



Florida Department of Children and Families
 Child Care Program Office
 1317 Winewood Blvd.
 Building 6, Room 389 A
 Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700



Gold Seal Quality Care Program



Gold Seal Quality Care Program

Gold Seal Quality Care Program Description

Licensing standards established using Florida Statute and the Florida Administrative Code are the "minimum" standards that a child care facility, family day care home or large family child care home must meet in order to be licensed or registered. Child care programs accredited by an accrediting agency approved to participate in the Gold Seal Quality Care Program meet additional standards promoting quality in their programs.

The Department of Children and Families Child Care Program Office is responsible for approving accrediting agencies for participation in the Gold Seal Quality Care Program. To be approved, accrediting agencies must substantially meet or exceed standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation Commission (NECPA), or the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC). The Gold Seal Quality Care Program does not contain a set of independent standards; rather, it is a level of care that exceeds the minimum licensing standards by meeting the higher standards set by the accrediting agencies in statute. The DCF Child Care Program Office is tasked with ensuring that the accrediting agencies approved for participation are of sufficient variety to meet the needs of all child care providers (i.e., faith-based, school-age, Montessori, school-based, private, etc.).

The DCF Child Care Program Office is also responsible for recognizing each program that meets these additional standards by issuing a Gold Seal certificate. The Gold Seal Quality Care Program is a voluntary program with potential benefits of participation including, but not limited to: a positive marketing tool for parents, sales tax exemption, VPK eligibility and an increased reimbursement rate for children participating in school readiness programs.

Gold Seal Accreditation Process for Child Care Providers

To be recognized as a Gold Seal Quality Care Program provider:

Review the List of Approved Accrediting Agencies located on our web site listed below and contact that agency directly if their requirements and procedures best meet the needs of your program. Many child care providers are surprised to learn that they already meet some or many of the accrediting standards.

Once a provider has achieved accreditation from an approved accrediting agency, the agency will then forward a quarterly report with a copy of the accreditation certificate or letter verifying the program is accredited, the validation/ expiration/ renewal dates, and the complete mailing address for the program to the DCF Child Care Program Office.

Upon receipt of the information above, the department will award a Gold Seal Certificate to the child care provider, recognizing their achievement. The certificate will be mailed directly to the child care provider. If you are accredited by one of the department's approved accrediting agencies and have not received a Gold Seal certificate within 90 days of the accreditation date, please contact us at 1-888-352-2842 or fax your accreditation certificate to 1-866-596-9513, attention Gold Seal Unit.

For additional information, visit:

www.myflorida.com/childcare

or call toll-free:
1-888-352-2842

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Gold Seal

[What are the benefits of becoming a Gold Seal Quality Care Program provider?](#)

There are several benefits associated with the Gold Seal Quality Care Program:

- A positive marketing tool for parents,
- Sales tax exemption
- An increased reimbursement rate for children participating in school readiness programs.*
- Designation as a Gold Seal Quality Care Program satisfies the program eligibility requirement for participation in the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program.**

* For more information on the Gold Seal Quality Care Program reimbursement rate, contact your local Office of Early Learning coalition by calling toll free 1-866-357-3239 or visit them at:

www.floridajobs.org/earlylearning

<http://www.floridajobs.org/earlylearning/VPK%20Program.html>

[Does a child care provider have to be licensed to qualify for the Gold Seal Quality Care?](#)

Not necessarily. Any legally operating child care provider (facility, home, religious-exempt program, or public school program) is eligible to achieve Gold Seal Quality Care Program status if it is accredited by one of the Department's approved Gold Seal Quality Care Program Accrediting Agencies. Although the Department doesn't require that a provider be licensed in order to participate, some accrediting agencies may require licensure as part of their accrediting process. For example, the National Association for Family Child Care requires a family day care home to be licensed in order to become accredited.

[How long does accreditation take?](#)

Typically it takes between 9 months and 2 years, depending on how many of the accrediting standards your program has already achieved. You can conduct a self-evaluation to determine how far along you are towards becoming accredited, or the accrediting agency you select may be able to give you an idea how long it will take.

[Is there a cost associated with becoming a Gold Seal Quality Care Program provider?](#)

There is no fee involved for participation in the Gold Seal Quality Care Program; however, most accrediting agencies charge an application fee and a validation fee as part of their accreditation process. In addition, there may be other costs associated with becoming accredited (i.e., hiring staff to achieve lower child-to-staff ratios, higher salaries to account for higher staff qualifications, requirements relating to the physical environment, etc.). For more information on each accrediting agency's fees and other costs, contact the accrediting agency directly.

[Can a child care provider be accredited by more than one of the approved Gold Seal Quality Care Program accrediting agencies?](#)

Yes. However, accreditation by more than one of the approved Gold Seal Quality Care Program accrediting agencies does not affect the Gold Seal Quality Care Program reimbursement rate or the tax benefit. The Child Care Program Office only reports one accreditation per child care provider.

[How long does it take to receive a Gold Seal Quality Care Program Certificate once accredited?](#)

It usually takes 2-3 weeks to process Gold Seal Quality Care Program certificate requests and obtain signatures from the DCF Child Care Program Office.

[As a parent, how can I find a Gold Seal Quality Care Program provider?](#)

Both a "Provider Search" tool and a list of Gold Seal Quality Care Program providers are located on the Department's web site. The Department updates the list of [Gold Seal Quality Care Program](#) providers monthly; however, the data found within the [Provider Search](#) is updated continuously.

[Tax Exemption links and information for Gold Seal Quality Care child care providers:](#)

Child care facility tax credit and certain educational materials purchased by Gold Seal Quality Care child care facilities (not homes) are exempt from sales and use tax. For more information on requirements, please visit the following link or contact the Department of Revenue 1-800-352-3671 or (850)488-6800

www.myflorida.com/dor

[How do I apply for tax exemptions associated with the Gold Seal Quality Care Program?](#)

To qualify for exemption from sales and use tax, the child care facility must meet all requirements:

- Meet the standards for child care facilities as outlined in s.402.305, F.S.,
- Be licensed under s.402.308, F.S.;
- Hold a current Gold Seal Quality Care designation as provided in s.402.281, F.S.; and
- Provide all employees with basic health care as defined in ss. 627.6699(12), and 627.6699(12), F.S.

If your child care facility meets all four requirements you may submit a Sales and Use Tax application to:

The Children's Forum
2807 Remington Green Circle
Tallahassee, Florida 32308

Or, submit via fax 1-866-596-9513, Attn: Gold Seal Unit.

The Sales and Use Tax Application may be found on the DCF web site under Gold Seal:

www.myflorida.com/childcare

[Who issues the Tax-Exemptions?](#)

Tax exemptions are administered by the Department of Revenue and your local county property appraiser.

For more information:

Department of Revenue – 1-800-352-3671

Sales tax exemption - access Tax Information

Publication #99(A)01-30 at:

<http://dor.myflorida.com/dor/tips/1999.html>

<http://dor.myflorida.com>

For more information:

Education Property Tax Exemption established under s. 402.26(6), Florida Statutes.

Contact your county property appraiser at:

<http://dor.myflorida.com/dor/property/>