

The Stars Program for Family Child Care Homes



QRIS

Quality Rating and
Improvement System

Quality Care for Every Child!

Effective 2-10-2025



COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS The Stars Program

Oklahoma's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), the Stars program, criteria enhance child care programs in the State of Oklahoma. They are designed to promote quality environments for children in care outside of their own homes. The criteria were developed from the input of providers including the QRIS Standing Subcommittee, OST QRIS Taskforce, FCCH Focus Group, the public including the Child Care Advisory Committee, and information from research, and approved by the Commission for Human Services and the Governor of the State of Oklahoma pursuant to the Oklahoma Administrative Procedures Act.

DHS wants the Stars program criteria to be clear, reasonable, fair, and enforceable. Comments are welcomed anytime and are considered for future revisions and development of new criteria.

If you have comments or suggestions for future Star criteria, please complete the form below and send it to:

Department of Human Services
Child Care Services, QRIS-The Stars Program
PO Box 25352
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73125

The Stars program criteria for: _____ (program type)

Reference: Please list the topic of the specific criteria to which you are referring, such as Family Partnership: _____

Recommendation(s):

Reasons for Recommendation(s):

Please add additional pages if needed.

Your Name

Date



QRIS
Quality Rating and
Improvement System

Stars Program

PO Box 25352, Oklahoma City, OK 73125
(405) 521-3561 Fax: (405) 522-2564 Toll-Free: (844)834-8314

E-mail: QRIS@OKDHS.org

Table of Contents

QRIS OVERVIEW	5
THE FOUNDATION	7
STARS LEVELS AT A GLANCE	9
THE STARS PROGRAM	11
Rationale, Policy, Evidence/Acceptable Documentation.....	13
Rights and Responsibilities	29
Star Certification Reviews	31
Primary Caregiver Qualifications	33
Planning for Professional Development	35
Procedures for Extensions of Time to Comply	37
GLOSSARY	39

QRIS OVERVIEW

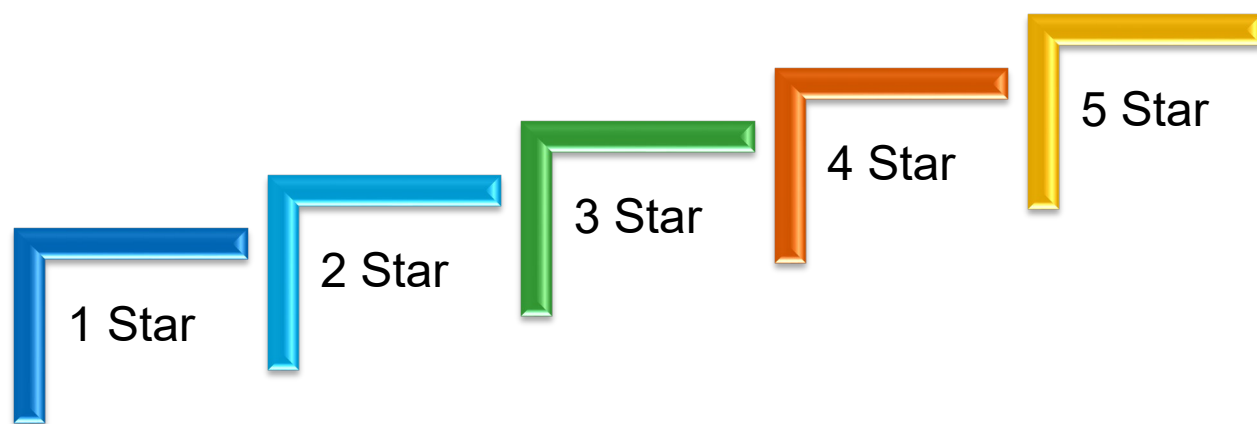
The Stars program is the name of Oklahoma's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). In 1998, Oklahoma was the first state in the nation to implement a statewide QRIS. Most states now have some form of a quality rating and improvement system. The Stars program is for all early care and education programs, including out-of-school time programs, that are shaping the lives of children and the future of our state. Our goals are for every provider to Reach for the Stars, grow professionally and be recognized for their accomplishments, for parents and the public to recognize and value quality practices, and for all of Oklahoma's children to benefit from the highest quality early childhood experiences.

What is a Quality Rating and Improvement System? A QRIS is a method to assess, improve, and communicate the positive practices in early care and education settings. The criteria used in QRIS are developed from research and what is universally considered quality care. Oklahoma's QRIS is designed to help providers improve the care and education they provide for children, raise the professional development level of early care and education teachers, and increase parents' awareness of the importance of positive practices in early care settings.

Child Care Services (CCS) is committed to providing the resources and incentives needed to increase Star levels. Please consult with CCS staff or Stars Outreach Specialist (SOS) to see how you can join other providers in improving early care and education in Oklahoma.

Levels of the Stars program certification

All programs who are on permit or license are automatically designated as a One Star program. The owner and primary caregiver must complete and submit the appropriate request for Star certification for 2, 3, 4 and 5 Star. In order for programs to be approved for a higher Star level, they must meet all criteria listed in the requested Star level as well as all lower levels, unless otherwise noted.



Complete Star policy can be located at
<https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs/library/policy/current/oac-340.html>
Resources in this book can help programs understand and implement the Stars policy.

THE FOUNDATION

Compliance with Licensing Requirements

Licensing requirements are the foundation of the Stars program. Programs must maintain compliance with minimum licensing requirements to qualify for 2, 3, 4, & 5 Star levels. Licensing requirements serve as the foundation of the Stars program, establishing standards that ensure the health, safety, and well-being of children. These requirements provide a baseline. Once these are met, programs can build upon this framework and pursue higher-quality practices through the QRIS criteria. To be approved for a Two-Star level or higher, programs must demonstrate full compliance with all minimum licensing requirements. Ongoing compliance is also necessary to maintain a Two-Star rating or higher.

The following policy is used to evaluate compliance. Programs must:

- have a permit or license AND
- be compliant with licensing requirements. Monitoring visits and substantiated complaints for the last 12 months of operation are reviewed. A request for Star certification may be denied or the Star level reduced when there are numerous, repeated, or serious non-compliances (NRS) with Licensing requirements, a serious incident occurs resulting in injury or imminent risk of harm to a child, an Emergency Order or notice of proposed request for license denial or license revocation is issued, a serious substantiated complaint occurs, if a program fails to employ a qualified director for six months or more, or Star certification level criteria are not met.

The following defines NRS per OAC 340:110-1-9.3:

A. Numerous non-compliance is any monitoring visit with six or more items documented as non-compliant on the monitoring checklist for a program with a licensed capacity of less than 60, or seven or more items for a program with a licensed capacity of 60 or more. Each numbered item on the monitoring report that has been marked as non-compliant is counted once even though there may be more than one non-compliance included in that item.

B. Repeated non-compliance is three or more documented incidents of non-compliance with the same requirement within the last 12 months.

C. Serious non-compliance is a non-compliance with licensing requirements that exposes children to conditions that present an imminent risk of harm. Serious non-compliances are identified through licensing observations, confirmed complaint investigations, and/or self-reported incidences. Some examples of non-compliance that may be considered serious are: staff-child ratio, child supervision, infant sleep environments and safe-sleep training, prohibited disciplinary actions, licensed capacity, transportation, water activities, pools and other water hazards, multiple hazards, weapons, failure to report child abuse or human trafficking, knowingly permitting access to children by individuals identified as restricted or Restricted Registry registrants, failure to obtain background investigations or Restricted Registry searches, medication administration, room temperatures, heat sources and/or loss of any utility service, and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and first aid training.

A non-compliance may qualify in more than one category in determining numerous, repeated, or serious and the same non-compliance, though only counted once, may qualify in more than one category. *Example:* an understaffing is considered serious and may be part of repeated and numerous non-compliance.

For more information you may refer to the policy listed at:
<https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs/library/policy/current/oac-340.html>

STAR LEVELS AT A GLANCE

2 Star				
Program must meet licensing and compliance status				
Program is on permit or license		and		Program must meet all 1 and 2 Star criteria.
3 Star				
Program must meet licensing and compliance status				
Program is on permit or license		and		Program must meet all 1,2 and 3 Star criteria. OR Accredited by a Child Care Services (CCS)-approved national accrediting organization. OR Head Start grantee compliant with Head Start Program Performance Standards.
4 Star				
Program must meet licensing and compliance status				
Program is on license		and		Program must meet all 1,2,3 and 4 Star criteria.
5 Star				
Program must meet licensing and compliance status				
Program is on license	and	Program must meet all 1,2,3,4 and 5 Star criteria	and	Accredited by a CCS approved national accrediting organization.

