



OFFICE OF
Early Learning
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Stars Over Escambia Quality Rating and Improvement System



PROVIDER MANUAL

2017-2018

Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County
3300 N Pace Blvd Suite 210
Pensacola, Florida 32505
www.elcescambia.org

Stars Over Escambia Provider Manual

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Stars Over Escambia's Quality Rating Improvement System

1.0 Introduction

Stars Over Escambia is a Quality Rating Improvement System for School Readiness Providers contracted with the Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County. Stars Over Escambia is a voluntary rating system that reviews early learning programs according to clearly defined, high quality standards. Stars Over Escambia uses a five (5) star rating system that evaluates and offers support and training to assist Providers in reaching their goals.

Stars Over Escambia is different from both child care licensing, accreditation, the Office of Early Learning programs, and the School Readiness Monitoring Tool. Child care licensing regulations are basic requirements that must be met in order to be a legally operating child care program. Accreditation, whether Gold Seal, NAEYC or other affiliated program, represents an achievement of quality, typically through self-study and verification, yet does not focus on **continuous quality improvement**. Stars Over Escambia will assist willing Providers by offering a comprehensive system of rating and support for **quality improvement** that will help create high quality early learning programs. The support in quality improvement is critical to addressing a program's strengths and needs in order to improve the quality of care and education being offered to the children enrolled in a program.

Stars Over Escambia will provide a rating of quality using a 5-star system similar to those used by hotel websites. A 5-star rating will indicate the highest quality programs. Becoming a participant in Stars Over Escambia will also afford programs additional guidance and support efforts toward attaining quality improvement for programs.

The rating can be a useful tool for providers, as well as for families who are deciding where to enroll their children in care. Once a program has earned its stars, this information may be published, posted on our website, and in a Provider's correspondence, such as parent newsletters and advertising. The Coalition will also provide information on star rated Providers to parents who are seeking this information through the Child Care Resource & Referral process.

Star Legend	
5 stars	
4 stars	
3 stars	
2 stars	
1 star	

Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

Vision:

To improve children's school readiness and strengthen early learning programs through capacity building, accountability, and family and community engagement.

Mission:

To raise the quality of our early learning centers by identifying strengths and weaknesses within the programs to allow for coaching, professional development and technical assistance.

Goals:

1. Continuous improvement of early learning centers;
2. Parent awareness of quality centers;
3. Create a path toward quality that will increase family engagement and community knowledge.

Expectations of the Coalition:

The expectations of the Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County for Stars Over Escambia include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Insuring quality programs
2. Respecting and supporting families
3. Supporting programs through training, coaching, technical assistance and development of a Quality Improvement Plan supervised by a Provider Specialist
4. Completing evaluations in a timely manner
5. Validating and presenting in service hours for completed trainings
6. Awarding of stars for successful completion of Stars Over Escambia program in a timely manner.
7. Acknowledge the submitted passport within 10 business days

Expectations of the Providers:

The Expectations of participating Providers include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Commitment to continuous quality
2. Cooperation with coalition in completion of Stars Over Escambia
3. Completing all required paperwork and submitting it in a timely manner
4. Implementing the Quality Improvement Plan as outlined by Provider Specialist
5. Displaying the Stars Over Escambia Banner

Quality Standards and Star Rating:

The Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County will have its Stars Over Escambia focus on three (3) equally important standards of quality during the first award period (an 18 – 24 month period)

- Program Personnel
 - a. Staff Qualifications and Professional Development
- Program Content
 - a. Infant CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System)
 - b. Toddler CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System)
 - c. Pre-K CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System)
- Program Support
 - a. Child Screening and Child Assessment

Future Evaluations will add additional requirements for continued success.

Both the Center-Based Program and Family Child Care Home Validation Checklist and Assessment Goals will be available in the manual appendix or on the Coalition's website – www.elcescambia.org/ (under the Provider tab, click on QRIS)

Stars Over Escambia Rating Process

Depending on the outcome of the assessment score totals, a program will receive a Star Rating consisting of either 5-stars, 4-stars, 3-stars, 2-stars or 1-star.

A star rating will be good for two (2) years and a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) will be designed specifically for each program. Provider shall have the following options:

1. Publish the star rating as it stands.
2. Publish the star rating and begin a Quality Improvement Plan which shall not exceed six months.
3. Hold off on publishing the star rating until the completion of the Quality Improvement Plan which shall not exceed six months.

