



## **Guiding Stars of Duval (GSOD) Professional Development Incentive Program** **2025-2026 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

### **GSOD CENTER AND FCCH REQUIREMENTS**

1. The child care center/FCCH must be star rated by June 2026.
2. The child care center/FCCH must be in good standing with DCF and have a current license or have a valid accreditation certificate by May 31, 2026.
3. The child care center/FCCH must have a current school readiness contract.

### **GSOD TEACHER AND ASSISTANT TEACHER REQUIREMENTS**

**You MUST show proof of ALL of the following:**

1. Employment of teaching staff (**Teaching staff - any staff person assigned to a classroom, including lead and assistant teachers, is responsible for or participates in providing academic support, and spends at least 15 hours per week in the classroom**) at a GSOD star rated center from **June 2025 – May 2026**. Documentation may be requested for verification. **Staff must be listed in CARES** (Childcare Administration, Regulation & Enforcement System)
2. A copy of a current DCF transcript documenting successful completion of the required **40 DCF training hours and additional 5 training hours** from DCF. All 45 hours must be documented on your DCF transcript. This is the only form of documentation that will be accepted. Your name must appear on the transcript.
3. A copy of your CPR/First Aid card as required by DCF. Online First Aid and online CPR cards are accepted and must be valid through May 31, 2026.
4. A copy of a **current (non-expired-must be valid through 5/31/26)** national CDA, FCCPC, Director's Credential (All credentials earned must be from birth to 5), **or**  
an unofficial copy of an associate's degree, **or** an unofficial copy of a bachelor's degree, **or** an unofficial copy of a master's degree, **or**  
an unofficial copy of a doctoral degree.

#### **NOTES:**

- The effective date of all current (non-expired) credentials noted above must be on or before **May 31, 2026**.
  - Additional documents may be requested to clarify degree earned.
  - Degrees from other countries must be translated from a translation company recognized by the American Translators Association.
5. A copy of a most recent published W-9 (currently March 2024) for those who are receiving a wage incentive for the first time, for those with a name change or for those who need to make changes to their address.
  6. A copy of your June 2025 paycheck stub (showing time worked in June 2025) or a payroll summary/register valid for June 2025 indicating hours worked.
  7. A copy of your May 2026 paycheck stub (showing time worked in May 2026) or a payroll summary/register valid for May 2026 indicating hours worked.  
**NOTE:** 1099 contractors are not eligible for wage incentive.
  8. Wage incentive amounts are calculated using the requirements below:
    - the center's star rating,
    - the in-field (**see list of in-field degrees on page 5**) or out of field degree of the teacher, out of field degrees with 18 credits in early childhood college credits or a teaching certificate in early education will be considered in field
    - number of school readiness children enrolled in the center during a specific time period (to be determined by ELC of Duval),
    - the number of eligible training hours earned from **May 16, 2025 to May 15, 2026**.
  9. Wage incentive checks will be mailed to the address noted on each eligible person's uploaded W9. If you pick up your incentive check, a picture ID with your name on it must be presented. If you do not have your picture ID, you will not be given a check.



## **GSOD OWNER, DIRECTOR AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR REQUIREMENTS**

### **You MUST show proof of ALL of the following:**

1. You must be working at the GSOD star rated center at least 51% of the time the center is open for operation. Documentation may be requested for verification.
2. A copy of a current DCF transcript documenting successful completion of the required **40 DCF training hours and additional 5 training hours** from DCF. All 45 hours must be documented on your DCF transcript. This is the only form of documentation that will be accepted. NO EXCEPTIONS! Your name must appear on the transcript.
3. A copy of your CPR/First Aid card as required by DCF. Online First Aid and online CPR cards are accepted and must be valid thru May 31, 2026.
4. A copy of a **current (non-expired; must be valid through May 31, 2026)** national CDA, FCCPC, Director's Credential (All credentials earned must be from birth to 5), **or** an unofficial copy of an associate's degree, **or** an unofficial copy of a bachelor's degree, **or** an unofficial copy of a master's degree, **or** an unofficial copy of a doctoral degree.

