



**Look for the Stars
Quality Improvement System (QIS)
Provider Contract Agreement
2011 – 2012**

A. Parties

This Quality Improvement System Contract Agreement is made and entered into this _____ day of _____, 2011 by and between _____, Name of Child Care Facility (PROVIDER)

Address City and State

and the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County (ELC).

B. Purpose

The purpose of this agreement is to clearly communicate the commitment between the PROVIDER and the Early Learning Coalition (ELC) in an effort to enhance the program’s quality of child care through the use of the Look for the Stars Quality Improvement System (QIS).

C. General Overview

All providers who receive state funds receive a comprehensive assessment to determine that a provider is meeting mandated requirements. This assessment will also be part of the QIS Star Rating system if the provider chooses to participate.

The assessment will cover the following component areas that measure the quality of the child care program. The assessment is mandated and is not optional for providers receiving state funds. Private providers receiving no state funds may request to be assessed.

- Learning Environment (includes ERS scores, teacher/child ratios, and use of Curricula, Screening and Assessment)
- Staff Qualifications and Professional Development
- Administrative and Business Practices
- Family Involvement

For those providers who choose to be a part of the QIS, the assessment will be used to determine a STAR level based on the collective results of the assessment. The participating providers may also be eligible, dependant on available funding, to receive a variety of support services and benefits outlined in the “benefit to providers” section below, and in the Look for the Stars Provider Handbook.

If a provider opts out of the QIS, they must sign the Opt Out Statement. A site that opts out is not eligible for the benefits as outlined in this agreement and in the Look for the Stars handbook.

D. Process

The following steps comprise the QIS:

- Step 1.** The ELC will arrange for the appropriate environment rating scale assessment for the center or family child care home. If the provider has two or more classrooms, a minimum of two classrooms will be assessed. If both ECERS and ITERS classrooms exist, one ITERS classroom and one ECERS classroom will be randomly selected for assessment. If all classrooms are ECERS, then the assessment will include two ECERS rooms. Providers who serve over 100 children or have more than 10 classrooms will

have an additional (third) classroom assessed. Additional assessments may be done in certain circumstances at the ELC's discretion.

- Step 2.** A Validation Checklist is completed to assess the other components within the QIS.
- Step 3.** The participating PROVIDER and ELC staff will review the results of the assessment. The validation checklist will also be reviewed. The PROVIDER and the ELC staff will reach agreement on the validation checklist and assigned STAR level before moving ahead in the QIS process.
- Step 4.** The PROVIDER signs this QIS agreement if they are choosing to fully participate, or they sign an "opt out" form. If a provider opts out then they will no longer be eligible for any of the Look for the Stars provider supports provided by the ELC.
- Step 5.** When the STAR level is established, it will be effective until the next annual assessment process is completed.
- Step 6.** Based upon the results of the assessment, the PROVIDER and the ELC will develop a program improvement plan to address any programmatic weaknesses that would prevent the program from moving to the next STAR level.
- Step 7.** By signing the program improvement plan, the PROVIDER commits to the plan of action outlined therein.
- Step 8.** The PROVIDER will implement the plan of action outlined in the program improvement plan. The ELC will assist with resources (funding permitting) and consultation to help owners, directors and teachers accomplish the tasks that are detailed in the program improvement plan. *Please Note: Separate requirements, expectations for improvement plans, or subsequent actions for sites that serve school readiness scholarship children may be initiated as per the school readiness contract.*
- Step 9.** Participating PROVIDERS who are eligible for sustaining support to maintain quality will begin to receive such support once the PROVIDER and ELC have reached an agreement and as funding allows.
- Step 10.** It is anticipated that all providers will be re-assessed on an annual basis or on a schedule as determined by ELC.

The PROVIDER and the ELC will together review all before moving ahead in the QIS process. *If an agreement cannot be reached, the ELC has a formal grievance policy available upon request.*

E. Provider Benefits

- PROVIDER benefits are based on the STAR level received and are also outlined in the Look for the Stars Provider Handbook, with updated information posted on the ELC website.
- Mentoring is available to individual directors and/or teachers. Targeted mentoring and training may be offered in a group setting, depending on the need and method determined to be most effective. Individualized improvement plans will be developed in partnership with the director and will focus on developing core competencies.
- Scholarships are open to teachers and directors at participating sites who work at least 20 hours per week at that site (funding permitting). Teachers at participating sites must complete a scholarship application and both the teacher and director must demonstrate commitment to meeting educational goals.

- Trainings directly related to quality components in the Look for the Stars QIS will be provided to all teachers and directors at participating sites.
- As funding permits, A PROVIDER may be eligible for supplemental payments to help maintain quality. **If a provider currently receives a Gold Seal differential payment, that amount will be factored into any supplemental payment, as will any other local grants the provider receives from other sources.** Providers must remain committed to certain minimum wage ranges for staff, and actively participate in our local child care community; examples include providing training, mentoring, or technical assistance to other providers and/or ensuring low-income or at risk children have access to quality child care at the site.

F. Public Acknowledgement of Participation

A PROVIDER that is participating in the Look for the Stars QIS must prominently display the Look for the Stars decal, have Look for the Stars brochures available for parents, and mention participation in the Look for the Star QIS in marketing efforts. Sites may request and receive the appropriate star level certificate to post.

G. Location Signage

Providers are expected to display their business name and address with appropriate street signage. All signage must comply with applicable local ordinances; this requirement is not intended to conflict with existing regulations.

The PROVIDER hereby signs this agreement to be executed as of the date set forth in Paragraph #1 and agrees to fully participate in the Look for the Stars Quality Improvement System.

_____	_____
Name of Facility	Program License Number
_____	_____
Signature of Director/Operator/Principal or Authorized Representative	Date
_____	_____
Print Name	Title

The ELC authorized representative hereby signs this agreement to be executed as of the date set forth in Paragraph #1 and agrees to provide the supports (funding permitting) to assist participating providers in achieving and maintaining their goals related to quality care, as outlined.

_____	_____
Signature of ELC Authorized Representative	Date
_____	_____
Print Name	Title