

Chapter DCF 203

CHILD CARE QUALITY STANDARDS AND GRANTS

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Note: Corrections made under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 6. and 7., Stats., Register, June, 1997, No. 458. Chapter DWD 58 was renumbered to chapter DCF 203 under s. 13.92 (4) (b) 1., Stats., Register November 2008 No. 635.

DCF 203.01 Child care quality improvement.

(1) **AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE.** This section is promulgated under the authority of ss. 49.155 (1d) (b) and 227.11 (2) (a), Stats., to establish quality of care standards for group day care centers and family day care centers that are higher than the standards set out in chs. DCF 202 and 250, and to establish criteria and procedures for the administration of the grant program under s. 49.137 (2), Stats., for child care providers who meet the higher quality of care standards, and for administration of the grant program under s. 49.137 (3), Stats., for child care providers who need assistance in meeting those standards.

(2) **APPLICABILITY.** This section applies to the department, to any agency the department may designate or contract with to administer the grant program under this section and to all applicants and recipients of grants under this section.

(3) **EXCEPTION.** The department upon written request of an applicant or recipient of a grant under this section may grant an exception to any nonstatutory requirement in this section if the department determines that granting the exception will not jeopardize the health, safety or welfare of any child and that the exception will improve the quality of child care.

History: Cr. Register, June, 1997, No. 498, eff. 7–1–97; corrections in (1) made under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 7., Stats., Register January 2003 No. 565; corrections in (1) made under s. 13.92 (4) (b) 7., Stats., Register November 2008 No. 635.

DCF 203.02 Definitions. In this section:

(1) “Accreditation” means:

(a) For a group day care center, accreditation by the national academy of early childhood programs, a division of the national association for the education of young children; and

(b) For a family day care center, accreditation by the national association for family child care or the Wisconsin early childhood association or receipt of a child development associate credential for family day care from the council for early childhood professional recognition.

(2) “Chapter 1 concentration area” means a school district eligible to receive grants under 20 USC 2701 et. seq.

(3) “Child development associate” means a competency-based credential issued by the national council for early childhood professional recognition.

(4) “Day care center” means a facility operated by a child care provider licensed under s. 48.65, Stats., or established or contracted for under s. 120.13 (14), Stats., that provides care and supervision for 4 or more children under 7 years of age for less than 24 hours a day.

(5) “Eligible for publicly funded child care” means family income at or below 75% of the state median income or any other standard established in s. 49.155 (1d) (b), Stats.

(6) “Enforcement action” means action taken by the department causing surrender of license due to threat of revocation, license denial or non-renewal, issuance of an order under s. 48.715 (2), Stats., license revocation, forfeiture, referral to law enforcement, emergency closing or any other sanction authorized under s. 48.715, Stats.

(7) “Family day care center” means a day care center that provides care and supervision for 4 to 8 children.

(8) “Group day care center” means a day care center that provides care and supervision for 9 or more children.

(9) “High population county” means a county with a population of over 300 people per square mile.

(10) “High poverty area” means a county with 25 or more AFDC cases per thousand population.

(11) “Licensing standards” means the standards under s. 48.65, Stats., which must be met in order for a license to be granted to a group day care center or family day care center.

(12) “Low population county” means a county with a population of fewer than 30 people per square mile.

(13) “Quality improvement grant” means a grant made under s. 49.137 (3), Stats., and s. DCF 203.05 to a day care center.

(14) “Staff retention grant” means a grant made under s. 49.137 (2), Stats., and s. DCF 203.05 to a day care center.

Note: References to “department” refer to the department of children and families.

History: Cr. Register, June, 1997, No. 498, eff. 7–1–97; correction in (5) made under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 7., Stats., Register January 2003 No. 565; corrections in (6), (13) and (14) made under s. 13.92 (4) (b) 6. and 7., Stats., Register November 2008 No. 635.

DCF 203.03 Higher quality standards for group day care centers. To be eligible for a grant under s. DCF 203.05, a group day care center shall:

(1) Have been licensed under ch. DCF 202 for at least one year;

(2) Have had no enforcement action taken against it for at least 3 years; and

(3) Shall submit a plan for meeting the following standards if it is applying for a quality improvement grant, or shall meet the following standards if it is applying for a staff retention grant:

(a) The center is accredited by the national association for the education of young children, as documented by a certificate of accreditation;

Note: For a copy of the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s Accreditation Criteria & Procedures of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs (Washington, DC: rev. ed., 1991), write National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1509 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. That publication may be consulted at the Department’s Bureau of Early Childhood Education and at the Legislative Reference Bureau.

