



**SCHOOL READINESS COMPLIANCE POLICY**

**For**

**INFORMAL CHILD CARE PROVIDERS**

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## **INTRODUCTION OVERVIEW**

The intent of this policy and procedure developed by the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc. (Coalition) is to provide interpretive guidelines for applicable services and standards as outlined in of Chapter 411, F.S., Chapter 1002, F.S. and the Child Care Development Fund (federal).

This policy and procedure provides clear definitions and guidelines for providers/early childhood educators to follow and is applicable to informal providers only.

## **OVERVIEW**

An informal provider is not required to be licensed.

Typically this is care by a relative or nanny. The reimbursements rate is 50% the rate for center based care.

All informal providers are required to sign an Agreement with the Coalition or its designee.

Failure to adhere to the terms of the Agreement or any violations described herein may result in the discontinuance of funding and/or, parent notification of non-compliance.

The Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc. reserves the right make exceptions to this policy.

Informal providers will be expected to:

- Meet basic health and safety standards in their homes.
- Offer a developmentally appropriate day of activities.
- Offer Character Development.
- Complete developmental screening on each child.

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## Section I DEFINITIONS

**Age Appropriate Assessment:** An ongoing, systematic process of determining what the children in programs, both individually and as groups, know and can do in relation to their optimal development and to the goals of the program. It is also used to assist teacher planning and program evaluation.

**Agreement:** A binding document between two entities addressing the payment for a service provided and the details of those services.

**Character Education Program:** A program that teaches students to use basic character traits in everyday life that promote responsible behaviors and a positive culture and climate in the school.

**Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas, Inc., Inc., Inc., Inc. (CCC):** The central agency contracted by the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County to administer designated School Readiness and VPK services.

**Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum:** A curriculum that is based on research and addresses all developmental areas by child's age.

**Developmental Screening:** A brief, relatively inexpensive, standardized procedure designed to quickly screen a large number of children to determine if a child should be referred for further assessment.

**Early Education and Care Provider:** For the purposes of this policy this is defined as any provider who receives funding for School Readiness, including informal providers.

**Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc (Coalition):** The agency that funds early childhood education and care programs for children in Pinellas County through a contractual agreement with Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas, Inc., Inc., Inc., Inc.

**Informal Provider:** A child care arrangement that is typically provided by a relative or nanny. The reimbursements rate is 50% the rate for center based care. Licensing is not required.

**Level 2 Background Screening:** Security background investigations which include, but are not be limited to, fingerprinting, statewide criminal and juvenile records checks through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and federal criminal records checks through the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It may also include local criminal records checks through local law enforcement agencies.

**Monitoring:** On-site and desk reviews to evaluate compliance with contractual and programmatic requirements by the Coalition or its designee.

**Service Improvement Agreement (SIA):** A corrective action plan issued by the Early Learning Coalition and/or its partner Coordinated Child Care. The SIA defines noted deficiencies in the provider's care setting and establishes a plan including timelines to make improvements.

## Section II

### HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) and the Child Care Services Block Grant (CCSBG) are federal revenue sources for the School Readiness program. These documents provide the mandated guidelines for states to meet in order to maintain funding. “In addition F.S. 411 requires each school readiness coalition provide a healthy environment. ....Each Coalition must adopt local health and safety requirements that may meet but not exceed state or local licensing standards.”<sup>1</sup>

#### **Level I Health and Safety Standards (Serious)**

Any violations of the following conditions must be resolved within a twenty four (24) hour period. The informal provider will be placed on corrective action and risk being suspended from serving school readiness funded children for a period of one (1) year.

