



School Readiness Reimbursement Tips for Providers

This tip sheet is intended to assist providers with knowing the key information that allows them to be reimbursed in a timely and efficient manner and to make every effort to maximize their monthly provider reimbursements. These are the rules, requirements and processes that our Coalition's Reimbursement Department follows to help ensure the accurate and efficient processing of the monthly provider reimbursements within the functionality of the OEL Provider Portal. Please know that this is not all of the information providers need to know to be fully knowledgeable and meet all requirements for all programs and all departments within the Coalition. There is a link to the most current Office of Early Learning (OEL) Provider Portal User Guide on the dashboard of the OEL Provider Portal and there are additional resources available on our website at www.elcpinellas.org. Please be sure to read this tip sheet in its entirety from tip #1 through tip #12. Tip # 12 is a very important reminder.

FYI - The OEL Portal System Requirements: Chrome or Internet Explorer Version 10 or higher

1. Sign in Sign Out Sheets – Must meet 6M Rules

- a. Providers are required to submit sign in sign out sheets for the ELC children at the same time that they submit the electronic attendance each month. Sign in sign out sheets must be received by the due date stated in the attendance on the Provider Portal attendance screen. If not, the attendance may not be processed and reimbursement will not be made on the 20th of the month.
- b. Sign in sign out sheets should be uploaded to the Monthly Sign in out Sheet folder on the OEL Provider Portal. Please use the child's ELC enrollment name for the child's sign in sign out sheet and not the child's nickname. We only know the child by the first and last name used at the time of enrollment to the provider's site. **Please alphabetize sign in sign out sheets by the child's last name before uploading. When uploading, please ensure the file name includes the month and year of the sign in sign out sheets.** This will help the Reimbursement staff in comparing this information with the submitted attendance for validating, monitoring, and accurate reimbursements.
- c. The provider's site name should be on every sign in sign out sheet and should include the month and the year. The days of the month should match the right date i.e. Tuesday, July 6, 2021. There should be a sign in and out time with a.m. or p.m. designation for every child for every day child is present with the client's signature. Please use appropriate sign in sign out sheet for children who attend before and after school. There are samples on the ELC's website.
- d. It is best practice to mark the day with the word "ABSENT" when a child is absent to prevent someone from signing on the absence line later, when the child returns to care.
- e. If your site is closed, this should be marked on the date of closure on your sign in sign out sheet so your Reimbursement Specialist will know this when comparing sign in sign out sheets to the submitted attendance.
- f. There should be a place for the provider to sign and date the sign in sign out sheet. This will validate that the sign in sign out sheet is true and accurate. There should never be a discrepancy between the sign in sign out sheet and the submitted attendance. For your convenience if needed, there are master sign in sign out sheet forms available on our website.
- g. Per 6M rules, one sign in sign out sheet, per month, per child is required.
- h. We prefer that sign in sign out sheets be uploaded but if not then they can be faxed to 727-400-4472. **Please alphabetize the sign in sign out sheets by child's last name before uploading or faxing so that we can efficiently process the attendance, which is also in alphabetical order.** Providers



are responsible to get a confirmation if they must fax their sign in sign out sheets to the Coalition. This is the only proof that you will have that your sign in sign out sheets were received. Providers would have to show proof that the fax was received if there were an issue with the processing of attendance per the usual process by the usual deadlines. Providers who are outside of Pinellas County (Out of County Provider) but contract with Pinellas County must **fax** their alphabetized sign in sign out sheets, as their document library is not visible to Pinellas ELC.

- i. FYI - Currently, the file size limit for uploading documents is 2MB per upload and the system works better if file name is in lower case letters including the .pdf extension. The file should be in pdf format.

