



Guiding Stars of Duval (GSOD) Wage Incentive Program

2026-2027 Eligibility Requirements

Center and FCCH Eligibility Requirements

1. The child care center/FCCH must be star rated by June 2027.
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, 2027.
3. The child care center/ FCCH must have a current school readiness contract.

GSOD Portal and Documents

Providers will be notified when the portal opens in Spring 2027. Documents must be uploaded to the portal within the window to be counted toward wage incentive.

Find the pages below that relate to the work you do for wage incentive qualifications.

Table of Contents

CENTERS: Owners, Directors, and Assistant Directors.....	Page 2
FCCH: Owners and Teaching Staff.....	Page 3
CENTERS: Teaching Staff and Other Staff.....	Page 4
Training Requirements for All Applicants.....	Page 5-6
Wage Incentive Calculations.....	Page 6
FAQ.....	Page 6-7



CENTERS: Owners, Directors, and Assistant Directors

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.

You MUST show proof of ALL of the following:

1. 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.
2. A copy of a **current (non-expired-must be valid through 5/31/27)** national CDA or FCCPC, AA/AS, BA/BS or higher degree **required for all staff** in birth to 5, applying for wage incentive. Staff Credential Verifications with formal education noted, must be accompanied by documentation of a degree of AA, AS, BA, BS, or above.
 - These credentials may increase the incentive received with documentation of **one** below:
 - 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
 - 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.
3. Professional Development: ELC IACET hours are required from ELC's training department. No other substitutions will be permitted. Trainings will not be offered after April 14, 2027. **(see page 5 for more details)**
4. May/June 2026 Paystub: A copy of your May or June 2026 paycheck stub (showing time worked). If you do not receive paycheck stubs, your employer may provide a payroll summary/register valid for May or June 2026, indicating hours worked. OWNERS ONLY may provide a 2026 Florida Profit Corporation Annual Report indicating your name as owner/principal.
5. CPR/First Aid: 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, 2027.
6. W9: 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.
7. May 2027 Paystub: A copy of your May 2027 paycheck stub (showing time worked in May 2027). If you do not receive paycheck stubs, your employer may provide a payroll summary/register valid for May 2027, indicating hours worked. OWNERS ONLY may provide a 2027 Florida Profit Corporation Annual Report indicating your name as owner/principal.



FCCH: Owners and Teaching Staff

Owners: 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. **Staff:** You must be working at the GSOD star rated center at least 15 hour per week or more.

You MUST show proof of ALL of the following:

1. 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.
2. A copy of a **current (non-expired-must be valid through 5/31/27)** national CDA or FCCPC, AA/AS, BA/BS or higher degree **required for all staff** in birth to 5, applying for wage incentive. Staff Credential Verifications with formal education noted, must be accompanied by documentation of a degree of AA, AS, BA, BS, or above.
 - These credentials may increase the incentive received with documentation of **one** below:
 - 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
 - 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.
3. Professional Development: ELC IACET hours are required from ELC's training department. No other substitutions will be permitted. Trainings will not be offered after April 14, 2027. **(see page 5 for more details)**
4. May/June 2026 Paystub: **OWNER:** A copy of your May or June 2026 paycheck stub (showing time worked). If you do not receive paycheck stubs, your employer may provide a payroll summary/register valid for June 2026 indicating hours worked. **OWNERS ONLY** may provide a June 2026 EFSM reimbursement report or a DCF license valid for June 2026. **STAFF:** A copy of your May or June 2026 paycheck stub (showing time worked). If you do not receive paycheck stubs, your employer may provide a payroll summary/register from May or June 2026 that shows hours worked.
5. CPR/First Aid: 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, 2027.
6. W9: 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.
7. May 2027 Paystub: **OWNER:** A copy of your May 2027 paycheck stub (showing time worked in May 2027). If you do not receive paycheck stubs, your employer may provide a payroll summary/register valid for May 2027, indicating hours worked. **OWNERS ONLY** may provide a May 2027 EFSM reimbursement report or a DCF license valid for June 2027. **STAFF:** A copy of your May 2027 paycheck stub (showing time worked in May 2027). If you do not receive paycheck stubs, your employer can provide a payroll summary/register valid for May 2027, indicating hours worked.



CENTERS: Teaching Staff & Other Staff

You must be employed at a GSOD center from June 2026 – May 2027. Teaching staff is defined as 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). Other staff includes all other staff with the exception of the director, lead teacher, or assistant teacher. Other staff must work within the classroom at least 15 hours per week or more to qualify for wage incentive. Staff must be teaching birth to 5 to qualify. This may include a floater/substitute who is not assigned to a classroom but goes wherever is needed to meet the minimum adult/child ratio requirement.

