



Anti-Fraud Plan

FY 2017-2018

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Table of Contents

I. Plan Statement

II. Plan Definitions

III. Description of Organization Structure with Plan Responsibilities

IV. Plan Procedures

A. ELC Procedures Review

B. ELC Staff Education/Awareness/Training

C. SR and VPK Parent Education and Awareness

D. SR and VPK Provider Education and Awareness

E. Providers, Parents, Employees, and Public Access to Reporting of Potential Fraud

F. ELC Detection and Investigation of Suspected Acts of Fraud, Abuse, or Improper Payment

G. Benefit Recovery

H. Monthly Reporting Process to OEL

I. Plan Contact

V. Attachments

A. ELCPC-10.1A Provider Grievance and Due Process Policy

B. ELCPC-10.1B Client/Recipient Grievance and Complaint Resolution Policy

C. ELCPC-10.6 Suspected Employee Fraud Policy

D. ELCPC-50.1 Suspected Provider and Client Fraud and Misrepresentation Policy

I. Plan Statement

The Anti- Fraud Plan addresses the detection and prevention of overpayments, abuse, and fraud relating to the provision of and payment for the School Readiness (SR) program and Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program services. The Plan addresses parents or legal guardians of children enrolled in the SR or VPK programs. *Note: provider fraud is a violation of the terms of the contract and is addressed in the statewide contract rules.*

The Anti- Fraud Plan serves to support organizational processes and staff in prevention of fraud, build on employee knowledge and awareness of fraud prevention and describe the Coalition’s procedures for detecting and investigating possible acts of fraud, abuse of services and related overpayment. Due process procedures for suspending or terminating a recipient’s eligibility for SR or VPK programs and the recipient’s right to appeal the decision are included in the Plan.

II. Plan Definitions

Recipient- The parent or legal guardian whose child was determined eligible for SR or VPK Education Program benefits.

Fraud- An intentional deception, omission, or misrepresentation made by a person with knowledge that the deception, omission, or misrepresentation may result in unauthorized benefit to that person or another person, or any aiding and abetting of the commission of such an act. The term includes any act that constitutes fraud under applicable federal or state law.

Suspension- When services are temporarily no longer provided, however, parents do not have to go to the waiting list when their suspension is finished.

Termination- When services are ended and the recipient would have to return to the waiting list when their termination is expired.

III. Description of Organization Structure with Plan Responsibilities

The Director of Program Operations is responsible for implementing the Coalition’s anti-fraud activities.

The Director of Program Operations is responsible for reviewing an initial appeal request by recipient for decision to uphold or modify the suspension or termination.

The following are responsible for the daily activities related to prevention, detection, investigation, and reporting of possible overpayment resulting from potential fraud or abuse:

Internal Means of Notification

External Means of Notification

Family Services Specialist
Reimbursement Specialist
Contract & Compliance Specialist
Fraud Analyst
Suspected Fraud Tip Line

Child Care Providers Centers & Homes
DFS/DPAF
DFS/DIF
Pinellas County License Board
CareerSource Pinellas
Office of Early Learning
Early Learning Coalitions
USDA Food Programs
LSF – Head Start/Early Head Start
R’Club Child Care – Food Program
Juvenile Welfare Board
Local/ State Law Enforcement
DCF
Pinellas County School Board
Early Steps/ FDLRS
Suspected Fraud Tip Line

IV. Plan Procedures

A. ELC Procedures Review

1. The Human Resources, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Executive Officer will annually review job descriptions and internal processes to confirm appropriate separation of duties is in place, and review internal controls to reduce risk.

B. ELC Staff Education/Awareness/Training

1. The Family Services Eligibility Staff annually attends training given by Department of Financial Services, Division of Public Assistance Fraud Unit.
2. Family Services Department holds a staff meeting twice a month to review any changes or issues that may arise.
3. All departments under Program Operation Services such as Contracts and Compliance, Family Services, and Reimbursement meet twice a month to review any changes or issues that may arise.
4. The Coalition’s Compliance Specialist continually monitors throughout the year and holds department meeting on the findings.

C. SR and VPK Parent Education and Awareness

1. Display fraud awareness posters in interview rooms at ELC.
2. A fraud awareness statement is included in SR parent packets with ELC phone number to report any suspected fraud.
3. Family Services will review responsibilities of parent in detail at interview, including importance of reporting changes in their circumstances within ten (10) days, which will include recipient signing an SR Scholarship Participant Agreement and receiving a VPK

Parent Guide, if applicable.

4. Information about the ELC Fraud Tip Line is included on the ELC phone system hold menu.

D. SR and VPK Provider Education and Awareness

1. Encourage child care providers to report potential fraud to ELC staff through provider communication venues including email or portal communications, and appropriate provider group meetings.
2. Periodic reminders to providers about having procedures in place to prevent fraud
3. Regular practices of monitoring that occur with providers that also keep providers aware of ELC's intention to prevent and/or detect fraudulent practices
4. Use of SR and VPK monitoring tools.

E. Providers, Parents, Employees, and Public Access to Reporting of Potential Fraud

1. The Suspected Fraud Reporting form and phone number is on the ELC website; for the purpose of reporting potential fraud for parents, providers, employees, and general public.