QRIS

Quality Rating Improvement System

Rationale, Policy and Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation

The chart on the following several pages is set up as a checklist that programs can use when applying for a higher Star level, when maintaining a Star level, and when working toward higher Star levels. It includes criteria for 2, 3, 4 and 5 Star levels and evidence or acceptable documentation of implementation that can be used to verify meeting each required criteria.

It is possible that there are additional, acceptable forms of evidence or documentation of implementation not listed in the chart. When programs wish to meet Star criteria in another manner, they may discuss with CCS staff and come to an agreement as to whether or not it meets Star criteria.

Resources and examples related to Star criteria required for each Star level can be accessed on the University of Oklahoma's CECPD website (www.cecpgd.org) under the Additional Resources tab, QRIS, QRIS- Family Child Care Home tab. CCS staff may be contacted to discuss what is expected to meet and maintain specific Star criteria.

Full QRIS policy can be accessed at <https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs/library/policy/current/oac-340.html>. The Oklahoma Administrative Code (OAC) citations listed in the following chart points you to the location of each specific policy.

QRIS

Rationale, Criteria, Evidence/Acceptable Documentation

340:110-1-8.3 Certification of programs to receive a quality rating and improvement level Revised 2-10-2025

Rationale: To be issued a license, a program must demonstrate they are meeting and maintaining minimum licensing requirements that ensure the health, safety, and well-being of children. Once these are met, programs can build upon this framework and pursue higher-quality practices through the QRIS criteria. To be approved for a four-Star level or higher, programs must demonstrate full compliance with all minimum licensing requirements by obtaining a license.

Accreditation standards reflect a process of extensive self-study and external review of a program and how it compares to benchmark standards of quality set by the national accrediting organization.

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
2, 3	Star level certification requests OAC 340:110-1-8.3(d)(1). Programs operating on permit or license may request two- or three-star certification.	At time of request and ongoing implementation: CCS staff view the State issued permit or license on the CCS computer system.
4,5	Star level certification requests OAC 340:110-1-8.3(d)(2). Programs requesting four- or five-star certification must be licensed. Programs on permit are not eligible for four- or five-star certification.	At time of request and ongoing implementation: CCS staff view the State issued license on the CCS computer system.
5	Accreditation OAC 340:110-1-8.3(c)(5). The child care program is currently accredited by a CCS-approved national accrediting organization.	At time of request and ongoing implementation: Accredited programs provide a copy of the current accreditation certificate. Approved national accrediting organizations are the: (1) National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC) (2) National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)

340:110-1-8.4. Licensing status and compliance criteria
Revised 2-10-2025

Rationale: Licensing requirements serve as the foundation of the Stars program, establishing standards that ensure the health, safety, and well-being of children. These requirements provide a baseline. Once these are met, programs can build upon this framework and pursue higher-quality practices through the QRIS criteria. To be approved for a Two-Star level or higher, programs must demonstrate full compliance with all minimum licensing requirements. Ongoing compliance is also necessary to maintain a Two-Star rating or above.

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
2, 3, 4, 5	Licensing status: OAC 340:110-1-8.4(a). The program has a license or permit.	At time of request and ongoing implementation: CCS staff view the State issued permit or license on the CCS computer system.
2, 3, 4, 5	Compliance: OAC 340:110-1-8.4(b). The program is compliant with licensing requirements.	At time of request and ongoing implementation: CCS staff review the OKRegistry and monitoring reports, complaint summaries, and case records for the last 12 months on the CCS computer system. - Licensing records from previous licenses are considered - Star certification may be denied or level reduced when: - there is numerous, repeated, or serious non-compliance (NRS) with applicable Licensing requirements - a serious incident occurs resulting in injury or imminent risk of harm to a child - an Emergency Order or notice of proposed request for license denial or license revocation is issued - a serious substantiated complaint occurs - the program fails to employ a qualified director for six months or more or - star certification level criteria are not met - violations are not corrected in the agreed-upon timeframe

340:110-1-8.5. Administrative
Revised 2-10-2025

Rationale:

The Oklahoma Professional Development Registry is a statewide database recognizing the professional development of all individuals working in the early care and education field and maintained by Center for Early Childhood Professional Development (CECPD). Some benefits of the registry are: professional development is maintained in one location, there is an interactive training calendar, individuals have access to their professional development record online at any time, and the registry can be used to plan meaningful professional development and track accomplishments.

Job descriptions detail what is expected and how to satisfactorily perform a job, provide a foundation for personnel evaluations, and can help potential staff decide if they are a good fit with a program.

No matter the size or type of business, programs and personnel can benefit from regular personnel performance evaluations. Evaluations can be used to clearly communicate expectations, document and improve performance, recognize accomplishments, and develop and motivate personnel.

Written personnel policies clearly communicate the program's policies, procedures, and expectations

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
2, 3, 4, 5	Administrative: OAC 340:110-1-8.5(d)(1). The primary caregiver is an Oklahoma Professional Development Registry (OPDR) member having a current Professional Development Ladder (PDL) certificate.	At time of request and ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify Oklahoma Professional Development Registry and PDL certificates on the OKRegistry.
2, 3, 4, 5	Administrative: OAC 340:110-1-8.5(d)(2). Programs are registered as a direct care organization with the OPDR by following and maintaining all items listed in the Direct Care Facility Handbook.	At time of request and ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify direct care organization (DCO) compliance on the OKRegistry. This includes job positions being listed correctly. The primary caregiver should be listed as the Family Child Care Home Provider and any assistants must list their job position as a Family Child Care Home Assistant.
2, 3, 4, 5	Administrative: OAC 340:110-1-8.5(d)(3). Assistant caregivers are OPDR members having current PDL certificates. New assistant caregivers are verified on OPDR having current PDL certificates within 12 months of employment.	At time of request and ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify PDL certificates on the Oklahoma Professional Development Registry (OPDR).
3, 4, 5	Administrative: OAC 340:110-1-8.5(e)(1). The owner or primary caregiver maintains assistant caregivers' written job descriptions and responsibilities.	At time of request and ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify written job description defining the assistant's responsibilities.

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
3, 4, 5	Administrative: OAC 340:110-1-8.5(e)(2). The owner or primary caregiver evaluates assistant caregivers in writing annually, including developing the educational professional development plan.	At time of request for programs operating 12 months or less: Program provides a template or completed current evaluation. At time of request for programs operating 12 months or more and ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify written, completed, and dated annual forms/tools for each assistant. <u>Educational professional development plans (EPDP)</u> EPDPs signed by the owner or primary caregiver and assistant(s) or primary caregiver description of involvement in each assistant's EPDP development.
3, 4, 5	Administrative: OAC 340:110-1-8.5(e)(3). The owner or primary caregiver maintains a written policy regarding children's transition plans, for daily activity transitions, new caregivers, and transition to a new child care program, Head Start, or school.	At time of request: Programs submit written child transition policies. Ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify written onsite child transition policies.

340:110-1-8.6. Primary Caregiver qualifications criteria**Revised 2-10-2025**

Rationale: The level of quality found in child care largely depends on the knowledge and skills of the adults who work with children. All children are ready to learn from birth and what caregivers do or do not do can help or hinder a child's success in life. Caregivers need to understand child development and implement developmentally appropriate practices so they can meet children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical needs. Children benefit when caregivers understand and use Early Learning Guidelines, including having fewer behavior and guidance issues and increased school-readiness.

