EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
AGENDA
November 7, 2017
1:00 p.m.
ELC Main Office
10 SE Central Parkway, Suite 200, Stuart, FL

* Items require action

Mission: Partnering with parents, providers and communities to ensure quality early learning experiences through programmatic and financial support.

Vision: Building Blocks for Educational Success

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Public comments may be offered at every Early Learning Coalition of Indian River, Martin & Okeechobee Counties Board of Director’s or committee meeting. We welcome the opportunity as part of our continuing effort to improve our responsiveness to the needs of the children, families, and community we serve. To present comment, interested parties are asked to complete a Public Comment Card available at the sign-in table, deliver such to the Chair in advance to the Call to Order, and be present during the public comment period. All interested parties are asked to indicate whether the comment is related to the business associated with the specific agenda before the Board/Committee or if the comment is intended for consideration by the Board/Committee at a future meeting. All comments are limited to 3 minutes unless otherwise waived by a majority action of the members present.
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES

January 17, 2017

ELC Main Office
10 SE Central Parkway, Suite 200, Stuart

Present: Brandon Tucker (via teleconference)  William Laughlin (via teleconference)
          Michelle Akins (via teleconference)  Tom Peer (via teleconference)
          Cathleen Blair (via teleconference)  Deborah Schooley (via teleconference)

Excused: Donna Rivett

Staff: Migdalia Rosado  Loretta Toth

I. CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order by Chair, Brandon Tucker, at 10:02 a.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
Motion to adopt the agenda was made by Cathleen Blair, seconded by Michelle Akins and passed unanimously.

III. CONSENT AGENDA
A. Minutes – Executive Committee, November 8, 2016
B. Minutes – Executive Committee, December 1, 2016
C. Minutes – Joint Executive Committee with St. Lucie ELC, December 14, 2016
D. Minutes – Executive Committee, December 22, 2016

Motion was made by Cathleen Blair to approve the consent agenda. Motion was seconded by Will Laughlin and passed unanimously.

IV. NEW BUSINESS
A. Membership & Acceptance – Steve Newman
The Board Membership Application submitted by Steve Newman, Private Sector Member representing Indian River County, was reviewed. Mr. Tucker met with Mr. Newman who is retired and very energetic. He is well versed about the organization and is aware of the merger discussions. Regardless of the outcome, he is interested in becoming part of the board and assist in increasing ELCIRMO’s image in Indian River County.

Motion was made by Michelle Akins to accept Steve Newman’s application for board membership. Motion was seconded by Cathleen Blair and passed unanimously.

Follow-up/Action:
1) Application will be submitted to the full board at the January Board meeting.

V. OLD BUSINESS
Mr. Tucker asked for an update on management discussions with St. Lucie ELC and whether any additions meetings were scheduled. Ms. Rosado commented that a second meeting is scheduled for this Friday between both leadership teams.

Mr. Peer joined the call at 10:06 a.m.
VI. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS – None

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandon Tucker, Chair
BT:It
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES

June 6, 2017
(via teleconference)

ELC Main Office
10 SE Central Parkway, Suite 200
Stuart, FL

Present: Brandon Tucker (via teleconference) Tom Peer (via teleconference)
Michelle Akins (via teleconference) Donna Rivett (via teleconference)
William Laughlin

Excused: Cathleen Blair Deborah Schooley

Staff: Migdalia Rosado

I. CALL TO ORDER
At the request of Chairman, Brandon Tucker, the meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair, Donna Rivett at 8:38 a.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA – None.

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA
Motion to adopt the agenda as presented was made by Brandon Tucker, seconded by Tom Peer and passed unanimously.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA
A. Minutes – Executive Committee, May 31, 2017
Motion was made by Will Laughlin to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion was seconded by Tom Peer and passed unanimously.

V. NEW BUSINESS
A. Action Item 2016-17.08.03 – 2nd Revision to Slate of Nominees for Officers
Ms. Rosado explained that after the 5/31/17 Executive Committee meeting where a proposed slate was presented, it was determined that Angela Davis-Green who was nominated as a member-at-large, does not meet the Florida Statue requirements of Head Start Director, as she will be the incoming Executive Director of EOC in July. Discussion ensued. Ms. Natalie Sanders serves in the capacity as Head Start Director for Indian River County and will be the incoming board member.

Motion was made by Brandon Tucker to approve the appointment of Natalie Sanders as a Member-at-Large. Motion was seconded by Tom Peer and passed unanimously.

The revised slate of officers for 2017-2018 will be presented at the June board meeting, as follows:

Chair Brandon Tucker (Okee)
Vice-Chair Will Laughlin (MC)
Secretary Michelle Akins (Okee)
Follow-up/Action:
1) Revised slate of nominees will be presented at the June Board meeting.

VI. CHAIRMAN COMMENTS – None

VII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS – None

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

IX. ADJOURNMENT
There being no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Rivett, Vice-Chair
DR:It
Early Learning Coalition
Of Indian River, Martin, and Okeechobee Counties, Inc.

SCHOOL READINESS
PROGRAM POLICIES
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Approved by the Coalition Board: 8/15/13
ELCIRMO School Readiness
Program Policies

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ELCIRMO School Readiness
Program Policies

This document provides an overview of the operational policies and high level procedures used by the Early Learning Coalition of Indian River, Martin and Okeechobee (ELCIRMO) counties. ELCIRMO also uses guidelines and rules defined by the state and contained within grants to determine procedures. Additionally, each department within ELCIRMO maintains detailed procedures utilized to perform their specialized functions.

1. GENERAL

School Readiness services are strictly based on a client's eligibility and availability of funds by county. School Readiness services are not an entitlement. Participation in the School Readiness Program is provided to children up to 13 years of age who meet child care eligibility requirements established by the Florida’s Office of Early Learning and the priorities set forth by F.S. 1002.87

1.1 Ages of Children Served

School Readiness – Children between the ages of 0 and up to - 13 years of age are served based on the availability of funds by county.

1.2 Hours of Care

Parents will be given one unit of early learning services based on work/school hours including travel time. Less than six (6) hours a day will be considered part-time care. Six (6) or more hours a day will be considered full-time care.

1.3 School Readiness (Wraparound Care)

Children enrolled in the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten and School Readiness Programs concurrently may receive part-time care if the wraparound care is less than 6 hours and full-time care if the wraparound care is more than 6 hours, based on availability of funding. The School Readiness reimbursement for children enrolled in both VPK and School Readiness will be at the FTV or PTV rate established by county.

2. Application and Waiting List Procedures

2.1 Prequalifying Questions and School Readiness Application

1. In order to participate in the school readiness program, parents shall submit a prequalifying questionnaire, file an application if appropriate, and provide requested documentation to an early learning coalition. If funds are available at the time of application the coalition shall conduct an eligibility determination. If funds are not available at the time of application, the coalition shall place the child or children on a waiting list as set forth herein.

2. All parents requesting school readiness program services must first complete the prequalifying questions before completing the School Readiness Application, if applicable, and submit it through the single point of entry available at the following web address: https://familyservices.floridaearlylearning.com. Questions three and four of the prequalifying questions are based on the current Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for the total number of family members reported in question two. Parents may complete the prequalifying questions and School Readiness Application at any time. If the results of the prequalifying questions indicate that the family may be potentially eligible, the family will then be directed to complete the School Readiness Application. Upon completion of the School Readiness Application, parents must submit at least one document to complete the application process. The
document may be a current paystub, a verification of employment statement, written statement from employer, school enrollment or class registration, or documentation of a temporary or permanent disability.

3. If the prequalification screening results indicate that the family may not be potentially eligible, the family shall be directed to contact the early learning coalition which shall offer Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) services pursuant to Rule 6M-9.300, F.A.C.

2.2 Eligibility Screening

1. The coalition shall review each submitted application and required documentation within 20 calendar days of receipt to determine if the parent is potentially eligible pursuant to Section 1002.87(1), F.S. The coalition shall notify the parent if the eligibility criteria have or have not been met.

2. If the coalition determines that the family is potentially eligible based on their application and funding is available, the early learning coalition shall conduct an eligibility determination pursuant to Section 1002.87, F.S., and subsection 6M-4.200(2) or (3), F.A.C. Upon determining the family eligible for the school readiness program, the child is eligible for enrollment with a provider delivering the school readiness program. The coalition shall indicate the required supporting documents for eligibility determination pursuant to Rule 6M-4.208, F.A.C.

3. If the family is potentially eligible and funding is not available, the coalition shall place the child on its waiting list as set forth herein.

4. If the family is not potentially eligible, the early learning coalition shall offer the parent CCR&R services pursuant to Rule 6M-9.300, F.A.C.

2.3 Waiting List Management

The coalition shall utilize a waiting list as an enrollment management tool for the school readiness program on an ongoing basis. The coalition shall not purge its waiting list by removing all children at one time. A coalition’s waiting list management shall consist of:

2.4 Placement of Children on the Waiting List

1. A family shall be placed on the waiting list on a first-come, first-serve basis, based on the date of the submitted application, the potential eligibility category and priority categories specified in Section 1002.87(1), F.S., and the age of the child. The coalition may consider local service priorities within a priority category.

2. If a parent requests school readiness program services for an additional child following placement on the waiting list, the additional child shall be placed on the waiting list according to the initial date the family was placed on the waiting list. The additional child shall also be assigned a potential eligibility category and priority specified in Section 1002.87(1), F.S.

3. An unborn child shall not be eligible for the waiting list.
4. **A parent may update the information reported in the School Readiness Application.** The coalition shall review the changes as set forth herein. If the family remains potentially eligible, the family shall retain its place on the waiting list.

### 2.5 Revalidation
At least once every six (6) months from the date the family was initially placed on the waiting list or from the last revalidation date the coalition shall contact the parent and request the parent to submit updated information regarding eligibility status. The coalition shall notify the parent within 30 calendar days prior to the revalidation date.

### 2.6 Availability of Funding
The coalition shall notify the parent within thirty (30) calendar days of funding availability to potentially enroll the child in the school readiness program. In the notice, the coalition shall provide instructions to the parent on how to complete the school readiness eligibility determination process pursuant to Rule 6M-4.208, F.A.C.

### 2.7 Removal from the Waiting List
The coalition shall notify the parent of removal from the waiting list. The notification shall include the reason why the family was not placed on the waiting list or why the family or child was removed from the waiting list. Notice of removal is not required when funding becomes available for the child to receive school readiness services and the child is enrolled with a school readiness provider. A family will be removed from the waiting list under the following circumstances:

1. Failure to maintain accurate contact information;
2. Failure to meet the school readiness eligibility requirements as specified in Section 1002.87(1), F.S.;
3. Failure to confirm information. The parent does not validate its information by the due date indicated on the notification;
4. Over age limitations. Any child on the waiting list age 13 or older will be removed from the waiting list;
5. School readiness services no longer needed. The parent indicates, via email, fax, mail, telephone or in person, that school readiness services are no longer needed;
6. The parent does not respond to the notification for available funding by the due date;
7. The family no longer resides in the coalition’s service delivery area; or
8. Funding becomes available for the child to receive school readiness services and the child is enrolled with a school readiness provider. Actual eligibility determination will be conducted prior to authorization for enrollment, which will be based on available funding. Enrollment in the school readiness program will be on a first-come, first-serve basis pursuant to Section 1002.87(1), F.S.
2.8 Reapplication

1. If a family is removed from the waiting list, a parent must reapply for school readiness services and shall be screened for eligibility as set forth herein to be placed back onto the waiting list and receive a new waiting list date.

2. If a family on the waiting list of the coalition moves out of the coalition’s service area, the family shall reapply for eligibility services with the coalition operating in the family’s new location. The family will receive a new waiting list date with the coalition offering services in the new location.


3.1. Definitions.

The following definitions are applicable to all rules under Chapter 6M-4, F.A.C.

(a) “Child Care Authorizations” and “referrals” means the forms received from recognized referring entities authorizing the need for child care services.

(b) “Child Care Executive Partnership (CCEP)” is a program that uses state and federal funds as incentives for matching local funds derived from local governments, employers, charitable foundations, and other sources to create local flexible partnerships with employers.

(c) “Earned Income” means the gross remuneration resulting from work, professional service or self-employment. This includes commissions, bonuses, and back pay awards.

