

6M-4.720 Screening of Children in the School Readiness Program.

(1) Definitions. As used in this rule:

(a) “Concerns” means a child’s scoring below established thresholds or age appropriate levels suggested by the authors of a screening instrument.

(b) “Eligibility determination” means the initial process conducted by the early learning coalition to determine if a child meets minimum requirements to participate in the School Readiness program.

(c) “Enrollment” is the final step in the process of entering (or enrolling) a child in the School Readiness program. It means officially entering the child’s name in the statewide information system as a School Readiness student.

(d) “Exceptions” are circumstances in which School Readiness children aged six weeks to age 60 months are not required to be screened under this rule.

(e) “Intervention practices” means the action taken subsequent to a child demonstrating concerns based on screening results.

(f) “Redetermination” means the process conducted by the early learning coalition at least annually to determine if a child’s family continues to meet minimum requirements to participate in the School Readiness program pursuant to Rule 6M-4.200, F.A.C.

(g) “Referral” means the process of providing information and recommendations to parents regarding further evaluation for a child who shows concerns based on screening results.

(h) “Screener” means the individual responsible for conducting the developmental screening for each child.

(i) “Screening” means activities to identify children who may have concerns and who may need early intervention practices as supports.

(j) “Screening Start Date” is the date of the child’s first day of attendance at the School Readiness Program after enrollment or the first day of attendance after the annual redetermination date.

(k) “Single Statewide Information System (SSIS)” is the designated system used to conduct screenings and provide screening information to early learning coalitions, parents and providers, consisting of the Family Portal, Provider Services Portal, and Coalition Services Portal.

(2) Screening Process. A developmental screening shall be conducted for each child aged six (6) weeks to 60 months with parental consent. The parent of a child enrolled in the School Readiness program may consent or decline to have his or her child screened within the single statewide information system (SSIS).

(a) Initial screening. Each early learning coalition shall coordinate with parents and providers to complete an initial screening for each child, aged six (6) weeks to age of 60 months. Children shall be screened no later than 45 calendar days after:

1. His or her first enrollment in the School Readiness program; or
2. Enrollment after being terminated or withdrawn from the School Readiness program.

If a child, aged six weeks to age 60 months, is again enrolled in the School Readiness program after prior termination or withdrawal that is less than 12 months from initial enrollment, the coalition must determine if the child has been screened in accordance with the subsequent screening intervals identified in paragraph (2)(c), no later than 45 calendar days after subsequent enrollment.

(b) Subsequent screenings. Each early learning coalition shall coordinate with parents and providers for subsequent screenings to be completed annually at redetermination.

(c) Screening intervals.

1. Initial and subsequent screenings conducted by the parent shall be completed within the first five (5) calendar days of the enrollment or redetermination.

2. Initial and subsequent screenings conducted by the provider or coalition shall be completed within forty-five (45) calendar days of the screening start date.

3. This rule is not intended to limit the number of screenings offered to a child enrolled in a School Readiness program. A coalition may conduct additional screenings at its discretion.

(d) Completion of screenings. Upon initial or subsequent enrollment, the screening instrument shall be available to each parent for completion. A parent can waive their option to be their child’s screener at the time of enrollment or redetermination.

1. Completion by a parent that elects to screen their child(ren) using the SSIS must complete the screening in accordance with subparagraph (2)(c)1. of this rule. The coalition shall make staff persons available to assist parents during the screening, if requested. Screenings not completed by the parent are transferred to the provider or coalition for completion.

2. Completion by child care providers. A screening conducted by a child care provider shall be completed in accordance with subparagraph (2)(c)2. of this rule. The provider shall receive electronic notification of each child that must be screened using the

SSIS. In the event the SSIS is non-operational, the early learning coalition shall provide written or electronic notification of each child that must be screened to child care provider no later than 15 calendar days after the screening start date. At a minimum, notification shall include the screening start date, the screening due date, and each child's name and date of birth.

3. Completion by early learning coalitions. A screening conducted by a coalition shall be completed in accordance with subparagraph (2)(c)2. of this rule.

4. Each screener can voluntarily complete a screening instrument that solely targets social-emotional domains within the screening intervals described in paragraph (2)(c) of this rule.

(e) Screening Results. Screening results shall be available to each parent no later than 15 calendar days after the screening due date.

1. Screening results without concerns shall be available to each parent upon completion of the developmental screening within the SSIS.

2. Each early learning coalition shall provide or require a child care provider to provide screening results with concerns in writing to each child's parent. An early learning coalition shall make staff persons available to explain screening results, if requested by a parent.