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
3, 4, 5	Primary Caregiver qualifications: OAC 340:110-1-8.6(h). Criteria required at time of star certification request includes: 1) A current OPDL certificate of Level 4 or higher. 2) Completed training in Oklahoma's Early Learning Guidelines (ELG). However, new primary caregivers hired or assuming the responsibilities after certification are trained within 90-calendar days 3) Employment on-site, full-time.	At time of request: <u>PDL</u>: CCS staff verify current PDL certificates Level 4 or higher on the Oklahoma Professional Development Registry. The primary caregiver must be fully qualified at time of request for a higher Star level. <u>ELG</u>: CCS staff verify completed training in Oklahoma's Early Learning Guidelines (ELG) on the Oklahoma Professional Development Registry. <u>Full-time Employment</u>: CCS staff verify employment on Oklahoma Professional Development Registry or daily attendance records, when needed. Ongoing implementation: <u>PDL</u>: CCS staff verify PDL certificates on the Oklahoma Professional Development Registry. <u>ELG</u>: CCS staff verify completed training in Oklahoma's Early Learning Guidelines (ELG); however new primary caregivers hired or assuming the responsibilities after certification are trained within 90-calendar days. <u>Full-time Employment</u>: CCS staff verify by personnel daily attendance records or Oklahoma Professional Development Registry when needed. Note: A current list of approved ELG training is located at www.cecpd.org.
2, 3, 4, 5	Additional primary caregiver requirements: OAC 340:110-1-8.6(i). An individual is not counted as a primary caregiver, master teacher, or probationary master teacher in more than one program, unless the scheduled hours of employment in each program do not overlap at any given time.	At time of request and ongoing implementation: CCS staff review CCS records and verify hours of employment with the individual and/or programs when an individual works at more than one program.

340:110-1-8.7. Professional development criteria**Revised 2-10-2025**

Rationale: The primary caregiver is a leader for the program and the primary person responsible for the day-to-day operations. A primary caregiver has a vast knowledge of early care and education including, but not limited to operating a program, leadership, managing personnel, nutrition, child development, understanding and using the Early Learning Guidelines, etc.

Everyone who works with children and their families needs a basic understanding of child development and how children learn.

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
2, 3, 4, 5	Primary caregiver professional development. OAC 340:110-1-8.7(c)(1)(A) & (c)(2). Prior to star certification request, the primary caregiver has documentation of at least two college credits or 20-clock hours of job-related professional development within the last 12 months or within current PDL certification, when applicable. No more than six-hours of informal professional development per PDL certification may be counted in total hours. After certification approval, the professional development criteria is met within the primary caregiver's PDL certification.	At time of request and ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify on the Oklahoma Professional Development Registry.
2, 3, 4, 5	Primary caregiver professional development. OAC 340:110-1-8.7(c)(1)(B). Prior to star certification request, the primary caregiver has documentation of Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) orientation. New primary caregivers also complete QRIS orientation within 90-calendar days of hire date.	At time of request: Programs provide a completed child care provider training declaration of completion for Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) orientation. Ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify on the OPDR or by viewing completed child care provider training declaration of completion for Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) orientation.
2, 3, 4, 5	Primary caregiver professional development. OAC 340:110-1-8.7(c)(3). The primary caregiver has a written educational professional development plan reviewed annually, updated as needed, and maintained on file at the program.	At time of request: Program submits a completed, dated educational professional development plan (EPDP) for the primary caregiver. Ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify completed annual updated and dated educational professional development plan (EPDP) for the primary caregiver.

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
2, 3, 4, 5	Assistant caregiver professional development. OAC 340:110-1-8.7(d)(1). Assistant caregivers employed for at least 12 months have documentation of at least two college credits or 20-clock hours of job-related professional development, per PDL certification. No more than six-hours of informal professional development per PDL certification may be counted in total hours.	At time of request and ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify on the Oklahoma Professional Development Registry.
2, 3, 4, 5	Assistant caregiver professional development. OAC 340:110-1-8.7(d)(2). The assistant caregiver has a written educational professional development plan reviewed annually, updated as needed, and maintained on file at the program.	At time of request: Program submits a completed educational professional development plan (EPDP) for each assistant. Ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify completed annual updated and dated educational professional development plan (EPDP) for the assistant caregiver(s).

340:110-1-8.8. Learning and development criteria**Revised 2-10-2025**

Rationale: The learning environment is key to children's learning and gives them the space, materials, and opportunity to learn and practice new skills.

Learning is an interactive process and children learn through doing. The environment in which children play and learn provides them with opportunities to explore and interact with a variety of inviting activities and materials and is based on each child's individual interests and needs.

Researchers agree that young children under two years old should not watch television or other screens. During this time of rapid brain development, children need activities that promote language development and brain growth such as interaction with others and hands-on activities.

Children learn from outdoor play as well. Fun and interesting outdoor experiences include those that are sometimes too messy for indoors, such as sand and water tables and some art activities. In the heat of summer, a rug and basket of books placed under a shade tree is a cozy spot for reading to children.

High-quality early learning environments include the use of developmentally appropriate curriculum and learning spaces based on individual children's needs and interests. Daily schedules are written timetables of events that show what is supposed to happen throughout the day. Lesson plans are the basic plan for the day and help caregivers select, plan, and organize activities, projects, and equipment appropriate for the ages, development, and interests of children in their care.

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
2, 3, 4, 5	Learning and development: OAC 340:110-1-8.8(d) (1) A written daily schedule reflecting a balanced program of opportunities for learning, physical activity, indoor and outdoor play, rest periods, and meals is followed with flexibility meeting children's individual needs. Learning activities balance child-initiated play and caregiver-guided activities. (2) The daily schedule is posted. (3) Children are read to for a minimum of 15 minutes each day.	At time of request: Programs submit a developmentally age-appropriate schedule. Ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify a current daily schedule with required components is posted.
2, 3, 4, 5	Learning and development: OAC 340:110-1-8.8(d)(4). Television or other screen time is not used for children 1 year of age and younger.	At time of request and Ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify daily schedules and through on-site observation ensuring that children 1 year of age and younger are not exposed to television or screen time.
2, 3, 4, 5	Learning and development: OAC 340:110-1-8.8(d)(5). Caregivers prepare children for transitions.	At time of request: The program agrees to implement and maintain this criteria. Ongoing implementation: CCS staff observe and discuss transitions that occur.
4, 5	Learning and development: OAC 340:110-1-8.8(e)(1). Children have access to art, block building, book reading, dramatic play, manipulative play, and music and movement.	At time of request: Program provides photos showing children have access to art, block building, book reading, dramatic play, manipulative play, and music and movement. Ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify children have opportunities for daily access to art, block building, book reading, dramatic play, manipulative play, and music and movement.

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
4, 5	Learning and development: OAC 340:110-1-8.8(e) (2) The program implements lesson plans with developmentally appropriate activities aligning with ELG or Oklahoma Academic Standards. Lesson plans identify ELG or Oklahoma Academic Standards and are shared with families. (3) Curriculum or lesson plans provide for the children's various ages, abilities, developmental stages, social-emotional development, special needs, and interests.	At time of request: Program provides a current lesson plan sample for the age group of children for which the program provides care reflecting criteria listed in this section. Ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify current lesson plans reflecting criteria listed in this section as well as evidence of implementation of the lesson plan through the environment, activities available, photos or newsletters.
4, 5	Learning and development: OAC 340:110-1-8.8(e)(4). Caregivers lead and participate daily in at least two developmentally-appropriate physical activities for all children.	At time of request and ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify the program implement at least two developmentally appropriate caregiver led physical activities daily through lesson plans, daily schedules or other classroom documentation.

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
4, 5	Learning and development: OAC 340:110-1-8.8(e)(5)(A) & (B). In addition to curriculum or lesson plans, children 2 years of age and older are given the opportunity to join enhancement activities promoting basic skills and higher level thinking. Enhancement activities are conducted routinely throughout the year, documented on the lesson plan, and may be rotated based on children's needs and interests. Four-star homes implement one or more enhancement activities and five-star homes implement two or more enhancement activities. Examples may include: (i) outdoor interest areas (ii) indoor interest areas (iii) invitations to play helping children reflect on and extend their learning (iv) nature-related activities (v) social studies (vi) community involvement (vii) health and physical wellness (viii) nutrition (ix) foreign language (x) theater (xi) sign language (xii) cooking lessons (xiii) science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) (xiv) onsite contracted activities, such as dance lessons gymnastics lessons, or sports. (xv) life skills; or (xvi) activities promoting Native American culture and language	At time of request and ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify lesson plans for inclusion of enhancement activities. CCS staff also verify evidence of implementation onsite in accordance with lesson plans by viewing photos of activities or the environment reflect evidence of enhancement activity plan implementation for children two years of age and older.