(d) “Person who stands in loco parentis” means a responsible adult with whom the child lives, who is responsible for the day-to-day care and custody of the child when the child’s parent by blood, marriage, adoption or court order is not performing such duties.

(e) “Non-temporary Interruption” means a loss in employment or education activity with no reasonable expectation at the time of interruption that the parent will return to that specific eligible work or education activity.

(f) “Parent” means a person who has legal custody of a minor as a:
   1. Natural or adoptive parent,
   2. Legal guardian,
   3. Person who stands in loco parentis to the minor, or
   4. Person who has legal custody of the minor by order of a court.

(g) “Payment certificate” means the document issued by the coalition authorizing School Readiness payment for a specific child to a specified child care provider for a defined period.

(h) “Purpose for care” means the reason the parent needs care, such as employment, education and training, job search, work activity, respite services, child protection, migrant employed, disability and special needs.

(i) “Special Needs” means a child who has been determined eligible as a child with a disability in accordance with Chapter 6A-6, F.A.C., and is participating in a program for children with disabilities provided by the school district or a child who has an individualized educational plan (IEP) or family support plan (FSP).

(j) “Suspend” means to temporarily discontinue services for the parent when the parent intends to resume an eligible education/training or work activity that has an interruption that exceeds three (3) months or the child temporarily does not need school readiness services offered by the coalition.

(k) “Temporary Interruption” means interruption in the parent’s work or education activity with an intent to return to that specific work or education activity. A temporary interruption in
employment or education/training activity shall include:

1. Any time-limited absence from work for an employed parent due to reasons such as need to care for a family member or an illness,
2. Any interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working between regular industry work seasons,
3. Any student holiday or break for a parent participating in training or education,
4. Any reduction in work, training or education hours, as long as the parent is still working or attending training or education,
5. Any other cessation of work or attendance at a training or education program that does not exceed three (3) months,
6. Any change in age, including turning 13 years old during the eligibility period; and,
7. Any change in residency within the state.

(l) “Unearned Income” means income other than earned income that includes documented alimony and child support received, social security benefits, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (excluding SSI payments when a child is the recipient), worker’s compensation benefits, reemployment assistance or reemployment compensation benefits, veteran benefits, retirement benefits, temporary cash assistance under Chapter 414, F.S., and cash gifts received regularly.

3.2 Child Care Authorization and Relative Caregiver Program Eligibility

In order for a child to be eligible to receive school readiness services in the following categories, pursuant to Sections 1002.87(1)(a)-(l), F.S., a child care authorization or documentation the parent receives relative caregiver payments must be issued by the appropriate agency.

3.2.1 At-risk and Protective Service Child Care Authorizations

Eligibility is based on a documented child care authorization from the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) or its contracted providers, DCF-designated Lead Homeless Coalition Continuum of Care agency or Certified Domestic Violence Center. “At Risk Child” is defined in Section 1002.81(1), F.S.

1. Child care authorizations for at-risk and protective services categories shall be valid for the duration determined by the referring entity. A child may continue to maintain eligibility under the at-risk or protective services categories as long as there is a current and valid child care authorization. The parent no longer maintains the current purpose for care upon the child care authorization’s expiration or upon notification of termination from the referring agency to the coalition, whichever comes first.

2. At-Risk and protective services parents with a valid child care authorization will be authorized for 12-months of child care funding. Each time a child care authorization is renewed during the 12-month authorization of child care funding, child care services will continue in increments defined by the referring agency.

3. At the initial determination for at-risk child care authorizations, the coalition or contracted designee shall inform the parent that when the referral expires or is terminated by the referring agency, the parent will have three (3) months to provide documentation to establish a purpose for care under another eligibility category to continue receiving services for the remainder of the initial 12-month authorization period. Purpose for care must be reestablished no later than three (3) months after the initial child care authorization expires. A family will not be limited to a single three (3) month period to reestablish a purpose of care during the 12-month eligibility period.

4. If an additional referral is granted to the parent that extends the purpose for care beyond the
3.2.2 Relative Caregiver Program

A child may continue to maintain eligibility under the relative caregiver program category if upon closure of the protective services case, the guardian is in receipt of Relative Caregiver Assistance payments for the child in need of school readiness services from the Florida Department of Children and Families.

1. A child may continue to maintain eligibility under the relative caregiver category for up to 12-months, as determined by the coalition, as long as the parent is in receipt of relative caregiver payments.

2. At the initial determination for relative caregiver eligibility, the coalition or contracted designee shall inform the parent that when receipt of relative caregiver payments ends the parent will have three (3) months to provide documentation to establish a purpose for care under another eligibility category to continue the remainder of the initial 12-month authorization period. Purpose for care must be established no later than three (3) months after the receipt of relative caregiver payments ends or upon termination of relative caregiver payments, whichever comes first. A family will not be limited to a single three (3) month period to reestablish a purpose of care during the 12-month eligibility period.

3. If the parent loses purpose for care anytime during the initial 12-month eligibility, the coalition shall provide services for three (3) months, at which time the parent must reestablish purpose for care to remain eligible. The time period that surpasses the initial authorization will be counted toward the subsequent authorization period.

3.2.3 Welfare Transition Program

Eligibility is based on a documented child care authorization issued by DCF or the local workforce agency.

1. Temporary Cash Assistance parents must also maintain compliance with statutory welfare transition program requirements by DCF or the local workforce referral agency, as monitored by the referring agency.

2. Transitional Child Care/Non-Temporary Cash Assistance parents must also maintain compliance with statutory welfare transition program requirements by DCF or the local workforce referral agency, as monitored by the referring agency.

3. All children eligible under the Temporary Cash Assistance, Temporary Cash Assistance Respite, and Temporary Cash Assistance Applicant programs will be authorized for child care funding for the period indicated by the referring agency's child care authorization. The parent no longer maintains purpose for care under this eligibility category upon child care authorization expiration or upon notification of termination from the referring agency to the coalition, whichever comes first.

4. The coalition or contracted designee shall inform the parent and DCF or local workforce referral agency that when the child care authorization expires the parent will have three (3) months to provide documentation to establish a purpose for care under another eligibility period, the coalition shall authorize the parent for an additional 12-month eligibility period, subject to available funding. The time period that surpasses the initial authorization will be counted toward the subsequent authorization period.

5. If the parent loses purpose for care anytime during the initial 12-month eligibility, the coalition shall provide services for three (3) months, at which time the parent must reestablish purpose for care to remain eligible. The time period that surpasses the initial authorization will be counted toward the subsequent authorization period.
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3.3 Income Based Eligibility Categories

3.3.1 Initial Eligibility Determination

1. Age of the child. The age limits of eligible children are set forth in Section 1002.87(1), F.S.

2. Family Income. The family’s income, as defined in Section 1002.81(8), F.S., must be at or below 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for economically disadvantaged and 200 percent of the FPL for Child Care Executive Partnership (CCEP) children for entry into the school readiness program. If 85 percent of the State Median Income (SMI) is less than 150 percent of the FPL, then 85 percent of the SMI is the income threshold for entry into the school readiness program for economically disadvantaged. If 85 percent of the SMI is less than 200 percent of the FPL, then 85 percent of the SMI is the income threshold for entry into the school readiness program for CCEP children.

3. Assets. A family shall not have assets that exceed one million dollars (as certified by a member of such family). This applies to all children funded with Child Care Development Block Grant funds, including children identified in Section 1002.81(1), F.S.

4. Working Family. The family must also meet the definition of “Working Family” as defined by Section 1002.81(16), F.S.

A single-parent family in which the parent with whom the child resides is employed or engaged in eligible work or education activities for at least 20 hours per week;

A two-parent family in which both parents with whom the child resides are employed or engaged in eligible work or education activities for a combined total of at least 40 hours per week; or

A two-parent family in which one of the parents with whom the child resided is exempt from work requirements due to age or disability, as determined and documented by a physician licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459, and one parent is employed or engaged in eligible work or education activities at least 20 hours per week.

5. Initial eligibility determinations for Economically Disadvantaged, Special Needs, and Child Care Executive Partnership children will be authorized for 12-months of child care funding.

6. If the parent loses purpose for care anytime during the initial 12-month eligibility, the coalition shall provide services for three (3) months, at which time the parent must reestablish purpose for care to remain eligible. The time period that surpasses the initial authorization will be counted toward the subsequent authorization period. A family will not be limited to a single three (3) month period to reestablish a purpose of care during the 12-month eligibility period.

4. Documenting Eligibility

1. The coalition must determine eligibility for each applicant applying for the School Readiness Program in accordance with Section 1002.87(1), F.S., and Rule 6M-4.200, F.A.C. All child eligibility documentation shall be maintained by the coalition. The coalition is responsible for implementing a records retention policy ensuring that all documentation is maintained in accordance with law. The coalition or its designee must conduct internal file monitoring activities to ensure the accuracy of eligibility determinations.
2. Notwithstanding their inability to provide full documentation at the initial eligibility determination, the coalition shall permit enrollment after initial eligibility determination to children experiencing homelessness as verified by a Department of Children and Families certified homeless shelter.

3. Each applicant must have a completed signed and dated Form OEL-SR 01, School Readiness Application for each eligibility determination. The signature and date may be electronic if the application is available in the statewide information system.

4. During the initial determination an applicant must submit documentation, as applicable, to verify compliance with eligibility requirements. Prior to the eligibility determination and enrollment, new applicants shall submit required documentation within 30 calendar days from the date on the funding notification.

4.1 Age:
Verification of age must be established for each child eligible for the school readiness program in accordance with Section 1002.87(1), F.S. The coalition shall keep a record of at least one of the following supporting documents that shows the child’s name and date of birth:
1. An original or certified copy of the child’s birth record filed according to law with the appropriate public officer.
2. An original or certified copy of the child’s certificate of baptism or other religious record of the child’s birth, accompanied by an affidavit stating that the certificate is true and correct, sworn to or affirmed by the child’s parent.
3. An insurance policy on the child’s life which has been in force for at least 2 years.
4. A passport or certificate of the child’s arrival in the United States.
5. An immunization record signed by a public health officer or licensed practicing physician, or
6. A valid military dependent identification card.
7. For children identified in Sections 1002.87(1)(a), (1)(d), and (1)(g), F.S., the child’s age, as indicated on a child care authorization submitted by the referring agency, is sufficient to establish the child’s age as verified by the parent.
8. For children identified in Sections 1002.81(a)-(d), F.S., the child’s age, as indicated on a child care authorization submitted by the referring agency, is sufficient to establish age as verified by the parent.
9. If no supporting documents listed in subparagraphs 1-8. above are available, a parent’s sworn affidavit of the child’s age accompanied by a certificate of age signed by a public health officer or physician stating that the child’s age shown in the affidavit is true and correct may be accepted.

4.2 Citizenship:
Each child receiving services must be a U.S. citizen or qualified alien. Verification of U.S. citizenship or a qualified noncitizen status must be obtained for each child prior to authorizing school readiness services. The coalition shall keep a record of at least one of the following supporting documents establishing citizenship:
1. U.S birth certificate.
2. An original or certified copy of the child’s U.S. birth record filed according to law with the appropriate public officer.
5. Certificate of U.S. citizenship or naturalization.
6. For children identified in Sections 1002.87(1)(a), (1)(d) and (1)(g), F.S., the child’s status as a TANF recipient, as indicated on a child care authorization submitted by the referring agency, is sufficient to establish the child’s citizenship.

7. For children identified in Sections 1002.87(1)(b) and (1)(e), F.S., the Medicaid-eligible status, as indicated on a child care authorization submitted by the referring agency, is sufficient to establish the child’s citizenship.

