



## Program Development Committee

February 27, 2017 at 12:45 p.m.  
2536 Countryside Blvd., Suite 500  
Clearwater FL 33763

### Proposed Agenda

#### I. Call To Order

- A. Approval of February 27, 2017 Agenda Page1
- B. Approval of the October 24, 2016 Minutes Page2

#### II. Action Items

- A. School Readiness Holiday Reimbursement Policy Page6
- B. Suspected Provider and Client Fraud and/or Misrepresentation Page9

#### III. Collective Impact Discussion

- A. Welcome & Introductions
- B. Define kindergarten readiness
- C. Identify barriers to kindergarten readiness
- D. Asset Mapping

#### IV. Adjournment

**Next meeting: Monday, April 24, 2017 @ 1:00 p.m.**  
ELC, Countryside Tower  
2536 Countryside Blvd., Suite 500  
Clearwater, FL 33763

**Program Development Committee  
Unapproved Minutes  
October 24, 2016 at 1:00 p.m.  
2536 Countryside Blvd. Suite 500  
Clearwater Florida 33763**

**Members In Attendance:** Yvonne Malague, Patsy Buker and Anne Ryan

**Members Absent:** Harry Fogle, Dr. Jim Sewell, and Amy Crumble.

**Coalition Staff:** Carrie Culbertson, Matt Bonner, Ken Buchanan, Angela Loring

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

A quorum was present and Yvonne Malague called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**A.** A motion was made Patsy Buker to:

*Approve the October 24, 2016 Agenda*

The motion passed unanimously by consensus.

**B.** A motion was made Patsy Buker to:

*Approve the April 25, 2016, 2016 Minutes*

The motion passed unanimously by consensus.

**II. ACTION ITEMS**

**A.** School Readiness Client Compliance Policy Repeal

Matt Bonner presented this Policy Repeal to the Committee.

In 2015, Coalition staff presented a new School Readiness (SR) Client Compliance Policy in preparation for the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) eligibility changes. The policy was put in place to create more levels of accountability for SR clients locally. Since adopting this policy, OEL has release guidance on implementing the CCDF eligibility changes, which limits local flexibility.

Due to the prescriptive nature of the OEL guidance, the SR Client Compliance Policy must be repealed. The Coalition will follow OEL guidance once approved by the State Board of Education later this month.

A motion was made by Patsy Buker to:

*Approve the School Readiness Client Compliance Policy Repeal.*

The motion passed unanimously by consensus.

**B. School Readiness Provider Enforcement Policy**

Matt Bonner addressed the purpose of the Policy is to outline enforcement actions with School Readiness providers who fail to comply with the terms of the Statewide School Readiness Provider Contract.

This Coalition policy and procedure is inclusive to all caregiver settings: licensed child care centers, licensed family child care homes, licensed exempt child care centers, and informal providers receiving School Readiness (SR) funding.

It is the intent of the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc. to ensure the health, safety, and development of all School Readiness children and to maintain compliance of the program requirements delivered by School Readiness providers in accordance with federal, state, and local guidelines.

Patsy Buker brought to the attention of Matt Bonner that the word “require” should be “allow” regarding Licensing access to be more accurate and was noted by Matt Bonner for correction.

A motion was made by Patsy Buker to:

*Approve the School Readiness Provider Enforcement Policy with the word correction.*

The motion passed unanimously by consensus.

**C. Wait List Policy**

Matt Bonner informed the Committee that the Office of Early Learning (OEL) recently released changes to the School Readiness (SR) Application and Waiting List Procedures rule. The rule incorporates the implementation of the statewide Family Portal and requires all children in a family to have the same waiting list date. When parents request services for additional children, they will be placed according to the initial date the family was placed on the waiting list.

A motion was made by Patsy Buker to:

*Approve the Wait List Policy.*

The motion passed unanimously by consensus.

### III. DISCUSSION

#### A. School Readiness Eligibility Rule Changes

Matt Bonner presented a summary of Draft School Readiness Eligibility Changes.

