



# 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 provide parent information and consumer education to the community.
- 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 facilities evaluated?***

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

- Learning Environment and Classroom Interactions
- Screening, Assessment and Curriculum
- 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 for at least 12 months 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 for VPK providers. This is now included as part of the School Readiness contract, and is offered as an additional service to providers who only contract for VPK.

- Specialized trainings for providers
- On-site, personalized support provided by ELC Quality Mentors
- Access to educational scholarships
- Discounted CEUs
- Quality improvement resources
- Memberships to professional early childhood organizations
- Community recognition



## QUALITY ENHANCEMENT SUPPORTS

### ***Star Level 1***

- 1 membership to a professional organization (NAEYC, NAFCC)
- Discounted CEUs – 25%
- Quality Improvement Resource Awards up to \$200 per year

### ***Star Level 2***

- 1 membership to a professional organization (NAEYC, NAFCC)
- Discounted CEUs – 25%
- Quality Improvement Resource Awards up to \$400 per year

### ***Star Level 3***

- 1 membership to a professional organization (NAEYC, NAFCC)
- Discounted CEUs – 50%
- Quality Improvement Resource Awards up to \$600 per year

### ***Star Level 4***

- 1 membership to a professional organization (NAEYC, NAFCC)
- Discounted CEUs – 50%
- 1 \$500 scholarship towards conference registration fees
- Quality Improvement Resource Awards up to \$800 per year

### ***Star Level 5***

- 2 memberships to a professional organization (NAEYC, NAFCC)
- Free CEUs
- 1 \$500 scholarship towards conference registration fees
- Quality Improvement Resource Awards up to \$1,000 per year

***\*Quality Enhancement Supports are subject to funding availability.***



## **Providers' Responsibility for Materials Received**

Child Care Providers who receive materials as a Quality Enhancement Support are responsible for submitting all packing slips/acknowledgement of receipt of items within 10 business days of receipt of items. Any items or materials received as a result of participation of SWFL Stars must be returned to the Early Learning Coalition if the Early Learning Facility closes within 12 months of receipt of the items.

In the event that the provider is unable to fulfill the obligations listed above and unable to return the materials, they are responsible for paying the value of the items received.



## 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). 50% of classrooms for each care level will be assessed.

Family child care homes will receive a CLASS assessment. To determine the tool to be used, at least 51% of the children enrolled must be between the ages of the applicable CLASS tool.

### *Supporting Documents:*

All applicable CLASS reports



## **Screening, Assessment and Curriculum**

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. Similarly, the use of the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards, or applicable curriculum objectives, help teachers create developmentally appropriate lesson plans to keep children learning and growing on the right track.

### ***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.

#### *Supporting Documents:*

- Early Childhood Specialist will review at least 10% of completed ASQs
- Documentation of director or teacher/parent meetings to discuss Individual Learning Plans.
- Compliance reports from Screening and Assessment Department.

### ***Assessment aligned with OEL Approved Curriculum***

There should be evidence of facility using an assessment that is aligned with OEL Approved Curriculum.

Training certificate for assessment aligned with OEL approved Curriculum

Documentation showing completion of assessment for all children.



### ***Curriculum***

There should be evidence of Curriculum used for all applicable age groups birth to five years from the state approved curriculum list. State approved curriculum list can be found at:

[http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/providers/provider\\_resources/school\\_readiness\\_curriculum.aspx](http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/providers/provider_resources/school_readiness_curriculum.aspx)

Lesson Plans (Provide sample of 4 weeks of lesson plans for each group).

Lesson plans should be completed weekly and posted in classroom. Alignment with appropriate Florida Early Learning Standards or approved curriculum objectives must be clearly demonstrated on plans.

There should be evidence of ongoing planning to connect the results of formal screenings/assessments or informal observations for children with concerns to the individual activities, such as a section on the lesson plan for individualized lessons or separate individualized planning form that documents this information.

Evidence of classroom documentation system (TS GOLD online portfolios, classroom portfolios, documentation boards, etc.)

### ***Family and Community Relationships***

Strong relationships between the family and the child care facility are an essential part of providing quality care and is a key element of developmentally appropriate practices. Building this relationship involves many tasks, such as ample opportunities for clear communication between families and caregivers, parental involvement in the classroom, and occasions for families and teachers to get to know one another. While not scored separately, family involvement in this rating system is captured through evidence of Parent/Teacher conferences.





## 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



## ***Additional Point Considerations***

### ***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 potential bonus 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
- 2 most recent DCF Inspection Reports, or applicable inspection report
- ELC Compliance Report
- SR Monitoring Report