

Higher rates for quality-accreditation/credential**9.24.9**

Child care assistance can pay up to 15% above the standard maximum rate, not to exceed the provider charge, if a provider submits verification showing they hold a certain current early childhood development credential or is accredited by certain organizations.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) recommends that agencies contact their policy specialist to determine whether the verification submitted is an exact match which makes the provider eligible for the higher rate. The department will review the actual documents and assist agencies to help prevent incorrect payments.

Providers may use the [Quality Differential Rate Request Form DHS-4795 \(PDF\)](#) when requesting the higher rate.

Approved credentials and accreditations for family child care providers

A licensed family child care provider or legal nonlicensed provider is eligible for the 15% higher rate for quality if they hold one of the following early childhood development credentials or accreditations:

- A Child Development Associate credential (CDA).
- A diploma in child development from a Minnesota state technical college.
- An associate's degree in child development.
- A bachelor's degree or post-baccalaureate degree in early childhood education from an accredited college or university.
- Accreditation by the National Association for Family Child Care.
- Competency Based Training and Assessment Program Certificate. (This certificate has not been offered in Minnesota since 1997. If you get a copy of this certificate, contact DHS staff).

Multiple license holders

Each adult on a licensed family child care license must have one of the credentials listed above to get the 15% higher rate for quality.

Other credentials

Licensed family child care providers and legal nonlicensed providers that do not hold one of the above credentials are **NOT** eligible for the higher rate. Licensed family child care providers and legal nonlicensed providers that hold a credential other than the ones listed above are **NOT** eligible for the higher rate.

Approved accreditations for center-based providers

Child care centers that hold one of the accreditations below are eligible for the 15% higher rate for quality. Make sure the name of the accreditation and the listed organization match exactly as listed below before approving the higher rate:

- Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment (APPLE) for Early Childhood Education or School Age Programs
- American Montessori Society (AMS) School Accreditation
- Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) Accreditation
- Association of Montessori International – USA (AMI) Montessori School Recognition
- Cognia (formerly called AdvancED) – Early Learning Accreditation
- Council on Accreditation (COA) - Child and Youth Development – Early Childhood Education (CYD-ECE) Accreditation
- Council on Accreditation (COA) - Child and Youth Development - Out-of-School Time (CYD-OST) Accreditation

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- Council on Accreditation (COA) - Private Early Childhood or Youth Development
- Green Apple Accreditation of Children's Services (GAACS) - Early Education Center (EEC) Accreditation
- Green Apple Enrichment Program Accreditation (GAEPA)
- Head Start Performance Excellence and Quality Recognition Program
- Ignite SAC Accreditation Program (Ignite)
- Lumen Accreditation from The Catholic University of America (Lumen)
- Minnesota Nonpublic School Accrediting Association (MNSAA)
- National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs (NAC) Accreditation
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation
- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation Commission Inc. (NECPA) Accreditation
- National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA)

Expired accreditations

MEC² will automatically send new notices to providers and families when a Higher Rate for Quality is expiring.

Accrediting organizations may issue an extension of a current accreditation. Require a letter from the qualifying accrediting organization that states that the timeframe has been extended. This letter must include the extension end date.

Other accreditations

Centers that are not accredited by one of the above organizations are **NOT** eligible for the higher rate. Centers that are accredited by an organization other than the ones listed above are **NOT** eligible for the higher rate.

Providers eligible for more than one higher rate for quality

The 15% higher rate for quality is the maximum rate that can be paid to an accredited or credentialed provider unless the provider has a Four-Star Parent Aware rating. Providers with a Four-Star Parent Aware rating qualify for the 20% higher rate for quality.

Providers who hold a credential/accreditation and a Three-Star Parent Aware Rating qualify for the 15% higher rate for quality.

See Chapter 9.24.3 ([Child Care Rates, Registration Fees, Copayments](#)) for links to the maximum rates tables.

Effective date of higher rates

Providers are eligible for the higher rate the first Monday following the date the verification is received by the CCAP agency.

Higher rates for quality entered in error

If an agency discovers that a provider was incorrectly entered into MEC² as being eligible for the 15% higher rate for quality, the information must be corrected in MEC² and the agency who discovered the error should contact all other counties or tribes where the provider is registered.

If a Parent Aware Rating is not displaying correctly in MEC², contact your CCAP policy specialist.

Legal authority

Minnesota Statutes 119B.13, subd. 3a & 3b