



SWFL Stars Provider Guide



The Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida is proud to present its Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), Southwest Florida Stars. SWFL Stars is a 5-star rating system designed to highlight and enhance the quality of child care services in our service area, which includes Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties. It was developed through a great team effort, using a collaborative approach between Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida Provider Services staff members, Program Committee members, and a SWFL Stars Workgroup, which included SWFL child care providers.

VISION

The vision of SWFL Stars is to promote and recognize early learning environments of distinguished quality which will support young children to become lifelong learners.

GOALS

The SWFL Stars Workgroup has outlined the following goals of this QRIS:

- ☆ To raise the standards and accountability in early learning environments and provide a road map to quality.
- ☆ To promote positive outcomes for children.
- ☆ To identify and recognize early learning providers for the quality services they provide.
- ☆ To build a stronger partnership between early learning providers and the Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida.
- ☆ To offer early learning providers a marketing tool.



How are Child Care programs evaluated?

Child care programs that choose to participate in Southwest Florida Stars are evaluated based on three quality categories:

- ☆ Learning Environment and Classroom Interactions
- ☆ Screening and Assessments
- ☆ Professional Development and Staff Qualifications

Who can participate?

Child Care Providers who have been legally operating as per the Florida Department of Children and Families and currently have a School Readiness and/or Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten contract with the Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida can apply to participate in Southwest Florida Stars.

Benefits to Participation

- ☆ Free program quality assessments using Classroom Assessment Scoring System
- ☆ Specialized trainings for providers
- ☆ On-site, personalized support provided by ELC Early Childhood Specialists
- ☆ Access to educational scholarships
- ☆ Discounted CEUs
- ☆ Quality improvement resources
- ☆ Community recognition
- ☆ Preferred access to quality initiatives, such as Lee County's Preferred Provider Program
- ☆ Quarterly Support Groups for Directors
- ☆ ***Quality Enhancement Supports are subject to funding availability.***



Learning Environments and Classroom Interactions

Quality in child care settings varies greatly and includes a number of determining elements. These elements, referred to as “process quality” include things such as interactions between children and teachers, use of materials, the classroom and outdoor spaces, and the overall curriculum and schedule of the classroom. In order to capture information regarding all of these elements, multiple assessment tools have been created and researched to ensure their reliability and validity.

Child care providers will be assessed once per year with the applicable tools.

Assessments will be completed by a trained, reliable assessor. The assessments will include the Infant Classroom Assessment Scoring System, Toddler Classroom Assessment Scoring System, and the Pre-K Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).

Family child care homes will receive a CLASS assessment. To determine the tool to be used, at least 60% of the children enrolled must be between the ages of the applicable CLASS tool.

Supporting Documents:

- ☆ All applicable CLASS reports

Learning Environments and Classroom Interactions					
Star Level 1	Star Level 2	Star Level 3	Star Level 4	Star Level 5	50 points possible
☆ CLASS Score 3.5-3.99	☆ CLASS Score 4.00-4.49	☆ CLASS Score 4.50-4.99	☆ CLASS Score 5.00 – 5.99	☆ CLASS Score 6.00 – 7.00	
10 points	20 points	30 points	40 points	50 points	



Screening and Assessments

ASQs, TS Gold and other screening and assessment tools provide valuable information to both parents and teachers regarding the overall development of each child. This allows parents and teachers to ensure that each child’s developmental needs are being met and assists in planning activities to ensure continued growth.

Screening: Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)


An Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) should be completed for all children enrolled. Credit will be given if ASQ is only completed for all School Readiness (SR) children on time at Star Level One. Paper copy of ASQ is available for Non-SR children. Credit will not be given if a non-compliance was issued for not completing ASQ.

Assessment aligned with DEL Approved Curriculum (TS Gold)

There should be evidence of facility using a child assessment that is aligned with DEL Approved Curriculum

Training certificate for assessment aligned with DEL approved Curriculum (IRR)

Documentation showing completion of assessment for all children

Screening and Assessment					
Star Level 1	Star Level 2	Star Level 3	Star Level 4	Star Level 5	25 points possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Complete Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) screenings and Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) on time for all SR children ☆ Utilize an observation-based child assessment twice a year (SR children) ☆ One on-site member of administration complete training for selected child assessment 	Meets Level 1 plus... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Complete ASQ screenings and ILPs on time for all children ☆ Conduct one parent/teacher conference for each student to discuss the child's developmental progress and behavioral, social emotional, and physical needs 	Meets Level 2 plus... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ 50% of lead teachers complete training for selected child assessment within 6 months of date of hire ☆ Utilize an observation-based child assessment three times a year for all children ☆ 50% of classroom staff achieve interrater reliability within 6 months 	Meets Level 3 plus... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ All lead teachers complete training for selected child assessment within 6 months of date of hire ☆ Conduct two parent/teacher conferences for each student to discuss the child's developmental progress and behavioral, social emotional, and physical needs ☆ 75% of classroom staff achieve interrater reliability within 3 months in assigned age group 	Meets Level 4 plus... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Conduct three parent/teacher conferences for each student to discuss the child's developmental progress and behavioral, social emotional, and physical needs ☆ 90% of classroom staff achieve interrater reliability within 30 days of hire in assigned age group 	 Total SAC Points Earned
5 points	10 points	15 points	20 points	25 points	