##### i. 6M-4.200 School Readiness Eligibility Provisions

- Aligns with CCDF requirements
- Period to reestablish purpose for care (employment or educational activities) changed from 60 days to 3 months
- Establishes 12-month eligibility period for at risk and income eligible categories
- Families have to attest they do not have assets totaling more than one million dollars
- If a child exceeds the age limit of the priority category during 12-month eligibility period, they continue to receive services for the remainder of the authorization period
- Once determined eligible, family income threshold changed from 200% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 85% of State Median Income (SMI)

##### ii. 6M-4.208 Documenting Eligibility for the School Readiness Program

- Aligns with CCDF requirements
- Allows certain proof of residency documentation to be within 12 months of the date the child application is submitted
- Rule does not allow parents in graduate-level programs (i.e. masters, juris doctor, doctorate) to be eligible for services UNLESS APPROVED BY THE LOCAL ELC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
- Proof of income documentation requirements changed from 6 weeks to 4 weeks

##### iii. 6M-4.209 Redetermination of Eligibility for Financial Assistance

- Repealed
- Requirements addressed in Rule 6M-4.208

##### iv. 6M-4.400 Required Parent Co-payment

- Aligns with CCDF requirements
- Established a 6-month “Graduated Phase-Out” period for families whose income, at the end of their 12-month eligibility period, exceeds 200% FPL but is below 85% SMI, to continue receiving services
- Established “Graduated Phase-Out” supplemental payment scale
- Does not allow Coalitions to increase parent co-payments during the 12-month eligibility period, only decrease them
- Establishes deadlines for providers to collect co-payments and graduated phase-out payments and to notify parents of outstanding balances
- States that families can be terminated from receiving services for failure to make copayments and graduated phase-out payments
- Allows for the establishment of a repayment plan as part of satisfactorily fulfilling copayment obligations for purposes of transfers

#### B. Professional Development Institute

Angela Loring and Carrie Culbertson presented a presentation to the Committee regarding the mission and scope of the Professional Development Institute and the courses, initiatives and trainings that will be made available to the providers and staff once the service model is ready.

#### C. Community Foundation Proposal

Carrie Culbertson informed the Committee that a letter of intent was sent to the Community Foundation for mobile libraries that would be used for family checkouts within our Nemours classrooms.

**D. Vroom!**

Carrie Culbertson let the Committee know that we were exploring our implementation plan and partnership with the Vroom! Program and hopefully within the next few months will be able to get Pinellas on the map as a strong advocate. Brett Engisch has taken the lead on this project and it taking it beyond its initial introduction.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 4:00p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Next meeting: Monday, February 27, 2017 @ 1:00 p.m.**

ELC Training Room  
2536 Countryside Blvd. Suite 500  
Clearwater, FL 33763

**Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc.  
February 27, 2017**

**Subject:** SR Provider Holiday Reimbursement Policy

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**BACKGROUND**

The Office of Early Learning (OEL) recently revised the Statewide School Readiness Provider Contract to include an amendment form. The form allows SR providers to amend parts of the policy, including holidays. Coalition staff would like to propose allowing SR providers to only change the two (2) floating holidays that are allowed per the policy. It is also recommended that changes should not be retroactive and can only be changed if providers notify the Coalition no later than close of business on the day of the change

The Coalition has also created a process for SR providers to notify Coalition staff if they will be open and providing child care services to the children on the ELC approved holidays. The Coalition then is able to remove the pre-printed H on the providers' attendance rosters in the Provider Portal so they can record a child's true attendance on that day.

**PROPOSED COALITION ACTION**

To approve the recommended revisions to the SR Provider Holiday Reimbursement Policy.

Approval
_____
Chair Signature
_____
Date

**Supporting Documents:**

- SR Provider Holiday Reimbursement Policy

# Early Learning Coalition



of Pinellas County, Inc.