4.3 Residency:

Each applicant must submit verification of current residency to qualify for the program in the county in which the applicant applied. The coalition shall keep a record of at least one of the following supporting documents that shows the name and current residential address of a parent with whom the child resides:

1. Utility bill (electric, gas, water), cable, internet or home phone bill dated within 12 months of the date the child application is submitted.
2. Pay stub from a current employer dated within 12 months of the date the child application is submitted.
3. Current and signed residential rental agreement or receipt from rental payment dated within 12 months of the date the child application is submitted.
4. Government-issued document (e.g., Florida driver’s license, Florida identification card, property tax assessment showing a homestead exemption), or
5. Military order showing that the child’s parent is a service member in the United States Armed Forces and is assigned to duty and resides in Florida when the child attends the school readiness program (e.g., permanent change of station).
6. For children identified in Section 1002.87, F.S., the child’s status as a TANF recipient, as indicated on a child care authorization submitted by the referring agency, is sufficient to establish the child’s residency.
7. For children identified in Sections 1002.87(1)(b) and (1)(e), F.S., the child’s Medicaid-eligible status, as indicated on a child care authorization submitted by the referring agency, is sufficient to establish the child’s residency.
8. If no supporting documents listed in subparagraphs 1.-7. above are available, a coalition may accept a notarized statement provided by the child’s parent and a letter from a landlord or property owner which confirms that the child resides at the address shown in the notarized statement.
9. If no supporting documents listed in subparagraphs 1.-7. above are available, for a homeless child as defined in Section 1003.01, F.S., a coalition shall document residency based on other supporting documents showing that the child is homeless and resides in Florida (e.g., letter from a shelter or a notarized statement provided by the child’s parent).

4.4 Parent Status:

Each applicant must meet the definition of parent in paragraphs 6M-4.200(1)(c) and (e), F.A.C., and submit government-issued ID and documentation of guardianship. The coalition shall keep a record of at least one of the following supporting documents to verify the parental relationship:

1. A copy of the child’s birth certificate, which includes the parent’s name or maiden name, if applicable.
2. A court order or other legal documentation that substantiates the adult’s relationship to the child(ren).
3. A valid DCF or Workforce Child Care Authorization Form that bears the name of the child and the parent.
4. Documentation the applicant is in receipt of relative caregiver payment or TANF benefits on behalf of the child.
5. An affidavit sworn to or affirmed by the child’s parent.
6. Official public or non-public school records.
7. An affidavit from a medical professional.

4.5 Family Size:
Each applicant must identify and provide supporting documentation of each child and adult included in the school readiness family size, in accordance with Section 1002.81(9), F.S.
1. Family size includes the parent(s) and the child(ren) currently residing together in the same dwelling unit (persons who are parents of a child in common regardless of whether they have been married and all children in their care) or person standing in loco parentis.
2. Children with a child care authorization who are in a licensed out-of-home placement or relative/non-relative placement must be listed as a child only case in the statewide information system. A family unit shall include an individual child referred or related sibling group referred in a licensed out-of-home placement or relative/non-relative placement.
3. The family size for a family that includes a child(ren) in receipt of Relative Caregiver payment shall only include the child(ren) in receipt of the Relative Caregiver payment.
4. The family size for a family that includes a child(ren) in receipt of TANF child only benefits shall only include the child(ren) if the child resides with a guardian. If the child resides with a parent, the parent must be included in the family size.
5. A teen parent will be considered a separate household, unless the teen and their child(ren) are included in their parents School Readiness family size. Eligibility and income will be determined consistent with the procedures for other households.
6. The coalition shall keep a record of at least one of the following supporting documents, as applicable, to establish family size:
   a. A statewide information system generated form or locally developed form documenting the applicant’s family size, with supporting verification of each household member (e.g. birth certificate, or government issued ID).
   b. For children identified in Sections 1002.87(1)(a), (1)(d), and (1)(g), F.S., the child’s family size as a TANF recipient, as indicated on a child care authorization submitted by the referring agency as verified by the parent, is sufficient to establish family size.
   c. For children identified in Sections 1002.87(1)(b) and (1)(e), F.S., the child’s family size on a child care authorization submitted by the referring agency as verified by the parent, is sufficient to establish family size.

4.6 Purpose for Care:
Each applicant must meet the purpose for care requirements of the program in accordance with Sections 1002.81(1), (7), (16) and 1002.87(1), F.S. The coalition shall keep a record of at least one of the following supporting documents establishing purpose for care:
1. For children identified in Sections 1002.87(1)(b) and (1)(e), F.S., the child’s purpose for care, as indicated on a child care authorization submitted by the referring agency, is sufficient to meet this requirement. If income documentation (earned and unearned) is available during the initial and subsequent eligibility verification, it must be submitted at that time by the family or the referring agency. A child is eligible under the relative caregiver program category if, the guardian is in receipt of Relative Caregiver Assistance payments from the Florida Department of Children and Families.
2. For children identified in Section 1002.87(1)(a), F.S., the child’s status as a TANF recipient, as indicated on a child care authorization submitted by the referring agency, is sufficient to establish purpose for care.
3. For income eligible families, purpose for care is established by the parent’s work schedule as verified on one of the income documents listed below in subparagraph (4)(f)6.
4. Education. Each applicant requesting services in order to attend an approved educational
activity in accordance with Section 1002.81(16), F.S., shall provide an official school schedule and proof of enrollment from an accredited education institution. Use of educational activities as a purpose for care shall be limited to GED programs, secondary education programs, technical or vocational programs, associate of arts, associate of science, bachelor of arts, and bachelor of science programs.

5. Documentation for exemptions to work requirements due to disability or age:
   a. Disability – In order to be exempt from work requirements due to disability, a parent must submit documentation from a physician licensed under Chapter 458 or 459, F.S., or a disability award letter from the U.S. Social Security Administration.
   b. Age – In order to be exempt from work requirements due to age, a parent must submit proof of receipt of retirement income benefits from the U.S. Social Security Administrator or documentation from a physician licensed under Chapter 458 or 459, F.S.

4.7 Income:
   Each applicant must submit documentation of earned and unearned income in accordance with paragraphs (a)-(f), below. This applies to at-risk children identified in Section 1002.81(1), F.S., if available. If income documentation is not available for at-risk children, the coalition shall still process the eligibility determination under the at-risk child care authorization.
   a. All earned income and unearned income not excluded by Section 1002.81(8), F.S, and employment, shall be documented.
   b. For all applicants, other than those who are self-employed, each source of earned income, at a minimum, shall be documented by hours of employment and rate of pay based on:
      I. Four (4) weekly, two (2) biweekly, two (2) semi-monthly, or one (1) monthly pay stubs that are current and consecutive, or
      II. A signed statement by the employer dated within 4 weeks of applying for SR child care funding, or
      III. A signed contract for employment that has a termination date of not less than 9 months from the date of applying for SR child care funding.
   c. Each source of unearned income, as defined by Section 1002.81(15), F.S., shall be documented at a minimum by:
      I. Source documentation establishing receipt of unearned income such as, but not limited to, alimony, social security benefits, supplemental security income, worker’s compensation benefits, reemployment assistance, veteran’s benefits, retirement benefits, temporary cash assistance under Chapter 414, F.S., and regularly received cash gifts.
      II. For child support, verification from the child support enforcement office or a written statement from the absent parent or household member.
   d. Income Fluctuations. For families that have irregular earnings (fluctuations) due to seasonal or other types of work schedules such as retail employment during the holidays or tourism in the summer, the coalition or contracted designee must:
      I. Calculate the average income for the previous 12 months. The average must reflect income changes that occur during the eligibility period, including situations in which a family had monthly income above 85 percent of the State Median Income (SMI), as published in the Federal Register at https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-06-10/pdf/2015-14187.pdf, for part of the year and lower income in other months.
      II. For instances where a family, upon redetermination, may not have 12 months of pay stubs, use an employer verification statement that affirms the average annual income.
   e. Self-Employment. For purposes of income verification, self-employment is defined as work activities that produce income that an individual uses to meet daily living expenses. The self-employment activity must contribute to the applicant’s livelihood and the time and effort put into the activity will indicate intent to make a profit. Passive or casual
activities that can be more appropriately qualified as “hobbies” or volunteer work do not meet this criterion.

I. Self-employed applicants shall provide appropriate documentation sufficient to determine a minimum of 20 hours worked per week and income, such as: business account ledgers, written documentation from customers, contractors, or federal tax returns.

II. For initial eligibility determination, eligibility shall not be denied solely because the applicant makes less than the minimum wage. If an applicant makes less than minimum wage at initial eligibility determination, the authorized eligibility period shall be twelve (12) months. However, subsequent eligibility authorizations will be dependent on whether or not the participant can document that self-employment activities generate consistent business gains. Once minimum wage is established by self-employment activities, subsequent eligibility may continue to be authorized for twelve (12) months.

(f) An acknowledgement of income and family size used to establish the family copayment in accordance with Rule 6M-4.400, F.A.C., if applicable, shall be documented by every family applying for school readiness service, including families of children identified in Section 1002.81(1), F.S. This acknowledgement shall be made and documented at each determination of eligibility. The acknowledgement may be recorded on locally created income worksheets that includes the information listed on the income worksheet generated by the statewide information system or worksheets generated by the statewide information system, if available.

4.7.1 2.6 Income Types

Income is defined as “family income,” and means the combined gross income, from all sources, of all members of the family unit who are eighteen (18) years of age or older, including earned and unearned income.

Counted Income Types includes and MUST BE DOCUMENTED by an award letter or verification statement:
- Salary/Tips
- Social Security Benefits (SSA/SSI received by adults)
- Documented Child Support Received
- Self-Employment Income
- Documented Alimony Received
- Unemployment Compensation Benefits (30 days)
- Veteran’s Benefits
- Retirement Benefits
- (RCG) TANF
- Cash Gifts (received regularly)
- Recurring cash contributions
- Military FSSA housing assistance
- Work Release payments
- Interest and dividends
- Money received from an employer as an employee benefits for child care if paid directly to employee
- Overtime/Bonuses
- Income Received from non-family member residing in the same household
- Worker’s Compensation Benefits

Excluded Income Types:
- Food Stamps
- Documented child support (paid out of the home)
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- Documented alimony (paid out of the home)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI Paid to Children)
- Housing assistance payments from HUD issued directly to a landlord and associated utility expenses
- School Loans/Grants
- Foster Parent Monthly Allotment
- Work Study
- One time only gifts
- Earned income from an underage child (in a secondary school)
- Adoption Benefits
- Earned Income Tax Credits or dependent care credits
- Capital gains
- Sale of personal assets (such as stocks, bonds, house, car, and insurance policies
- Money borrowed with an established repayment plan
- VISTA (Volunteers in Service To America) Payments

For children at risk of child abuse or neglect who are placed by the court in foster care or in the custody of a relative or non-relative caregiver, the income of the foster parent, shelter parent, court-ordered relative, or non-relative caregiver is not considered “family income” for purposes of eligibility or the assignment of parent fees.

Families in a natural disaster area are not required to include disaster relief or other forms of temporary assistance when calculating income thresholds for family eligibility purposes.

Bonus payments or incentive pay are included in total program income. The amount of the bonus shall be averaged over the twelve-month period to determine monthly income. The Eligibility Family Services Specialist does have some discretion about whether to include one-time payments in the income total after considering the circumstances of the family in question.

Parents are eligible for financial assistance (60) days during a break in employment.

Qualifications and Definition of Working Family

- A single-parent family in which the parent with whom the child resides is employed or engaged in eligible work or education activities for at least 20 hours per week;
- A two-parent family in which both parents with whom the child resides are employed or engaged in eligible work or education activities for a combined total of at least 40 hours per week; or
- A two-parent family in which one of the parents with whom the child resided is exempt from work requirements due to age or disability, as determined and documented by a physician licensed under chapter 458 or chapter 459, and one parent is employed or engaged in eligible work or education activities at least 20 hours per week.

2.3 Purpose of Care

The criteria for purpose of care for billing groups other than at risk must meet one of the following:

- Age and/or Disability - Parent/Guardian must have documentation from a physician licensed under Chapters 458 or 459, Florida Statutes. Can substitute for work requirements.
- Work - Parent/Guardian is working a minimum of 20 hours/week.
- Education - Limited to GED programs, secondary Parent/Guardian is in an eligible education activity.

4.82.4 Enrollment/Priority Groups
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Eligible clients may be rolled over into another Billing Category for which they qualify, based on availability of funding.

**Priority 1**

A child younger than 13 years of age from a family that includes a parent who is receiving temporary cash assistance under chapter 414, F.S., and subject to the federal work requirements. (s. 1002.87(1)(a), F.S.)