Professional Development and Staff Qualifications

The ELC of SWFL recognizes the value of continuing professional development. We want to acknowledge the hard work of child care providers and encourage them to continue learning and growing, along with the children they care for. Whether through in-service training or formal education, coursework allows providers to strengthen their skill set and as a result, enhance the level of care and education provided in their classrooms.

Supporting Documents:

- ☆ Copy of training certificates
- ☆ DCF Transcript
- ☆ College Transcript

Professional Development and Staff Qualifications					
Use Professional Development and Staff Qualifications Scoring Worksheet to calculate points earned for this section					
Star Level 1	Star Level 2	Star Level 3	Star Level 4	Star Level 5	25 points possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Director holds a current Florida Director's Credential ☆ All teaching staff meet DCF/OEL training and professional development requirements ☆ 12 hours of relevant in-service training for all staff, annually, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Meets Level 1 plus... ☆ Director or on-site admin holds an Associate's Degree or 63 hours of college coursework, or is enrolled in an Associate's Degree program or above ☆ 50% of Lead teachers complete FL Early Learning and Developmental Standards training that corresponds with their classroom group, repeated as new versions are available ☆ 50% of Lead Teachers have a DCF Staff Credential with a Child Development Associate (CDA) or higher education, or are enrolled in coursework for a CDA ☆ 100% of Assistant Teachers have a High School diploma (from an accredited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Meets Level 2 plus... ☆ Director or on-site admin holds an Associate's Degree or 63 hours of college coursework with 12 credits in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, or Business Administration ☆ 16 hours of relevant in-service training for all staff, annually ☆ 75% of Lead teachers complete FL Early Learning and Developmental Standards training that corresponds with their classroom group, repeated as new versions are available ☆ 75% of Lead Teachers have a DCF Staff Credential with a Child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Meets Level 3 plus... ☆ Director is enrolled in coursework for a Bachelor's Degree, with 18 credits in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, or Business Administration ☆ 20 hours of relevant in-service training for all staff, annually ☆ 50% of assistant teachers complete FL Early Learning and Developmental Standards training that corresponds with their classroom group, repeated as new versions are available ☆ 25% of Lead Teachers have an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☆ Meets Level 4 plus... ☆ Director or on-site admin holds a Bachelor's Degree, with 18 credits in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, or Business Administration ☆ 24 hours of relevant in-service training for all staff, annually ☆ 75% of Lead and 50% of assistant teachers complete all FL Early Learning and Developmental Standards training, repeated as new versions are available ☆ 50% of Lead Teachers have an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education or 63 hours of college coursework with 12 	<p style="text-align: center;">  Total PDSC points earned from Professional Development and Staff Qualifications Scoring Worksheet </p>
5 points	10 points	15 points	20 points	25 points	



Ratio & Group Size

Providers will report the ratio and group size they routinely follow for each classroom. Actual ratio and group size will be monitored by an ELC Early Childhood Specialist during an on-site visit. Additionally, ratio and group size observed by DCF during their annual visits will be reviewed. Ratio and group size for a mixed group will be determined by majority in the age group with the exception of Infants and Ones, where the youngest age will be used to determine the ratio and group size. The points assigned for this section will be based on the highest ratio and/or largest group size observed during either DCF or the ELC visits.

Supporting Documents:

- ☆ DCF License
- ☆ Most recent DCF Inspection Reports, or applicable inspection report
- ☆ ECS Ratio Check upon visit

DCF Violations

DCF Violations	
Violation Type	Point Deduction
Class 1	Provider is held at a level 1 regardless of overall score
Class 2	5 points deducted for the first Class 2 violations in an area, subsequent Class 2 violations in the same area results in the provider being held at a level 2
Class 3	2 points deducted for each Class 3 violation. Should the provider receive 3 or more Class 3 violations in the same area within the fiscal year 10 points will be deducted.
Specialist will review DCF inspection reports during the fiscal year and adjust the provider's points based on the culmination of all DCF reviews within that fiscal year.	