340:110-1-8.9. Family partnership criteria
Revised 2-10-2025

Rationale: Families are the child's first teachers and are the link between the educational setting and home. A strong connection between child care personnel and families is critical for building a positive environment, allowing children to feel more secure, confident, and self-assured. It is best for children when programs build relationships with families based on mutual trust, respect, and willingness to involve them as full partners. Everyone, but especially children, benefits when providers and families work together.

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
2, 3, 4, 5	Family Partnership: OAC 340:110-1-8.9(c)(1). The primary caregiver maintains a signed contract on file for each family including, but not limited to, policy concerning hours, fees, payment schedules, vacations, and terminations.	At time of request: Program provides a copy of the contract including policies concerning hours, fees, payment schedules, vacations, and terminations is submitted. Ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify a contract for each child enrolled that include the required policies and are signed and dated by the family member.
2, 3, 4, 5	Family Partnership: OAC 340:110-1-8.9(c)(2). The primary caregiver encourages family visitation when children are present and provides access to all child care areas.	At time of request: Programs describe how this is done. Ongoing implementation: CCS verify documentation in the family handbook or posters in the family resource center or observed on site.
2, 3, 4, 5	Family Partnership: OAC 340:110-1-8.9(c)(3). The primary caregiver offers and encourages individual family conferences at least annually, discussing children's progress, accomplishments, and challenges, and establishing children's goals. Documentation is maintained with the child's records.	At time of request: Program lists dates family conferences will be offered and encouraged. Ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify dated conference sheet(s) with the family member/parent's signature in children's record or newsletter or other notification of conference schedule.
2, 3, 4, 5	Family Partnership: OAC 340:110-1-8.9(c)(4) & (d)(3). Two- and three-star programs provide at least two family involvement opportunities annually. Four- and five-star programs provide at least three family involvement opportunities annually.	At time of request for program operating 90 days or less: Programs provide date of first scheduled family event. At time of request for programs open 90 days or more and ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify photos of events or flyers, invitations with dates, newsletters, agendas with dates or sign-in sheets with dates.
2, 3, 4, 5	Family Partnership: OAC 340:110-1-8.9(c)(5). The primary caregiver has information available regarding common childhood issues including health care, education, nutrition, and family counseling services and provides referral information when indicated.	At time of request: Programs describe how resources are made available to families including how resources are available in languages representing the program's families. Ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify resource area or electronic resources onsite.

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
2, 3, 4, 5	Family Partnership: OAC 340:110-1-8.9(c)(6). The primary caregiver ensures applicable Licensing requirements are available to families.	At time of request: Program describes how this is done. Ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify methods that Licensing requirements are available to families.
2, 3, 4, 5	Family Partnership: OAC 340:110-1-8.9(c)(7). The primary caregiver respects children's and families' home languages and cultures by adapting communication methods.	At time of request: Programs describe how this is maintained. Ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify methods onsite.
4, 5	Family Partnership: OAC 340:110-1-8.9(d)(1). The primary caregiver provides families at least two non-relative references, including contact information.	At time of request: The primary caregiver provide documentation of references. Ongoing implementation: CCS staff view the reference list in the family handbook or contract or posted in the home or readily available elsewhere.
4, 5	Family Partnership: OAC 340:110-1-8.9(d)(2). The primary caregiver establishes and maintains a system for sharing and communicating with families information specific to the child's physical and emotional state.	At time of request: Programs describe how this is done. Ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify examples or copies of ongoing documentation provided/available to families or an explanation of confidential verbal procedures used.

340:110-1-8.10. Program evaluation for continuous quality improvement criteria
Revised 2-10-2025

Rationale: Program evaluation is universally recognized as one of the key indicators of quality in child care. Evaluating your program helps you identify the strengths and growth opportunities for your program, continuously grow as a professional, provide a quality environment for the children in your care, and increase family awareness of the importance of their child's care.

Continuous quality improvement (CQI) is a way for your program to regularly enhance services and increase positive outcomes for the children and families you serve. Even the best family child care homes benefit when you regularly review your practices, make goals specific to the needs of your program, carry out the plans you make, and regularly repeat this process.

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
2, 3, 4, 5	Program evaluation for continuous quality improvement: OAC 340:110-1-8.10(c)(1). Health and safety checklists for both indoor and outdoor spaces are completed annually and maintained on file at the program.	At time of request for program operating 12 months or less: The owner and primary caregiver agree to implement and maintain this criteria. At time of request for program operating 12 months or more and ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify completed and dated checklist(s) on file at the program.
2, 3, 4, 5	Program evaluation for continuous quality improvement: OAC 340:110-1-8.10(c)(2). Personnel and families are surveyed annually identifying program strengths and weaknesses and evaluating effectiveness in meeting children's, families', and personnel's needs.	At time of request for program operating 12 months or less: Program provides a copy of survey templates and list of dates surveys are conducted or scheduled. At time of request for program operating 12 months or more and ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify completed and dated surveys and responses or dated online survey report summaries are viewed.

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
3, 4, 5	Program evaluation for continuous quality improvement: OAC 340:110-1-8.10(d). Program evaluation criteria listed below are completed within one year of receiving three-, four-, or five-star level and repeated as required. (1) The program is assessed annually using an assessment tool approved by Child Care Services (CCS). This assessment is not required for programs accredited by a CCS-approved, national accrediting organization. (2) Program goals are established and updated annually considering information gathered from completed health and safety checklists, family and personnel surveys, and a CCS-approved assessment tool, or approved national accreditation assessment tool, when applicable. The program may also use any program-completed needs assessments. (3) The program has a written plan and program policy and procedures for meeting established goals, including professional development and educational needs for the primary caregiver and assistant. (4) Personnel participate in program evaluation and the established goals for continuous quality improvement are shared with personnel.	At time of request: Programs agree to implement and maintain this criteria. At time of request for programs operating 12 months or more as a 3 Star or higher and ongoing implementation: CCS staff verify the following: 1) A completed, dated Oklahoma Quality Child Care Program Scale: Self-Assessment, Oklahoma Quality Out-of-school Time Program Scale: Self-Assessment, documentation of another completed approved CCS assessment tool. Programs licensed as Out of School Time Child Care Programs may use the School-Age Program Quality Assessment (School-Age PQA) to meet this criteria. 2) Written program goals with dates the goals were established and are updated at least annually. 3) Written plans with dates the goals were established that are updated annually and include goals for personnel's professional development and educational needs. 4) Dated personnel meeting sign-in sheets with agendas or dated personnel meeting notes listing personnel present.

340:110-1-8.11. Additional four- and five-star criteria**Revised 2-10-2025**

Rationale: Four-star programs implement and maintain all Star criteria for their Star level listed in previous sections plus implement additional professional development and program criteria detailed in this section.

Five-star programs are accredited by a CCS-approved national accrediting organization and implement and maintain all Star criteria for their Star level listed in previous sections plus implement additional professional development and program criteria detailed in this section and are awarded the highest Star level.

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
4, 5	Additional four-star and five-star home professional development criteria: OAC 340:110-1-8.11(b)(1). Four-star homes implement one additional professional development criteria. Five-star homes implement two additional professional development criteria. (A) The primary caregiver maintains a current PDL Level 5 or higher. (B) The primary caregiver obtains two college credits or 30-clock hours of job-related professional development annually, per PDL certification year. (C) The primary caregiver completes Family Child Care Home Leadership Academy. (D) The assistant caregiver obtains two college credits or 30-clock hours of job-related professional development annually, per PDL certification year. (E) The program uses ongoing, evidence-based coaching to caregiving practices. (F) Primary caregiver completes all Pyramid Model Infant/Toddler, Preschool, or Birth to Five modules.	At time of request and ongoing implementation: For (A) - (D), and (F): CCS staff verify documentation on OKRegistry. For option (E): CCS staff verify current type of evidence-based coaching used, coaching source, and overall plan for program coaching as well as completed action plans, observation forms, feedback forms, or other pertinent written coaching documentation. When internal coaching is used also include verification of coach training in the evidence-based coaching model.
4, 5	Additional four- and five-star criteria: OAC 340:110-1-8.11(b)(2)(A). The program conducts a formal intake process for new families. Four-star homes implement one family orientation criteria, and five-star programs implement (i) and (ii). Family orientation includes: (i) parent orientation (ii) child orientation to caregiver, home, and routine.	At time of request and ongoing implementation: CCS staff view current documentation showing written family orientation policy is regularly implemented, such as log including dates and names of family members and/or child, and personnel conducting orientation.