- BG3- TCAN – Temporary Cash Assistance – Not Working
- BG3-TCAW – Temporary Cash Assistance – Working
- WRC-RC1 – Temporary Cash Assistance – Respite

**Priority 2**

An at-risk child younger than 9 years of age. (s. 1002.87(1)(b), F.S.)

- BG1 – 11D – At Risk – Diversion
- BG1 – Home – At Risk – Homeless
- BG1 – DOM – At Risk – Domestic Violence
- BG1 – 11 – At Risk in Home Protective Service
- BG1 – 14R – At Risk Out of Home Protective Service
- BG1 – 13 – At Risk Foster Care
- BG1 – IN – Protective Investigation In Home
- BG1 – OUT – Protective Investigation Out of Home
- BG3R – RCG – At Risk – Relative Caregiver

**Priority 3**

A child from birth to the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2, F.S., who is from a working family that is economically disadvantaged, and may include such child's eligible siblings, beginning with the school year in which the sibling is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2, F.S., until the beginning of the school year in which the sibling is eligible to begin 6th grade, provided that the first priority for funding an eligible sibling is local revenues available to the coalition for funding direct services. However, a child eligible under this paragraph ceases to be eligible if his or her family income exceeds 200 percent of the federal poverty level. (s. 1002.87(1)(c), F.S.)

- BG8 – ECON – Economically Disadvantaged
- BG3AP – APP – Economically Disadvantaged TCA Application
- BG3 – 28A - Economically Disadvantaged TANF Child Only

**Priority 4**

A child of a parent who transitions from the work program into employment as described in s. 445.032, F.S., from birth to the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2, F.S. (s. 1002.87(1)(d), F.S.)

- BG5 – TCC – Transitional Child Care

**Priority 5**

An at-risk child who is at least 9 years of age but younger than 13 years of age. An at-risk child whose sibling is enrolled in the School Readiness program within an eligibility priority category listed in s.
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1002.87(1)(a)-(c), F.S., shall be given priority over other children who are eligible under this priority. (s. 1002.87(1)(e), F.S.)

BG1 – 11D – At Risk – Diversion
BG1 – Home – At Risk – Homeless
BG1 – DOM – At Risk – Domestic Violence
BG1 – 11 – At Risk in Home Protective Service
BG1 – 14R – At Risk Out of Home Protective Service
BG1 – 13 – At Risk Foster Care
BG1 – IN – Protective Investigation In Home
BG1 – OUT – Protective Investigation Out of Home
BG3R – RCG – At Risk – Relative Caregiver

Priority 6
A child who is younger than 13 years of age from a working family that is economically disadvantaged. A child who is eligible under this paragraph whose sibling is enrolled in the School Readiness program under s. 1002.87(1)(c), F.S., shall be given priority over other children who are eligible under this priority. However, a child eligible under this priority ceases to be eligible if his or her family income exceeds 200 percent of the federal poverty level. (s. 1002.87(1)(f), F.S.)

BG8 – ECON – Economically Disadvantaged
BG3AP – APP – Economically Disadvantaged TCA Application
BG3 – 28A - Economically Disadvantaged - TANF child-only

Priority 7
A child of a parent who transitions from the work program into employment as described in s. 445.032, F.S., who is younger than 13 years of age. (s. 1002.87(1)(g), F.S.)

BG5 – TCC – Transitional Child Care

Priority 8
A child who has special needs, has been determined eligible as a student with a disability, has a current individual education plan with a Florida school district and is not younger than 3 years of age. A special needs child eligible under this paragraph remains eligible until the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2, F.S. (s. 1002.87(1)(h), F.S.)

CF – SN – Special Needs Age 3 to School Eligible

Priority 9
Notwithstanding s. 1002.87(1)(a)-(d), F.S., a child who otherwise meets one of the eligibility criteria as described in priorities, who is also enrolled concurrently in the federal Head Start Program and the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program. (s. 1002.87(1)(i), F.S.)

Not Prioritized
CCPP – P1 – Child Care Executive Partnership

Note: Other funders may be used based upon Board approval.
2.7 Required Documentation

Parent must bring the following documentation for their intake appointment:

- Choice of child care provider
- Birth certificates for ALL children in the household (State issued)
- Proof of Income/Employment (6 weeks of current consecutive employment income (pay stubs, printout from current employer showing gross wages on company letterhead, printout from DCF showing TANF/Relative caregiver payments, proof of child support income, etc.) – all unearned income and school enrollment if unemployed applicable. (Examples of unearned income are: cash assistance, unemployment compensation, social security benefits, veteran’s benefits, child support, alimony and rent income). A completed verification of income form or signed statement by employer may be required. Overtime bonus awards are counted as (annual) income.
- Self-employed individuals shall provide appropriate documentation to determine hours worked and income such as business account ledgers, written documentation from customers, contractors, or federal tax returns.
- Picture ID
- Proof of Residency – Utility bill (FPL, cable, etc.), lease agreement or ELC official documentation, government issued document (e.g. current valid driver’s license, Florida identification card, property tax assessment showing a homestead exemption)

Please Note: Driver’s license/Florida identification card is acceptable proof of residency if it is current and it has a current physical address and not a P.O. box.

- Proof of separation letter from one (1) person stating the partner is no longer residing in the home. Letter must have name, address and phone number of the person making the statement.
- Proof of guardianship (letter from DCF showing custody of child)
- Other documentation that might be required for ELC services are:
  - Full time student documentation with paid receipt
  - Custody paperwork
  - Legal guardian home study application and paperwork
  - Maternity leave documentation
  - Disability documentation
  - Verification of school attendance
- Depending on the circumstances, additional documentation may be required.

4.9 Payment Certificate

Upon determination of eligibility, a parent shall be given a payment certificate to submit to an eligible child care provider to enroll the child in its school readiness program. The payment certificate shall at a minimum include the child(ren) for whom a coalition authorized child care, the provider the family selected, signatures of both the beneficiary and school readiness provider representative, the assessed parent copayment for each eligible child, the authorized hours of care and the authorized begin and end dates for school readiness services.

5. Parent Co-Payment/Fees

5.1 2.8.1 Sliding Fee Scale
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A coalition’s sliding fee scale must be set at a level that provides economically disadvantaged families equal access to the care available to families whose income is high enough not to qualify for financial assistance for school readiness services. A coalition must submit their proposed sliding fee scale to the Office of Early Learning for approval. The Office of Early Learning shall review the sliding fee scale to determine that the scale is reflective of the annually released federal poverty level, has an effective date no later than July 1st of that year, and that parent co-payments do not exceed 10 percent of the family’s income, regardless of the number of children in care. The Office of Early Learning shall perform a sampling of different income levels and family size to confirm that the proposed parent co-payments do not exceed the 10 percent level. If the coalition’s proposed sliding fee scale does exceed 10 percent of family income, the coalition must provide justification of how the sliding fee scale meets the federal requirement that the co-payment be affordable, prior to approval of the proposed sliding fee scale by the Office of Early Learning.

5.2 2.8.2 Parent Co-payment

Each family that receives School Readiness (SR) services shall be assessed a co-payment based on family size, hours of care needed, and family’s income, according to the sliding fee scale approved by the Office of Early Learning.

Prior to a child’s enrollment, at the child care provider, the person determining eligibility shall issue a payment certificate which informs the parent and the school readiness service provider of the co-payment to be paid by the parent and that additional fees which are charged by the provider may apply. If a child is enrolled with more than one provider, a co-payment must be assessed to each authorized provider.

If a child is authorized for part time care, the parent shall be assessed a part time co-payment. If a child is authorized for full time care, the parent shall be assessed a full time co-payment. A parent with two or more children receiving school readiness services may receive a co-payment discount for the second and any subsequent child in their care based on the coalition’s approved sliding fee scale. When a discount is applied, the youngest child must be assessed a full co-payment based on the approved sliding fee scale and hours of care needed.

When a school age child who is authorized part time care during the school year, attends a full-time day on a school holiday or school closure, the parent shall pay the part-time co-payment but the provider is reimbursed at a full-time rate. During the summer break, if a school age child attends full time, the parent shall pay the full-time co-payment and the provider shall be reimbursed at the full-time rate.

A co-payment shall not be equal to or greater than the providers private pay rate.

5.3 Co-Payment Changes

A parent co-payment shall not be increased during the initial 12-month eligibility authorization period. The amount of co-payment assessed shall be in effect for the family’s authorized eligibility period, unless:

- The parent or referring agency requests and the coalition grants a waiver of the co-payment specified in subsection (58) or (9) of Rule 6M-4.400; or
- An incorrect co-payment was assessed by the eligibility determiner as a result of an error of the eligibility determiner, program participant error or program participant fraud, resulting in corrective action to reduce or increase the family’s co-payment; or
- If there is any change in marital status, employment status, income or family size results in a lower parent co-payment; or
- The authorized hours of care change.
5.4 Graduated Phase-Out

At the end of the initial 12-month eligibility period at redetermination, if a family’s income is above 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), but at or below 85 percent of the State Median Income (SMI), the family will enter the graduated phase-out. The parent shall be assessed a co-payment that is based on the approved sliding fee scale. As the family’s income increases the co-payment shall gradually increase based on the approved sliding fee scale.

During the graduated phase-out, school readiness childcare funding will be authorized for 12-months from the redetermination date. At redetermination, the coalition shall provide written notice to the family and provider of the required co-payment for the 12-month period to be paid by the parent to the provider. The notice shall inform the parent that the co-payment shall increase as the family’s income increases.

During the graduated phase-out, the family shall report any changes in family size or income to the coalition within ten (10) calendar days. The coalition shall adjust the family’s co-payment based on the reported information and shall notify the family and provider of any changes within ten (10) calendar days. The parent co-payment shall be increased or decreased based on any reported changes, as required, that affect the parent co-payment.

During the graduate phase-out, if the family’s income exceeds 85 percent of the SMI, the family is no longer eligible for the program. The coalition shall notify the family that the family is no longer eligible to receive school readiness services and school readiness services will be discontinued two weeks (14 calendar days) from the date of the notice, as long as the two-week period does not extend beyond the family’s authorized eligibility period.

5.5 Program Provider Co-Payment Collection

Collection of the family’s required co-payment for school readiness services shall be the responsibility of the provider of school readiness services in accordance with Section 1002.84(8), F.S.

The provider shall provide written notice of the co-payment due date. The parent co-payment shall be collected within 10 calendar days of the provider’s payment due date. The provider shall provide written notice of the co-payment due date. The provider must give a receipt for each co-payment made by the parent and retain receipt records for all child care co-payments.

The provider shall provide written notification to the parent of the current outstanding co-payment balance within 15 days of the provider’s payment due date. This notification shall be provided at least on a monthly basis as long as there’s a co-payment balance.

Early learning program provider may charge parents additional fees such as registration fees, supply fees, late charges, etc. not covered by ELC. An early learning program provider may also charge the parent the difference between its private rate and the Coalition approved market rate (if the private rate is higher).

6. Reportable Events
6.1 Status Changes

A parent/guardian must notify the Coalition, in writing using the change report form, within 10 calendar days of any changes in circumstances related to employment, address, school, income, family size, or marital status. The parent/guardian may then be required to re-determine eligibility:

- Address,
- Temporary/Non-temporary work or education status,
- Family size,
- Failure to maintain attendance at a job training or education program,
- Income exceeds 85% of the State Median Income (SMI)

6.2 Breaks in Employment - Interruption in Employment or Education Activities.

A family shall maintain eligibility for financially assisted early learning services with certain breaks in employment or educational activities. These are:

- A break in employment, attendance at a job training or education program, which will be re-established within 60 calendar days. Services are reimbursable during this time.

- An temporary interruption in employment activity, with an option to return to that employment, including such circumstances as seasonal employment, school system related employment or leave in compliance with the Family Medical Leave Act. Services are considered suspended until employment resumes. Services are not reimbursable. Care may be re-established upon resumption of employment.

- An interruption in the parent’s educational activity, with an intent to return to education at the next available full semester. Services are considered suspended until the parent’s education enrollment resumes. Services are not reimbursable. Care may be re-established upon resumption of education.

