

Helpful Hints to Christian Preschool Association Accreditation

Christian Preschool Association is happy that you have decided to pursue your Gold Seal Accreditation. The purpose of this document is to give you an outline of what to expect and how to prepare for accreditation.

The first step is to print off the Accreditation Standards from our website at: www.christianpreschoolassociation.com. Review them to see where your school is already outstanding and where your program needs to grow. Be patient. This process is designed to take up to a year. If you take your time, you will not be stressed out.

It is important that your staff and church leadership buy into the process so get them involved from the beginning. Accreditation is definitely a team effort. Create a timeline. Include in it the training that is needed, a realistic plan to purchase any equipment needed based on your budget, and implementation of any new policies, procedures or forms that are needed.

When you think you are almost ready, order the accreditation packet off of the website. It costs \$150. In it you will find all of the forms you will need to complete your self-study. Up to three Commissioners will review this to ensure that you have all of the information needed for accreditation. Once the Commissioners are satisfied, a Validator will be assigned to your school. Their role is to be the eyes of the Christian Preschool Association Board. They are there to simply confirm that all of the information you provided is accurate. They are not there to judge your program in any way. If they don't see something, they will ask.

If you are still intimidated by the process, please ask our Executive Director, Linda McGlashan for a Mentor. One of the Board members would be happy to advise you. Just note that a Mentor cannot be a Commissioner or a Validator for the same school.

When creating your self-study material set up a file folder and create individual folders for each section of the accreditation. Once you have all of the materials, you can share these through Google Drive, or put them on a thumb drive to mail. Be sure to include a parent handbook and staff manual. Watch [this video](#) for more details about electronic submission.

Below are the official standards and criteria. In italics are examples of how to meet these standards and criteria.

PART A: Administrative Criteria

Section 1 Administrative Requirements

Note that ALL Administrative Requirements in this Section Must be Met 100%.

1.1 License to operate

In Florida- a copy of your DCF License.

Other states- a copy of appropriate license from local governing body

Attach a copy of your license.

1.2 The program must provide a copy of rules and regulations for licensed programs

Provide a link to the website for DCF or other licensing agency.

1.3 The program must provide inspection reports and permits for the local, county and city

A copy of the last 2 licensing inspection reports, fire inspection reports, health department reports, etc. Any document that is a result of an inspection specific to your location is required.

1.4 Proof of Insurance

Attach a copy of evidence of liability insurance. You can obtain this information from your church administrator, The Florida Conference or you may have your own insurance.

1.5 Staff Qualifications – Appendix 1

Include DCF Transcripts, college transcripts, and copies of First Aid/CPR certificates. All information provided should be current.

1.6 Staff Background Screening – Appendix 2

Supply copies of current background clearance letters for each staff member.

PART B: PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Section 1 The Program

1.1 Program maintains a governing board

Attach a copy of your board agenda or minutes, a list of all members with signatures. Board By-laws could also be included.

1.2 Philosophy and Mission Statement

Provide your mission statement and philosophy.

1.3 Program defines roles of board and staff

Attach copies of job descriptions for board members, director, teachers, teacher assistants, etc. Be sure to include all positions in your department.

1.4 Fiscal records are kept

Attach a copy of your annual budget and monthly reports.

1.5 Operating budgets are prepared annually and reconciled at least quarterly

Show profit/loss statements for last 6 months and school annual budget.

1.6 Policy for Operation

These are the policies needed to operate your school, drop off/pick-up procedures, sick policy, emergency preparedness, nap time, etc. These should already be listed in a handbook for parents/students and staff. Please include a copy of these policies and note where each criteria can be found.

1.7 Benefit Package for Staff

List policies such as leave time, pension, health coverage, dental, continuing education etc. here. Cross reference them by noting where they are located in your staff handbook.

1.8 Program Self Evaluation Process for Staff -Appendix 3 and 4

Use the evaluation form provided with the Accreditation paperwork. Place completed forms here. Make sure that a review between the staff member and the Director has been documented. Forms cannot be dated more than 6 months before accreditation paperwork is due. If paperwork is due by October, surveys can be completed between April and October.