Star Level	QRIS Family Child Care Home Criteria	Evidence/Acceptable Documentation of Implementation
4, 5	Additional four-and five- star health and safety criteria: OAC 340:110-1-8.11(b)(2)(B). Four-star homes implement two health and safety criteria, and five-star homes implement four criteria. The program i. offers evidence-based developmental assessments or screenings by trained personnel. The program communicates results with families and provides referral information when indicated. ii. uses a health consultant as needed iii. implements daily playground safety checklists iv. conducts annual personnel emergency plan and procedure training, when applicable v. participates in CACFP vi. obtains quality initiative certifications, such as Oklahoma State Department of Health Certified Healthy Early Childhood Program vii. collaborates with schools, with parental permission, regarding individual children's health and wellness, such as developmental screenings and IEPs	At time of request and ongoing implementation: i. Completed and dated child development assessment for each child in the past year. ii. Log of consultation dates iii. Completed playground checklists iv. Training agenda and personnel attendance form v. CACFP records vi. Certificate or evidence of progress toward certification. vii. Collaboration agreement, goals, logs, running notes, or meeting agendas reflecting collaboration efforts.

THE STARS PROGRAM

Rights and Responsibilities

You have the right to:

- submit a request for certification and have it processed in a timely manner.
- withdraw a request for certification before approval or denial by written request to the Stars Outreach Specialist for your area.
- request a reduction in star certification level by written request to the Stars Outreach Specialist for your area.
- receive written notification of the decision made about your request for certification.
- contact the Stars Outreach Specialist or supervisor to discuss or ask questions if your request for certification is denied.
- reapply at any time after a denial once all criteria are met. However, if the request was denied due to **Numerous**, **Repeated**, or **Serious** (NRS) non-compliances, the program is not approved for a higher star certification level prior to six months after the program receives the denial letter by certified mail.
- request an Extension of Time to Comply (CCS form 07LC074E). You may request an Extension of Time to Comply when your program has a plan of correction for a Star criteria violation (except for compliance with minimum Licensing requirements) and you are unable to correct the violations within the agreed-upon time frame. You must show that the violation of Stars criteria was unforeseeable and beyond your control. All requests must be submitted no later than 10-calendar days after the plan of correction expires and must include all supporting documentation. Requests are made to:

Child Care Services—QRIS Program Administrator
PO Box 25352
Oklahoma City, OK 73125

- receive written notification of the decision for an Extension of Time to Comply in a timely manner (in no longer than 30 days).
- receive written notification regarding a violation of Stars criteria. This notification may be made by a letter, Notice to Comply, licensing services supplemental information page, or on a periodic Star certification review.
- grieve any QRIS violation, non-compliance or substantiated complaint.
- request an alternative settlement instead of being recommended for reduction by submitting a plan to the designated programs manager.
- receive written notification of a reduction of your Star level and directions for requesting an administrative review.

THE STARS PROGRAM

Rights and Responsibilities

You have the responsibility to:

- submit a completed request for Star certification (Star levels are not awarded until a complete request has been submitted and approved).
- Allow OKDHS staff full access to the program's premises and personnel for the purpose of monitoring quality criteria.
- maintain compliance with licensing requirements (numerous, repeated or serious non-compliances may result in denial of a higher Star rating). Your Star level may be reduced due to serious non-compliance.
- understand and maintain all Star criteria at the appropriate levels and ask for help with understanding criteria, as needed.
- notify Child Care Services within five program business days of any change in your program's ability to meet Star criteria (examples may include: loss of a primary caregiver, loss of accreditation, etc.).
- submit a written plan for correcting violations of Star criteria within an agreed-upon timeframe.
- complete all methods of program evaluation within the first year of Two, Three, Four, or Five Star status and repeat them as required.
- obtain required professional development and ensure completed coursework is documented on the OKRegistry.
- submit a Request for an Extension of Time to Comply (07LC074E) no later than 10-calendar days after the plan of correction expires.
- maintain current credentials, including professional development ladder, for primary caregiver and all assistant caregivers employed for at least 12 months maintain a current professional development ladder.
- Maintain accreditation or Head Start Program Performance Standards compliance, when applicable.

STAR CERTIFICATION REVIEWS

Pre-Certification Visits

- Prior to initial or higher star level certification approval, programs receive a pre-certification visit from CCS staff to verify stars criteria compliance.
- Pre-certification visits will be scheduled once a completed online Stars request for certification is submitted and all required criteria are verified by the Stars Outreach Specialist.

Two, Three, Four, and Five Star full year family child care homes receive a minimum of one partial- and one full-star certification criteria review annually, including programs operating less than a full-year or having a tribal cooperative licensing agreement. Star certification reviews are conducted by CCS staff. When requested by the program owner or primary caregiver, CCS staff schedules the annual criteria review at least one week in advance.

Exceptions are:

- Homes exempt from state licensure have at least one full Star certification review annually.
- Programs accredited by a CCS-approved national accrediting organization may be exempt from the partial certification criteria review. When programs have numerous, repeated, or serious non-compliances, per OAC 340:110-1-9.3, within the previous 12 months, designated CCS staff consult with the designated programs manager for exemption approval.

Partial Star Certification Reviews

During partial Star reviews the following criteria is reviewed:

- compliance with minimum Licensing requirements
- primary caregiver qualifications
- Star criteria violations from the previous review

Full Star Certification Reviews

All Star criteria are reviewed annually at the full Star review including criteria violations from the previous review.

Additional Information

At each Star certification review, Child Care Services staff verify implementation for criteria required for that review.

THE STARS PROGRAM

Primary Caregiver Qualifications

Primary caregivers in 2 Star family child care homes must meet and maintain a current Oklahoma Professional Development Ladder (OPDL) certificate

Primary caregivers in 3, 4, and 5 Star family child care homes must:

- meet and maintain an Oklahoma Professional Development Ladder (PDL) level of 4 or higher AND
- be trained in ELG
 - 1) at certification for a higher Star level OR
 - 2) new primary caregivers hired or assuming responsibilities after certification are trained within 90 calendar days AND
- be employed onsite on a full-time basis, which is defined as 80 percent of the weekly operating hours

An individual is not counted as a primary caregiver, master teacher, or probationary master teacher in more than one program unless the scheduled hours of employment in each program do not overlap at any given time.

The Oklahoma Professional Development Ladder level requirements can be accessed at: [Criteria - CECPD](#)

To apply for an Oklahoma Professional Development Ladder certificate go to: [Registry - Event Search \(okregistry.org\)](#). (Click “Login”, then “Create Account”)

THE STARS PROGRAM

Planning for Professional Development

The quality offered in a family child care home depends on the knowledge and skills of the people who work with children. Everyone who works with young children and their families needs a basic understanding of child development and early education. To provide children with the best, it is important that we strive for the best in ourselves, personally and professionally. An individualized educational professional development plan serves as a map. (Vermont Early Childhood Work Group)

Think about yourself as an early childhood professional:

- Evaluate your current level of knowledge. What are your personal strengths? What areas do you want to improve?
- Identify educational needs: What is your past educational experience? What kinds of training or education do you need?
- Determine professional development that can meet those needs. Where will you look for/find it?
- Identify potential career paths. What opportunities do you want to pursue? (CDA, Certificate of Mastery, AA, BA, etc.) How? When?

The Stars Program Approved Professional Development

Professional development (PD) is an ongoing process used to improve the knowledge and skills to best serve children and families. PD must be related to position responsibilities.

- Job-related is directly associated with the content areas of the Oklahoma Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners and/or the Oklahoma Core Competencies for Out-of-School Time Practitioners.
- Formal PD is two or more clock hours from an Oklahoma Professional Development Registry (OPDR)-approved training organization or OPDR-approved college credit hours.
- Informal PD is less than two clock hours from an OPDR-approved training organization, any number of clock hours from and OPDR non-approved training organization, and any training from electronic media such as videos, DVDs, or webinars.
- No more than six hours of informal PD may be counted in required training hours per Professional Development Ladder (PDL) certification.
- One college credit hour is equal to 16 clock hours of PD.

Note: General education coursework such as English Comp I, Biology, Math, History, etc., does not count as approved annual PD for Stars.