1. A family shall maintain eligibility and child care funding for school readiness services during a temporary interruption in employment activity, with an option to return to that activity, not to exceed three (3) months. A temporary interruption in employment activity includes circumstances such as the parent’s seasonal employment, school system-related employment or leave in compliance with the Family Medical Leave Act. If the temporary interruption in employment exceeds three (3) months, services will be considered suspended, and not reimbursed, until the parent’s employment resumes. The child shall not be placed on the waiting list if the parent has verification that they are still employed and returning to that employment. Care may be re-established for the remainder of the initial 12-month authorization upon resumption of employment and reevaluation of the remaining eligibility factors.

2. A family shall maintain eligibility and child care funding for school readiness services during a temporary interruption in the parent’s educational activity with an intent to return to the education activity at the next available full semester or term, not to exceed three (3) months between a semester or term. If the temporary interruption exceeds three (3) months, services will be considered suspended, and not reimbursed, until the parent’s education enrollment resumes. The child shall not be placed on the waiting list if the parent has verification that they have enrolled in the next semester. Care may be re-established for the remainder of the initial 12-month authorization upon resumption of education and reevaluation of the remaining eligibility factors.

3. School readiness children shall not be terminated prior to the end of the 12-month eligibility
period based on a parent’s non-temporary interruption or cessation of employment, attendance at a job training or education program. Parents shall be provided a three (3) month period to re-establish their purpose for care. The 3-month period will start on the last day of verifiable employment/training/education for working families or the last day of the referral period for at-risk families. If a parent does not establish a purpose for care at the end of the three (3) month period, school readiness funding will be discontinued.

4. Parents and providers must be notified if, as a result of any redetermination, a child is determined ineligible for financial assistance within 10 calendar days.

7. 2.10 Provider Transfers

Parents can transfer their child care services at any time. A parent may not transfer his or her child to another school readiness program provider until the parent has submitted documentation from the current school readiness program provider to the early learning coalition stating that the parent has satisfactorily fulfilled the co-payment obligation related to the school readiness program.

If the referenced documentation is not available, the coalition will contact the provider to determine compliance and document compliance as reported by the provider. The transfer will be completed once the copayment obligation has been satisfactorily fulfilled. In the context of Rule 6M-4.400, satisfactory fulfillment of the co-payment obligation means immediate payment of the outstanding co-payment obligation or establishment of a repayment plan for the outstanding co-payment obligation.

If an at-risk child’s parent is unable to satisfactorily fulfill co-payment obligation prior to the transfer, the provider shall attempt to arrange a repayment plan with the at-risk child’s parent. The provider shall document the repayment attempt with the coalition and the coalition shall report the parent’s intent to the transfer child care providers to the Child Welfare Program Office of the Department of Children and Families or the community-based lead agency.

2.11 Wait List Procedure

The Coalition maintains a waiting list of all eligible families using the Unified Wait List. All parents requesting school readiness program services must complete the online prequalifying questions and School Readiness application, if applicable, and submit it through the single point of entry available at the following web address: Placement on this Wait List is determined by a preliminary screening which includes at a minimum, statement of income, family size, and type of service requested. All eligible children are placed on the Wait List based on the child’s legal name, age, and probable eligibility category and the type of service requested. Unborn children are not eligible to be placed on the Wait List. Actual certification of eligibility is conducted prior to authorization for placement, which will be based on available funding and capacity.

Children on the wait-list are re-determined every six months, by response to a letter, by phone, electronically or in person. Parent’s will have two (2) weeks from time of request to contact the party responsible for validating the waiting list to provide updated information necessary to remain on the waiting list. Names will be removed from the waiting list for failure to comply with the request for information within the time frame or if, upon validation, a purpose for care no longer exists.

Children shall be pulled from the Wait List based upon eligibility category in section 2.4 (Enrollment /Priority Groups) and by date of placement on the wait-list for children within the same priority group.

8. 2.12 Fee Waiver Policy & Appeal

The Coalition may, on a case-by-case basis, waive the co-payment for an at-risk child or temporarily waive the copayment for a child whose family experiences a natural disaster or an event that limits the
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parent’s ability to pay, such as incarceration, placement in residential treatment, or becoming homeless, or an emergency situation such as a household fire or burglary, or while the parent is participating in parenting classes. The request for the co-payment waiver must be documented in the case file during the initial authorization for care and at each redetermination.

- At-risk co-payment waivers - Families participating in an at-risk program as defined in Section 1002.81(1), F.S.
- Temporary co-payment waivers – Families with income at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level during an event that limits a parent’s ability to pay in accordance with Section 1002.84(8), F.S.

A request for an at-risk or temporary fee waiver may be made by a referring agency or parent/guardian on referral, other written documentation, or locally developed ELCIRMO Forms with verifying documentation as appropriate. Duration of the fee waiver shall coincide with duration of the special circumstances.

If a referring agency or parent/guardian is not satisfied with the ruling, they may appeal, in writing, the ruling, or lack thereof, to the Chief Executive Officer within ten (10) calendar days of the issuance of the ruling or expiration of the time period to provide such a ruling. The Chief Executive Officer shall review the appeal, including the ruling, if any, and conduct further investigations, as appropriate. Within five (5) business days of the receipt of written appeal, the Chief Executive Officer shall issue its decision.

The referring agency or parent/guardian may appeal the Chief Executive Officer’s decision to ELCIRMO’s Finance Committee, within fifteen (15) days after receiving the Chief Executive Officer’s decision. The appeal to the Finance Committee shall be in writing and delivered to the main office of ELCIRMO, located at 10 S.E. Central Parkway, Suite 200, Stuart, Florida 34994. Any appeal not filed in a timely manner shall not be processed.

The Finance Committee shall conduct a hearing to determine a fair and equitable solution and shall issue its findings, in writing, to referring agency or parent/guardian. Referring agency or parent/guardian may be present at the hearing and may choose to present witnesses on his/her behalf. The decision of the Finance Committee is final, however referring agency or parent/guardian may pursue such matters in a court of law as appropriate.

The referring Agency or parent/guardian failure to comply with the requirements for filing appeals as contained in this Section shall be deemed as referring agency or parent/guardian acceptance of the ruling or decision at the given level as satisfactory and acceptable, and shall have waived any right to further appeal.

9. 3 SCHOOL READINESS SLOT MANAGEMENT

School Readiness services are subject to the availability of funding and enrollment priorities, while critical to achieving federal and state policy objectives, are not guaranteed for any class or group. It is the policy of the ELCIRMO to utilize a range of budget management strategies to maintain fiscal integrity and balance, including the possibility of slot management of non-priority CCDF funded eligibility categories participants as an option of last resort, to maintain fiscal integrity.

Definition

Disenrollment: The removal, either temporary or permanent, of a child from participation in the School Readiness program. (s. 1002.81(5), F.S.).

9.1 3.1 Slot Management

To manage the budget efficiently and to ensure for a zero-balance deficit at the end of the fiscal year, ELC monitors child enrollment closely, as it is critical to accurately project the number of children.
the budget can support. Section 1002.87(1), F.S., establishes priority eligibility groups for participation in the School Readiness program. Priority must first be given to –

- A child younger than 13 years of age from a family that includes a parent who is receiving temporary cash assistance under Chapter 414, F.S., and subject to the federal work requirements.
- An at-risk child younger than nine 9 years of age.
- A child from birth to the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school who is from a working family that is economically disadvantaged.

A variety of preventive budget strategies may be employed, but are not limited to the following for budget deficits. Where applicable, a coalition plan amendment will be required.

- Projecting the number of children that can be served during the fiscal year. With 12-month eligibility the attrition rate may not be significant.
- School readiness funds may be transferred from administration, non-direct services or quality services to direct services within the targets to direct services within the earmarks and restrictions of the Coalition’s grant award or contract amount;
- Resources may be leveraged through partnerships (e.g., local government, Head Start, children’s services councils);
- Delaying the enrollment of a child in a subsequent priority eligibility group;
- Suspending automatic enrollment of a child in a subsequent priority eligibility groups of those children previously enrolled in a priority eligibility group but no longer eligible for the priority eligibility group (commonly called “rollovers”);
- Reduce payment rates for School Readiness providers;
- Amending its SR plan to increase the Coalition’s School Readiness PLAN which increases parent co-payments and remain in compliance with section 1002.84(8), F.S. and OEL Program Guidance 400.01. Parent copayments may only be increased at redetermination, but complies with Rule 6M-4.400, Florida Administrative Code, and OEL Policy Guidance No. 400.01; and
- Completing eligibility re-determinations in accordance with section 1002.84(7), Florida Statutes.

In accordance with the CCDBG Act of 2014, a child receiving CCDF funding SR assistance may not be terminated from the program unless the family income exceeds the federal threshold of 85 percent of the State Median Income. Children in CCDF funded eligibility categories must not be disenrolled due to a projected deficit. Children in non-CCDF funded eligibility categories must not be disenrolled due to a projected deficit unless a deficit has been forecasted through the end of the fiscal year and the fund management strategies listed in this document have been addressed and implemented, as appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCDF funded eligibility categories (OCA)</th>
<th>97ROO, 97POO, 97CFO, 97PPO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-CCDF funded eligibility categories (OCA)</td>
<td>97GNW, 97GOO, 97RSP, 97GTA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If after implementation of fund management strategies, a deficit continues to be projected, making disenrollment a continued possibility, no individual child nor group of children shall be disenrolled due to a projected deficit before consulting with and obtaining written approval from the Executive Director of OEL.

If the preventive budget deficit plan has been implemented and over-enrollment of children continues to create a problem, the following steps to slot management of children will be activated.

Process:
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The Chief Executive Officer will provide written notification to the Finance/Executive Committee/Board of slot management covering the following information:

1. The category of care that is being dis-enrolled
2. Detailed information regarding:
   - the number of children affected
   - identify the enrollment priority billing groups affected (income eligible, TCC, etc.)
   - ages of children
   - date the notification will be sent to parents
   - effective date of implementation of dis-enrollment
   - other information as deemed necessary

The Coalition must notify the OEL within forty-eight (48) hours of the initiation of formal consideration by the Coalition of dis-enrolling children from early learning programs and at least five (5) days before the Coalition takes any action to notify providers or families of a determination to dis-enroll children. The Coalition shall not dis-enroll any group of children prior to consulting with representatives of the Agency.

May be based on the following events—
- A reduction in available school readiness funding.
- Availability of funds based on a budget forecast.
- A participant’s failure to meet eligibility or program participation requirements.
- Fraud.

Dis-enrollment shall be completed according to the following—
- In reverse order of the previously mentioned eligibility priorities.
- Beginning with children from families with the highest incomes.

Dis-enrollment due to loss of funding or a family’s ineligibility
- A coalition must send a notice of dis-enrollment to the affected parent(s) and provider at least two weeks prior to dis-enrollment to provide adequate time for the parent to arrange alternative care for the child.
- The two-week notice may not extend beyond the original authorization period.
- An at-risk child may not be dis-enrolled from the program without written approval from DCF’s Child Welfare Program Office or the community-based lead agency.

Dis-enrollment due to projected fund deficit will comply with Early Learning Grant Agreement and OEL-EPG-240.04 requirements
- The Coalition shall make written notification to at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the initiation of formal consideration by the board to disenroll a group of children from early learning programs due to a projected funds deficit.
- The Coalition shall make written notification to OEL at least five business days prior to taking action to notify provider or families of a determination to disenroll a child from early learning programs due to a projected funds deficit.
  - The coalition shall submit the notification to OEL with a copy of the two most recent monthly use analyses and identify the enrollment priority groups from which the coalition plans to disenroll children due to a projected funds deficit and the projected number of children the coalition plans to disenroll within the enrollment priority group.
  - The coalition shall make written notice, which includes the effective date of the child’s disenrollment, to any affected child’s parent or guardian and School Readiness provider at least two weeks before the coalition disenrolls the child from the School Readiness Program due to a projected funds deficit.
  - The continued initial enrollment of a child in a priority eligibility group according to s. 1002.87(1)(a)(i), F.S.
  - The coalition has established enrollment priorities among the subsequent priority eligibility groups in descending order, beginning with the highest enrollment priority, in accordance with s. 1002.879(1), F.S.
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- The coalition prohibits the disenrollment of groups of children for any reason other than preventing a deficit or failure to comply with eligibility requirements.
- The coalition dis-enrolls children in order § 1002.87(7), F.S., states. The policy may allow for the dis-enrollment of a distinct subgroup within an enrollment priority (e.g., a school-age child older than a specific age).
- Submit a plan amendment, if applicable, and receive written approval of the submitted plan from OEL prior to the disenrollment of children.