1.9 Program evaluation process for parents- Appendix 5 and 6

Place completed evaluations and Summary here. Forms cannot be dated more than 6 months before accreditation paperwork is due.

1.10 Records are kept of staff and children

You can attach a copy of the DCF report page that states "compliance" on records for staff and children. Or attach photos of the files.

1.11 Policy on Abuse and Neglect

Include reporting requirements for staff as well as procedures to be followed should a staff member be accused of abuse or neglect. Also include any statements found in parent or staff handbooks.

1.12 The Program Works in Partnership with Families

Provide a sample newsletter, screening flyer, daily slips or anything that illustrates this Partnership. Include information on providing information about your program to perspective families, orientation for new families, your visitor policy and how your programs connects parents to community resources.

1.13 Policy Regarding Enrollment/Termination

This should be in your staff handbook and cross referenced in the parent handbook.

1.14 The Program is Inclusive of All Children

This should be a policy in your Parent Handbook and cross referenced to the Staff Manual.

1.15 Program Provides Evaluation and Plans for Children with Special Needs

Provide proof of your policy for including children with special needs and how you communicate it to the community.

1.16 Program Policy for the Use of Media

Provide documentation of this policy as stated in your staff manual. This includes photography, Facebook and other social media and the use of television and videos.

Section 2 School and Church Relationships

- 2.1 Program is a Mission to the Church and Community
Communicate this in some manner; is it clearly stated in your school mission statement? In a church document: In what ways are you a mission to the church and community? Do you offer scholarships? Do you participate in book drives, MDA hop-a-thons, Toys for Tots or similar programs? Tell us about your activities and attach photos.
- 2.2 Program Has a Connection in the Church Structure
Attach an organizational Chart or something in writing that communicates the school's role within the Church.
- 2.3 Program Works in Harmony with Church and Pastor
Have the Pastor or member of Staff Parish write a letter describing this relationship.
- 2.4 Program Has a Healthy Relationship with the Church
Write a narrative describing this relationship. Include things like shared space and materials. Click here for [Church Preschool Best Practices](#) flyer for ideas.
- 2.5 Program Provides the Church with Information on Preschool Events
Include examples of newsletters, bulletins or other printed materials about Preschool events.
- 2.6 Program Provides Parents with Information on Church Events
Provide examples of Church events such as the Sacrament of Baptism and others in the form of newsletters, brochures and other printed materials.
- 2.7 Program Participates in, or Supports Church Functions.
Provide examples of ways the school and church partner on projects or ways school staff volunteer in the Church.
- 2.8 The Church Participates in, or Supports Program Functions.
Provide documentation. Does your Pastor lead Chapel? Does your Choir Director teach music? List the ways the Church supports the school. Add photos if possible.
- 2.9 Program and Church Support Each Other Financially
Write a narrative describing the support and provide documentation.
- 2.10 Program Staff is Considered Church Staff
Provide documentation such as the Director's picture in the Church Directory or information on the church website.

Section 3 Christian Education

- 3.1 Christian Education is Presented at All Age Levels and is Interwoven into the Curriculum
Provide a brief narrative, examples of lesson plans and pictures.
- 3.2 Children Participate in Worship
Provide pictures.
- 3.3 Children Participate in Christian Celebrations
Provide a brief narrative and pictures.

- 3.4 Children are Nurtured as a Child of God and a Person of Value
Provide a brief narrative and pictures of children receiving individual attention or family involvement.
- 3.5 Children Learn to Care for Others and the Community through Mission Opportunities
Provide a brief narrative and pictures.

Section 4 Program Staff Qualifications

This seems to be an area that often needs clarification. There is no grandfathering option. Programs failing to meet the education standards are automatically deferred.