THE STARS PROGRAM

Planning for Professional Development

Primary Caregiver PD Requirements:

At initial Star approval:

- must have 2 college credits in management, child development, or early childhood education or 20 clock hours of job-related PD within the last 12 months or within current PDL certification AND
- completed QRIS Orientation

When a new primary caregiver is hired:

- must have 2 college credits in management, child development, or early childhood education or 20 clock hours of job-related professional development within the previous 12 months or within current PDL certification AND
- complete QRIS Orientation within 90 calendar days of hire

Ongoing PD: must have 2 college credits in management, child development, or early childhood education or 20 clock hours of job-related PD per PDL certification.

Assistant Caregiver PD Requirements:

After being employed for 12 months, assistant caregivers must have 2 college credits in child development, early childhood or school age education or 20 clock hours of job-related PD per PDL certification.

Reference:

Development Plan for Early Care and Education. June 2001. The Professional Preparation and Development Committee of the Vermont Early Childhood Work Group

PROCEDURES FOR EXTENSIONS OF TIME TO COMPLY

The owner or primary caregiver may submit a written *Request for an Extension of Time to Comply* when a plan of correction has been made to correct a violation of Stars criteria (such as loss of a master teacher or loss of accreditation) and additional time is needed to correct the violation.

The owner or primary caregiver submits Form 07LC074E, *Request for Extension of Time to Comply* (available at <http://www.okdhs.org/services/cc/Pages/ChildCare.aspx> or from any CCS staff) along with all supporting documentation to the QRIS program administrator or designee no later than 10-calendar days after the plan of correction expires. Supporting documentation may include: professional development certificates, transcripts, documentation from instructors or scholar coordinators, or correspondence from a CCS-approved accrediting organization.

The decision to approve an Extension of Time to Comply is made by the QRIS Program Administrator or designee. Approval of an Extension of Time to Comply does not set a precedent and each request is independently evaluated. The owner or primary caregiver is notified of the decision in writing.

Information taken into consideration to determine whether to approve a request for an Extension of Time to Comply:

Date of Request

- Extension requests are made by filling out and submitting form 07LC074E, *Request for Extension of Time to Comply*, no later than 10-calendar days after the plan of correction expires.
- Extension requests received more than 10 days after the expiration of the plan of correction may not be approved due to not submitting timely.

Plan of correction and type of violation

- In order to request an extension of time to comply, a plan of correction must first have been in place for criteria not met
- Documentation must show how the violation was unforeseeable and beyond your control.
- Extensions are not approved for ongoing professional development for an employment year.
- Extensions are not granted for violations that are easily corrected such as annual professional development or parent/personnel surveys.
- Extensions are not approved to meet minimum licensing requirements.

Compliance

- The program's record of compliance of numerous, repeated and/or serious non-compliance with applicable licensing requirements is taken into consideration in determining whether to approve the request.
- An extension is not approved for any program whose case is under review for possible reduction, denial, or revocation.

Master Teachers

- For additional extensions to be granted, programs must provide documentation of personnel who have been actively working toward master teacher qualifications since submission of the previous extension request.

Reasons for Extensions

- Extensions are only given when the violation was unforeseeable and beyond your control.
- Extensions are only given for violations related to Stars criteria.

GLOSSARY

A

Accreditation: National standards for professional practice that guide programs in continuous quality improvement. The accreditation process is completed through a national accrediting agency.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE): Potentially traumatic events that occur during from birth to age 18.

Assessment Tool: A tool used by programs to evaluate their strengths and areas for growth that is based on research and positive early childhood practice and is approved by Child Care Services.

C

Center for Early Childhood Professional Development (CECPD): A University of Oklahoma and Child Care Services (CCS) partnering agency that supports Oklahoma early childhood professionals with professional development, trainer and training approval registry, statewide training calendar.
www.cecpd.org

Certificate of Mastery (CoM): A minimum 18-credit-hour certificate in infant/toddler, child development or early childhood education awarded by the community college.
www.okhighered.org/scholars

Certified Child Care Professional (CCP): A national credential awarded by the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation Commission, Inc. (NECPA)
<https://necpa.net/page/ccp/>

Child Care Center: Programs that operate 30 or more hours per week.

Child Care Services (CCS): A division of the Department of Human Services that ensures minimum standards are maintained for the care and protection of children who are away from their homes, encourages and assists child care programs in meeting maximum standards, and works to ensure sufficient and adequate services for child care. <https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs/services/child-care-services/child-care-licensing.html>

Child Development: The study of physical, intellectual, emotional, and social changes that occur in children from conception through adolescence.

Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential: A national credential awarded by the Council for Professional Recognition to child care professionals who have successfully completed the CDA assessment process. <https://www.cdacouncil.org/en/>

Child Developmental Assessment: A formal or informal assessment of a child's developmental progress.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): The Child and Adult Care Food Program is a USDA child nutrition program for licensed family child care homes and centers. This federally funded program helps children receive the nutrition they need by reimbursing child care providers for the cost of serving food that meets USDA guidelines.

Child Initiated Play: When children have the freedom to choose what and how they are going to engage in play in the environment.

Child Learning Assessment: A formal or informal assessment based on what the child is learning, using the individual goals and observations from the lesson plans and curriculum taking place in the learning environment.

Children Goals: Written goals created for the individual children in the program based on family input, observation documentation, assessments, and developmental screenings. Goals can be written using the ELGs or the Oklahoma Academic Standards as a guide.

Coaching: Evidence based practices where child care personnel work one-on-one with a coach to work towards improving specific quality teaching practices in their classrooms and programs.

Coaching and Reflection Release Time: Scheduled time out of the classroom away from other job duties, for personnel to have the time and space needed to improve on quality practices. This time can be spent with or without a coach present.

Community Involvement: How the community is represented in the children's learning environment as well as what ways the children are actively involved in the community around them.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI): The process of identifying, describing, and analyzing strengths and weaknesses and then testing, implementing, learning from, and revising solutions. This is as an ongoing commitment to improve the ability to provide high-quality educational services and to use those services to maximize outcomes for all children enrolled in a program.

Continuity of Care Plan: A plan that includes how children will remain with specific personnel throughout the majority of the day and are not routinely moved or assigned to another group or classroom.

Curriculum: A purchased curriculum or a self-developed plan, such as lesson plans, that guide personnel as they develop learning opportunities and goals for the children in their care.

Curriculum Coordinator: A person who develops and evaluates curriculum and/or lesson plans as well as monitors or assists in implementation of curriculum/lesson plans and daily activities for children in the program.

D

Daily Schedule: A written timetable of events that shows what is supposed to happen throughout the day. This is different from a lesson plan.

Day Camps: Programs that operate during school breaks for 12 hours or less per day, serve children 5-year-olds and older who are attending, or have completed kindergarten or above, and use the outdoors as a major program component for at least 50 percent of the daily hours of operation.

Department of Human Services (DHS): An agency of the State of Oklahoma that provides help to individuals and families in need through public assistance programs and managing services for children, seniors, and people with disabilities. Child Care Services is a division of this state agency. <https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs.html>

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP): Principles and guidelines for best practice in the care and education of young children that is based on research of how children develop and learn. They cover ways to nurture young children's optimal learning and development. DAP considers children's age and individual interests, cultural backgrounds, and developmental needs.

Developmental Screenings: Formal or informal screenings to evaluate how a child is developing over time and whether they are meeting the typical developmental milestones.

Developmental Stages: The typical timeframes in which a child is achieving age specific capabilities. Can also be referred to as developmental milestones.

Direct Care Organization: Any licensed child care program or family child care home that is registered with the Oklahoma Professional Development Registry.

Director's Advanced Training: An administration and management certificate for directors that is no longer in effect. This is recognized as an additional certification option in Star levels four-and-five for Directors that previously completed this certificate.

Director's Leadership Academy: For child care directors, assistant directors, and administrators. The Academy provides leadership skills training and focuses on ways to become a more effective leader to meet the needs of staff and children in their care.

E

Early Head Start: A program sponsored by a Head Start agency or grantee that provides low-income pregnant women and families with children from birth to age three with family-centered services that support child development, parental roles, and self-sufficiency.

Educational Professional Development Plan (EPDP): A written plan that documents an individual's goals to stay current in the knowledge and practices of the field of early childhood education/child development and personal professional growth. An EPDP helps individuals stay organized to meet required training deadlines, plan for and track required training to renew credentials that expire, develop a list of meaningful training, and develop a plan to progress in the field of ECE.