### 10. RE-DETERMINATION

#### 10.1 4.4 Re-determination of Eligibility Time Frames

Re-determination dates will vary and at a minimum, child eligibility must be re-determined annually. Parents/guardians who fail to meet purpose for care at this time (if there has been no status change) are at risk of termination of services.

Re-determination must also be conducted twice per year for an additional 50 percent of the Coalition’s enrollment through a satisfactorily valid random sampling.

Coalition must document the reason why a child is no longer eligible for the school readiness program according to the standard codes prescribed by the Office of Early Learning.

During redetermination an applicant must submit documentation, as applicable, to verify compliance with eligibility requirements. Redetermining applicants shall submit required documentation prior to the redetermination date. The coalition shall determine eligibility within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the documentation.

#### 10.2 Maintaining Eligibility at Redetermination.

1. **Age of the child.** The age of eligible children is set forth in Section 1002.87(1), F.S. If a child’s age exceeds the age limit during the 12-month authorization period, the child shall continue to receive services for the remainder of the 12-month authorization period.

2. **Family Income.** The family’s income must remain at or below 85 percent of the State Median Income (SMI) as the upper level of the program subsidy support.

3. **Assets.** A family shall not have assets that exceed one million dollars (as certified by a member of such family).

4. **Working Family.** The family must also meet the definition of “Working Family” as defined by Section 1002.81(16), F.S.

5. All redetermining eligible Economically Disadvantaged, Special Needs, and Child Care Executive Partnership children will be authorized for 12-months of child care as funding allows.

#### 11. 4.2 Termination of Services

Services shall be discontinued for a family prior to the end of the 12-month eligibility period under limited circumstances. The family and provider will be notified of disenrollment at a minimum of two weeks prior to termination of services. Qualifying events for termination include:

(a) Excessive unexplained absences that exceed 10 calendar days during a total month of attendance. The coalition shall document 3 attempts to contact the family and the provider regarding excessive absences prior to disenrollment.

(b) Substantiated fraud or intentional program violation determined by the coalition or its designee pursuant Sections 1002.91 and 1002.84 (17), F.S.
Parents/guardians who fail to meet their eligibility re-determination time frame will have their early learning services terminated. Prior to the termination of services for any parent/guardian who is under a child care authorization form from a referring agency, an Eligibility Specialist will contact the Case Manager. Eligibility Specialists will contact parents and early learning programs of any termination of services. Early learning programs are required to submit a Termination Form to Reimbursement staff when the child is terminated from care.

A parent/guardian’s services may also be terminated due to failure to pay their parent fees. It is the responsibility of an early learning program to report any non-payment of parent fees.

12. Transfer of School Readiness Services

A family shall continue to receive school readiness services during the 12-month eligibility period due to a change in residence within the state to a different coalition service area.

(a) The school readiness funding shall transfer to the coalition service area that the family relocates to. Funding shall reflect the remaining balance of 12-month eligibility.

(b) The parent copayment may not be increased due to a transfer of services outside of the coalition service area.

(c) The coalition service area of transfer will be responsible for the redetermination of eligibility at the end of the original 12-month authorization period.

(d) If the family transfers during a three (3) month period to reestablish a purpose of care, the family must reestablish a purpose of care by the end of the three (3) month period for services to be continued in the new coalition service area.

13. REIMBURSEMENT

13.1 Provider Payment Rates

The coalition considers the average market rate schedule in adopting a provider payment rate schedule and the projected number of children the coalition will serve. The provider payment rate schedule is based exclusively on the prices charged for child care services.

At a minimum, the provider payment rate schedule includes:

- Differentiate rates by type, including child care provider who holds a Gold Seal Quality Care designation under s. 402.281, F.S.; a child care facility licensed under s. 402.305, F.S.; a public or non-public school exempt from licensure under s. 402.3025, F.S.; a faith-based child care facility exempt from licensure under s. 402.316, F.S., who does not hold a Gold Seal Quality Care designation; a large family child care home licensed under s. 402.3131, F.S.; or a family day care home licensed or registered under s. 402.313, F.S.
- Differentiate rates by type of child cares services provided for children with special needs or risk categories, infants, toddlers, preschool-age children and school-age children.
- Differentiate rates between full-time and part-time child care services.
- Differentiate rates for participation in a quality improvement program approved by the Office of Early Learning.
- Consider discounted rates for child care services for multiple children in a single family.
- Reimburse informal child care arrangements at no more than 50 percent of the rate adopted for a family day care home.
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Provider payment rate schedule changes in the form of an increase or decrease may be implemented for any of the following, taking into consideration how a decrease or increase will impact the coalition’s financial status.

- **Increase:**
  - An increase in Notice of Award
  - Provider rate not aligning with market rate schedule

- **Decrease:**
  - A decrease in Notice of Award
  - To prevent a deficit

The coalition must submit the provider payment rate schedule to the Board and the Office of Early Learning for approval.

### 13.2 5.2 Reimbursement Time Frames

**School readiness** providers are required to submit Enrollment/Attendance Verification forms on or before the 3rd business day of the month following when services were provided. **Early learning programs** **School readiness providers** are paid when the state funds become available and with a valid Enrollment/Attendance Verification form. Enrollment/Attendance Verification forms submitted late will be processed for payment the following month.

In accordance with Section 1002.84(10), F.S., attendance records may not be altered or amended after December 31 of the subsequent year.

The **school readiness** provider must report any discrepancy, overpayment, or underpayment within sixty (60) calendar days of transmission of the reimbursement receipt summary. Reported changes must include supporting documentation. Discrepancies validated by the coalition will be corrected for reimbursement purposes.

### 13.3 5.3 Reimbursement Rates

Programs **School readiness providers** shall be reimbursed based on a child’s care level and unit of care as defined by of the Coalition’s approved provider payment rate schedule for the county in which the provider’s facility is located.

Programs are reimbursed for children in attendance 6 or more hours per day at a full-time rate.

Programs are reimbursed for children in attendance less than 6 hours a day at a part-time rate.

Programs are not reimbursed for a full-time rate if the parent/guardian is only allotted a part-time rate based on work or school hours. If a child is in attendance for longer than the parent/guardian’s allotment of hours, the program can hold the parent/guardian responsible for the difference in payment, and tuition and other fees.

In order for a provider to be reimbursed for a child served by a coalition other than the coalition where the provider is located, the provider must have executed a Statewide School Readiness Provider Contract with the coalition of the child’s residence prior to enrollment and reimbursement. The provider’s reimbursement rates shall be negotiated in accordance with the approved school readiness plan of the contracted coalition. However, the provider reimbursement rate shall not exceed the contracted coalition’s approved school readiness rates based on the child’s care level and unit of care.

### 13.4 5.5 Reimbursement of Holidays

**School readiness** providers sub-contracted with the Coalition to provide full or part-time care are paid for 10 holidays of their choice. Those days are designated for payment by pre-printing an “H” on the attendance sheets. Handwritten “H’s” are not accepted for payment and only Coalition approved holidays will be reimbursed. A provider may not utilize a child’s absence for reimbursement purposes
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due to center closure of additional days during the holidays. Extended day providers are not reimbursed for holidays. A recognized holiday shall not be counted as an absence for purposes of reimbursement.

1. For school-aged children authorized part time care, a provider shall be reimbursed at a part time rate if a child care provider is closed on a coalition approved holiday. If a school-aged child is authorized full time care on school holidays, school closures or teacher inservice days, a provider shall be reimbursed at a full time rate if the provider is open. For school-aged children authorized full time care during the summer, a provider shall be reimbursed at the full time rate for coalition approved holidays.

2. For a school-aged child, if the child is scheduled to attend full time at a provider that is open on a day when school is closed and does not attend because his/her parent has opted to keep the child home that day, the provider shall be reimbursed at the full time rate in accordance with paragraph below.

13.5 5.6 Reimbursement of Absences

- Reimbursement shall be authorized for no more than three (3) absences per calendar month per child except in the event of extraordinary circumstances in which case the coalition or its designee shall provide written approval for payment based on written documentation provided by the parent justifying the excessive absence for up to an additional seven (7) days. Extraordinary circumstances does not include vacation or recreational time. Examples of extraordinary circumstances include the following:
  - Hospitalization of the child or parent with appropriate documentation (i.e., doctor’s note, hospital admission);
  - Illness requiring home-stay as documented (doctor’s note, parent statement);
  - Death in the immediate family with appropriate documentation (i.e., obituary, death certificate, parent statement);
  - Court ordered visitation with appropriate documentation (i.e., court order); or
  - Unforeseen documented military deployment or exercise of the parent(s) (i.e., military orders of deployment, reserve duty).

- Total monthly reimbursed absences shall not exceed ten (10) calendar days.

- In the event that If a child is absent for five consecutive days of the child’s regularly scheduled attendance during a calendar month, with no contact from the parent, the provider shall notify submit written notification to the ELC who in turn shall determines the need for continued care. If a termination is filed, notice will be provided to the referring entity. The coalition shall document in the case file all attempts to contact the parents by the coalition, provider or referring agency, if applicable.

- If the child has ten (10) unexplained absences during a total calendar month of attendance, with no contact from the parent, the provider shall submit written notification to the coalition or its designee who in turn shall determine the need for continued care. The coalition shall document in the case file all attempts to contact the parent by the coalition, provider, referring agency, if applicable. If a determination is made that school readiness services are no longer needed, the coalition or designee shall send a notice of termination to the parent and school readiness provider at least 2 weeks prior to disenrollment pursuant to Rule 6M-4.200, F.A.C. If the authorized eligibility period ends in less than 2 weeks, the notice of disenrollment will be sent stating that services will end on the last day of the current eligibility period. However, an at-risk child may not be disenrolled from the program without the written approval of the Child Welfare Program Office of the Department of Children and Families or the community-based lead agency. A notice of termination shall be maintained in the case file and provided to the parent, provider and referring agency.

- When an at-risk child has an unexcused absence or seven consecutive days of excused absences, the school readiness provider shall notify the Department of Children and Families or community-based agency and the early learning coalition. This paragraph shall apply to all at-risk children under the age of school entry in a School Readiness program.
13.6 Reimbursement for Children with Special Needs

1. A child care provider may be reimbursed by the coalition at a higher rate if caring for any school readiness child with special needs requiring additional care beyond services required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To receive a special needs rate, a child care provider must submit a list of the special needs services it is providing for each special needs child, in addition to the routine school readiness services. A special needs rate may be negotiated up to twenty (20) percent above the maximum infant care rate established by the coalition. However, any amount that exceeds the provider’s private pay rate for infant care shall be classified as a quality expenditure.

2. To receive a special needs rate, in addition to the base rate, it must be requested by the provider and approved by the coalition. A special needs rate shall be reimbursed for a school readiness child that has a documented physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral condition that requires a higher level of care in the child care setting. The special needs child’s condition must be validated by a licensed health, mental health, education or social service professional other than the child’s parent or person employed by the child care provider.

13.7 5.4 Reimbursement for Gold Seal Quality Care Programs

Programs that are recognized as Gold Seal by the State of Florida are entitled to a higher rate of pay. This rate is calculated up to 20% above the reimbursement rate provided the rate does not exceed the provider’s private pay rate.

A child care provider that has a current Gold Seal Quality Care designation, as defined in Section 402.281, F.S., may receive a differential rate higher than the coalition’s base approved reimbursement rate for each care level and unit of care. The reimbursement rate for the Gold Seal differential may be negotiated up to twenty (20) percent above an early learning coalition’s approved reimbursement rate for each care level and unit of care.

13.8 Reimbursement for Quality Improvement Programs

1. The coalition may reimburse providers above the provider’s private pay rate to support quality. Payments may exceed private pay rates if they are designed to pay providers for additional costs associated with offering higher-quality care.