- 4.2 Administrator/Director Credentials
*The Director should have a Bachelor's Degree or higher in Early Childhood Education, Child Development or a related field of education to young children or a Bachelor's degree in another field with at least 12 credit hours in Early Childhood Education. Copy a college transcript and current copy of the DCF training transcript is required. If the Director does not have a Bachelor's degree, he/she **must** show proof of ongoing college level courses being completed on an annual basis. Copy of college transcript is required.*
- 4.4 Early Childhood Specialist Credential
*The Specialist **must** have a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development. Copy of college transcript and current DCF Transcript is required. If no one on staff has this degree then consider involving a Board member, a volunteer, or consultant.*
- 4.5 Lead Teacher Credential
A current DCF transcript indicating an active Staff Credential
- 4.7 Assistant Teacher Credential
A copy of High School diploma/GED and current DCF Transcript
- 4.3, 4.6 & 4.8 Staff Qualifications
Have each staff member write a brief essay on how they meet the qualifications listed. This component could be included as part of the staff self-study. See Staff Qualifications form at the end of this document. Anyone holding a degree from another country needs to have that degree professionally evaluated for the US equivalent.

Section 5 Pre-Service Training

- 5.1 Program Provides staff with a complete orientation of program
Provide proof of orientation: forms, training documentation, mentoring, or print/audio/video training.
- 5.2 Substitutes and volunteers also receive orientation
Provide proof.

5.3 Volunteers not counting in ratio unless 18 or older.

Provide proof.

Section 6 In-Service Training

6.1 & 6.2 The Program Provides Staff with Opportunities for Continuing Education

Provide proof: i.e. training flyers from local coalitions etc.

6.3 Professional Development is credit bearing when possible.

Provide a brief narrative.

6.4 Tuition Reimbursement

Provide documentation within the Staff Manual of this. T.E.A.C.H. scholarship contracts would also work.

6.5 Director and Staff must have at least 30 clock hours of job related training the first year of employment and 24 clock hours of in-service training each year thereafter.

In Florida provide copies of the CF-FSP 5268 In-Service Training Record (DCF form) for training for the year prior to reaccreditation. Outside Florida provide training document from your State's licensing agency; for the year prior to reaccreditation.

Section 7 Additional Training Requirements

7.1 First Aid/CPR

Provide copies of training certificates

7.2 Training is in Compliance to State and Local Licensing Agency Standards

Insert page here stating: "See A 1.1"

Section 8 Staff Interactions

8.1 Program Provides Time for Administration and Staff to Plan together

Provide a brief narrative.

8.2 Staff Meetings Held at Least Once a Month

Provide minutes from meetings to prove this.

8.3 Program Provides Weekly Paid Planning Time Away from the Children.

Provide documentation within the Staff Manual.

8.4 Program Staff Compiles Written, Individual Descriptions of Children's Development and Learning

Provide sample Individual Education Plans, or assessment form.

8.5 Schedule for Assessment of Children

Provide documentation of schedule

8.6 Communication Between School and Home

Provide samples of newsletters, daily reports and other means of communication.

- 8.7 Work Environment for the Staff is Comfortable and in Good Repair
Provide pictures.
- 8.8 Program provides Staff Space and Time Away from the Children During the Day
Provide proof within the Staff Manual.
- 8.9 Confidentiality
Provide documentation of confidentiality policy within the Staff Manual.

PART C: HEALTH AND SAFETY

Section 1 Food and Nutrition

- 1.1 The Program Shall Meet USDA Guidelines for Nutrition and Food Service.
If the school does NOT serve food provide documentation of parent education on USDA Guidelines. Include snack schedules and menu samples. Provide documentation that foods indicative of children's cultural background are served periodically. Provide proof that foods brought from home are stored appropriately until consumed.
- 1.2 The Program staff sits and eats with the children
Provide pictures.
- 1.3 The Program a policy to discreetly display children's allergies.
Provide pictures.
- 1.4 Parents provide a nutrition plan for children that have special dietary need.
Provide documentation.

Section 2 Transportation

***These items are required of all programs regardless of transportation procedure.**

- *C 2.1 The program has written policies and procedures for field trips that are distributed to parents.
Provide documentation and cross reference your Parent Handbook. If no trips are taken, provide a narrative that states: "Our Program does not participate in field trips.", and cross reference Parent Handbook.
- *C 2.2 The program takes children's emergency information with them whenever leaving the building as a class. If being transported in separate vehicles, this information is available in each vehicle.
Provide documentation (pictures).
- *C 2.3 The program has a written pick up/drop off routine, including a procedure for accounting for each child.
Provide documentation. Cross reference to Parent Handbook.

