



**SCHOOL READINESS COMPLIANCE POLICY
FOR**

**CHILD CARE CENTERS AND LICENSED
FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES**

ELCPC-620.2.1
Revised January 2010

INTRODUCTION

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 Coalition policy and procedure is inclusive to all caregiver settings: facility, home receiving School Readiness (SR) funding.

This policy and procedure provides clear definitions and guidelines for caregivers/early childhood educators to follow. Health and safety standards described in this policy are aligned with those of the Pinellas County License Board for Child Care Centers and Family Day Care Homes. No standards are more stringent than PCLB and no new standards have been introduced.

The Coalition has supported several varying payment arrangements with providers of early education. All providers will now be required to sign an Agreement or a Contract with the Coalition or its designee.

Failure to adhere to the terms of the Agreement/Contract or any violations described herein may result in the discontinuance of funding, parent notification of non-compliance, ineligibility to participate in certain incentive programs.

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Section I DEFINITIONS	4
Section II HEALTH AND SAFETY	5
Section III ENFORCEMENT - HEALTH AND SAFETY	7
Section IV DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM AND CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM	9
Section V ENFORCEMENT - DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM AND CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM	12
Section VI PRE-POST ASSESSMENT	13
Section VII ENFORCEMENT - PRE-POST ASSESSMENT	13
Section VIII DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS	14
Section IX ENFORCEMENT - DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS	15

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 to assist teacher planning and program evaluation.

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

Certificate/voucher: a method of payment to an early childhood education program that does not want to enter into a Contract or Agreement with the Coalition. This method of payment is no longer available. All early childhood education programs receiving state or federal funds through the Coalition and/or its partner Coordinated Child Care.

Character Education Program: Teaches students to use basic character traits in everyday life and promotes responsible behaviors and a positive culture and climate in the school.

Child Care Facility: Includes any day nursery, nursery school, or other facility whatsoever which provides child care with or without compensation. A center provides care for five or more children less than 13 years of age, not related to the operator by blood, marriage, or adoption for less than 24 hours per day per child. Facilities may be licensed by the Pinellas County License Board or legally license exempt.

Child Care Resource and Referral: a free community service administered by CCC that offers information and referral services to all families who are seeking to find child care.

Contract: Is an Agreement with additional requirements for both parties.

Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas, Inc. (CCC)- 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 appraise a large number of children to find out which individuals 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 or VPK services. This includes contracted, non-contracted and informal providers.

Family Day Care Home: Care for children by someone other than their parent that occurs in the caregiver's home that is licensed per Pinellas County License Board requirements.

Good Moral Character: Attestation signed by childcare providers affirming they have not been found guilty of or plead no contest to, regardless of adjudication, to any charges listed under the provision of the Florida Statutes or under any similar statute of another jurisdiction. They must also acknowledge existence of any criminal records relating to the offenses regardless of whether or not those records have been sealed or expunged.

Informal Care/ Relative Caregiver: Typically care by a relative or nanny; reimbursement is 50% the rate of licensed family child care homes.

Large Family Child Care Home: Child care is regularly provided for children with or without compensation from at least two unrelated households and which has at least two full-time child care personnel on the premises during the hours of operation.

Level 2 Background Screening: Security background investigations which include, but not be limited to, fingerprinting for all purposes and checks in F.S. Chapter 435.04, statewide criminal and juvenile records checks through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and federal criminal records checks through the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and may include local criminal records checks through local law enforcement agencies.

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

Non-contracted Providers: Providers of School Readiness services who are not contracted. These providers are required to sign an agreement in order to receive payment.

Service Improvement Agreement (SIA): A corrective action plan issued by the Early Learning Coalition and/or its partner Coordinated Child Care.

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.”¹ School Readiness

Health and Safety Standards

The Coalition will consider:

1. Any incident resulting in 1 or more Class 1 fines by Child Care Licensing Program of Pinellas.
2. Any incident resulting in 1 or more Class 2 fines by Child Care Licensing Program of Pinellas.

