

# Gold Seal Quality Care Program

## Gold Seal Quality Care Program Description

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) licensing standards established by the Florida Statutes 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. These programs are eligible to receive a Gold Seal certificate.

The DCF Child Care Program Office is responsible for approving accrediting agencies for participation in the Gold Seal Quality Care Program. These accrediting agencies must meet or exceed the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards, the standards of the National Association of Family Child Care, or the standards of the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation Commission. 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 approved accrediting agencies. The 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, acknowledging their accomplishments. This is a voluntary program and the benefits of participation include, but are not limited to; a positive marketing tool for parents, sales tax exemptions, increased reimbursement rate for children participating in school readiness, and participation in the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program.

## Gold Seal Accreditation Process for Child Care Providers

If you wish to be recognized as a Gold Seal Quality Care Program Provider:

1. Review the list of approved accrediting agencies on our web site below and contact the agency that best meets your needs and the needs of your program.
2. Follow each accreditation agencies individual requirements for accreditation. Many child care providers are surprised to find that they have already achieved some or many of the accrediting standards.
3. Once the child care program has achieved accreditation from an approved accrediting agency, the agency will forward the following information to the DCF Child Care Program Office.
  - a. A copy of the accreditation certificate, or letter verifying that the provider has been accredited.
  - b. The child care provider's validation/expiration/renewal date and complete mailing address.
4. Upon receipt of the information listed above, the department will award a Gold Seal Certificate to the child care program (facility or home), recognizing their achievement. The certificate will be mailed directly to the child care program. Please contact us at 1-866-320-9710, extension 3 if you have not received your Gold Seal certificate within 90 days of accreditation.

**For additional information, visit:**

[www.myflorida.com/childcare](http://www.myflorida.com/childcare)

**or call toll-free:**

1-866-320-9710



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Florida Department of Children and Families  
Child Care Program Office  
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Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700

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### 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 website. The Department updates the list of Gold Seal Quality Care Program providers monthly; however, the data found within the "Provider Search" is updated continuously (as soon as child care licensing staff is made aware of an accredited program).

### Can the Gold Seal Quality Care status be used to meet the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) provider requirements?

Yes; In December 2004, Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) legislation ([www.vpkflorida.org](http://www.vpkflorida.org)) was passed into law. This bill requires participating child care facilities and homes to maintain higher standards and accreditation. Gold Seal Quality Care Program accreditation is one of the approved accreditations a child care provider can obtain to be eligible to participate in VPK.

### 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.

### How long does accreditation take?

Becoming accredited typically 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.

### 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:

- The Gold Seal Quality Care designation represents an increased quality of child care and can serve as a marketing tool for your program letting parents know that you have exceeded the state's minimum licensing standards.
- Gold Seal Quality Care Program child care providers who participate in the Office of Early Learning - School Readiness Program can qualify for an increased reimbursement rate. For more information on the Gold Seal Quality Care Program reimbursement rate, contact the Office of Early Learning by calling 850-922-4200 or at [www.floridajobs.org/earlylearning](http://www.floridajobs.org/earlylearning).
- Gold Seal Quality Care Program child care providers may qualify for one of two tax exemptions associated with the Gold Seal Quality Care Program designation.

### 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 or non 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.

### Is there a cost associated with becoming a Gold Seal Quality Care Program provider?

The Department of Children and Families does not charge a fee for 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.



[www.myflorida.com/childcare](http://www.myflorida.com/childcare)

### 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 taxation. For more information on requirements, please visit the following links or contact the [Department of Revenue](http://www.floridarevenue.com) at 1-800-352-3671.

<http://sun6.dms.state.fl.us/dor/tips/tip99a0130.html>

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

Tax exemptions are administered by the Department of Revenue and your county property appraiser. For more information on:

- Sales tax exemption, access Tax Information Publication #99(A) 01-30 at the following web site.  
<http://sun6.dms.state.fl.us/dor/tips/1999.html>
- The education property tax exemption established under s. 402.26(6), Florida Statutes, contact your county property appraiser at the following web site.  
<http://sun6.dms.state.fl.us/dor/property/appraisers.html>.
- When you achieve the Gold Seal Quality Care Program status, the Child Care Program Office will send you a congratulatory letter. This should suffice as documentation for purposes of the tax exemption(s) until you receive your Gold Seal Quality Care Program certificate. If the letter is not sufficient, please call the Child Care Program office.

**For more information on tax credits, please call the Department of Revenue at (850)488-6800 or (800)352-3671.**