

Gold Seal Quality Care Program Description

In 1996, the Florida Legislature established the Gold Seal Quality Care program to acknowledge child care facilities and family day care homes that are accredited by nationally recognized agencies and whose standards reflect quality in the level of care and supervision provided to children. In addition, the Legislature established provisions for Gold Seal providers participating in the subsidized child care program, a.k.a. school readiness and early learning, to receive a higher reimbursement rate per child than providers not receiving a Gold Seal designation.

Licensing standards established using Florida Statute (F.S.) and the Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) are the “minimum” standards that a child care facility, family child 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 Quality Care Designation.

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, and an increased reimbursement rate for children participating in school readiness programs.

To be approved, accrediting agencies must substantially meet or exceed the Gold Seal Quality Care standards adopted by the department which are based on the applicable accrediting standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA), or the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC). These standards require a level of care that exceeds the minimum licensing standards.

The Office of Child Care Regulation 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.).

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 by visiting <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-care/goldseal>
- Find an agency that meets the needs of your facility. Review the agency’s accreditation requirements and follow their procedures for accreditation. 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 provider must submit to the DCF Office of Child Care Regulation the Gold Seal Quality Care Provider Application, CF-FSP 5386, http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/child-care/docs/CF-FSP_5386.pdf

Upon receipt and verification of the application information, 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.

Proof of the Gold Seal Quality Care accreditation may be required for participation in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program and tied to increased payments for child care providers participating in School Readiness. It is also required as proof for tax incentives outlined in s. 212.08, F.S.

For additional information, visit:

<http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/childcare>
or call toll-free: 1-888-352-4453



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Gold Seal



Quality Care Program



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Gold Seal Quality Care Program

Gold Seal Accreditation Process for Child Care Providers

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

- A positive marketing tool for parents
- Sales tax exemption
- An increased reimbursement rate for children participating in school readiness programs*
- 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 the Office of Early Learning at 1-866-357-3239 or visit them at: www.floridaearlylearning.com

Does a child care provider have to be licensed to qualify for the Gold Seal Quality Care Program?

Any legally operating child care facility 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 child care home to be licensed in order to become accredited. Providers that are not licensed must agree, by submission the Gold Seal Provider application, to periodic inspections conducted by the licensing authority.

Gold Seal Accreditation Process for Child Care Providers

Typically it takes between nine months and two 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?

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. 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 one to three weeks to process Gold Seal Quality Care Program application requests.

As a parent, how can I find a Gold Seal Quality Care Program provider?

A map of Gold Seal Quality Care Programs can be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.myffamilies.com/service-programs/child-care/gold-seal-map>

Parents may also conduct a Provider Search to access additional information such as provider services, hours of operation, and inspection history by visiting the department's "Provider Search" tool web address at:

<https://cares.myffamilies.com/PublicSearch> is updated continuously.

Tax Exemption links and information for Gold Seal Quality Care child care providers:

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 at 1-850-488-6800 or 1-800-352-3671 <http://floridarevenue.com/dor/tips/tip99a0130.html>

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 the following requirements:

- Satisfy 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 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

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

<http://www.myffamilies.com/service-programs/child-care/goldseal-tax>

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://floridarevenue.com/dor/tips/tip99a0130.html>
- Education Property Tax Exemption established under s. 402.26(6), F.S. Contact your county property appraiser at http://floridarevenue.com/Pages/forms_index.aspx#adval