### **NOTES:**

- The effective date of all current (non-expired) credentials noted above must be on or before **May 31, 2026**.
  - An Employment History Recognition Exempt Credential (Grandfathered) will **NOT** be accepted. Additional documents may be requested to clarify degree earned.
  - Degrees from other countries must be translated from a translation company recognized by the American Translators Association.
5. A copy of a most recent published W-9 (currently March 2024) for those who are receiving a wage incentive for the first time, for those with a name change or for those who need to make changes to their address.
  6. A copy of your June 2025 paycheck stub (showing time worked in June 2025), a payroll summary/register valid for June 2025 indicating hours worked, or a 2025 Florida Profit Corporation Annual Report (owners only).
  7. A copy of your May 2026 paycheck stub (showing time worked in May 2026) a payroll summary/register valid for June 2025 indicating hours worked, or a 2026 Florida Profit Corporation Annual Report (owners only).  
**NOTE:** 1099 contractors are not eligible for wage incentives.
  8. Wage incentive amounts are calculated using the requirements below:
    - the center's star rating,
    - the in-field (**see list of in-field degrees on page 5**) or out of field degree of the Director, Owner or Assistant Director, out of field degrees with 18 hours of ECE college credits or a teaching certificate in early childhood will be considered in field
    - number of school readiness children enrolled in the center during a specific time period (to be determined by ELC of Duval),
    - the number of training hours earned from **May 16, 2025 to May 15, 2026**.
  9. Wage incentive checks will be mailed to the address noted on each eligible person's uploaded W9. If you pick up your incentive check, a picture ID with your name on it must be presented. If you do not have your picture ID, you will not be given a check.



## **GSOD FCCH PROVIDER REQUIREMENTS**

### **You MUST show proof of ALL of the following:**

1. You must be working at the GSOD star rated family child care home at least 51% of the time the family child care home is open for operation. Documentation may be requested for verification.
2. A copy of a current DCF transcript documenting the required **30 DCF** training hours **and additional 5 training hours** from DCF. All 35 hours must be documented on your DCF transcript. This is the only form of documentation that will be accepted. NO EXCEPTIONS! Your name must appear on the transcript.
3. A copy of your CPR/First Aid card as required by DCF. Online First Aid and online CPR cards are accepted and must be valid thru May 31, 2025.
4. A copy of a **current (non-expired)** national CDA or FCCPC (All credentials earned must be from birth to 5), **or** a current (non-expired) Director's Credential, **or** an unofficial copy of an associate's degree, **or** an unofficial copy of a bachelor's degree, **or** an unofficial copy of a master's degree, **or** an unofficial copy of a doctoral degree.

### **NOTES:**

- The effective date of all current (non-expired) credentials noted above must be on or before **May 31, 2026**.
  - Additional documents may be requested to clarify degree earned.
  - Degrees from other countries must be translated from a translation company recognized by the American Translators Association.
5. A copy of a most recent published W-9 (currently March 2024) for those who are receiving a wage incentive for the first time, for those with a name change or for those who need to make changes to their address.
  6. A copy of your June 2025 paycheck stub (showing time worked in June 2025), a payroll summary/register valid for June 2025 indicating hours worked, or a June 2025 EFSM reimbursement report or a DCF license valid for June 2025 (owners only).
  7. A copy of your May 2026 paycheck stub (showing time worked in May 2026), a payroll summary/register valid for June 2025 indicating hours worked, or May 2026 reimbursement report or a valid DCF license for May 2026 (owners only).

**NOTE:** 1099 contractors are not eligible wage incentives.

8. Wage incentive amounts are calculated using the requirements below:
  - the center's star rating,
  - the in-field (**see list of in-field degrees on page 5**) or out of field degree of the provider, out of field degrees with 18 hours of ECE college credits or a teaching certificate in early childhood may be considered in field
  - number of school readiness children enrolled in the center during a specific time period (to be determined by ELC of Duval),
  - the number of training hours earned from **May 16, 2025 to May 15, 2026**.
9. Wage incentive checks will be mailed to the address noted on each eligible person's uploaded W9. If you pick up your incentive check, a picture ID with your name on it must be presented. If you do not have your picture ID, you will not be given your check.



## **Training Requirements for all Applicants**

The training hours required for the wage incentive are to enhance professional development and should be viewed as training that **EXCEEDS** the expected hours required to be employed as a child care worker. Training hours must provide a focus on early care and education and/or early childhood development. The number of training hours can range from a minimum of **5 hours to a maximum of 20 hours**.

