

# School Readiness Scholarship Participant Agreement of Rights and Responsibilities, Choice of Sites and Types of Child Care

**ALL PLACEMENT AND REDETERMINATION PACKETS SUBMITTED FOR REVIEW WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED COMPLETE AND BE REVIEWED UNLESS THIS SIGNED AGREEMENT IS ATTACHED.**

As a Parent(s)/Guardian(s) receiving School Readiness (SR) Scholarship funding, your signature below will certify that you understand, accept the responsibility and will abide by the program conditions outlined for continued receipt of a SR Child Care Scholarship. Failure to report changes and comply could result in termination of the School Readiness Scholarship. Please call 727-400-4411 to speak with an ELC Specialist if you have any questions.

## Report All Changes within 10 Days

You understand that you are **required** to notify the Family Services office, in writing with supporting documentation, within **10 calendar days** if any of the following changes occur: Where you live; Where you work; Your household income; Your household size; Your reason for care; When you start or stop school or training; When you remove your child from care; When you start or stop working and/or any other changes that can affect child care scholarship eligibility. Forms to report these changes are found on the ELC website. **Please Note: Failure to report any changes could result in termination of your School Readiness Scholarship.**

## Right to Appeal

If you do not agree with a decision regarding your child care scholarship(s) funding, you have the **right to appeal** that decision if you believe it was made in error and not based on policy. Decisions based on policy cannot be appealed. You must submit an Eligibility Appeal Form (G-10F-15) to Family Services within **10 business days from your termination date** to begin the case review process. It is recommended that you keep copies of all paperwork provided by the Early Learning Coalition to determine your eligibility. You can visit the "Download" page on the ELC website at [elcpinellas.net/sr-downloads](http://elcpinellas.net/sr-downloads) to review the complete Grievance/Dispute Resolution Policy.

## Data Exchange and Release of Information

Florida's Office of Early Learning and the Early Learning Coalition has the right to initiate and/or receive data either through direct contact or an automated data exchange process to establish the validity of household information provided by the applicant/recipient to receive program benefits. This will include but not be limited to: Social Security numbers, birth dates, immunization status, school/training information, and/or all sources of potential and reported earned and unearned income sources (employment records, unemployment benefits, TANF, child support, etc.). By signing this agreement, you authorize the Early Learning Coalition to share your household information, including social security numbers, to School Readiness Collaborative Partners for conducting research and program benefit purposes only. The Collaborative Partners include: Department of Children and Families, Department of Health, Early Steps, Eckerd Community Alternative, FDLRS, Head Start, Juvenile Welfare Board, Pinellas County Health and Human Services, Pinellas Licensing Board, Pinellas County School Board, R'Club, USDA Food Program, Department of Financial Services, and any Local, State and/or Federal Law Enforcement agencies as requested. Your personal information will not be shared with anyone other than those stated in this agreement for the express purposes as stated in the agreement.

## Limited Funding Notice

School Readiness Scholarships are dependent upon the availability of funds from state and local resources. Available funding varies during the year and at times is not available which may result in the termination of your scholarship. **You will receive a minimum of 14 days notice if your scholarship(s) ends.**

## School Readiness Approved Provider and Scholarship Authorization

Your School Readiness scholarship is only valid at Certified School Readiness Providers. The ELC will not be responsible for charges you acquire from a provider who has not completed the School Readiness certification process. Your child care scholarship(s) can not start until you are determined eligible and your enrollment is processed.

## Right to Change Providers (Transfers)

In order to change SR child care providers, you must ensure that all copayments have been paid or establish a repayment arrangement with your provider. Then, a Child Care Transfer form must be completed and submitted to the Family Services Department **72 hours** prior to the start date. The Child Care Transfer form is available on our website at [elcpinellas.net/sr-downloads](http://elcpinellas.net/sr-downloads). Once your child care transfer is approved by ELC, then confirmation of the enrollment will be mailed to you. A copy will be sent to the provider. If you move your child without authorization from the Family Services Department, you will be responsible for paying the full cost of care. If you are not comfortable with the quality of child care being provided or concerned for the safety of your child, you should immediately notify the ELC.

## Responsibility to Sign In and Out

You are responsible to sign your child in and out of care each day they attend. Your signature must be a full signature in ink and include the arrival time and departure time. Parents may be held financially responsible due to nonpayment as a result of missing or inadequate signatures. School age children may be signed into care after school by the provider if this occurs during hours that the parent is working or in school; **the parent must sign the child out.** It is not otherwise acceptable for providers to sign children in and out of care or for there to be no signature. Anything less than a parent/guardians full signature (first initial and full last name is acceptable) in ink with the time in and out of care are considered non-reimbursable days. **This is being strictly enforced.**

## Responsibility to Pay Co-Payments

You are responsible to pay your child care provider the established daily parent copayment assigned. If the provider charges more than the ELC's child care reimbursement rate, you may have to negotiate or pay the extra money in addition to your parent copayment. It is important that you inquire about any additional provider fees before selecting your child care provider. You must stay current with your parent copayments. Unpaid copayments may be cause for termination from the child care scholarship program or may cause delay in processing transfer requests.