(b) The center has written job descriptions and written personnel policies that include provisions for compensation with increments based on staff performance and additional child care professional development, and that cover staff resignations and terminations, benefits and grievance procedures. A collective bargaining agreement may satisfy this requirement;

(c) The center has benefit packages for teachers, program directors and administrators which include annual paid leave and sick leave or personal needs leave, and medical insurance. One or more other benefit options such as retirement, subsidized child care or education benefits may be substituted for or combined with medical insurance. A collective bargaining agreement may satisfy this requirement;

(d) All child care teachers at the center shall be qualified under s. DCF 251.05 (1) (d) shall have a minimum of a child development associate credential or a one-year degree in early childhood

education or child development or equivalent or is completing a training plan to meet these standards within one year of the date of initial accreditation;

(e) The program director at the center shall be qualified under s. DCF 251.05 (1) (c) and shall have a minimum of a bachelor of arts degree in early childhood education or child development and at least 3 years of full-time teaching experience with young children or equivalent or is completing a training plan to meet this standard within one year after the date of initial accreditation;

(f) The center conducts an annual program evaluation that examines the adequacy of staff compensation and benefits and rates of staff turnover, and subsequently develops and updates a plan to increase salaries and benefits to assure the recruitment and retention of qualified staff; and

(g) Staff turnover at the center in the last 12 months is 20 percent or less or the center has a plan to meet this standard.

History: Cr. Register, June, 1997, No. 498, eff. 7-1-97; **corrections in (intro.), (1), (3) (d) and (e) made under s. 13.92 (4) (b) 7., Stats., Register November 2008 No. 635.**

DCF 203.04 Higher quality standards for family day care centers. To be eligible for a grant under s. DCF 203.05, a family day care center shall:

(1) Have been licensed under ch. DCF 250 for at least one year;

(2) Have had no enforcement action taken against it for at least 3 years; and

(3) Shall submit a plan for meeting the following standards if it is applying for a quality improvement grant, or shall meet the following standards if it is applying for a staff retention grant:

(a) The center is accredited by the national association of family day care or the Wisconsin early childhood association, or the operator has a child development associate credential for family day care.

Note: For a copy of the National Association for Family Child Care accreditation standards, write National Association for Family Child Care Accreditation Program, 3717 E. Ridge Drive, Nashville, TN 37211. For a copy of the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association's Family Child Care Accreditation Criteria and Procedures (Madison, WI: 1992), write Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, 1245 East Washington Ave., Suite 260, Madison, WI 53703. For a copy of standards for a child development associate credential, write Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition, CDA National Credentialing Program, 1341 G Street, NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005-3105. Those publications may be consulted at the Department's Bureau of Early Childhood Education and at the Legislative Reference Bureau.

(b) The center has a written policy that when an assistant or substitute is employed, there shall be a written agreement with that person on personnel matters, which includes a job description and covers compensation, benefits, resignation and termination procedures and grievance procedures.

(c) The center has a written policy that when assistants and substitutes are employed, hiring practices are not discriminatory.

(d) The center has a written policy that there will be a written contract with parents which provides for paid leave annually for the provider as well as leave for sickness or personal needs.

(e) The center provides medical insurance for employees. Other options, such as retirement, subsidized child care or educational benefits may be substituted for or combined with medical insurance.

(f) If the family day care provider is qualified under s. DCF 250.04 (1), the provider has a minimum of a child development

associate credential for family day care or one-year degree in early childhood education or child development or equivalent or is completing a training plan to meet this standard within one year after the date of accreditation.

(g) The center conducts an annual program evaluation with participation of parents, which includes discussion of the provider's income and benefits.

History: Cr. Register, June, 1997, No. 498, eff. 7-1-97; corrections in (1) and (3) (f) made under s. 13.93 (2m) (b) 7, Stats., Register January 2003 No. 565; **corrections in (intro.), (1) and (3) (f) made under s. 13.92 (4) (b) 7., Stats., Register November 2008 No. 635.**

DCF 203.05 Staff retention and quality improvement grants. (1) AVAILABILITY OF GRANTS. Grants are available for child care providers who meet the higher quality of care standards under s. DCF 203.03 or 203.04 to improve the retention of skilled and experienced child care staff and to assist in meeting the higher quality of care standards.

(2) APPLICATION. Application for a staff retention or quality improvement grant shall be made in response to a request for proposals issued by the department's office of child care and in accordance with the application forms and application instructions included in the request for proposals.

(3) USE OF FUNDS. Funds awarded to eligible group day care centers or family day care homes under this subsection may only be used to defray costs that are directly related to attaining or maintaining the higher quality standards specified in ss. DCF 203.03 and 203.04.

(4) EVALUATION CRITERIA. A quality improvement or staff retention grant application either from or on behalf of a licensed group day care center or a licensed family day care home shall be evaluated using all of the following criteria to determine if the applicant meets or will meet the higher quality standards and intends to use grant funds to retain trained staff or to meet the higher quality standards:

(a) The project objectives are consistent with the purpose of the grant program and address the achievements of high quality standards and retention of trained staff;

(b) Staff assigned to the project are qualified to accomplish the objectives;

(c) The work plan is clear and tied to realistic and achievable objectives;

(d) The applicant's budget request is clear and accurate and the proposed uses and amounts of requested funds are reasonable for the scope of the project and the number of children served at sites involved in the project; and

(e) Other criteria as set out in the department's request for proposals.

(5) GEOGRAPHIC PRIORITY AREAS. All applications meeting eligibility and submission requirements shall be reviewed and priority points may be awarded for services located in one or more of the following areas but not for both pars. (c) and (d) areas:

(a) A chapter 1 concentration area;

(b) A high poverty county;

(c) A high population county; or

(d) A low population county.

History: Cr. Register, June, 1997, No. 498, eff. 7-1-97; **corrections in (1) and (3) made under s. 13.92 (4) (b) 7., Stats., Register November 2008 No. 635.**