Section III

ENFORCEMENT - HEALTH AND SAFETY

The 1st Occurrence of any applicable incident within a 24 month period will result in:

1. Provider placed on a Service Improvement Agreement (SIA).
2. Letter sent or delivered to provider. Provider may request a meeting with Coordinated Child Care staff.
3. Provider must submit corrective action plan.

Subsequent occurrence(s) of any applicable incidents within a 24 month period will result in:

1. Service Improvement Agreement amended to extend deadline or update goals.
2. Provider must submit corrective action plan.

License on probationary provisional status will result in:

¹ Child Care Development Fund Plan 2008-2009

1. New enrollments for School Readiness suspended for the duration of the probation.
2. Parents of School Readiness funded children will receive notification of the S.I.A. with lists of alternative providers from Child Care Resource and Referral. Parents choosing to keep their child enrolled must sign a waiver.

Suspension of License will result in:

1. Letter from designated program staff person which will suspend provider from offering School Readiness services and receiving state funds for a period of 6 months 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. 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.

Notice of Intent to Revoke or Deny License will result in:

1. Letter from designated program staff person which will suspend provider from offering School Readiness services and receiving state funds 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. 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.

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.).

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

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 teachers do to help children reach these goals and the environment in which teaching and learning occur. A well-designed curriculum, combined with teachers' knowledge of children, guides instruction so teachers 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.

Early Childhood Professionals are encouraged to use *The Florida Birth to Three Learning and Development Standards* and the *Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten Standards* as they plan activities and interact with young children. Providing rich experiences, supportive learning environments and positive relationships with children in the years before they start kindergarten will give them the foundations for later school success.

Character Development Program

[Section 411.01 \(5\)\(c\)2.b., F.S.](#)

There is no single script for effective character education, but there are some important basic principles. The following ten principles serve as best practices that providers can use to plan effective character education program:

Principle 1 – Promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character

Principle 2 – Defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling and behavior.

Principle 3 - Uses a comprehensive, intentional, proactive, and effective approach to character development.

Principle 4 - Creates a caring school community.

Principle 5 - Provides students with opportunities for moral action.

Principle 6 - Includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed.

Principle 7 - Strives to foster students self motivation.

Principle 8 - Engages the school staff as a learning and moral community that shares responsibility for character education and attempts to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students.

Principle 9 - Engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort.

Principle 10 – Evaluates the character of the school, the school staff’s functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character.

Developmentally Appropriate Curricula Compliance Options

1. Providers may choose to use a curriculum on the approved list and complete the self-assessment study to verify your implementation of the curriculum is developmentally appropriate.

OR

2. If you are using a curriculum not on this list you must submit a Self-Assessment Study for each age group you serve (Infant, Toddler, Two's and/or Preschool). Relax... Take a moment to read through the tools, you'll probably find these are all things you are already doing. The self-assessment studies will probably look very familiar as they are directly aligned with the performance standards. Use your performance standards as reference to help you through the process.
 - *Florida Birth to Three Learning and Developmental Standards*
 - *Florida School Readiness Performance Standards for Three-, Four-, and Five Year-Old Children*
 - *Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Standards (revised 4-year-old standards)*

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 4th 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

1. Providers may choose to use the *Commitment to Character* program.

OR

2. Many early education providers incorporate character development throughout the day. For example, you may teach conflict resolution when two children are arguing over a toy or responsibility during clean-up time. Review the self-assessment study for character development. You'll probably see that you are doing these things too. If so, simply complete the form.

Section V

ENFORCEMENT - DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM AND CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM

No new School Readiness Agreements or Contracts will be approved until compliance has been documented.

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 suspension in 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.

Early childhood screenings are brief, cost effective, and provide a snapshot of each child. Appropriate screenings identify children’s developmental levels at a point in time. This brief assessment procedure is designed to identify children who should receive more extensive assessment or diagnosis. Therefore, once potential concerns are identified, providers need to be prepared to act on those concerns.

To this end every child birth to five (5) not attending kindergarten and funded by School Readiness must be screened at the appropriate developmental milestones identified by the designated developmental screening instrument. Additionally, School Readiness providers must allow the Coalition or its designee access to children to administer vision and hearing screenings.

Section IX

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 Coalition Staff with a seven (7) day extension to return the screening.

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.