**Responsibility to Maintain Attendance**

Your child is authorized a total of three (3) absences per calendar month, except in the event of extraordinary circumstances. Ask your provider about their attendance policy. If you remove your child from child care for more than 10 days in any month without initiating a temporary termination by contacting Family Services, your child care scholarship may be terminated. This includes but is not limited to removal from care during summer months or during school breaks without making prior arrangements with the Early Learning Coalition. If your child is sick, you must call your provider to let them know.

**Visitation Rights**

The ELC strongly encourages you to visit your child while he/she is in care. You may visit anytime unannounced and let the provider know that you want to see where your child will play, eat and sleep. Discuss each of these activities with the provider as well as discipline and toilet learning policies. It is also recommended that you inquire about how this provider will help your preschool age child(ren) become school ready.

**Screenings and Assessments**

As a recipient of a School Readiness Scholarship, you give permission for your child to receive a developmental screening completed by your child care provider. In addition, a vision and hearing screening may also be administered to your child by qualified professionals periodically throughout the year at your child care provider's site.

**Right to Confidentiality**

Each parent has a right to confidentiality of their child's information and the right to inspect review and request a copy of his or her child's SR record.

**Notice of Social Service Assistance**

If you have a social service need, please contact "2-1-1" Tampa Bay Cares by phone for social service assistance 24 hours per day.

**Parent's Choice of Sites and Type of Child Care**

**Licensed and Legal Exempt School Readiness Approved Child Care:** Child Care providers under this category are licensed/legal exempt child care facilities (Family Child Care Homes, Child Care Centers, Faith Based or School Age Programs), and are a School Readiness Approved Provider. These providers must meet the Pinellas County Child Care Licensing Program standards and maintain compliance with their School Readiness Agreement.

**Non-Licensed Care (Informal) (Relative or In-Home Non-Relative):** Child Care caregivers under this category are not licensed under licensing standards and must maintain compliance with their School Readiness Agreement. Informal provider is defined as a responsible relative (non-parent) including siblings, age 18 or older. The relative may care for the child(ren) in the relative's home or the child(ren)'s home; a person (non-relative), age 18 or older, who cares for the child(ren) in the child(ren)'s own home. Informal providers may not reside in child's home.

**Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK):** School doesn't start in kindergarten anymore. VPK is a **FREE** program for all children who turn 4 years old on or before September 1<sup>st</sup> each year. VPK classrooms are established throughout Pinellas County and offered by private child care providers and Pinellas County Schools. There are two VPK programs offered within the year; a school year program that is a maximum of 540 hours and a summer program that is for 300 hours. Each 4-year-old may attend only one of these programs (school year or summer). **Register online at [www.vpkpinellas.net](http://www.vpkpinellas.net).**

**Head Start / Early Head Start:** is an alternative care choice that may be available to you if your child is birth to mandatory school age. If you are interested in this program, contact your local Head Start office at 727-547-5979.

**Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R):** All families can receive free help in researching and selecting early education programs that best meet their needs. CCR&R can provide you with assistance in locating Certified School Readiness Child Care Providers. Trained staff can answer your questions about choosing the best early learning program for your family and provide you with resources and recommendations on programs that are customized to your preferences. In addition, you will receive information about child development and developmentally appropriate practices. They can also offer you information about other services and resources available in your community. **Contact CCR&R by calling 727-400-4411** or at [www.elcpinellas.net/ccrr](http://www.elcpinellas.net/ccrr) to request a list of child care providers.

*The Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County does not discriminate against parents or children on the basis of race, national origin, ethnic background, sex, religious affiliation, or disability.*

**Eligibility Information Certification**

Please verify that all information you have submitted for scholarship determination is true and complete. Any knowing omissions, falsifications, misrepresentations or failure to report changes in a timely manner may disqualify your child(ren) from participating in child care scholarship programs and could be liable for prosecution under the law. In addition, you may lose the right to receive future benefits for a period of 5 years and may be responsible for repaying those benefits that you were not entitled to receive.

**I acknowledge that I have fully reviewed this document and fully understand its contents and my responsibilities as the Parent/Guardian. Until such time that a change in policy or procedures warrants a revision or resigning, I agree that this remains in effect.**

**SIGNATURE** of Parent/Guardian(Required)

**PRINTED** Name of Parent/Guardian(Required)

**Date**(Required)