<b>Policy:</b> <b>ELCPC-61.3.6</b>	<b>Title: School Readiness Provider Holiday Reimbursement</b>	
	<b>Review Date: July 2016</b> <b>February 2017</b>	<b>Next Review Date: July 2018</b> <b>7</b>

**References:**

- 6M-4.500 Reimbursement-General Provisions Regarding Reimbursements for Holidays and Absences
- 6M-4.610, Statewide Provider Contract for the School Readiness Program
- Form OEL-SR 20 – Statewide School Readiness Provider Contract
- School Readiness Program Manual

**Purpose:** To identify reimbursable holidays for School Readiness providers.

**Background:** School Readiness Providers may be reimbursed for up to 12 recognized holidays approved by the Coalition. In the past, providers chose their own 12 paid holidays. While providers typically chose most of the same holidays each day must be keyed into the data system manually. Administratively, this creates a huge workload and conflicts with Florida Administrative Code 6M-4.500.

**Policy:**

A. School Readiness Providers are eligible for reimbursement for observance of the following ten (10) Recognized Holidays:

New Years' Day	January 1 <sup>st</sup>
Martin Luther King's	Third Monday in January
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4 <sup>th</sup>
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Veteran's Day	November 11 <sup>th</sup>
Thanksgiving	Thanksgiving Day
Day after Thanksgiving	
Christmas Eve	December 24 <sup>th</sup>
Christmas	December 25 <sup>th</sup>

Holidays falling on a Saturday will be observed the Friday before; holidays falling on a Sunday will be observed the Monday after. Observance dates will be issued annually by the Coalition.

Providers who serve School Readiness children on these holidays in an effort to provide service and support to the families they serve who are required to work on these holidays may request a modification to the Holiday Schedule to allow them to observe the holiday on an alternative day subject to approval by the Coalition. These requests are documented on the Holiday Schedule Form submitted annually.

B. School Readiness providers are eligible for up to two (2) Floating Holidays per calendar year.

New School Readiness providers who are certified after June 1 will receive 1 floating holiday for that calendar year.

Floating holidays must be identified on the Holiday Schedule Form. Changes to floating holidays will not be permitted only be permitted if the provider notifies the Coalition no later than close of business on the day of the change.

Providers may choose to utilize floating holidays for professional development or planning purposes.

C. Providers must also complete the Coalition Holiday Schedule Verification Open Form each year.

By completing the form, providers notify the Coalition whether they will be open and providing child care services to the children on the ELC approved holidays.

The Coalition then is able to remove the pre-printed H on the providers' attendance rosters in the Provider Portal so they can record a child's true attendance on that day.

**Exhibits:**

Holiday Schedule Verification Open Form  
FAC 6M-4.500  
Form OEL-SR 20

**Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc.  
February 27, 2017**

**Subject:** Suspected Provider and Client Fraud and/or Misrepresentation Policy

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**BACKGROUND**

Rule 6M-9.400 Early Learning Anti-Fraud Plans states:

- (b) The coalition shall provide written advance notice of the intended action to suspend or terminate benefits to the recipient to be affected...The written advance notice shall include following:
  1. The procedure for the recipient to follow to attempt to appeal the decision.
  2. A statement, in bold print, that the failure to file a timely appeal waives the right to an appeal.
  3. Notice of the potential for repayment of improper benefits if the conclusion of fraud is upheld, including any benefits received after the receipt of the written advance notice.
  4. The procedure for the recipient to obtain a copy of his or her file.
  5. The amount of overpayment to be recovered, if applicable.
  6. The length of time for which the recipient's benefits are suspended or the date of the termination of benefits, if applicable.  
This length of time shall be proportionate to the alleged offense committed, consistent with suspensions or terminations issued to other recipients who allegedly committed comparable offenses, and may also consider prior offenses, as appropriate.

For consistent application, Coalition staff recommends the length of time a SR recipient is suspended or terminated be five (5) years. This is consistent with the length of time a provider is terminated from providing SR services due to fraud.