1. Informal providers and all family members over the age of 18 years residing in the home must [have a local background check and child abuse registry clearance.](#) ~~comply with Level 2 background screening as defined in Chapter 402, F.S.~~
2. In the absence of the provider, there must be a screened substitute who meets the definition of Good Moral Character and are 18 years of age.
3. There may be no more than 5 children in the home; no more than 3 can be under the age of 2 years. (See further explanation for Family Child Care Home Licensing Requirements.).
4. Children must be supervised at all times. This is defined as children being within eyesight or hearing so that the provider can respond to the child’s needs in a reasonable amount of time.
5. Informal providers must report any change of location within ten (10) calendar days prior to closing the current location to Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas, ~~Inc., Inc., Inc.~~ Inc. and the Coalition.
6. Informal providers must have a working land-line telephone. The telephone number must be on file with Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas, ~~Inc., Inc., Inc.~~ Inc. at all times.

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<sup>1</sup> Child Care Development Fund Plan 2008-2009

7. Informal providers must notify the parent/guardian immediately of any injury or incident and maintain proper documentation of such notification in the child's file.
8. Informal providers must have sufficient seatbelts or federally approved child restraints when transporting children. They must have a valid driver's license, vehicle liability insurance and the vehicle should be in good working condition. They must complete a visual sweep inspection upon arriving at a location and upon returning to the home to ensure no child is left alone in the vehicle.
9. The facility and equipment (inside and outdoor play area) must be clean, sanitary, free from pests and vermin, and in good repair.
10. Children in care must not be subject to inappropriate discipline which is; severe, humiliating, frightening, inappropriate isolation, or associated with food, rest, or toileting. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is prohibited
11. Provider must be physically able to respond appropriately in an emergency situation. Documentation from health care provider may be required.

**Level II (Moderate/ Less Serious Non-Compliance)**

Any violations of the following conditions must be resolved within forty-eight (48) hours/two (2) business days or risk being suspended from enrolling additional school readiness funded children for a period of one (1) year and will be placed on a corrective action plan called a Service Improvement Agreement (SIA).

1. All informal caregivers must operate within the capacity approved by Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas, Inc.
- ~~2. Children must be supervised at all times. This is defined as children being within eyesight or hearing so that the provider can respond to the child's needs in a reasonable amount of time.~~
- ~~3.2.~~ Infants under one (1) year of age must be placed on their backs to sleep in accordance with American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines.
- ~~4.3.~~ The informal caregiver must maintain current certification in First Aid and CPR.
- ~~5.4.~~ Each site must maintain a complete First Aid kit containing: soap, band-Aids, disposable non-porous gloves, cotton balls or applicators adhesive tape, thermometer, tweezers, pre-moistened wipes and scissors.

~~6.5.~~ A minimum of 4 foot fencing must enclose the outdoor play areas unless the outdoor play area is bordered by a road or street with a speed limit of ~~more~~-less than 25 MPH.

~~7.6.~~ Napping accommodations must be sufficient for a child's comfort and health and have sufficient bedding.

~~8.7.~~ The total learning environment should be free of hazards such as toxic substances, exposed wiring, "sharp objects". Electrical outlets must be covered by child safety caps.

**Level III (Least Serious Non-Compliance)**

Any violations of the following conditions must be resolved within ten (10) business days or risk being suspended from enrolling additional school readiness funded children for a period of one (1) year.

1. An up-to-date and age-appropriate immunization record must be present in the file for each non school age child.
2. A current Student Health Examination Form 3040, or equivalent must be on file for each non-school age child.
3. A Release for Medical Care Form should be on file for each child. It should be signed annually.
4. Lighting, ventilation, and temperature must be adequate. Temperature range 65 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit.

