

Certified Healthy Early Childhood Program Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

Q: What qualifies as an early childhood program?

A: A childcare center, Head Start (tribal or other), large and small family childcare homes, part day programs, out-of-school-time programs, and summer day camps.

Q: Does the program need to be licensed by OKDHS?

A: Yes, all programs must be licensed by OKDHS unless the program is exempt from licensure. Exempt programs include the following: care provided in a child's own home or by relatives, informal arrangements for the occasional care of children, programs in which children attend on a drop-in basis and parents are on the premises and readily accessible, single activity programs, and programs operating for 15 hours or less per week.

Q: Do I have to participate in Reaching for the Stars (QRIS) in order to apply?

A: No, the program does not have to be a Reaching for the Stars participant. However, the application will ask if the applicant is a participant for demographic purposes.

Q: Is this open to early childhood programs in any area?

A: Yes, programs from any area in Oklahoma may apply.

Q: If I was a Certified Healthy Early Childhood Program last year, do I need to reapply?

A: Yes, applicants must re-apply each year for certification.

Application Process

Q: When can I apply?

A: The application period runs from August 1st to November 1st.

Q: Where do I apply?

A: Please apply online at www.certifiedhealthyok.com

Q: Can I mail or fax my application?

A: No, all applications must be completed online. We will not accept mailed or faxed applications.

Q: How will I know if my application was submitted successfully?

A: You will receive a confirmation e-mail if your application is submitted successfully. If you do not receive this e-mail, you will need to re-submit.

Q: I have multiple program sites. Does each one need to apply?

A: As policies and procedures vary by location, we encourage applicants to submit an application for each site.

Q: My program is connected to a school. Should I still apply as an early childhood program?

A: Yes, we encourage early childhood programs connected to and/or affiliated with a school to apply separately.

Q: I am having technical issues with the application and/or website. Who can I call?

A: Please contact the Center for the Advancement of Wellness at (405) 271-3619.

Q: When will the awardees be announced?

A: We will send out award decisions in December.

Q: When is the awards ceremony and how much does it cost?

A: The awards ceremony is typically held in February, and cost varies each year.

Criteria

Q: How many criteria are there on the early childhood program application?

A: There are 62 criteria total in seven categories, and some criteria include multiple selections (i.e., check all that apply).

Q: Are the criteria different from last year?

A: No, the criteria have not changed from last year. All Certified Healthy Oklahoma criteria are updated biennially to reflect the latest best and promising practices.

Q: Where did these criteria come from?

A: The Certified Healthy Early Childhood Program criteria are based on the 3rd Edition of Caring for Our Children (American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education) and Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Policies (Institute of Medicine).

Q: I need help understanding a criterion. What should I do?

A: First, check out the Resource Guide. If you still need assistance, contact the Center for the Advancement of Wellness at (405) 271-3619 or your local county health department.

Q: These criteria seem difficult. Who can I talk to about implementing these components?

A: Please contact the Center for the Advancement of Wellness at (405) 271-3619 or your local county health department.

Scoring

Q: How will my application be scored?

A: We strive to be as transparent as possible with scoring. We use specific percentages for scoring, and applicants are scored based on the percentage of criteria checked in *each* category. These percentages vary based on type of program and recognition level (Basic, Merit, or Excellence). Scoring information is available online at www.certifiedhealthyok.com.

Q: How many criteria do I need to check in each category to be certified?

A: Please see the scoring information on www.certifiedhealthyok.com. The number of criteria needed for certification varies by type of program and certification level.

Q: I did not receive certification last year. How can I improve my score this year?

A: We are here to provide technical assistance to your program. We want all early childhood programs to eventually reach the Excellence level, and we are happy to provide information, training, and consultation. Please call the Center for the Advancement of Wellness at (405) 271-3619. Your local county health department is also a great resource for information on criteria implementation.

Contacts

Q: Who do I contact with questions about Certified Healthy Oklahoma?

A: Please contact Julie Dearing at (405) 271-3619 or JulieAD@health.ok.gov.

Q: Who do I contact with questions about Certified Healthy Early Childhood Program?

A: Please contact Lindsey Ellis at (405) 271-3619 or LindseyE@health.ok.gov.