F. ELC Detection and Investigation of Suspected Acts of Fraud, Abuse or Improper Payment

1. Monthly unscheduled reviews of work products and follow up on questionable circumstances are conducted by Family Services Training Coordinator, Monitoring and Compliance Specialist.
2. Monthly review, research, and follow up of data quality reports generated from Office of Early Learning are completed by Family Services Specialist and Monitoring and Compliance Specialist.
3. Documented verification of child care referrals from other organizations through manager signature, if required, and periodic cross reference review of children in service.
4. Daily alertness of Family Services Specialist to inconsistencies through regular operational processes with recipient(s). At initial placement and eligibility redetermination, the Coalition's Family Services Specialist reviews the recipient's information for "red flags". If the Specialist believes "red flags" exist, but cannot be confirmed, then the case is forwarded to the Director of Program Operations and the Compliance Specialist for further review with an explanation on the ELC Investigation form. This will include consultation with the Department of Financial Services (DFS), the Division of Public Assistance Fraud (DPAF) and/or the Division of Insurance Fraud (DIF).
5. Once inconsistencies are identified through any of the above means, the Coalition's Fraud Analyst will conduct a phone interview with recipient(s) (recipient will be told that the interview is being recorded) and obtain verification from parent or legal guardian within five (5) business days to resolve inconsistencies, which could include but not limited to income, residential documentation, or household composition, and determine if situation is resolved or warrants next steps of due process provisions for termination or

suspension of SR or VPK benefits.

6. The Coalition's Fraud Analyst will save the recording of the phone call.
7. For those cases in which there is reasonable suspicion that a recipient has committed fraud in the receipt of SR or VPK services, calculate associated overpaid benefits amount and follow the due process provisions for termination or suspension of SR or VPK benefits and refer the case to OEL and DFS.
8. After phone interview by Coalition's Fraud Analyst, a follow up letter with delivery confirmation will be sent by Coalition's Fraud Analyst requesting all documents to be sent within five (5) business days that will clarify or correct Coalition records.
9. Prior to any suspension or termination of services, the Coalition will provide written advance notice of the intended action to suspend or terminate benefits to the client/recipient to be affected and it must clearly advise of the allegations, the basis of the allegations, the intended action and the date the action is to be imposed. The Coalition will send the written advance notice at least fourteen (14) calendar days before the intended action. The written advance notice should be translated into the client/recipient's native language if the Coalition's other communications with the client/recipient have been translated. The written advance notice shall include following:
 - The procedure for the client/recipient to follow to attempt to appeal the decision. Clients/recipients must submit a Client Fraud Appeal Form (G-10F-16) within fourteen (14) calendar days of determination. This form is available at www.elcpinellas.net or by request.
 - A statement, in **bold print**, that the failure to file a timely appeal waives the right to an appeal.
 - 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.
 - The procedure for the client/client/recipient to obtain a copy of his or her file.
 - The amount of overpayment to be recovered, if applicable.
 - The length of time for which the client/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 client/recipients who allegedly committed comparable offenses, and may also consider prior offenses, as appropriate.
10. If the client/recipient files a timely appeal, he or she will not be suspended or terminated from the program until the written decision of the CEO or appeal committee or the original date of the intended action, whichever is later.
11. A suspension or termination shall not be applied against client/recipients with a valid at-risk referral.
12. If services are terminated, clients will be ineligible to receive services (except under circumstances allowed by law) for a period of five (5) years or until restitution is paid, whichever is later.
13. If there is no response by recipient(s), case will be referred to DFS.

G. Benefit Recovery

Cases Below Minimum Threshold will be Screened Out or Not Referred

In situations where DFS determines that there is reasonable suspicion fraud has occurred, but is unable to refer the case to the States Attorney's Office (SAO) due to low restitution amount or other reasons, the case will be processed through the repayment agreement process.

1. DFS determines that there is reasonable suspicion fraud has occurred, but refuses case due to restitution is below \$5,000.00 or the case is screened out or not referred for other reasons.
2. DFS shares findings and supporting documentation with Coalition's Fraud Analyst.
3. The Coalition's Fraud Analyst notifies recipient(s) in writing with delivery confirmation to inform them of the DFS/SAO decision and that they must repay the improper payment by signing a repayment agreement.
4. Payments must be made by money order or cashier's check and payable to the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County.
5. The Coalition's Fraud Analyst or assigned ELC Staff person will write a receipt for each payment received and document payments in recipient(s) file.
6. All payments will be delivered to the Fiscal Department for further processing.
7. If the recipient fails to meet the terms of the repayment agreement, the ELC may choose to have the case resubmitted to OEL/DFS or file a civil action through Pinellas County Clerk of Court.

H. Monthly Reporting Process to OEL

The Coalition's Fraud Analyst will submit an electronic report monthly reporting the parents and providers terminated from services as a result of fraud, per Rule 6M.9.400 subsection (b).

Process for Mandatory Reporting Fraud and Abuse through the OEL Fraud Referral System

The Coalition's Director of Program Operations is the designated administrator for the Office of Early Learning's *Fraud Referral System*.

At the point when potential fraud has been communicated to the recipient, the Coalition's Fraud Analyst makes a mandatory referral for potential fraud or abuse investigation using Office of Early Learning *Fraud Referral System*. The referral includes the recipient information, amount of overpayment; discover date and a brief summary of the allegations, and notifications of any evidencing documents available that substantiate the allegations.

Note the Coalition's fraud investigation and appeals procedures outlined in this plan will complement the OEL referral process to Department of Financial Services through the *Fraud Referral System*.

I. Plan Contact:

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