(3) Screening Instruments. Each early learning coalition shall select a screening instrument or instruments for use under this rule which meet all of the following criteria:

(a) Covers an age range of at least six weeks to age 60 months;

(b) Addresses, at a minimum, each of the developmental domains established in the performance standards (Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five, Form OEL-SR-15, dated October 2017) adopted by Florida's Department of Education in Rule 6M-4.700, F.A.C;

(c) Takes 30 minutes or less on average to complete per child;

(d) Is supported by research-proven validity tests;

(e) Is supported by research-proven reliability tests;

(f) Is available, at a minimum, in English and Spanish versions;

(g) Is appropriate to be administered by a parent or guardian, child care provider or other professional; and,

(h) Yields results, which can be entered into data fields into an electronic data system.

(4) Exceptions. All children enrolled in the School Readiness program aged six weeks to age 60 months must be screened in accordance with the screening process identified in subsection (2) except children in the following situations:

(a) Children who have been screened in a program other than the School Readiness program within the preceding 12 month period and whose scores were shared with the early learning coalition by the due date established for initial screening in paragraph (2)(a), or subsequent screenings in paragraph (2)(b), and when the screening instrument used meets the criteria in subsection (3), above; or

(b) Children who are receiving services in accordance with an individualized family support plan (IFSP) or individual education plan (IEP), in which the plans have been:

1. Developed or reviewed in the last 12 months by a school district, early intervention program, or other state agency that provides special education and related services; and,

2. Shared with the early learning coalition by the due date established for initial screening in paragraph (2)(b), or subsequent screenings in paragraph (2)(c).

(5) Early Identification and Referral.

(a) Each early learning coalition shall initiate intervention practices, no later than 30 calendar days after receipt of the screening results, for children who show concerns based on their screening results. Intervention practices must address the identified concern(s).

(b) The coalition shall initiate and document intervention practices that match each concern identified by the screening instrument. The process for implementing intervention practices must include:

1. Concern identification. The coalition shall identify areas of concern. Examples include but are not limited to observations in the early learning program, parent and provider interviews and additional screening or assessment.

2. Concern analysis. The coalition shall develop priorities, goals, and an action plan in collaboration with the provider to address the identified concerns. An example includes but is not limited to a documented description of the steps the provider and or family will take to address each concern.

3. Intervention implementation. The coalition shall implement interventions practices when there are areas of concern. Examples include but are not limited to coaching for the provider on making program accommodations and providing parent and teacher education.

4. Plan evaluation. The coalition shall follow up to assess the intervention services provided. Examples include but are not limited to, a review of the action steps to determine if revision to the analysis is necessary, sufficient gains are made or if a referral to other early intervention services or specialized care under subparagraph (5)(b)5. is needed.

5. Referrals to early intervention services or specialized care, if applicable.

a. Each early learning coalition shall notify in writing, or require a child care provider to notify in writing, the parent of a child who receives a referral under subparagraph (5)(b)5. The notification must include, at a minimum, areas identified through the screening which are of concern and local contact information for the appropriate referral agency.

b. When providing a referral under sub-subparagraph (5)(b)5.a., each early learning coalition must offer to contact the appropriate referral agency. Either the coalition or the child care provider must document the parent's choice of "yes" or "no" indicating the choice regarding receipt of additional help, the name of the parent, the date, and the child's name.

(c) A coalition shall document intervention practices or referrals declined by a parent. The coalition shall inform the provider of intervention practices declined by a parent.

(6) Data.

(a) The early learning coalition shall enter, or require the screener to enter, the child screening data into the single statewide information system no later than the screening due date. The early learning coalition shall enter data from intervention practices into the single statewide information system no later than 30 calendar days after intervention practices.

(b) The early learning coalition shall make the electronic version of the screening results and intervention practices data available to Florida's Division of Early Learning upon request. The child screening and intervention practices data must include, at a minimum, the following elements:

1. Child name;
2. Child date of birth;
3. Child age;
4. Child ID number, if available;
5. Parent name;
6. Parent contact information, to include: mailing address, email address, and phone number, if available;
7. Date of enrollment in the School Readiness program;
8. Date(s) of screening(s), if screened;
9. Reason for not being screened, if applicable, which may include:
 - i. Parental objection to the screening; or
 - ii. Exceptions to being screened in the School Readiness program as described in subsection (4);
10. Screening results, which include a summary of areas in which the child shows concerns based on the screening;
11. Date intervention practices were initiated;
12. Type of intervention practices initiated;
13. Date of referral, if applicable under subparagraph (5)(b)5.; and,
14. Whether the parent elected to receive additional help from the coalition under sub-subparagraph (5)(b)5.b.