The Coalition will also include a program's star rating for parents requesting such information through the Child Care Resource and Referral process.

If at any time during the two year period a program is monitored by DCF or the Coalition's Provider Specialist and found to have a Class I violation, the star rating will be revoked until further notice. The Guide for each respective program type provides a full explanation of consequences for DCF violation and/or being placed on probation by the Coalition. Reapplication is possible after one year.

Benefits to Providers Participating in Stars Over Escambia

Support services programs will include:

- **Technical Assistance for Quality Improvement:** Each Stars Over Escambia program participant will be assigned a Provider Specialist (PS) who is dedicated to supporting the program during the quality improvement process and beyond. The Provider Specialist will work closely with your program staff, specifically your teaching staff, to develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The QIP is a guide that will outline the additional goals and action plans that may be utilized in order to promote a quality-based learning environment for the children in your program.
- **Career Advisement:** Coalition Staff will help program participants identify what is needed to increase knowledge, skills and qualifications for staff members teaching in early learning and education settings.
- **Educational Training:** Stars Over Escambia and The Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County will provide trainings on a variety of topics designed to increase the classroom knowledge of program teachers. Coalition Staff will work with program staff members to help them develop a plan to meet their educational goals.
- **Recognition/Marketing/Advertising:** Banners will be provided to centers that have achieved their stars (upgrading will yield an updated banner). These may be displayed outside the center and used as a marketing and advertising tool. The ratings are also beneficial when placed on the center's website. They will appear on the Coalition's website for parents to view.

2.0 The Process

Eligibility Checklist

All contracted School Readiness programs are eligible to participate in Stars Over Escambia. In order to be eligible to participate, however, a program must meet the following criteria:

- Hold a School Readiness Provider Contract with The Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County and have a program based in Escambia County.
- Be in good standing with applicable School Readiness Provider Contract.
- Be in good standing with the Department of Children and Families/Child Care Licensing or other accredited licensing agency.
- Director must have completed MMCI.
- Meet Stars Over Escambia Licensing Status Policy:
 - a. Zero (0) Class 1 licensing violations within the last 12 months.
 - b. No probationary status by the Department of Children and Families during the past 12 months.
 - c. Zero (0) Major DCF non-compliance issues which endanger the health and safety of children at the center.

To be eligible, Providers must be violation free as stated above, AND contracted with the Early Learning Coalition for at least one year before applying. More clearly, it must be at least one (1) year since the last disqualifying violation (assuming there were no additional violations during that period). Once a School Readiness Provider meets these requirements a passport can be issued immediately. If a program has not been operating with an active license for a least one year, it will be eligible one year from the active date. If a program is ineligible due to operating on a probationary license, it will be eligible once it obtains an annual license.

The Passport

The Stars Over Escambia passport package may be found on the Coalition's website, under the Stars Over Escambia tab. www.elcescambia.org

All participants are required to fill out the passport package – either online directly through the website, or drop the completed package off at the Coalition's main office in Pensacola. The package can also be printed and either faxed, or scanned and emailed.

After the Coalition has received and verified the information supplied in the passport, Providers will be notified within 10 business days of receipt of the passport as to whether, or not, they are eligible to participate in Stars Over Escambia.

The timeliness of responses to applications is dependent upon staffing and funding. Terms of the agreement are **for two (2) years**, after the awarding of a star rating, wherein the program and Coalition will work together to complete the process. The contract and rating certificate will provide exact validation dates.

Passport Summary:

The Stars Over Escambia Passport is easy and straightforward. The information included is obtained from a Provider's records and should be reproduced accurately. Applicants should be sure to fill in all the blank areas:

- Business Contact Information
- Business Information
- Verification of Minimum Criteria
- Agreement to Become a Stars Over Escambia Provider
- Signatures

Signing, dating and submitting the passport application begins the Stars Over Escambia process.

Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County
3300 N Pace Blvd Suite 210, Pensacola, FL 32505
STARS OVER ESCAMBIA PASSPORT FORM

BUSINESS CONTACT INFORMATION

Owner Name:	Date Business Established:
Business Name:	<input type="checkbox"/> Child Care Center <input type="checkbox"/> Family Child Care Home <input type="checkbox"/> Large Family Child Care Home
Phone:	
E-mail:	
Registered Business Address Location:	

BUSINESS INFORMATION

Site Name:	Other Business Name (if applicable):
How long at current address:	Primary Business Address (city, state, zip):
DCF License/Exemption #: Expiration Date:	Gold Seal Designation: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Process

VERIFICATION OF MINIMUM CRITERIA

School Readiness Provider contracted for current year and based in Escambia County: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Process If No, explain: _____ MMCI Completer: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Process	
In Good Standing with Statewide School Readiness Provider Contract: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Process If No or In Process, explain: _____	
In Good Standing with Department of Children and Families: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If No, explain: _____	
Have you received a Coalition Corrective Action Notification in the last 12 months: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If Yes, explain: _____	
Class I Violations: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If Yes, explain: _____	
Class II Violations: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If Yes, explain: _____	
Accreditation: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Process	If Yes, Which Accrediting Agency: _____
If In Process, with which accrediting body: _____	If No, with which accrediting body do you plan to seek accreditation: _____

AGREEMENT TO BECOME STARS OVER ESCAMBIA PROVIDER

1. By signing and submitting this passport, I am aware of the benefits and commitments of participating in Stars Over Escambia. (See Expectations in the Provider Manual)
2. By submitting this passport, you authorize The Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County to make inquiries into the correctness of any statements provided above.

SIGNATURES

Owner Signature:	Director Signature:
Name and Title:	Name and Title:
Date:	Date:

Expectations for Star Ratings

The Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County and its program, Stars Over Escambia, reserve the right to take any action necessary for the betterment, preservation and validity of this initiative. The Coalition's Executive Director can initiate termination of a Provider program at any time based on recommendations of Coalition staff or system partners AFTER the Provider has been afforded an opportunity for due process.

Grounds for immediate termination from Stars Over Escambia

- One (1) Class 1 violation during the past 12 months.
- Being placed on probationary status by DCF during the past 12 months.
- Any other major DCF non-compliance issues which endanger the health and safety of children.
- No more than two (2) of the same Class 2 licensing violations within the last 12 months in the same category.
- Being placed on probation by the Coalition for contractual noncompliance.

Change in owner or location(s)

- If there is a change in location or owner, notification must be submitted to the Coalition in writing within five (5) business days.
- The star rating is non-transferrable to new owners or another location.
- The sign and the certificate will be picked up by the Coalition.

Change in Director

- If there is a change in Director, notification must be submitted to the Coalition in writing within five (5) business days of the change.
- A Coalition staff member will visit the facility to evaluate continued participation.
- Re-application will be required to verify new status.

Limitations of Participation

- Participation is voluntary. Either party may discontinue participation, but should give the other thirty (30) days written notice. The Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County will give prior notification and justification if participation is to be terminated.
- Participation in Stars Over Escambia does not guarantee a high star level designation or allow the participant to be eligible to waive county or state licensure.
- The timeliness of Coalition response to applications is dependent upon staffing and funding **but a 10 day response is the standard**
- Terms of agreement/participation/tenure are for two (2) years, after the star rating is awarded, wherein the Provider and Coalition will continue to work together and develop a comprehensive Quality Improvement Plan.

Reapplication

- Providers that have had their Stars Over Escambia revoked, may re-apply after one year and meeting all other eligibility requirements.

3.0 Process for Reapplication for Stars Over Escambia

The Star designation shall be valid for a period of two years (24 months). Ninety days (90) before the expiration date, it will be the responsibility of the Provider to re-apply for Stars Over Escambia. This can be done on-line or with the reapplication found in the Appendix of the Provider Manual. The Coalition shall review all reapplication packages, and respond within 10 business days. The Coalition shall inform the Provider of the next steps to take to complete the process.

These steps shall include:

1. Setting up appointment with the Coalition and Provider Specialist for re-evaluation. (This will be done within the 10-business day window.)
2. Acknowledge terms of agreement, and understand ALL expectations and requirements.

It should be noted that a new passport, evaluation and possibly a Quality Improvement Plan will be part of the reapplication process. Nothing carries over from previous passport applications. This is to ensure that quality has been maintained, or improved and technical assistance has moved a Provider to a higher level of quality and professional development.

4.0 Stars Over Escambia Contact Information

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