



**Child Care  
Services**

**Reaching for the Stars for Family Child Care Homes  
Quality Rating Improvement System**

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Contact Information for QRIS Personnel  
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## QRIS Overview

**Reaching for the Stars** is the name of Oklahoma's **Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)**. Oklahoma was the first state in the nation to implement a QRIS. The majority of other states have now implemented some form of a quality rating and improvement system. The Reaching for the Stars program is for all child care providers who are shaping the lives of children and the future of our state. Our goal is for each 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 have been developed from research and what is universally considered to be quality care. Oklahoma's Quality Rating Improvement System was designed to assist individual providers in improving the care and education they provide for children, raise the professional development level of child care providers, and increase parents' awareness of the importance of positive practices in child care.

Child Care Services (CCS) is committed to providing the resources and incentives needed to increase Star levels. Please consult your Licensing Specialist or Stars Outreach Specialist (SOS) to determine how you can join other child care providers in enhancing and improving child care in Oklahoma.

### Levels of Reaching for the Stars Certification

**Three Star:** An owner must apply for and meet all 1, 1+ and 2 Star criteria and

- 1) be accredited by one of the approved national accrediting agencies or
- 2) be a Head Start meeting the Head Start Performance Standards.

**Two Star:** An owner must either apply and meet all 1, 1+ and 2 Star criteria or meet licensing status and compliance and be accredited by a national accrediting body approved by CCS or a Head Start grantee and compliant with Head Start Performance Standards.

**One Star Plus:** An owner must apply for and meet all 1 Star and 1+ criteria.

**One Star:** Meeting minimum licensing requirements is the foundation for Reaching for the Stars. A program that has a 6 month permit or a license is automatically designated as a One Star program.

Complete Star policy can be located at [www.okdhs.org](http://www.okdhs.org). Resources in this book can assist programs in understanding and implementing CCS Reaching for the Stars policy.

# The Foundation

## Compliance with Licensing Requirements

The foundation of the *Reaching for the Stars* program is licensing requirements. Before seeking to meet additional quality criteria, a program should first strive to maintain compliance with requirements established as a minimum standard for operation. DHS has established the following policy to assist child care providers and licensing specialists in evaluating compliance.

**The program must have a permit or license, and must not have numerous, repeated, or serious (NRS) non-compliance with applicable licensing requirements. The monitoring visits and substantiated complaints for the last 24 months of operation are reviewed to determine whether the facility meets the compliance criteria.**

If there is a history of numerous, repeated or serious non-compliance over the last 24 months, Star certification may be **denied**. An existing facility may be **reduced** if serious non-compliance occurs. The following defines numerous, repeated and serious non-compliances for licensing as 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 report 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; supervision of children; infant sleep environment; prohibited disciplinary actions; licensed capacity; use of passenger restraints; water activities; pools and other water hazards; multiple hazards; weapons; reporting child abuse; knowingly permitting access to children by persons identified as restricted or registrants; failure to obtain background investigations or Child Care Restricted Registry searches; administering medication to children; room temperatures; heat sources and loss of any utility service; compliance file and/or posting; cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid training; liability insurance; or vehicle liability insurance.

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 but may be part of repeated or numerous non-compliance.

For more information you may refer to the policy listed at: <http://www.okdhs.org>

## Reaching for the Stars Rationale, Policy, Evidence/Acceptable Documentation

### 340:110-1-8.4. Licensing status and compliance for differential quality rating and improvement certification criteria Revised 11-1-16

**Rationale:** Meeting and maintaining minimum licensing requirements ensures the basic health and safety of children in care. It is the foundation of the Reaching for the Stars program.

Check if met	QRIS Family Child Care Home Policy	Star Level	Evidence or Indicators
[ ]	(a) Licensing status criteria for one star plus, two star, and three star levels. For certification, programs must have a license or permit.	1+, 2, 3	Verification is the State issued permit or license.
[ ]	(b) Compliance criteria for one star plus, two star, and three star levels. The monitoring visits and substantiated complaints for the last 24 months of operation are reviewed. The licensing record from the applicant's previous licenses, if any is considered. Numerous, repeated, and serious non-compliance per Oklahoma Administrative Code (OAC) 340:110-1-9.3 are considered when approving or denying star certification. The request for certification may be denied or status may be reduced, if:	1+, 2, 3	<b>At application and ongoing</b> , CCS personnel will review monitoring reports and complaint summaries for the last 24 months.
[ ]	(1) there are numerous, repeated, or serious non-compliance with applicable licensing requirements; or	1+, 2, 3	<b>At application and ongoing</b> , CCS personnel will review monitoring reports and complaint summaries for the last 24 months.
[ ]	(2) a serious incident resulting in injury or imminent risk of harm.	1+, 2, 3	<b>At application and ongoing</b> , CCS personnel will review monitoring reports and complaint summaries for the last 24 months.