## Section III

### ENFORCEMENT - HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Level I Violations are the considered the most serious to the health and safety of children.**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Occurrence of any Level I violation within a 12 month period will result in:

1. Provider placed on a Service Improvement Agreement (SIA).
2. ~~Certified-I~~ Letter sent to provider. Provider may request a meeting with Coordinated Child Care Program Supervisor/Manager.
3. ~~Parents of children will receive notification of SIA with lists of alternative care arrangements from Child Care Resource and Referral.~~

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Occurrence of any Level I violation within a 12 month period will result in:

1. Service Improvement Agreement (SIA) is amended to extend deadline or update goals.
2. Provider will receive mandatory onsite visits by designated staff.
3. No additional children will be enrolled at the site for 6 months.
4. Parents of funded children will receive notification of the S.I.A. with lists of alternative providers from Child Care Resource and Referral.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Occurrence of any Level I violation within a 12 month period will result in:

1. Letter from Program Supervisor/Manager which will suspend provider from offering care and receiving state funds for a period of 1 year since the last infraction
2. Parents of funded children will receive a letter. The letter will explain that Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas, Inc. will no longer pay for the child's(ren) care after ~~45-30~~ days.

CCR&R will assist them in finding alternate care.

If the parent chooses to continue using the informal provider, they will no longer receive payment for their child's care in that setting.

### Levels II, III

Should an early learning provider accumulate any combination of Level I, II or III violations resulting in 11 points\* or more within a twelve (12) month period, the provider will be suspended from providing School Readiness services for a

period of one (1) year.

\* Level I = 3 Points

Level II = 2 Points

Level III = 1 Point

1-2 Points

1. Provider inspection results from CCC are noted and discussed with provider, no further action is taken.

3-5 Points

2. Provider receives a Warning Letter reflecting their current point accumulation

6-7 Points

1. Providers will be placed on a Service Improvement Agreement
2. Provider will receive mandatory onsite visit by monitoring staff

8-10 Points

1. Service Improvement Agreement amended
2. New enrollments for School Readiness suspended for 6 months
3. Parents of early learning funded children will receive notification of SIA with lists of alternative providers from CCR&R.

11+ Points

1. Letter from Program Supervisor which will suspend providers from offering School Readiness services for a period of 1 year from the termination of contract or agreement
2. Parents of School Readiness funded children will receive a letter notifying them that the funding for these programs with this provider will cease after 30 days. CCR&R will assist them in finding alternate

care. If they choose to stay with their current provider, they will forfeit their School Readiness scholarship.

Enforcement

~~To Be Determined~~

## Section IV

### DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM AND CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Each provider uses a developmentally appropriate curriculum to support the cognitive, physical, character and social- emotional development of the whole child. (Section 411.01(5)(c)2.a.,F.A.). [All providers serving children birth to five years of age must provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum and character education program. Providers serving only school age children must comply with character education requirements only.](#)

A curriculum is a set of guidelines to assist teachers and providers in ensuring all the learning needs of the child are met. Most of these guidelines provide examples of appropriate activities by age groups. Every child in an informal setting must receive the same educational opportunities as children attending licensed programs.

#### **Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum/ Guidelines for Learning**

##### **Curriculum is**

- An organized framework that defines the content that children are to learn.
  - The processes through which children reach the identified educational goals.
  - What the provider does -to help children reach these goals.
  - Addresses the environment in which teaching and learning occur.
1. Children should be read to each day.
  2. Activities to promote both gross and fine motor skill development
  3. Water- and sand play activities
  4. Housekeeping and make belief activities.
  5. Arts and crafts activities
  6. Music
  7. Outdoor play

A well-designed curriculum, guides instruction so the adult can provide experiences that promote children's growth and development in each of the following areas: social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive. The curriculum places as much emphasis on the process of learning as on the content and capitalizes on children's natural curiosity to promote their growth as language users, thinkers, and problem solvers. It provides a wide variety of planned experiences that enable children to learn through interaction, exploration, manipulation, and self-discovery.

References *The Florida Birth to Three Learning and Development Standards*

### **Character Development Program**

Character development refers to teaching children the moral values of our society to include sharing, empathy, tolerance, kindness, in general “doing the right thing”.

There is no single script for effective character education, but there are some important basic principles.

### **Developmentally Appropriate Curricula Compliance Options**

1. Providers may choose to use a curriculum on the approved list (see below) and complete the compliance form to verify that they curriculum is developmentally appropriate.

