide School Age Program

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