**340:110-1-8.6. Director, personnel, and primary caregiver qualifications for differential quality rating and improvement certification criteria**

**Revised 11-1-16**

**Rationale:** The level of quality found in child care largely depends on the knowledge and skills of the people who work with children. All children are ready to learn from birth and what caregivers do or do not do can help or hurt a child's success in life. In order to meet children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical needs, caregivers need to have a thorough understanding of child development and be able to implement developmentally appropriate practices. Their knowledge in Early Learning Guidelines is key to classroom success, including lower behavior guidance problems and increased school-readiness.

Check if met	QRIS Family Child Care Home Policy	Star Level	Evidence or Indicators
[ ]	(a) <b>Master teacher and primary caregiver qualifications for two and three star levels.</b> Master teachers and primary caregivers must be employed on-site on a full-time basis and trained in Oklahoma's Early Learning Guidelines. An individual is not counted as a master teacher, director, or primary caregiver at more than one program, unless the programs do not operate concurrently at any given time.	2 & 3	Full-time employment is verified by personnel daily attendance records, when needed. ELG training is verified by viewing the Oklahoma Professional Development Registry or certificates or college transcripts.
[ ]	(2) Primary caregivers meet and maintain one of the requirements in (A) through (I) of this paragraph.	2 & 3	Qualifications are verified by viewing the Oklahoma Professional Development Registry.
	[ ] (A) Occupational child care competency certificate for master teacher or lead teacher through an Oklahoma technology center and three months of satisfactory full-time experience in a licensed or legally exempt child care setting.	2 & 3	
	[ ] (B) Current Child Development Associate (CDA) or Certified Childcare Professional (CCP) credential.	2 & 3	
	[ ] (C) Certificate of Mastery in early childhood education or child development from an accredited Oklahoma college or university.	2 & 3	

**340:110-1-8.7. Professional development for differential quality rating and improvement certification criteria**  
**Revised 11-1-16**

**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 facility, leadership, managing staff, nutrition, child development, understanding and utilizing the Early Learning Guidelines, etc.

Everyone who works with young children and their families need a basic understanding of child development and early education and how children learn.

A written educational professional development plan serves as a map to progress in the field of early education. It helps individuals stay organized to meet professional development deadlines so they can plan for and track professional development needed to renew credentials and other certifications like CPR.

Check if met	QRIS Family Child Care Home Policy	Star Level	Evidence or Indicators
[ ]	(c) <b>Primary caregiver professional development requirements for one star plus, two star, and three star homes.</b> No more than six hours of informal professional development per Professional Development Ladder certification may be counted in total hours. Primary caregiver qualifications listed in (1) – (2) of this subsection are required.	1+, 2, 3	The Oklahoma Professional Development Registry or training certificates or college transcripts are viewed to verify no more than six hours of informal professional development has been counted for required professional development.
[ ]	(1) At request for star certification, the primary caregiver must have documentation of at least two college credits or 20-clock hours of job-related professional development. At initial request for star certification, the professional development may be counted if obtained within the last 12 months or within the primary caregiver's employment year.	1+, 2, 3	The Oklahoma Professional Development Registry or training certificates or college transcripts are viewed to verify required professional development hours.
[ ]	(2) After approval for certification, the professional development criteria must be met within the primary caregiver's Professional Development Ladder certification.	1+, 2, 3	The Oklahoma Professional Development Registry is viewed to verify required professional development hours.

**340:110-1-8.8. Learning environment differential quality rating and improvement certification criteria  
Revised 11-1-16**

**Rationale:** Learning is an interactive process and children learn through doing. The environment in which children play and learn should provide them with opportunities to explore and interact with a variety of activities and materials, and allow for each child's individual temperament, moods, and development. Reading aloud to children is an important part of the day as it helps children acquire the information and skills they need to succeed in school and life. Vocabulary (knowing the names for things) begins to develop at birth and reading to children is the single most important activity for building the foundation required for eventual success in reading.

Current early childhood researchers agree that young children under two years old should not watch television. 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.

Check if met	QRIS Family Child Care Home Policy	Star Level	Evidence or Indicators
[ ]	(c)(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.	1+, 2, 3	<b>At application:</b> a copy of the current daily schedule reflecting opportunities for learning, physical activity, indoor and outdoor plan, rest periods and meals is submitted. <b>Ongoing:</b> the daily schedule is observed on-site by CCS.
[ ]	(c)(2) The daily schedule is posted.	1+, 2, 3	The posted daily schedule is observed on-site by CCS.
[ ]	(c)(3) Children are read to a minimum of 15 minutes each day.	1+, 2, 3	Daily reading is verified by the daily schedule or observed on-site by CCS.
[ ]	(c)(4) Television or other screen time is not used for children 1-year-old or younger.	1+, 2, 3	No use of television is verified by the daily schedule or observed on-site by CCS.
[ ]	(d)(1) Children have opportunities during the day to access art, block building, book reading, dramatic play, manipulative play, and music and movement.	2 & 3	Opportunities for daily access to art, block building, books, dramatic play, manipulative play, and music and movement is observed on-site by CCS.
[ ]	(d)(2) The provider has a plan for transition times.	2 & 3	Transition time plans are observed on-site by CCS or described by the FCCH personnel.

