

# Early Learning Coalition



of Pinellas County, Inc.

<b>Policy: ELCPC-61.3.3</b>	<b>Title: Gold Seal Reimbursement</b>	
	<b>Review Date: 4April 2013</b>	<b>Next Review Date: April 2014</b>

**References:** Coalition Plan Element 5.1.1,  
AWI OEL-PG-0047-07  
Ch. 402.281, Florida Statute  
Ch. 1002, Florida Statute

**Purpose:** To provide guidance and establish protocols for the Gold Seal accreditation process and reimbursement information for child care providers

## **Background:**

In 1996, the Florida Legislature established the Gold Seal Quality Care Program to acknowledge child care facilities and family day care homes 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 programs, also known as School Readiness and Early Learning, to receive a higher reimbursement per child than providers not receiving a Gold Seal designation.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Care Program Office is responsible for approving accrediting agencies for participation in the Gold Seal Quality Care Program. A list of approved accrediting agencies can be viewed at <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us.programs/childcare/goldseal.shtml>. 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.

Providers who receive a state defined Class 1 Fine from Child Care Licensing lose their Gold Seal designation for one year.

**Policy:**

- I. The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Care program recognizes this achievement by issuing a Gold Seal Certificate to child care providers accredited by one or more of the approved agencies. It is the responsibility of the child care provider to work with an approved accrediting agency and the DCF Child Care program to obtain a Gold Seal Certificate. Although many public schools may be accredited in the State of Florida Gold Seal, approval is not automatic. Public schools (or local school boards) must also submit the required documents to the DCF Child Care program to obtain a Gold Seal Certificate.
  - a. Providers must submit both the accreditation certificate and Gold Seal Certificate before the differential School Readiness reimbursement will take effect.
  - b. Gold Seal reimbursement takes effect the actual date all documents are received by the Coalition. The rate is not applied retroactively regardless of the date of accreditation.
  - c. In the event of a change of ownership or change in name, providers must submit accreditation certificate and Gold Seal Certificate issued by the DCF reflecting current name, effective date and expiration date of the award to be eligible for Gold Seal Reimbursement.
- II. Gold Seal Quality Care Program Accreditation allows qualified providers to receive a rate differential not to exceed 20% above the School Readiness reimbursement rate established by the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc. for a licensed child care provider and depending upon the availability of funding. Maximum reimbursement may not exceed a provider's published rate.
- III. Gold Seal providers do not receive a differential payment for Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK).
- IV. School Readiness providers receiving a Gold Seal payment who receive a state defined Class 1 Fine will lose the 20% differential rate for Gold Seal immediately upon close of appeal period for 1 year or until Gold Seal designation is reissued by DCF and documentation is submitted to the Coalition.
  - a. Gold Seal differential will be eliminated immediately upon close of appeal period with Child Care Licensing.
  - b. A Provider will be ineligible to receive Gold Seal payment for 1 year or until Gold Seal designation is reissued by DCF and documentation is submitted to the Coalition.

**Exhibits: NA**