- **\*IMPORTANT\*** In order to be eligible for the wage incentive, a minimum of .5 IACET CEUs of training MUST BE earned **only by the Early Learning Coalition of Duval**. These hours can be earned from an in-person training OR an online training. Please visit the ELC of Duval Training Calendar at <https://www.elcduval.org/i-am-a-provider/register-for-a-training/> for training opportunities to fulfill this requirement. Trainings will not be offered after April 15, 2026; ELC of Duval is not responsible for providers who do not complete their required 5 hours before this date.
- The remaining early care and education training hours can be completed by the option listed above and **only** the options listed below.
  - IACET approved CEU trainings; IACET providers can be found at <https://www.iacet.org/affiliates/accredited-providers-list/>
  - trainings offered by KHA, FSS, ECS, UF Learning (or affiliates), ELCs, CDEA, DOE, Division of Early Learning, DELDN, FDLRS Crown, UF/IFAS Extension Duval County, DCF, Teachstone, National Head Start Office and local Head Start affiliates, Duval County Public Schools, Lena GROW, Early Learning Exchange at Schultz Institute, Childcare Education Institute, Nemours, Florida Institute of Education at the University of North Florida, FSCJ, NAEYC and affiliates, Jacksonville Public Library, the Council for Professional Recognition, Teaching Strategies GOLD, the National Association for Family Child Care, the Florida Family Child Care Home Association, and the National Association of Family Child Care Homes and its local affiliates
  - Trainings offered directly from Calm Classroom, Be Strong Families, Positive Discipline, or by a certified trainer of the Pyramid Model that are related to initiatives at the ELC of Duval
  - Early Childhood Education instructor led, hybrid or online college level course from a **Florida public state institution** (a 1 hour college course will equal 10 training hours, 2 hour course will equal 20 hours, etc.). College level courses must be completed between May 16, 2025 and May 15, 2026. A class schedule to verify the date the class was taken and a college transcript showing when the credit was earned must be provided.
  - Conscious Discipline Training authored by Dr. Becky Bailey, conducted by a Master or Certified Conscious Discipline Instructor. The certificate must be issued from the Conscious Discipline organization.
  - a training certificate or other documentation showing proof of attendance at an Early Childhood Education conference. At a minimum the conference program, agenda and/or certificate of attendance, if available, is required. It is at the discretion of the coalition to determine whether or not the documentation presented shows actual attendance.
    - Training hours that will **NOT** count towards the wage incentive are:
      - CPR and First Aid
      - Initial CDA credential hours
      - Initial DCF required trainings (40+5 required hours)
      - Initial SR required trainings (if used for initial childcare hours)
      - USDA Food Program
      - Staff Meetings
      - Afterschool or school-aged topics
      - Trainings conducted by Director or staff at center

**NO OTHER TRAINING CERTIFICATES WILL BE ACCEPTED!**



### **ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS & DEFINITIONS**

- When ELC requests the documentation for staff listed to receive a wage incentive, you must be in good standing with your employer and with DCF from June 2025 – May 2026. This is at the discretion of the **director/owner** to determine “good standing” during the previously mentioned time frame. Once the required documentation is submitted, all staff listed will be eligible to receive a wage incentive **if** they meet the requirements.
- The Coalition's leadership reserves the right to decide about training hour requirements and distributing a professional development incentive to any Guiding Stars center personnel, after an opportunity for a meeting and due process.
- In-field degrees can be in A.S., A.A, B.A., B.S., or advanced degree in Early Childhood Education/Child Development, Pre-Kindergarten or Primary Education, Preschool Education, Family and Consumer Sciences, Exceptional Student Education, Special Education, Mental Disabilities, Specific Learning Disabilities, Physically Impaired, Varying Exceptionalities, Visually Impaired, Hearing Impaired, Speech-Language Pathology, or Elementary Education
- If you are a GSOD director at one location and a teacher at another GSOD location, you will only receive one incentive check.
- One of the important goals and expectations of the Guiding Stars of Duval Professional Development Incentive Program is to reward staff for remaining employed at the same GSOD center **for at least a year**. To continue to be eligible in the program, please note the following:
  1. Employees who move during the program year **for ANY reason** (including being promoted to another position at a “corporate” center who may have more than one location) and become employed at another GSOD center **will no longer be eligible** to receive an incentive. This includes “corporate” centers with more than one location.
  2. If a GSOD center closes and you move to another center that is **not** listed as star rated you will no longer be eligible to participate in the Guiding Stars of Duval Professional Development Incentive Program.
  3. If a GSOD center closes, you must become employed within 30 days at another GSOD center that is listed as star rated. If you earned any training hours while employed at the center that closed, those hours can be used to meet the qualifications towards the Guiding Stars of Duval Professional Development Incentive Program. A letter from your current center director on the center's letterhead must be provided. The dates of current employment and the date and name of the center where the employee was previously employed must be included in the letter. The employee must remain employed at the center thru **May 1, 2026**.
- You will be asked to produce copies of all **certificates** earned towards the incentive program for the respective year. It is the responsibility of each class or workshop participant to keep his or her own certificate upon receipt. If for any reason your ELC certificate is misplaced, lost in the mail, destroyed, etc, request for a certificate must be submitted by email to [training@elcduval.org](mailto:training@elcduval.org) at least 2 weeks prior to the date the certificate is needed. Please include your name, date of training, title of training, location and hours earned in the email. A copy of an ELC training transcript will not meet the wage incentive training requirement.
- Staff Qualifications and Professional Development information submitted by providers who will go through Guiding Stars validation / revalidation in **2025-26**, will be cross referenced with information provided for the Guiding Stars of Duval Professional Incentive Program to ensure alignment in meeting the requirements.

***Any false documentation submitted will PERMANENTLY disqualify you from ever receiving any wage incentive from the coalition.***

***Termination of the center's school readiness agreement will disqualify the provider's eligibility for a wage incentive.***