Emergency Plan and Procedure Training: A plan created by the program on how they will train all staff on the emergency plans and procedures set in place in the

Enhancement Activities: Activities that are incorporated throughout the program that promote basic skills and a higher level of thinking such as social studies, theater, cooking lessons, or life skills. These activities should be documented on the lesson plans and are conducted on a routine basis while being rotated based on the needs and interest of the children.

Equipment Inventory: A detailed list of required equipment specific to the number and ages of children in a particular child care setting. An equipment inventory is done by counting equipment and completing the required DHS form. It is completed at least annually and is used as part of the program evaluation process.

Extension of Time to Comply: A written request by a child care owner, designated agent, director, or primary caregiver to ask for additional time to meet Stars criteria.

F

Family Advisory Board: A group of parents who meets with the center director, owner, and other personnel and provides input to help create program goals, activities, and procedures.

Family Conferences: Meetings held in person between a child's teacher and parents where the child's progress, accomplishments, and challenges are discussed, and goals are set together.

Family Contracts: Agreements between parents and a program which includes, but is not limited to, policy concerning hours, fees, payment schedule, vacations, and termination. Contracts are signed and dated by parents.

Family Orientation: The formal process of accepting new families into the program. This includes orientation to the classroom and routine, and for the parent and child to meet the teaching personnel. These processes are included in the program's written parent policies.

Family Partnership: The ways in which the families are serving an active role in the program, such as serving on a parent advisory board, volunteering or conducting visits in the family's home. The program encourages families to be involved in the child's education and development.

Family Resource Area: An area where families can get information about agencies that provide services to families and articles on family-related topics.

Family Surveys: Questionnaires given to parents to obtain their opinions and help the program identify strengths and weaknesses of the program to evaluate their effectiveness in meeting the needs of children and parents. Data collected from surveys are used to set goals to improve the program and learning environment.

Formal Professional Development: Two or more clock hours from an OPDR-approved training organization or OPDR-approved college credit hours. Formal professional development hours are determined by CECPD on the OPDR website.

H

Head Start Agency or Grantee: A local public or private nonprofit agency approved to operate a Head Start program by the by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Head Start: A program funded under the Head Start Act and carried out by a Head Start agency or grantee that provides ongoing comprehensive child development services according to the federal Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Health Consultant: A healthcare professional who supports the health, safety, and wellness of the young children, families, and staff in early care and education settings. They foster quality by observing for recommended practices and identifying hazards in the program.

I

Implementation: The process of consistently putting plans or ideas into practice.

Informal Professional Development: Less than two clock hours from an OPDR-approved training organization, any number of clock hours from a non-approved training organization, and any training from electronic media, such as videos or DVDs. Formal and informal professional development hours are determined by CECPD on the OPDR website.

Individualized: The process of planning and implementing learning experiences that are responsive to each child's interests, strengths, and needs. Teachers reflect on their observations of each child and then plan the most effective ways to support each child's learning and development

Individualized Educational Plans (IEP): A written plan for children ages 3 to 21, focusing on the educational needs of the child. It is a legal document under U.S. law developed for each public school child who needs special education. It is created by a team including the child's parent and school district personnel knowledgeable about the child's needs.

Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP): A written plan for children birth to age 3 (and their families) who are found eligible for early intervention services from Oklahoma's SoonerStart program due to identified developmental delays. The plan is developed by a team including the parent, service coordinator, and professional(s) directly involved in conducting the evaluation or assessment. The IFSP includes the services necessary to enhance the unique developmental needs of an individual child.

Interest Areas: The areas within a learning space arranged so that children can interact with a variety of interesting, age-appropriate materials and participate in a variety of activities in art, reading, dramatic play, blocks, manipulatives, math, and science/nature. Interest areas should also expand to the outdoors area, taking the interest areas outside for the children to explore and experiment.

Invitations to Play: Can also be referred to as invitations to learn, provocations, or makerspaces. They encourage children to learn through exploration by providing materials that "invite them to play" in a creative, non-directive way with no criteria for success. It is a way to set up children's play and invite them in to a new and different way to spark their interest and expand their thinking with little direction from an adult.

J

Job Description: A written tool that describes the unique and essential duties of a particular job and usually includes the job title, responsibilities, major tasks (what the personnel will be doing), and qualifications (such as education, experience, and specialized skills or knowledge). They help potential personnel decide if they are a good fit with a program's philosophies and needs and provide a foundation for personnel evaluations.

L

Learning Environment: This can be inside or outside, anywhere the children have an opportunity to engage in learning. The learning environment gives children the space, materials and opportunity to learn and practice new skills.

Learning Opportunities: Any part of the day, structured or unstructured where the children have an opportunity to engage in the environment and activities.

Lesson Plan: Curriculum or lesson plans reflect the program philosophy and goals; are based on child development and appropriate practice; provide for children's various ages, abilities, developmental stages, and special needs; provide for children's physical, cognitive, language, literacy, and social-emotional development; and incorporate music and songs into children's activities at multiple times of the day. Programs implement developmentally appropriate activities in their lesson plans or curriculum aligning with the Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines or Oklahoma Academic Standards.

Licensing: Child Care Licensing is managed by Child Care Services (CCS), a division of (DHS). The Child Care Facilities Licensing Act defines those programs required to be licensed. Their website links to licensing requirements, also known as standards, for various types of care. 844-834-8314, <https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs/services/child-care-services/child-care-licensing.html>

Licensing Specialists: Child Care Services staff who monitor to make sure minimum standards are met for the care and protection of children away from their own homes and who assist childcare programs in maintaining the higher quality standards of the Stars program.

Life Skills: Everyday essential skills children need to succeed as they continue to grow, such as focus and self-control, communication, and critical thinking.

M

Master Teacher: An individual working on site, at the program a minimum of 50% of the program's operating hours. Must be at least 18 years of age, have a current OPDL level 4 or higher. The individual must have approved ELG training or receive approved ELG training within 90 calendar days of assuming the role of master teacher. Master teachers are responsible for direct care of children and supporting other teaching personnel and program management with planning and implementing lesson plans, classroom arrangement, planning and implementing family communication and engagement, and providing program development and evaluation feedback.

Mission and/or Vision Statement: Describes the goals of your program, the unique qualities your program provides, and the overall vision or it could be the definition and purpose of your program.

N

National Administrator Credential (NAC): A comprehensive, 45 hours course, and is an award for demonstrated mastery of child care administration skills. It is recognized as a mark of excellence that designates professionals who have demonstrated the knowledge that is essential for managing a child care program. <https://necpa.net/page/nacoverview/>

National School Lunch Program: A federally assisted meal program. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children in child care programs.

Non-Compliance: Term used to define when a licensing requirement is not met.

O

Oklahoma Academic Standards: The expectations for what students in Oklahoma public schools should know and be able to do by the end of each school year as defined by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. <https://sde.ok.gov/oklahoma-academic-standards>

Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (R&R): A CCS partnering agency that has a network of regional sites throughout Oklahoma and provides services for parents, providers, and communities including child care referrals, provider training, technical assistance, and advocacy. <http://www.oklahomachildcare.org>

Oklahoma Core Competencies: A document which includes what all who work with young children need to know, understand, and be able to do to support children's learning and development. It can be used to assess skills in content areas, plan for professional development, write job descriptions and personnel policies, and evaluate educational options.

Oklahoma Director's Certificate of Completion (DCoC): A minimum 24 credit hour certificate in child development and administration awarded by the Scholars Program and is available for directors, assistant directors, and family child care home providers only. The Scholars program offers a tuition scholarship to eligible providers.

866-343-3881, 405-225-9395, www.okhighered.org/scholars

Oklahoma Director's Certificate of Mastery (DCoM): A 33 credit hour certificate in child development and administration available only through OSU-Oklahoma City and Carl Albert State Colleges. The Scholars program offers a tuition scholarship to eligible directors, assistant directors, and family child care providers for this credential. 866-343-3881, 405-225-9395, www.okhighered.org/scholars

Oklahoma Director's Pathway to Program Administration: A 130 clock hour curriculum that provides training and preparation in the area of business, management, and leadership in child care. The Scholars program offers a tuition scholarship to eligible directors, assistant directors, and family child care providers for this credential. 866-343-3881, 405-225-9395, www.okhighered.org/scholars

Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines (ELG): Guidelines for early childhood teachers to help children with what they need to know and be able to do to experience success in school. There are Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines for Infants, Toddlers and Twos and Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines for Children Ages Three through Five.

