

Early Learning Coalition



of Pinellas County, Inc.

Policy: ELCPC-61.1.5	Title: School Readiness Provider Certification	
	Review Date: January 2017	Next Review Date: January 2018

References: Ch. 1002.88, F.S.; Statute 402

Purpose: To establish procedures for School Readiness provider certification.

Background: Ch.1002.88 references Statute 402 defining/outlining admissible child care provider entities. School Readiness providers must meet one of the identifying definitions in order to be considered for approval.

Definitions:

Child Care Facility: Includes any licensed day nursery, nursery school, or other facility that 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.

Family Child Care Home: A caregiver's home that is licensed per the Child Care License Program requirements where children are cared for by someone other than a parent or relative.

Informal Care/ Relative Caregiver: Typically, care by a relative or nanny in a child's home or caregiver's home, whose reimbursement is 50% the rate of licensed family child care homes. These Providers are not required to be licensed.

Large Family Child Care Home: A caregiver's home that is licensed per the Child Care License Program requirements with at least two full-time child care personnel on the premises during hours of operation and where child care is regularly provided for children from at least two unrelated households, with or without compensation and which. The maximum capacity is twelve children. However, if five or less children are in care, the staff-child ratio will follow Child Care License Program requirements for a Family Child Care Home,

A Public School or Non-Public Schools exempt from licensure under 402.3025: Programs for children who are at least three (3) years of age, but under five (5) years of age, which are not licensed under Licensing Regulations Governing Pinellas County

Children's Centers shall substantially comply with the minimum child care standards promulgated pursuant to Licensing Regulations Governing "Substantial compliance" means that level of adherence which is sufficient to safeguard the health, safety, and well-being of all children under care. Substantial compliance is greater than minimal adherence but not to the level of absolute adherence.

Religiously/Faith Based Affiliated Children's Centers Exempt from Licensing- Exemption from Licensing of Religiously Affiliated Children's Centers means a children's center that may request religious exemption if it is an integral part of a church or parochial school conducting regularly scheduled classes, courses of study or educational programs accredited by or a member of an organization which publishes and requires compliance with its standards for health, safety, and sanitation; provided, however, that such a center shall meet minimum requirements of the Pinellas County License Board, the applicable local governing body, as to health, safety, and sanitation, and the screening requirements as published in Licensing Regulations Governing Pinellas County Children's Centers, and that the center submits proof of membership in an organization which publishes and requires compliance with its standards for health, safety, and sanitation.

Before and After School Program defined in Statute 402.305(1)(c).

Policy:

Providers must be defined as one of the following to be eligible for School Readiness provider certification or renewal:

- **Child Care Center**
Programs licensed for school age care may be required to submit proof of licensing inspections of school age programs.
- **Family Child Care Home**
- **Large Family Child Care Home**
- **Non Public School**
Does not include charter schools unless licensed.
- **Religiously Affiliated Children's Centers Exempt from Licensing**
Proof of qualifying membership or accreditation must be submitted to the Coalition.
- **Legally Operating (Before and After School Programs exempt from Licensure).**

The Coalition has two (2) designated certification periods per year in which potential new providers can become certified as a School Readiness Provider. Providers must attend an orientation, receive site visits and submit School Readiness provider certification packet. These "open certification" periods for new providers will be from:

- August 1st - September 30th
- January 1st - March 31st

Providers outside of Pinellas County may offer School Readiness services to Pinellas residents. Out of County Providers must have an active Contract in good standing with the Early Learning Coalition in their county. In an effort to ensure parent choice, out of county providers are not subject to the open enrollment periods.

Procedures:

A. New In-county Providers

1. Orientation sessions are held during the first month of the open enrollment period. A minimum of one orientation session will be offered.
2. After attending an orientation session, potential new providers may request a site visit with an assigned host or mentor.
3. New providers will be required to submit the completed Contract packet prior to September 30th or March 31st.
4. Inquiries received after September 30th for example, will be instructed the next open period which will begin January 1st and to watch the Coalition website for more information and registration for orientations.
5. Prior to Informal Provider Certification these providers must also complete the following:
 - The 6-hour Family Child Care Home Rules and Regulations course. Any new informal care providers are required to complete the course and pass the exam component prior to eligibility for reimbursement by the Coalition or its designee.
 - If the provider has completed the 30 hour training for Family Child Care Homes and submits a copy of the certificate, the 6 hour class is not required.
 - Providers are responsible for any fees incurred to take the exam.

B. In-county Provider Renewal

1. School Readiness Contract packet materials will be available online only at www.elcpinellas.net and through the Provider Portal.
2. Incomplete or incorrect Contract packets submitted will be returned to the provider.
3. Complete and correct School Readiness Contract Renewal Packets must be received no later than May 16th to ensure packets are processed prior to the July 1st fiscal year start date.

C. In-county Providers Recertifying After Contract Termination by Coalition

1. Recertifying providers will be required to submit a completed Contract packet during an open certification period.
2. Recertifying providers must attend the next New Provider orientation session before a standard Contract will be executed.

D. Out of County Providers

1. Out of County Providers must complete the School Readiness Provider Certification Packet.
2. Coalition staff will obtain a copy of the School Readiness Contract with Early Learning Coalition in their county.

E. Required Meetings

School Readiness providers may be required to attend a periodic Contract meeting. Providers who do not attend one of the required meetings will have the opportunity to attend the ONE make-up session offered.