The following standards apply to schools that offer field trips.

C 2.4 The program provides adequate supervision of children while transporting and while on the field trip, including walking and riding in private vehicles. Supervision may include additional staff, parents, or volunteers.

Provide documentation of field trip ratios. Does Supervision include Parent Volunteers and additional staff? Do Volunteers receive training on emergency procedures before the trip? Do you require background screening for volunteers?

C 2.5 The program pre-plans field trips and has emergency procedures prepared.

Provide a narrative and cross reference Staff Manual. How would your program handle a missing child?

C 2.6 The program has written requirements for drivers. Requirements must meet or exceed local licensing requirements.

Provide documentation.

C 2.7 Field trip permission slips and transportation logs are kept for six months.

Provide a copy of a completed log dated six months prior.

These standards apply to schools that use school/church van to transport children.

C 2.8 The program schedules a complete vehicle safety inspection, performed by a certified mechanic, at least once a year.

Provide a copy of inspection that is less than 1 year old.

C 2.9 The program shall keep a maintenance log for each vehicle.

Provide a copy of one that is currently in use.

C 2.10 The program uses appropriate restraint systems for each child.

Provide pictures.

C 2.11 The program has a complete first aid kit on each vehicle.

Provide pictures.

C 2.12 The program provides vehicle insurance on each vehicle.

Provide documentation of current insurance coverage.

C 2.13 The drivers for the program carry current certification in Pediatric CPR and first aid.

Provide copies.

C 2.14 The drivers for the program are examined yearly by a physician and certified fit to drive.

Provide documentation of policy.

Section 3: Health

3.1 Program has a Written Policy and Procedure for Assessing New Employee's Mental and Physical Health

Provide documentation and cross reference the Staff Manual or job descriptions.

3.2 Program has a System for Daily Health Screenings for the Children

Provide documentation from Parent Handbook and Staff Manual.

3.3 Program Collects and Maintains Records for Each Child Enrolled

Include a blank copy of the enrollment forms indicating emergency pick-up authorization.

- 3.4 Program Provides arrival and departure procedures which allows for interaction between teaching staff and parents
Provide a narrative.
- 3.5 Program has a Written Policy for Sick Children. It Should Include When a Child Must be Isolated and When a Child Can Remain in the Classroom
Provide documentation and cross reference Staff Manual.
- 3.6 Program Has a System for Recording and Reporting Individual Medical Problems to Staff and Families
Provide documentation.
- 3.7 Program Has a Separate Area to Care for Ill Children
Provide a narrative and picture.
- 3.8 Program Has a Policy for Reporting Suspected Incidents of Child Abuse/Neglect. Staff is Aware of the Policy.
Provide document of policy, cross reference Staff Manual. Provide proof of Staff Training.
- 3.9 Program Maintains a Fully Stocked First Aid Kit in the Facility
Provide pictures.
- 3.10 Program has a Plan for Medical Emergencies
Provide documentation and cross reference Staff Manual.
- 3.11 Program Trains Staff and Implements the Use of Universal Precautions to Prevent the Transmission of Body Fluids.
Provide documentation and cross reference Staff Manual. Provide proof of training.
- 3.12 Program Staff Washes their hands with Liquid Soap at Appropriate Times
Provide a copy of hand washing signs that are posted in your classrooms.
- 3.13 The Facility is Cleaned Daily
Provide a copy of blank cleaning form and one completed.
- 3.14 Program has a Schedule for Washing Toys Weekly, Except Toys that are Mouthed Which are Washed Daily
Provide cleaning schedules and cross reference Staff Manual.
- 3.15 Program has Toilets, Handwashing Facilities and Drinking Water Accessible to Children
Provide pictures.
- 3.16 Program has a Written Policy for Administering Medication
Provide documentation. Administered by Whom? Copy of Medication Log. Cross reference Parent Handbook and Staff Manual.
- 3.17 Program Provides Regular Vision, Speech and Language and Hearing Screenings.
Provide documentation.
- 3.18 Program Documents Annual Developmental Screenings
Provide documentation and cross reference Parent Handbook.
- 3.19 Program Supplies Parents with Information on Dress Code