2. **Attendance**

- a. Attendance must be submitted each month by the due date noted in the attendance screen. Attendance can be submitted as early as the last day of the month after you have recorded all of the children's attendance for that day. There is no need to wait until the system's due date to submit attendance for the month. Submitting sooner is better rather than later.
- b. Attendance submitted after the system due date will **not** be processed in the current payment period.
- c. Sign in sign out sheets are required in order for attendance to be processed. Sign in sign out sheets should be submitted to the Coalition on the same day as the attendance to avoid any possible delay in processing your site's attendance.
- d. Please be sure to end/term enrollments for children no longer attending by going to the **Enrollments Tab/Manage SR Enrollments/View-Edit Enrollments** process **BEFORE** submitting attendance electronically to the Coalition. You will need to go to the bottom of the screen and scroll all the way to the right to see the "End Enrollment" button. Providers should not wait until attendance is due to key terminations. Enter enrollment terminations at the time they occur. There is no need to wait until it is time to submit attendance. If you are unable to terminate a child, **please contact Family Services at 727-400-4411**. Please remember that Reimbursement staff does not key enrollment terminations. The term must be keyed in a timely manner in order for the child to be removed from future months' attendance rosters. This will also avoid overpayments and adjustments for overpayments.
- e. The provider controls the "H"s on the attendance. It is the provider's responsibility to make sure that the "H"s are on the right date. It is best to set the holidays up correctly during contract submission so that you do not have to make changes throughout the contract year. Beginning with the 21-22 Contract Year, providers choose ALL 12 reimbursable holidays. Providers should decide on their holidays at the beginning of the contract year and record them in their closure calendar screen as well as make sure that they coincide with their VPK instructional calendar, if offering VPK. Excessive, non-reimbursable holidays will be marked with an asterisk on the attendance. The provider should mark unplanned closures with an N for a non-reimbursable closure. **Per ELC policy, changes cannot be made to the twelve approved reimbursable holidays that are in the provider's certified contract after the fact.** The provider can only make changes to **future** holidays. This is done by submitting the change through their provider profile. Any future holiday date changes require a 20A as this is an amendment to the original contract. Holidays should not be changed on short notice, as clients need to be notified of any holiday changes in advance so that they can make other arrangements for their child's care. Please report to your Reimbursement Specialist, as soon as possible and **prior** to submitting the monthly attendance any issues with missing "H"s on your attendance roster. This will avoid a delay in the processing of your attendance. It is highly recommended that you review your paid holidays in your certified 21-22 contract by viewing Exhibit 6 Holiday Schedule. If any of these dates are wrong, if you failed to capture all 12 of the paid holidays



that you wanted to observe for your site, or you chose a Saturday or Sunday by mistake then you will need to submit the corrections through your provider profile and have a 20A completed. Please note the 20A process takes longer than a day or two to complete so be sure to give plenty of notice ahead of the observed holiday date that you want to be reimbursed for your site.

- f. If you are closed unexpectedly for any reason and you are not available to provide care to the children, this day then becomes an “N” and should be marked as a non-reimbursable day. This is done by clicking on the “X” and choosing Enrolled/Non-reimbursable as the reason. Please include a note so that the Reimbursement Specialist is notified of the reason that your site was closed for that day. Providers are self-employed subcontractors and provider closures other than the 12 approved holidays are non-reimbursable and should be marked with an “N.” This will avoid any overpayment for unapproved closure days. *****Temporary Closures that may be reimbursable require a very specific process that includes the timely notification to the Coalition with an Unusual Incident Form and the submission through the Provider Portal of the temporary closure dates. Please refer to the requirements for notification in the statewide contract, the Provider Portal User Guide, the “For Providers” section of our website for the form and other information pertaining to temporary closures if your site is affected by an event that would constitute the need for a temporary closure.
- g. It is best to record attendance throughout the month rather than at the end of the month. This will help you save time at the end of each month. The recorded attendance and the sign in sign out sheet should match **exactly** for each child on the attendance roster. Be sure that you do account for every child on the attendance roster and not just record attendance using your sign in sign out sheets or teacher roll as you will likely miss children you termed or intended to term. There should never be a discrepancy between the two! **The system will not allow providers to record attendance into the future. As an example, if recording attendance today then the rest of the month would be blank making today the last day you could record attendance for until tomorrow.**

3. **Absences**

- a. The “X”s populate automatically on the attendance. This means the child was present. Click on an “X” to record an absence and choose the reason for the absence.
- b. The system marks absences as “A”s but when the attendance is viewed by the Reimbursement Staff, the first 3 “A”s are “E”s for excused absences and the rest remain “A”s.
- c. If you have a Request for Justification of Absence (RJOA) form and the supporting documentation, if it is required for the code being recorded as the reason for the absence, **you are to attach it to the fourth (4th) “A” or absence.** Please make a comment when doing this that states all of the dates that the form and the documentation covers. Reimbursement staff will see these notes when they are processing the attendance. This helps the Reimbursement Specialists process attendance efficiently.
- d. If you do not have the form and the documentation, if it is required, please **do not** record “A”s. These will then become non-reimbursable days and providers should code them as such by clicking on the “X” and choosing Enrolled/Non-Reimbursable as the reason for the absence. This will record an “N” and staff will quickly know that no form or documentation has been attached for absences beyond three (3). This will also help staff save time by not having to change the “A”s to “N”s. Please help us avoid the possibility of overpayments by marking these correctly. **If the docs are not attached to the 4th “A” then the excessive absences will not be considered for reimbursement.**