Oklahoma Professional Development Ladder (OPDL): The formal process that allows individuals to document their experience and professional development in early care and education. It is maintained on a registry by CECPD. www.cecpd.org

Oklahoma Professional Development Registry (OPDR): An online statewide database that recognizes the professional development (PD) of all individuals working in the early care and education field and is maintained by CECPD. www.cecpd.org

Oklahoma State Department of Health: The department responsible for protecting Oklahomans' health using strategies that prevent disease. 405-426-8000, 800-522-0203, <https://oklahoma.gov/health.html>

Oklahoma State Department of Health Certified Healthy Early Childhood Program: The program is administered by the Oklahoma State Department of Health, Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Certified Healthy Early Childhood Program recognizes early childhood programs that are working to improve the health of children, families, and staff by providing wellness opportunities and implementing policies that lead to healthier lifestyles.

On-going: Activities conducted routinely throughout the year.

Organizational Structure: The purpose of this structure is to identify the chain of command within a program. Some organizational structures look like pyramids, charts, etc.

Outdoor Interest Areas: Areas outside arranged so that children are able to interact with a variety of interesting, age-appropriate materials and participate in a variety of activities in art, reading, dramatic play, blocks, manipulatives, math, and science/nature. Outdoor interested areas could be permanent or temporary with items added to enhance learning.

Out-of-School Time Program (OST): Child care programs that operate when school is not in session, such as before and after school and school breaks, and serve 3-year-olds and older who are attending or have completed pre-kindergarten or above.

Owner: The individual listed on the ownership documentation for permit or license that is submitted to Child Care Licensing.

P

Parent Handbooks: Inform parents/families of the policies and procedures of the child care program with information that helps develop a partnership between a child's family and child care.

Part Day Program: Child care programs that operate for more than 15, but less than 30 hours per week.

Personnel Evaluation: Used to clearly communicate expectations, document personnel performance, recognize accomplishments, reward outstanding performance, improve personnel performance, develop and motivate personnel, and help achieve the goals of a program. It should utilize the Oklahoma Core Competencies and be based on the personnel's formal job description and be specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused, and time-bound.

Personnel Meetings: Scheduled meetings with all personnel and serve as a way to communicate information, make and relay decisions, build teams, and identify and resolve problems.

Personnel Policies: Policies that are provided to personnel upon employment and when revisions are made. The policies include information on hiring and termination, job duties and responsibilities for each position, professional development requirements including hours required, attendance policy, the program's mission or vision statement, organizational structure, professional and ethical conduct, plans for children's transitions, and continuity of care plans.

Personnel Surveys: Questionnaires given to program personnel to obtain their opinions and help the program identify strengths and weaknesses of the program to evaluate their effectiveness in meeting the needs of children, parents, and personnel.

Physical Activities: Planned physical activities that promote large (gross) motor development. Ideas for developmentally appropriate gross motor activities can be found in the Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines. These planned physical activities can be both indoor and outdoor.

Physical Environment Checklist: A tool completed to help programs assess their environments for any potential hazards, both indoors and outdoors, to provide a safe environment for children and personnel.

Planning Time: A scheduled time during the day allowing teachers time outside of the classroom to plan and prepare their lesson plans and set goals for the children and families that they serve.

Probationary Master Teacher Agreement: The written agreement between the director and personnel working towards the master teacher qualifications. The agreement is verified by Licensing and followed up with routinely.

Probationary Master Teacher: A personnel that is appointed by the director, who enters into a written agreement of how the personnel will work towards the master teacher requirements during a 1-year probationary term. The personnel and the director complete and submit a probationary master teacher agreement to Licensing.

Professional Development: Learning and support activities designed to prepare individuals for work with and on behalf of young children and their families including ongoing experiences to enhance their work.

Professional and Ethical Conduct: Defines the core values of the program and provides guidance for what personnel should do when they encounter conflicting obligations or responsibilities in their work.

Program Evaluation: A systematic and intentional process used to improve program practices and services. Program goals are established and implemented considering information gathered from family and personnel surveys, equipment inventories, physical environment checklists, and assessment tool(s).

Program Goals: Written plans based at minimum on information gathered from the completed equipment inventories, physical environment checklist(s), family and personnel surveys, and CCS approved assessment tool or approved national accreditation assessment tool. They include goals related to the professional development and educational needs of personnel as well as program policy and procedures.

Pyramid Model: An evidence-based model that promotes social emotional development in infants and young children. The model includes high quality professional development and resources as well as coaching to support in strengthening effective practices with children and their families.

Q

Quality Coaches: Child Care Services staff who provides support with implementing quality practices into child care centers, family child care homes and individual classrooms as well as completes reviews of programs participating in QRIS.

Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS): The part of Child Care Services that is responsible for the Stars program, which is a method to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education and school-age settings. The criteria used in QRIS are developed from research and what is universally considered to be quality care.

<https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs/services/child-care-services/gris.html>

Quality Specialist: Child Care Services staff who monitor programs participating in QRIS to ensure implementation of QRIS criteria. They also provide technical assistance to support child care programs in maintaining higher quality standards.

R

Resiliency Training: Professional development on emotional, cognitive and mental, physical, and/or spiritual resilience.

Routinely: Occurring on a regular and consistent basis and part of the normal operations.

S

Scholars for Excellence in Child Care Program: Child Care Services partnering agency that provides scholarships for eligible child care professionals so they can complete coursework in child development, early childhood, or school-age education. Scholar Coordinators assist and guide child care providers participating in the Scholars Program while they work toward a CDA credential, Certificate of Master, Director's Certificate of Completion, Director's Certificate of Mastery, and/or Associate of Arts or Science degree in CD/ECE. Scholar Coordinators provide support services, technical assistance, and academic and career advising. 866-343-3881, 405-225-9395, www.okhighered.org/scholars

School-Age Certificate of Completion (SACoC): A minimum 18 credit hour certificate in child development and school-age development awarded by the Scholars program.
866-343-3881, 405-225-9395, www.okhighered.org/scholars

Screen Time: The use of electronic media with a screen, such as television (TV), digital video display (DVD), video home system (VHS), video games, tablets and computers. Acceptable uses of screens in child care include e-readers for reading and games involving physical activity participation such as Wii Dance. Television and screen time are not used for children 1 year of age and younger.

Social Emotional Development: The developing capacity of the child to form and maintain close and secure relationships, experience, regulate and express emotions in socially and culturally appropriate ways, and explore the environment and learn- all in the context of family, community and culture.

Stars Outreach Specialist (SOS): Child Care Services staff who process Star applications and request for certifications, track 2, 3, 4 and 5 Star accredited and Head Start programs, provide professional development and technical assistance, and promote the Stars program.

STEAM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, & Math. These activities aim to teach students innovation, to think critically and use engineering or technology in imaginative designs or creative approaches.

T

Teacher Guided Activities: Learning opportunities where the adult determines the activity, purpose and the length of time spent engaging in the activity.

Technical Assistance (TA): When a person provides information, expertise, instruction, or skills training to help another person learn something new or apply something they have learned.

Transition Times: Times when children change from one activity to another, move between classrooms, experience changes in teaching staff, and transition to a new child care program, Head Start, or school.

Transition Plan: A plan of age-appropriate activities to help children when they change from one activity to another that minimizes wait time.

V

Violation: A term used to define when Star criteria is not met.

Visual and Pictorial Classroom Schedule: Pictures or a combination of pictures and words showing the sequence of events for the day. This can be pictures taken of the children at your program or clipart showing each part of the day.

W

Well Equipped: Having enough equipment in the interest area to provide multiple choices for the children and enough materials so the children can work together.



OKLAHOMA
Human Services

Pub. No. 99-43

Revised 2/2025

This publication is authorized by Oklahoma Human Services Director Jeffrey Cartmell and printed in accordance with state and federal regulations at a cost of \$7,120.94 for 4,121 copies. Copies have been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. Members of the public may obtain copies by calling 1-877-283-4113 (toll free) or by downloading a copy at <https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs/library.html>.