**OR**

2. Providers may use a curriculum not on this list. They must submit a Self-Assessment Study for each age group served (Infant, Toddler, Two’s and/or Preschool and School Age).

Performance standards can be used as a reference.

- *Florida Birth to Three Learning and Developmental Standards*
- *Florida School Readiness Performance Standards for Three-, Four-, and Five Year-Old Children*

## **LIST OF APPROVED DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE CURRICULA**

- Beyond Cribs and Rattles
- The Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers & Twos, 2nd edition
- High Scope Infant Toddler
- DLM Early Childhood Program
- High Scope
- Creative Curriculum 4<sup>th</sup> Edition
- Scholastic Early Childhood Program
- Doors to Discovery
- Let's Begin with Letter People
- Kaplan Planning Guide to the Preschool Curriculum
- Wee Learn
- Literacy Express
- Beyond Centers and Circle Time
- Links to Literacy
- Houghton Mifflin Pre-K
- Montessori
- Read Together, Talk Together
- Curiosity Corner
- Investigator Club Pre-Kindergarten Learning System
- Opening the World of Learning
- Ready, Set, Leap!
- Saxon Early Learning
- We Can!
- Wright Skills/Growing with Mathematics
- Early Literacy and Learning Model/Plus

### **Character Development Compliance Options**

#### **Decide one of the following**

1. Use the *Commitment to Character* program.

**OR**

Many early education providers incorporate character development throughout the day. (For example, a provider teaches conflict resolution when two children are arguing over a toy or responsibility during clean-up time.)

2. Review Self Assessment Form and submit.

**Section V**  
ENFORCEMENT- DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE  
CURRICULUM AND  
CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Failure to provide adequate written and observable developmentally appropriate curricula will result in a Service Improvement Agreement. No new School Readiness funded children will be referred to programs with this designation until they have reached compliance.

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## Section VI

### PRE – POST ASSESSMENT

Each provider administers a pretest to School Readiness funded children when they enter a program and a posttest administered to children when they leave the program. (s. 411.01(5)(c)2.d., F.S.)

Providers may choose any age appropriate assessment tool or process. They are not required to purchase a published assessment tool.

## Section VII

### ENFORCEMENT PRE – POST ASSESSMENT

Failure to provide adequate written and observable pre-post assessments may result in suspension of School Readiness Funding until compliance has been documented.

## Section VIII

### DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

**Children’s growth in all developmental areas is routinely screened to identify children not typically developing, to communicate with parents, and may be used for planning and implementation. (S. 411.01(5) (c) 2.c., F.S.)**

An effective, efficient, and appropriate screening process is an important component of all early childhood continuous assessment systems. The goal of early childhood screening is to identify normal aspects of a child’s health and development, while sorting out potential problems that need further assessment and follow-up. Screening of young children is only one part of a larger early childhood continuous assessment system.

Every child birth to five (5) years- not attending kindergarten and funded by School Readiness must be screened periodically using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire.

Screening forms will be mailed to the informal provider by Coordinated Child Care. Forms must be completed and returned to Coordinated Child Care within 14 days.

## **Section VIII**

### ENFORCEMENT - DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

Failure to complete and return accurate developmental screening documents within the 15 day window will result in the following:

Warning: Provider will be notified by phone call from provider consultant and a seven (7) day extension

Notice: Provider will receive a letter and must comply within a five (5) days. Failure to return the screening within that timeframe will result in a Service Improvement Agreement for a period of six (6) months. Parents of School Readiness funded children will be notified that their provider is out of compliance.

Payment Suspension: Once the Service Improvement Agreement has been issued, providers have seven (7) days to comply before payment may be suspended for School Readiness services. Payment will be reinstated when the screening is returned. Providers are prohibited from charging School Readiness parents for lost revenue due to this infraction.

Refusing cooperation or access to administer vision and hearing screenings may result in payment suspension for each School Readiness funded child for the day the attempt was made.

To Be Determined