**PROPOSED COALITION ACTION**

To approve the recommended revisions to the Suspected Provider and Client Fraud and/or Misrepresentation Policy.

Approval  <hr style="width: 80%; margin-left: 0;"/> Chair Signature  <hr style="width: 80%; margin-left: 0;"/> Date
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**Supporting Documents:**

- Suspected Provider and Client Fraud and/or Misrepresentation Policy

# Early Learning Coalition



of Pinellas County, Inc.

<b>Policy: ELCPC-50.1</b>	<b>Title: Suspected Provider and Client/Recipient Fraud and/or Misrepresentation Policy</b>	
	<b>Review Date:</b> <b>June 2016</b> <u>February 2017</u>	<b>Next Review Date:</b> <b>June 2017</b> <u>2018</u>

**References:**

- OEL-FG-0042-07 Collection of a Delinquent Account
- OEL-SR 20 School Readiness Provider Contract/Agreement
- OEL -VPK 20 VPK Provider Contract/Agreement
- Ch. 1002.91 F.S.
- Ch. 414.39, F.S.
- 6M-9.400, F.A.C., Early Learning Coalition Anti-Fraud Plans
- Coalition Anti-Fraud Plan

**Purpose:** To establish a policy to ensure that the Early Learning Coalition identifies and takes necessary actions to identify and address cases of possible fraud and/or misrepresentation by clients and provider owner/principals.

**Scope:** This policy applies to all clients and providers that participate in Early Learning Programs including School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten.

**Policy:** In its efforts to ensure the prudent use of public funds, the Early Learning Coalition will review any and all information and data to determine if there is a reasonable belief and supporting evidence that a client/recipient or provider knowingly or intentionally may have committed fraud or misrepresentation and will take appropriate action which may include, but not be limited to termination of scholarship or contract/agreement, refusing re-entry to any new or existing School Readiness or Voluntary Prekindergarten funded Early Learning Programs as a client/recipient or as a program owner, stakeholder, officer, fiscal officer or director of a program; denying further participation in new or existing School Readiness or Voluntary Prekindergarten Early Learning Programs as a client/recipient or as a program owner, stakeholder, officer, fiscal officer or director of a program; and/or referral of the matter and supporting evidence to the Office of Early Learning Inspector General and Department of Financial Services, Public Assistance Fraud Unit.

**Definitions:**

**Client/Recipient** shall mean the parent, family member, or guardian that is the recipient of services for their child(ren) enrolled in an Early Learning Program.

Revised November 2014February 2017

**Early Learning Programs** shall mean any program funded with local, state, and/or federal funds administered by the Early Learning Coalition; the primary programs are School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten.

**Fraud and/or misrepresentation** shall mean any negligent, false or misleading documentation, action, omission, or statement made by individual client/recipient or provider for the purpose of causing the Early Learning Coalition, or any employee or affiliated third party of the Coalition, to act in reliance of said concealment or representation in order to obtain funding, or some other benefit, from the Early Learning Coalition

**Intentional program violation** shall mean any false or misleading documentation, action, omission, or statement made in order for an Owner/Principal and/or Facility to qualify as a provider or client/recipient in the VPK or School Readiness Program or to receive program benefits or reimbursement (as determined at the sole discretion of the Early Learning Coalition)

**Provider owner/ principal** shall mean 1) the owner of the applicable business; 2) the individual that is primarily responsible for the day-to-day operations of the business; and/or 3) the individual that is primarily responsible for hiring and directing employees (agents) to perform his/her/its duties with respect to the business 4) corporate officer 5) stakeholder

**Related Party** shall include but not be limited to corporate entities with same leadership, personal relatives of Principal/Owner including immediate family members or spouse.

#### **Examples of Potential Fraud or Misrepresentation:**

The following is a list of examples of potential fraud or misrepresentation and is not intended to be all-inclusive.