- Provide documentation and cross reference Parent Handbook.*
- 3.20 Program has a Plan for Washing Bedding at Least Once a Week. Bedding is Only Used by One Child Between Washings and it's labeled with child's name.
Provide documentation and cross reference Parent Handbook. If program does not nap, provide a narrative that states; "Our program does not nap therefore washing bedding is unnecessary."
- 3.21 Smoking, including e-cigarettes is not permitted on campus.
Provide pictures of signs.
- 3.22 The program must have MSDS (material safety data sheets).
Provide examples.
- 3.23 The program has a plan to encourage dental hygiene.
Provide pictures.
- 3.24 Classroom pets or visiting animals appear to be in good health and have documentation from a veterinarian or animal shelter showing full immunization as needed.
Provide documentation.
- 3.25 Lighting and temperature in rooms are adequate and comfortable.
Provide pictures.

Section 4 Safety

- 4.1 Program Staff Maintains Supervision of Children at all Times
Provide photos or diagrams of room layout.
- 4.2 Program has Emergency Procedures
Provide documentation and cross reference Staff Manual.
- 4.3 Program has a Designated Staff Member Responsible for Health and Safety Issues
Provide documentation and cross reference Staff Manual.
- 4.4 Program Staff and Volunteers are Familiar with Emergency Routines
Provide orientation information or training documentation for staff and volunteers.
- 4.5 Evacuation Procedures are Practiced Monthly
Provide a copy of your Fire Drill Form.
- 4.6 Electrical Outlets are Covered with Protective Caps
Provide a picture.
- 4.7 Program has a Minimum of 35 Square Feet of Indoor Space per Child
Provide dimensions and pictures.
- 4.8 The Facility Layout is Arranged so that all Areas can be Viewed by at least Two Adults.
Provide pictures.

Section 5 Outdoor/Playground Areas

- 5.1 Program has a minimum of 75 Square Feet of Outdoor Play Space per Child
In Florida provide a narrative that states: "See Annual Inspection"

Outside of Florida, provide dimensions and pictures.

- 5.2 Program Provides Storage for Equipment not Secured to the Ground
Provide pictures.
- 5.3 Program has a Designated Person Who conducts Daily Playground Inspections
Provide documentation of form used cross reference Staff Manual. Include several completed forms.
- 5.4 Playground Safety Checks are Done Monthly
Provide Documentation. Include several months of completed forms.
- 5.5 Playground Rules are Posted
Provide Picture.
- 5.6 Sandbox is maintained for safety
Provide Picture or state "no sandbox".

Remember, a picture is worth a thousand words. If you need to write a description of a policy or procedure, you should be adding it to your Parent Handbook or Staff Manual. Start with the classroom and staff evaluations. You may need to do them twice. Once to see where you are and again to ensure you have covered all of your bases.

If you follow this tip sheet, your success is almost guaranteed. My prayer for you is for wisdom and patience. This is a terrific opportunity for you and your school to grow and shine.

You can do this! You are Awesome!

Staff Qualifications
(To be used for B 4.3, 4.6, 4.8 and Early Childhood Specialist)

Name: _____

Position: _____

Please complete the following as part of your self-evaluation.

How do you convey your commitment to pursuing a higher level degree in Early Childhood?

How do you stay current on Early Childhood research and issues?

How do you support the Christian Preschool Association as well as other Early Childhood programs?

How do you manifest concern and love for the children you serve?

How do you demonstrate your Christian faith? What Church do you attend?

Whether or not you are a member of the local congregation, you should consider yourself a leader, responsible for the ministry to children. How do you display this?

How do you minister to children and parents?

Please use the back if needed for your explanations.