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

1. 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.
2. A copy of a **current (non-expired-must be valid through 5/31/27)** national CDA or FCCPC, AA/AS, BA/BS or higher degree **required for all staff** in birth to 5, applying for wage incentive. Staff Credential Verifications with formal education noted, must be accompanied by documentation of a degree of AA, AS, BA, BS, or above.
 - These credentials may increase the incentive received with documentation of **one** below:
 - 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
 - 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.
3. Professional Development: ELC IACET hours are required from ELC's training department. No other substitutions will be permitted. Trainings will not be offered after April 14, 2027. **(see page 5 for more details)**
4. May/June 2026 Paystub: A copy of your May or June 2026 paycheck stub (showing time worked). If you do not receive paycheck stubs, your employer may provide a payroll summary/register from May or June 2026 that shows hours worked.
5. CPR/First Aid: 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, 2027.
6. W9: 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.
7. May 2027 Paystub: A copy of your May 2027 paycheck stub (showing time worked in May 2027). If you do not receive paycheck stubs, your employer can provide a payroll summary/register valid for May 2027, indicating hours worked.



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** and must fall between May 16, 2026 and May 31, 2027. **Five hours must be from ELC of Duval's IACET trainings. These trainings will not be offered after April 14, 2027.**

- ***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 in YELLOW to fulfill this requirement. Trainings will not be offered after April 14, 2027; 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.
 - **Early Learning** IACET approved CEU trainings; IACET providers can be found at <https://www.iacet.org/affiliates/accredited-providers-list/>
 - **Early Learning** trainings offered by CDEA, Childcare Education Institute, the Council for Professional Recognition, DCF, DCPS, DELDN, DOE, the Division of Early Learning, Early Learning Coalition (any county), Early Learning Exchange at Schultz Institute, ECS, FDLRS Crown, the Florida Family Child Care Home Association, Florida Institute of Education at the University of North Florida, FSCJ, FSS, Jacksonville Public Library, KHA, Lasting Learning (or affiliates), Lena Grow, NAEYC, the National Association for Family Child Care (and local affiliates), the National Head Start Office and local Head Start affiliates, Nemours, Teaching Strategies GOLD, Teachstone, UF/IFAS Extension Duval County
 - Trainings offered directly from Calm Classroom, Be Strong Families, Positive Discipline, Pyramid Model or by a certified trainer in relation to initiatives by 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, 2026 and May 31, 2027. 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 registration, 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
 - Business Classes

NO OTHER TRAINING CERTIFICATES WILL BE ACCEPTED!

Wage Incentive Calculations

Wage incentive amounts are calculated using the requirements below:

- the center's star rating (determined in June 2027)
- the in-field (**see list of in-field degrees on page 7**) 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, 2026 to May 31, 2027**.

FAQ

- **Do cash pay/1099 employees qualify for wage incentive?** No, cash pay and 1099 employees are not eligible for wage incentive.
- **Are other staff such as cooks, bus drivers, or support staff eligible for wage incentive?** No, only staff who work 15 hours per week or more in the classroom are eligible for wage incentive.
- **When will checks be distributed?** Check distribution depends on the review process and the needs of the coalition. Notification of distribution will be available in July/August 2027.
- **How will checks be distributed?** It is up to the Coalition to determine how checks will be distributed whether through mailing or in person.
- **Can I transfer centers and still be eligible for wage incentive?** No. 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: employees who move during the program for **ANY reason** (and become employed at another GSOD center **will no longer be eligible** to receive an incentive. This includes any center with more than one location.
- **What happens if my GSOD center closes?** If a GSOD center closes and you move to another center that is **not** listed as a star rated center you will no longer be eligible for wage incentive. If you become employed at a GSOD within 30 days, you may be eligible but must provide a letter from your current employer stating the start date and previous name of the center that closed.
- **If I work at more than one location, can I receive multiple checks?** No, staff are only



- eligible to receive a wage incentive check for one location.
- **What happens if I have a lapse in my CPR or CDA credential?** If you do not have a current CPR or CDA credential through 5/31/27, you will not be eligible for wage incentive. Staff are responsible for renewing their credentialing. If a credential is renewed in June 2027, staff can apply the following year.
 - **What happens if my center loses its SR agreement?** GSOD centers must remain eligible with their SR contract to remain in GSOD and apply for wage incentive.
 - **What happens if I leave my employment in May 2027?** You must be in good standing with your employer and with DCF from June 2026 – May 2027 to apply for wage incentive. It is up to the discretion of the director/owner to determine "good standing" during the previously mentioned time frame.
 - **What is an in-field degree?** In-field degrees can be A.S., A.A., B.S., B.A., 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. Out-of-field degrees with at least 18 college ECE (Early Childhood Education) credits, may also be considered in-field. This list is subject to change yearly at the discretion of the ELC Board.
 - **What happens if I cannot find my certificates?** It is the responsibility of each class or workshop participant to keep track of their own certificate upon receipt. If, for any reason, your ELC certificate is misplaced, a request for a certificate must be submitted to training@elcduval.org for a replacement at least two weeks prior to the date needed.
 - **Can my wage incentive application be denied?** Any false documentation submitted will PERMANENTLY disqualify you from ever receiving any wage incentive from the coalition. If applications are missing any piece of the application, they may be denied.
 - **What if I am on FMLA during May and do not receive a paycheck?** The purpose of the wage incentive is to reward staff for continuity of care in one center. If you are on leave, please have your director reach out to the professional development director on what documents are needed to prove employment. At a minimum, the last paystub before leave and a letter stating leave and expected return is necessary.
 - **What if my CDA/FCCPC is expired and I have a Director's Credential?** CDA/FCCPC certificates must be active through 5/31/27 when accompanying a director's credential to be eligible for wage incentive.