- Providing false or misleading information or withholding information in order to participate or receive payments under the School Readiness program;
- Concealing information to obtain School Readiness payments;
- Failing to disclose a change in circumstances or material information that could directly affect eligibility;
- Falsifying records or documents; and
- Assisting or aiding any person in committing any of the above acts.

#### **Policy Procedures:**

1) *Initial Reporting:* Any potential fraud or misrepresentation that is uncovered or suspected by management, an employee, or an affiliated third party to the Coalition shall be immediately reported to the Fraud/Benefit Recovery Department. The Fraud/Benefit Recovery Department shall be responsible for coordinating further investigations into the alleged fraud.

2) *Preliminary Investigations:* Upon becoming aware of any suspected fraud or misrepresentation, the Executive Director, or his/her appointee, shall, in cooperation with other employees of the Early Learning Coalition, conduct a preliminary investigation in order to determine the likelihood that a fraudulent act has been committed against the Early Learning Coalition. Such preliminary investigations may include, but need not be limited to, conducting in-person interviews, making telephone calls, reviewing files, and making site visits. The Executive Director, or his/her appointee, shall ensure adequate notes are placed in the file

documenting such allegations and any findings from the preliminary investigation, including whether further investigation is warranted. If it is determined, at the sole discretion of the Early Learning Coalition, that no further investigation is warranted, the case shall be closed and a notation placed in the file of such a determination.

3) *Penalties:* Following a determination that there is reasonable evidence of fraud, one or more of the following actions, or other actions at the sole discretion of the Early Learning Coalition, will be taken:

a. Providers: Termination of the School Readiness Agreement and/or VPK Agreement effective ten (10) business days after the provider has received notification to allow families to enroll with an alternate provider.

b. Client/Recipient: Termination of eligibility from School Readiness and/or VPK programs fourteen (14) calendar days from date of referral for suspected fraud to OEL and the Department of Financial Services.

c. Seek reimbursement through the court system

d. Deny the client/recipient or provider from further participation in Early Learning Programs for five (5) years;

e. Refuse the client/provider re-entry to the Early Learning Program until the required repayment has been satisfied.

f. Refuse the client/provider re-entry to the Early Learning Program until the investigation by OEL and the Department of Financial Services is concluded and a determination has been reached following investigation.

g. Referral of the client or provider to the Office of Early Learning and the Department of Financial Services Public Assistance Fraud Unit as required by the Office of Early Learning.

4) *Additional Investigations:* If it is determined, at the sole discretion of the Early Learning Coalition, that further investigation is warranted, the Executive Director, or his/her appointee, shall work in coordination with partner agencies, shall undertake those actions necessary to assist in a full investigation of the alleged fraudulent activity including referral to the Department of Financial Services Public Assistance Fraud Unit.

5) *Determination:* Once referred to DFS and/or the State Attorney's Office, determinations of potential for criminal prosecution are made by these entities. However, Penalties as described in Section 3 are at the sole discretion of the Coalition based on investigation findings and not on the basis of criminal prosecution solely.

Sale/Transfer of a child care facility in any manner to a Related Party shall not be considered a sufficient remedy to avoid the imposition of sanctions. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Early Learning Coalition maintains broad discretion with respect to the determination of whether or not a facility is eligible for funding or subject to the penalties listed above, and such determination will be on an individual facts and circumstances basis at the Early Learning Coalition's sole discretion. For example, the Early Learning Coalition may determine the transfer of a facility is still an end-around the penalties described above even if such transfer does not specifically fit the definition of a Related Party transaction.

6) Confidentiality: All information provided by management, employees, or affiliated third parties relating to any new or pending fraud claim will be treated as confidential and only shared with OEL, DFS, FDLE, Pinellas County License Board for Child Care Centers and Family Day Care Homes and/or the Coalition's attorney and other parties directly working on the investigation. No employee, who is not involved in the preliminary investigation, may intentionally contact or speak with an individual client recipient or provider that is involved, in any way, with an ongoing fraud investigation.

Exhibits: OEL Suspected Fraud Referral Record