2. A child care provider that is currently participating in a state or local quality improvement program, as documented by the coalition and approved by the Office of Early Learning, may receive a differential rate higher than the coalition’s base approved reimbursement rate for each care level and unit of care. The reimbursement rate for the state and local quality improvement differential may not exceed twenty (20) percent above an early learning coalition’s approved reimbursement rate for each care level and unit of care.

13.9 Reimbursement for Combined Quality Programs

A child care provider that is currently receiving a gold seal differential and participating in a state or local quality improvement program, as documented by the coalition and approved by the Office of Early Learning, may receive a differential rate higher than the coalition’s base
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approved reimbursement rate for each care level and unit of care. The reimbursement rate for the quality improvement differential shall not exceed twenty (20) percent above the provider’s private pay rate.

14. 6. FILE REVIEW

All School Readiness files for the three counties within ELCIRMO are stored electronically in the document management system. Only authorized personnel are permitted to access files. This allows for a more secure environment and limited handling of client records. Based on numbers served a percentage of files are reviewed on an ongoing basis as well as randomly. Files are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and randomly to monitor eligibility determinations.

14.1 6.1 Post Attendance Review:

Each month, a random attendance audit will be conducted of early learning programs school readiness providers including center and school based programs. The review may be conducted on-site or the provider may be asked to submit parent sign in and out sheets. The previous months of payment will be reviewed. The review will match the reimbursement request to the program’s attendance records and parent sign in and out sheets. Reviewing for parent/guardian signatures on “sign-in/sign-out” logs is the preferred monitoring method.

Providers will be notified in writing of the discrepancies via monitoring report and necessary adjustment made accordingly. The reimbursement department will provide technical assistance to the provider to ensure future compliance with acceptable verification and record keeping.

Follow-up attendance reviews will not necessarily be announced.

15. 7. CONTRACTED PROVIDER FILE DOCUMENTATION

The Coalition will ensure that SR Providers are in compliance with program provider standards eligibility to deliver the school readiness program.

Updates may be made to provider files at any time with written documentation. Rate increase requests or change of status (e.g. Gold Seal Stipend, holiday changes) will become effective the month following the date of request as long as all required documentation has been submitted and approved.
Early Learning Coalition
Of Indian River, Martin, and Okeechobee Counties, Inc.

VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM POLICIES
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ELCIRMO VPK
Program Policies

This document provides an overview of the operational policies and high-level procedures used by the Early Learning Coalition of Indian River, Martin and Okeechobee (ELCIRMO) counties. ELCIRMO also uses guidelines and rules defined by the state and contained within grants to determine procedures. Additionally, each department within ELCIRMO maintains detailed procedures utilized to perform their specialized functions.

1. GENERAL

1.1 Ages of Children Served

VPK Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten – Children must be 4 years old on or before September 1 of the current school year

1.1.2 Hours of Care

The school-year Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten program session offers 540 instructional hours to each eligible child. The Summer Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten program session offers 300 instructional hours to each eligible child. VPK providers decide upon a schedule for those hours which are entered into EFS as that provider’s VPK calendar for purposes of reimbursement. A child may only attend one Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten session.

2. VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN

2.1 Qualifications

Must be a Florida resident.

2.2 Eligibility

Children must be 4 years of age, but not 5 years of age or older on September 1st of the program year who attain the age of 4 between February 2 and September 1 may attend VPK either that program year or the subsequent program year. A child cannot attend VPK more than one program year unless granted a reenrollment under Rule 6M-8.210, F.A.C. A child is not eligible for VPK once he or she has been admitted to kindergarten.

2.3 Required Documentation

Parent must bring the following documentation for their intake appointment:

A parent has the responsibility to comply with date-of-birth verification requirements by providing a copy of at least one of the following approved supporting documents showing the child’s name and date of birth:

- An original or certified copy of your child’s birth record.
- An original or certified copy of your child’s certificate of baptism accompanied by an affidavit sworn to by the child’s parent that the certificate is correct.
- An insurance policy on your child’s life that is in force for at least two years.
- A religious record of the child’s birth accompanied by an affidavit sworn to by the child’s parent that the record is correct.
- A passport or certificate of arrival in the United States.
- An immunization record signed by a health officer or doctor.
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- A valid military dependent identification card or federal, state or local government identification card.
- A parent may submit a notarized affidavit of the child’s age accompanied by a certificate of age.

Proof of Age (one of the following)
- Original or certified copy of birth
- Certificate of baptism
- Insurance policy in force for at least 2 years
- Passport
- Immunization or military identification

Proof of Florida Residency (one of the following)
- Utility bill
- Pay stub
- Residential rental agreement
- Florida’s driver’s license
- Florida identification card
- Property tax showing homestead exemption

A parent has the responsibility to comply with residential address verification requirements by providing a copy of at least one of the following supporting documents that shows the name and residential address of a parent with whom the child resides:
- Utility bill (electric, gas, water), cable or home phone bill dated within 12 months of the date the child application is submitted.
- Pay stub dated within 12 months of the date the child application is submitted.
- Residential rental agreement or receipt for rental payment dated within 12 months of the date the child application is submitted.
- Government-issued document (e.g., driver’s license).
- Military order issued to the parent, if the parent is a service member of the United States Armed Forces, showing that the parent will reside in Florida when the child attends VPK.
- Federal government order showing that the child’s parent is a federal employee assigned to work in Florida when the child attends the VPK program.
- Florida Migrant Education Program Certificate of Eligibility (COE) Form from the Florida Department of Education.
- Notarized affidavit by the parent of the child’s residential address if accompanied by a letter from landlord confirming the child resides at the same address shown in the parent’s affidavit.
- Documentation of residency for a homeless child based on other documents (e.g., letter from a homeless shelter).

2.4 Fees

There is no parent fee for the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) program.

2.5 Reenrollments

As per the Florida Statute 1002.71 (4) “[a] child may reenroll only once in prekindergarten program under this section,” under the following conditions.
A child may only reenroll with a VPK provider during the program year(s) for which the child is eligible in accordance with Section 1002.53(2), F.S. Age and residential eligibility.
Good Cause Reenrollment for Good Cause within Same VPK Program Type:

Reenrollment for good cause” occurs when a child withdraws from a VPK provider, after the child has attended a portion of the VPK instructional hours, and enrolls with a new VPK provider of the same VPK program type. For funding purposes, a child reenrolled under this subsection shall not exceed one full-time equivalent (FTE) student, as defined by Section 1002.71(2), F.S. There are two categories of reenrollment for good cause: primary reenrollment due to good cause and subsequent reenrollment exemption due to good cause.

A student may be reenrolled for good cause and receive their remaining instructional hours in the same program type (school year or summer) in which the student was previously enrolled. The following are examples of situations that apply:

Primary reenrollment due to good cause:

A child may withdraw from his or her initial VPK provider and reenroll at another VPK provider within the same program type if the child is granted a primary reenrollment due to good cause under this paragraph. The following criteria must apply for a child to be granted a primary reenrollment due to good cause:

1. The child has attended a portion of the VPK program, but has not substantially completed the VPK program;
2. The child has not previously reenrolled in the VPK program;
3. The child’s parent completes and submits the Reenrollment Application, Form OEL-VPK 05 (May 2016) on https://familyservices.floridaearlylearning.com by using personal means or with assistance available at an early learning coalition. The Reenrollment Application, Form OEL-VPK 05, (May 2016) is hereby incorporated by rule and may be obtained as described in Rule 6M-8.900, F.A.C.; and,
4. One of the following circumstances must be applicable to the child (documentation is not required):
   a. The illness of the child student, an individual living in the student’s household; an individual which the student’s parent or guardian is responsible for caring for; or the student’s parent, guardian, sibling, grandparent, step-parent, step-sibling, or step-grandparent.
   b. A disagreement between the parent or guardian and the VPK provider or school concerning policies, practices, or procedures at the provider’s or school’s VPK program;
   c. A change in the student’s residence;
   d. A change in the employment schedule or place of employment of the student’s parent or guardian;
   e. The VPK provider’s inability to meet the student’s health, behavioral or educational needs;
   f. The termination of the student’s VPK program before 70 percent of the class instructional hours is are delivered;
   g. The student child is dismissed by a VPK provider for failure to comply with the provider’s attendance policy;
   h. The provider’s designation as a low performing provider on probation under Section 1002.67, F.S.;
   i. Any condition described as an extreme hardship in paragraph below (documentation is not required); or
j. Another reason not expressly stipulated in this rule which prevents the child from attending the VPK provider’s class or which prevents the VPK provider from serving the child in accordance with the requirements of the VPK program.

Subsequent reenrollment exemption due to good cause:

A child may reenroll and subsequently withdraw from the VPK provider and reenroll at another VPK provider within same program type if the child is granted a subsequent reenrollment exemption due to good cause under this paragraph. The following criteria must apply for a child to be granted a subsequent reenrollment exemption due to good cause:

1. The child has attended a portion of the VPK program, but has not substantially completed the VPK program;
2. The child has reenrolled under subsection (3) or (4) of this rule;
3. The child’s parent completes and submits the Reenrollment Application, Form OEL-VPK 05 with the supporting documentation on https://familyservices.floridaearlylearning.com by using personal means or with assistance available at an early learning coalition; and,
4. One of the following circumstances must be applicable to the child with supporting documentation:
   a. A change in the child’s residence that extended the child’s round-trip by 60 minutes or more, to and from the VPK provider, as supported by third party documentation showing the change (for example, a rental agreement or receipt from rent payment, mortgage, utility records, or other verifiable documentation);
   b. A change in the child’s residence that resulted in a temporary stay, or move out of a homeless shelter, transitional housing entity, or domestic violence shelter, as supported by third party documentation (for example, a letter from a homeless shelter, transitional housing entity or domestic violence shelter; a court-issued domestic violence injunction, or other verifiable documentation);
   c. A change in a parent’s employment that extended the parent’s round-trip travel time by 60 minutes or more, to and from the VPK provider, as supported by employer documentation showing the start date or change in employment location;
   d. The child’s parent(s) is active duty military or reservist and deployed supported by verifiable documentation (for example, proof of current military deployment);
   e. The termination of the child’s VPK class, into which the child was reenrolled as confirmed and documented by the coalition, the Department of Children and Families, or local licensing agency on official letterhead or from a Child Care Information System (CCIS) screen print;
   f. A provider is found to have committed a Class I Violation as defined in Rule 65C-22.10 or 65C-20.012, F.A.C. (as applicable to the provider type), as documented by the Department of Children and Families on official letterhead or from a CCIS screen print;
   g. A serious injury to the child that occurred at the provider which required the provider to contact medical services, as documented on the Department of Children and Families or local licensing agency Accident/Incident Report for licensed providers or on official provider letterhead for license-exempt providers;
   h. The child was dismissed from a VPK provider for issues that prevented the provider from meeting the child’s behavioral or educational needs, as substantiated by the dismissing provider on official letterhead;
   i. The child’s parent has reported events to the Department of Children and Families or local licensing agency that indicate the VPK provider’s practices put his or her child’s health, safety, or well-being at risk, as documented by a federal, state, or local government official;
Extreme Hardship

Reenrollment for extreme hardship into a VPK summer program:

“Reenrollment for extreme hardship” occurs when a child withdraws from a VPK provider, after the child has attended a portion of the VPK instructional hours, and enrolls with a VPK provider during a summer VPK program; for funding purposes, a child may be reenrolled and reported as one full-time equivalent (FTE) student, as defined by Section 1002.71(2), F.S., in a summer VPK program if the child meets the reenrollment criteria in this subsection. There are two categories of reenrollment for extreme hardship: primary reenrollment due to extreme hardship and subsequent reenrollment exemption due to extreme hardship.