Check if met	QRIS Family Child Care Home Policy	Star Level	Evidence or Indicators
[ ]	(d)(1) provides parents a minimum of two references, including contact information. Relative references are not accepted; and	2 & 3	Verification of provider references is references listed in the family handbook or contract or posted in family resource area.
[ ]	(d)(2) has and uses a system to communicate with families the happenings, activities, and related issues regarding their child's physical and emotional state.	2 & 3	Verification of communication with families about their child's happenings, activities and issues are examples/copies of daily documentation provided to families or explanation of verbal procedures used.



Check if met	QRIS Family Child Care Home Policy	Star Level	Evidence or Indicators
	<input type="checkbox"/> (3) The program has a written plan for meeting established goals including professional development and educational needs of personnel or the provider and assistant as well as program policy and procedures.	2 & 3	Verification of established program goals are written plans with dates the goals were established and are updated annually and include goals for personnel professional development and educational needs as well as program policy and procedures .
	<input type="checkbox"/> (4) Personnel participate in program evaluation and the established goals are shared with personnel.	2 & 3	Verification of personnel participation is personnel meeting sign-in sheet with agendas or personnel meeting minutes with personnel present.

# Reaching for the Stars Rights and Responsibilities

## You have the right to:

- submit an application and have it processed in a timely manner (no longer than 30 days).
- withdraw an application prior to approval or denial by contacting the Stars Outreach Specialist for your area.
- receive written notification of the decision made regarding your application.
- if denied, contact the Stars Outreach Specialist or Licensing Supervisor for discussion/clarification.
- reapply at any time following a denial once all criteria are met. However, if the request was denied due to **Numerous, Repeated, or Serious (NRS)** non-compliance(s), the program may not be approved for a higher certification level for six months from the denial date. You may request to reduce the six-month waiting period by requesting it in writing to the Regional Program Manager for your area.
- request an Extension of Time to Comply (CCS form 07LC074E). You may request an Extension of Time to Comply under the following circumstances: your facility has a plan of correction for a Star criteria violation (except compliance with licensing) and you are unable to correct non-compliances within the agreed-upon time frame. You must demonstrate that the violation of the criteria was not foreseeable and beyond your control; all requests must be submitted in writing 30 days prior to the expiration of the agreed-upon time frame for violations and must include all supporting documentation, all requests are to be 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 (no longer than 30 days).
- receive written notification regarding violation of Stars criteria. This notification may be in the form of a letter, notice to comply, supplementary information page, or on the periodic Stars review completed for the appropriate Stars level.
- you have the right to grieve any non-compliances or substantiated complaints within 10 days of notification.
- request an alternative settlement in lieu of being recommended for reduction, by submitting a plan to the Regional Program Manager for your county.
- receive written notification of a reduction of the Stars level and instructions on requesting an appeal of this decision.

## Reaching for the Stars Primary Caregiver Qualifications

A primary caregiver must be employed at the program, be on-site on a full-time basis (80 percent of the operating hours), work directly with children, be trained in ELG and meet and maintain one of the following:

- **Occupational Child Care Competency Certificate for master teacher or lead teacher** through an Oklahoma technology center and three months of satisfactory full-time experience in a licensed or legally exempt childcare setting. For more information about this certificate, call your area Technology school or 1-800-522-5810 **OR**
- Current **Child Development Associate (CDA)**. For more information, call 800-424-4310 or visit [www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org) **OR**
- **Current Certified Childcare Professional (CCP) credential**. For more information, call 405-225-9395 **OR**
- **Certificate of Mastery** in early childhood education or child development from an accredited Oklahoma college or university. For more information, call 866-343-3881 **OR**
- Thirty college credit hours from an accredited college or university, including 15 credit hours in early childhood education, child development, or other coursework supporting working with children **OR**
- Four year degree from an accredited college or university with six college credit hours in early childhood education, child development, or other coursework supporting working with children **OR**
- Two or four year degree from an accredited college or university in early childhood education or child development **OR**
- A valid teaching certificate in early childhood education from the Oklahoma State Department of Education **OR**
- Current Oklahoma Professional Development Ladder (OPDL) certificate of Level 3, specifically met by an Oklahoma Competency Certificate with a Master Teacher emphasis or Level 4 or higher.

An individual is not counted as a master teacher, director, or primary caregiver in more than one program or considered a master teacher in one program and a director of another program, unless the programs do not operate concurrently at any given time.