- e. Please know that the Reimbursement Specialists **will not look for the Request for Justification of Excessive Absence Form or the documentation in any other location other than those docs that are attached to the 4th "A" on the electronic attendance.**
 - f. Please do not upload the absence form and documentation for the current month absences, as they will not be reimbursed. The RJOA form must be attached to the 4th absence to be reimbursed with the attendance roster.
4. If you receive the Request for Justification of Excessive Absences form (RJOA) and the documentation **after, and only if after** the attendance has already been submitted, then those absences will be reimbursed by adjustment with a future service period. In this case, **only**, providers should upload the RJOA form and the documentation to the Monthly Adjustment Request folder. Please label the file with the month/year it pertains to and with the child's name. Example: August 2019 - Smith, J. – late RJOA form. You should also then email your Reimbursement Specialist to advise them that you are submitting/uploading a late RJOA Form and backup documentation if required to the Monthly Adjustment Request folder. The Portal currently does not notify the ELC staff when a document has been uploaded. These will be reimbursed as soon as possible with a future payment period.
 5. If a child is no longer attending and you were not able to end the enrollment through the enrollment tab, please contact Family Services at 727-400-4411. If there are days that your site should not receive any reimbursement, please record "N"s for all of the days of the month that you do not want to be reimbursed so that your site will not be overpaid. Reimbursement staff does not know this information, so we have to rely on the providers to record this correctly when submitting the attendance. Please make a note as to why you are recording "N"s for a child for the month. The note should say child was terminated on specific date or whatever the situation may be. Reimbursement Specialists do not key terminations noted at the time attendance is submitted. It is the provider's responsibility to make sure the termination is keyed in a timely manner. There is no way for a provider to record a "T" through the attendance screen. A term can only be keyed through the Enrollment Tab. Please be sure that all enrollments for the child are terminated at the same time. There may be more than one enrollment row due to care level changes due to child's birthday or due to a change in client's eligibility such as a fee change, redetermination, a funding rollover, etc.
 6. When uploading documents, there is no need to call to see if the Reimbursement Team has received them. **If you can see them in your document library folder then the Reimbursement Specialist can also see them.** You should always confirm for yourself, though, that you can see the uploaded documents. Please be sure that documents are uploaded to the correct folder, as staff does not receive any notification that documents are uploaded. We only look in the folder in which we expect to see the documents uploaded. For example, sign in sign out sheets are uploaded monthly to the folder labeled Monthly Sign in out Sheets. They will not be considered as received if we cannot find them in the correct folder. Please always alphabetize sign in sign out sheets before uploading them.
 7. If, when you are recording the attendance, there is an issue that needs addressed such as an incorrect schedule (FT vs. PT), incorrect care level (Infant through School Age), incorrect copayment or a child is missing from the attendance **even after the client signed the Payment Certificate**, then **please call 727-400-4411** and address the issue with the Family Services' staff. It is important that these issues are corrected on the attendance roster **before** it is submitted for reimbursement. Providers should look at the



attendance frequently to identify any issues and have them corrected prior to recording and submitting the attendance. Reimbursement staff cannot correct enrollment/eligibility issues so please do not call your assigned Reimbursement Specialist. It is highly recommended that you submit your attendance for all of the children that you are able to on time so that most of your reimbursement is not delayed. If Family Services' staff enroll a child late or the client does sign the Payment Certificate late then that child will appear in your attendance for the enrolled month at the top of the attendance and you will be able to submit that separately at any given time. Attendance that is submitted in between due dates will be processed with the next service period in the next payment period. Sorry, no exceptions. Example: August 2021 attendance submitted on September 15, 2021 is processed with September 2021's service period in October 2021 payment period.

8. Once each month's reimbursement has been completely processed and the payment period is officially closed, the Provider Reimbursement Detail Reports will be available by clicking on the Attendance tab and choosing Reimbursement Details option. Providers can run these detail reports by Service Period Month (the month that the care was provided) or by Payment Period Month (the month that the attendance was processed and reimbursed). EFT receipts are uploaded for SR on or before the 20th of every month to the Monthly Reimbursement Report folder in your Provider Portal document library. EFT receipts are uploaded for VPK on or before the last business day of the month to the Monthly Reimbursement Report folder in your Provider Portal document library.
9. Issues or questions about client eligibility and child enrollments should be directed to the Family Services Department and not the Reimbursement Department. Providers can call the Family Services' staff at 727-400-4411. If you have to leave a message, please be sure to give as much detailed information as you can so that staff can be prepared to answer your question thoroughly when they respond back to you.
10. You should call or email your assigned Reimbursement Specialist first before contacting the Reimbursement Supervisor. The Reimbursement Specialists manage their own caseloads; therefore, they have the most current information about your attendance, your sign in sign out sheets, your RJOA Forms, your site's monthly reimbursements or adjustments. They can help you better than anyone else in the Reimbursement Department. Telephone calls to the Supervisor are gladly welcomed; however, calls should only be made to the Supervisor when the assigned Reimbursement Specialist is unavailable for more than one business day, is unable to answer your question or when your issue regarding reimbursement cannot be resolved through your assigned Reimbursement Specialist and needs to be escalated to the Supervisor level.
11. Please be sure to check your email regularly and read carefully all communications from the Coalition, as email is not only our primary way of communicating with providers but also the Office of Early Learning's way of communicating with providers. Be sure to click on the links to read resources or attachments. This will help you stay informed and help you understand what is being requested or what is required. It is the provider's responsibility to know what has been communicated to them and the statewide contract refers to this as a requirement. We also post information on our website at www.elcpinellas.net. Our website is a very good place to find general information for all providers or updates so we suggest looking there for answers to your questions.