Primary reenrollment due to extreme hardship:

A student who is reenrolling from a School Year to a Summer program can receive all 300 VPK instructional hours in a summer program (requires documentation):

A child may withdraw from his or her initial VPK provider and reenroll at another VPK provider in a summer VPK program, and be reported as a full FTE, if the child is granted a primary reenrollment due to extreme hardship under this paragraph. The following criteria must apply for a child to be granted a primary reenrollment due to extreme hardship:

1. The student child has attended a portion of the VPK program, but has not substantially completed the VPK program;
2. The student child has not previously reenrolled in the VPK program due to an extreme hardship or for good cause; and
3. The student’s child’s parent or guardian completes and submits to the early learning coalition the Reenrollment Application, Form OEL-VPK 05 and, where documentation is not supplied by the coalition or provider, with supporting written documentation on https://familyservices.floridaearlylearning.com by using personal means or with assistance available at an early learning coalition; and, of extreme hardship of one or more of the following:

   a. The illness of the student child, the illness of a family member which the child’s parent is responsible for caring for, or the illness of the child’s parent, as documented in writing by a physician licensed under Chapter 458 or 459, F.S., if it the illness would result in the student child being absent from more than 30 percent of the number of hours in the program type in which the student child is enrolled;
   b. The termination of the child’s VPK class as a result of the provider’s misconduct or noncompliance which results removal from eligibility in the provider’s inability to offer the VPK program, as documented by the early learning coalition;
   c. The parent’s or guardian’s inability to meet the basic needs of the student child, including, but not limited to, a lack of food, shelter, clothing, or transportation, as documented in writing by a federal, state, or local governmental official;
   d. The provider’s inability to meet the student’s child’s educational needs due to the student’s child’s learning or developmental disability as documented by a federal, state, or local governmental official;
   e. The provider’s inability to meet the student’s child’s health needs as documented by a physician licensed under Chapter 458 or 459, F.S., or a federal, state, or local governmental official; or
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f. Displacement of a student the child from his or her place of residence or closure of the student’s child’s VPK provider as a result of a state of emergency as declared by a federal, state, or local governmental official; or

g. A temporary or permanent change in parent custody or guardianship, supported by legal documentation such as a court order or official documentation from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or DCF contracted agency. This includes an at-risk child care authorization that documents the guardianship change.

Subsequent reenrollment exemption due to extreme hardship:

A child may reenroll into a VPK provider and subsequently withdraw and reenroll at another VPK provider in a summer VPK program, and be reported as a full FTE, if the child is granted a subsequent reenrollment due to extreme hardship under this paragraph. The following criteria must apply for a child to be granted a subsequent reenrollment exemption due to extreme hardship:

1. The child has attended a portion of the VPK program, but has not substantially completed the VPK program;
2. The child has reenrolled under subsection (3) of this rule;
3. The child’s parent completes and submits the Reenrollment Application, Form OEL-VPK 05 with the supporting documentation on https://familyservices.floridaearlylearning.com by using personal means or with assistance available at an early learning coalition; and,
4. One of the of circumstances listed in subparagraph (4)(a)4. must be applicable to the child with supporting documentation

Reenrollment for children in the VPK Specialized Instructional Services (SIS) Program:

Changing SIS providers while enrolled in the SIS program type does not constitute a reenrollment under this rule. A child may reenroll under subsection (3) or (4) of this rule into a VPK SIS program from a school-year or summer program type or from a VPK SIS program into a school-year or summer program type, as applicable. However, a child shall not reenroll from VPK SIS school-year program type to a VPK SIS summer program type under subsection (4) of this rule. For a reenrollment due to good cause, the funding available to the child shall be equal to the child’s initial FTE allocation for the program type in which the child was previously enrolled, minus any amount previously paid for such services rendered to the child. A reenrollment under this subsection may be into a subsequent program year as defined in subsection (6).

(6) Reenrollment into a subsequent program year.

(a) A child may only reenroll into a subsequent program year if:
   1. The child attains the age of 4 years old between February 2 and September 1 of his or her initial program year of eligibility as described in Section 1002.53(2), F.S.; and,
   2. The child has not yet been admitted to kindergarten; and,
   3. The child is granted a reenrollment under subsection (3) or (4) of this rule.

(b) The remaining FTE for a child that reenrolls for good cause into a subsequent program year shall be calculated as the total FTE hours for the program type minus the hours the child has expended, including paid absences.

3. REIMBURSEMENT

VPK providers agree to submit monthly Attendance Verification forms on or before-the 3rd business day of each month. If a due date falls on a holiday, Provider agrees to submit all required attendance
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Provider agrees to review the reimbursement summary provided with the monthly reimbursement statement, Provider agrees to report to Coalition any discrepancy, overpayment, or underpayment within sixty (60) calendar days of transmission of the reimbursement summary.

3.1 Reimbursement Rates

Providers are reimbursed based on rates set by the Florida Legislature which are subject to change with limited notice.

4. Uniform Attendance Policy for Funding the VPK Program

(1) Attendance and Absences

(a) For payment purposes, a private provider or school district shall report that a student attended all of the instructional hours offered for a day if the student attends any portion of the day whether the private provider or school district is determined to be in compliance or out of compliance with all VPK statutes and rules for the day.

(b) A private provider or school district may not receive payment for a student prior to the student’s first day of attendance or after the student’s last day of attendance.

(2) Monthly Payment and Final Reconciliation

Each early learning coalition shall pay private providers or school districts on a monthly basis for each VPK classroom in accordance with Rule 6M-8.204 unless a private provider or school district chooses to accept advance payments under Rule 6M-8.205, F.A.C. The early learning coalitions shall make monthly payments by the last day of the month following the month for which the provider is receiving payment. Each early learning coalition shall calculate and reconcile monthly classroom payments using the Agency’s statewide information system.

(a) Monthly payments shall be equal to the sum of the following calculation for each student who has attended the VPK class: the county’s allocation per full-time equivalent student (calculated in accordance with Section 1002.71(3)(b), F.S.) divided by the number of hours for the VPK program type multiplied by the lesser of:

1. The sum of the hours within the month which each student attends the VPK program divided by .8; or
2. The hours the student is enrolled in the class for the month.

(b) The total program payment shall be equal to the sum of the following calculation for each student who has attended the VPK class except that the school district’s payment shall be rounded in accordance with Section 1002.71(3)(d), F.S.; the county’s allocation per full-time equivalent student divided by the number of hours for the VPK program type multiplied by the lesser of:

1. The sum of all the hours the student attends the program with the provider divided by .8.
2. The hours the student is enrolled with the provider for the program type.
If the sum of the monthly payments made to the private provider or school district under paragraph (2)(a) is:

1. Less than the total program payment to the private provider or school district, the early learning coalition shall make a final reconciliation payment to the provider equal to the total program payment minus the sum of the monthly payments.
2. Greater than the total program payment to the private provider or school district, the difference shall be deemed an overpayment.

(d) If a private provider or school district disputes the calculation of the total program payment based on inaccurate attendance or absence reporting or calculation, it must submit a request for an adjustment of a prior payment no later than the last day of the month following the calendar month in which it receives payment.

(3) Establishing VPK Class Schedules

To ensure that private providers or school districts receive accurate payment for a student’s attendance and absences when permissible under this rule, a private provider or school district shall submit a VPK class schedule for each VPK class to its early learning coalition in writing no later than the time the provider submits its class application. Private providers and school districts are not eligible to receive payment for hours of services unless the services are rendered during hours indicated on the VPK class schedule. A VPK class schedule shall:

(a) Be comprised of 540 hours for the school-year VPK program and 300 hours for the summer VPK program.

(b) Indicate the dates and times which instructional hours will be offered.

(c) For the school-year program:
   1. Not begin instruction more than 14 days before Labor Day or, if the uniform date fixed by a district school board under Section 1001.42(4)(f), F.S., for the opening of public schools for regular school programs occurs in a county more than 14 days before Labor Day, a school-year program in the county may not begin instruction before the uniform date.
   2. Complete instruction by June 30.

(d) For the summer program, not begin instruction before May 1 and complete instruction before the uniform date fixed by the district school board under Section 1001.42(4)(f), F.S., for the opening of public schools for regular school programs in the county.

(4) Modifying VPK Class Schedules

(a) A private provider or school district may modify its schedule up to two times for any reason other than a temporary closure caused by emergency circumstances as described in subsection (5). A private provider or school district may modify its schedule as frequently as necessary to restore instructional days lost as a result of a temporary closure caused by emergency circumstances.

(b) To modify a VPK class schedule, a private provider or school district shall submit notice in writing to the coalition.
1. If the modification of the class schedule results from a closure other than a temporary closure caused by emergency circumstances, as described in subsection (5), a private provider or school district shall submit:

   a. An initial notification of the closure before the coalition’s close of business on the first day of the closure. Initial notification shall indicate the provider’s name and address, the date(s) of the closure, the VPK class(es) affected by the closure, and, if available, an estimate of the date upon which the affected VPK class(es) will resume instruction.

   b. A notification of schedule modification no later than two business days following resumption of VPK instruction. Notification of schedule modification and resumption of instruction shall indicate the provider’s name and address, the class(es) resuming instruction, the date(s) which each VPK class did not offer instruction as previously scheduled, and a revised class schedule which indicates the date(s) and times added to the schedule as revised to restore the hours lost as a result of the closure.

2. If the modification of the class schedule results from a temporary closure caused by emergency circumstances, the private provider or school district shall submit a notification of schedule modification as described in sub-subparagraph (4)(b)1.b.

   (c) If a private provider or school district fails to modify a VPK class schedule as required in this rule or fails to comply with the deadlines established for submission of notifications, the private provider or school district shall be ineligible to receive payment for those closures and shall forfeit the opportunity to revise its class schedule to restore the lost instructional hours for those closures.

(5) Closures

(a) Temporary Closures Caused by Emergency Circumstances

1. A student is considered to have attended all VPK program hours offered during a temporary closure caused by emergency circumstances for a combined total of five (5) instructional days for each VPK class if the private provider or school district submits notification in writing to the coalition the dates which the provider was closed.

   a. A closure is temporary if the provider resumes instruction following the closure.

   b. A closure is caused by emergency circumstances when a state of emergency is declared by federal, state or local officials for the area in which the provider is located.

2. A temporary closure caused by emergency circumstances is not payable for any student who does not attend a VPK instructional day following the closure.

3. A private provider or school district shall revise its class schedule to restore VPK instructional days which are lost due to temporary closures caused by emergency circumstances in excess of a total of five (5) instructional days for a VPK class.

4. A private provider or school district may revise its class schedule to restore the instructional days lost as a result of a temporary closure caused by emergency circumstances instead of accepting payment for a temporary closure.

(b) Temporary Closures Caused by Other Circumstances. A temporary closure is not payable unless it is caused by emergency circumstances. A private provider or school district shall revise its VPK class schedule and receive payment for days it restores in accordance with subsection (4) following a closure.

(6) Overpayment
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(a) If the coalition determines that a private provider or school district received payment in an amount greater than the amount earned by the provider, resulting in a negative reconciliation payment calculation, the coalition shall make reasonable efforts to collect the overpayment from the provider. Reasonable efforts may include but are not limited to informing the provider of the full amount owed, making written requests for repayment, offering to negotiate a repayment schedule, and offsetting the overpayment against any future payments for early learning programs.

(b) If the coalition is unable to arrange for collection of the overpayment within ninety (90) calendar days of determining that the provider has received an overpayment and after making a reasonable effort, as determined by the Agency, the coalition shall provide all information necessary for the Agency to act to collect the overpayment. The Agency retains the ability to require the coalition to make continued efforts toward recovery of the overpayment or to consider the overpayment to be a disallowed expenditure of the coalition.

5. FILE REVIEW

All VPK files for the three counties within ELCIRMO are stored electronically on the Coalition Portal in the document management system. Only authorized personnel are permitted to access files. This allows for a more secure environment and limited handling of client records. Files are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and randomly to monitor eligibility determinations. All files are reviewed.

5.1 Post Attendance Review:

Each month, a random attendance audit will be conducted of early learning programs VPK Providers including center and school based programs. The review may be conducted on-site or the provider may be asked to submit parent sign in and out sheets. The previous months of payment will be reviewed. The review will match the reimbursement request to the program’s attendance records and parent sign in and out sheets. Reviewing for parent/guardian signatures on “sign-in/sign-out” logs is the preferred monitoring method.

Providers will be notified in writing of the discrepancies via monitoring report and necessary adjustment made accordingly. The reimbursement department will provide technical assistance to the provider to ensure future compliance with acceptable verification and record keeping.

Follow-up attendance reviews will not necessarily be announced.

6. CONTRACTED PROVIDER FILE DOCUMENTATION

The Coalition will ensure that VPK Providers are in compliance with Rule 6M-8.300 – 6M-8.301, F.A.C., prior to delivering instruction and receiving payments.