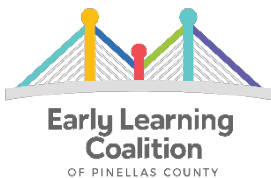


School Readiness Program Manual

Pinellas County

*Revised
July 2021*



DIVISION OF
Early Learning
LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.



Sponsorship by Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County,
Inc. and Division of Early Learning

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
About the Coalition.....	7
SCHOOL READINESS REQUIREMENTS.....	8
Licensed Provider - Health and Safety	8
Licensed Providers – Child Care Licensing Fines and Enforcement Actions	8
Unusual Incidents.....	8
Ratios and Group Sizes	8
Discipline	8
Curriculum	9
Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum.....	9
Character Education Program	9
Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 (ASQ-3) Developmental Screenings.....	9
Monitoring.....	10
Enforcement.....	10
School Readiness Certification Process for New Licensed Child Care Providers	11
New Provider Orientation Session	11
New Licensed School Readiness Provider Application	11
School Readiness Provider Contract	12
School Readiness Provider Contract Renewal Process.....	13
Renewal of Contract	13
Reporting Changes to Your School Readiness Program	14
Change in Owner.....	14
Change in Site Director	15
Change in Physical Address	15
Change in Teacher.....	15
Contact Information Changes.....	16

Calendar Changes.....	16
General Liability Insurance	16
SCHOOL READINESS.....	17
Provider Reimbursement.....	17
Provider Rates for School Readiness Contract Providers	17
Gold Seal Providers	18
Holidays for School Readiness Contract Providers	18
Available Funding Groups for Licensed School Readiness Contract Providers.....	19
Procedures Submitting Attendance Rosters	20
Confirmation of Receipt of Enrollment/Attendance Certification Forms	20
Provider Reimbursement Report.....	20
Attendance Validations.....	21
Sign In/Out Sheets.....	22
SCHOOL READINESS RESOURCES.....	22
Early Learning Coalition Community Trainings, Professional Development Initiatives, and Supports	22
ELC’s Community Trainings.....	22
Professional Development Initiatives.....	23
Connecting the Dots (Child Assessment Initiative).....	23
Building a Bridge (Family Engagement Initiative)	24
Leadership for Early Educators in Pinellas (LEEP) Initiative)	24
Right from the Start (Infant Toddler Initiatives)	24
Professional Development Supports.....	25
Technical Assistance.....	25
Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards.....	25
Screening and Intervention Services.....	26
Service Overview.....	26
Inclusion Specialist - Warmline	27
Overview	27
The Warmline.....	27
Inclusion Library	27

Community Screening.....	27
Parent Involvement.....	28
SERVICES FOR FAMILIES.....	29
School Readiness Scholarships.....	29
Wait List.....	29
Recertification	32
Transfers.....	32
Parent Copayments.....	33
At Risk Children (Rilya Wilson Act)	33
Enrollment Confirmations	33
Sign In/Out.....	33
Child Care Terminations.....	34
CCR&R (Child Care Resource & Referral)	34
Program Overview	34
Update Your Provider Information with Us	35
Annual Provider Update (OEL Provider Profile).....	35
Submit Provider Information Changes.....	36
Resources.....	36

INTRODUCTION

The School Readiness program is designed to prepare children for school and assist working families in obtaining self-sufficiency. Research has proven how crucial a quality early learning environment is to young children's later school success. The Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc. (Coalition) would like to thank its Providers and Staff for providing School Readiness services in Pinellas County. Your commitment to the children in your community is an admirable and important one.

The Coalition is the primary funder of the program and administers Provider Reimbursement, Provider Certification, Quality Initiatives, Training and Technical Assistance, Professional Development, Screening and Intervention, and the CCR&R Provider Database. In addition, the Coalition administers Family Services, which include child eligibility, and CCR&R to provide child care listings and community resources.

This manual is designed to assist you with understanding the policies and procedures of School Readiness. There will be on-going changes as policies are developed and updated. Coalition staff and Providers will be notified by e-mail when revisions are available to help keep the manual current. Revisions will also be available for review on the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas, Inc. [website](#). In the event that you come across a situation that is not discussed in the manual, please contact your supervisor or a staff member of the Coalition for guidance.

For further assistance in understanding the responsibilities of the Coalition, Providers, and Parents for the School Readiness Program, please refer to the chart below:

Task	Coalition	Provider	Parent
School Readiness and VPK Provider Contract Approvals and Orientation Process	X		
Implementation of School Readiness and VPK Contract AND Submission of ALL Required Documentation and Updates		X	
Parent Eligibility Determination for School Readiness and VPK Services and Entering Eligibility Information in Statewide Information System	X		X

Task	Coalition	Provider	Parent
Notification of Termination of School Readiness Services	X		
Notify the Coalition When a SR Child Does Not Attend for 5 Consecutive Days and there is No Contact from the Parent		X	
Parent Eligibility Re-determination Processing	X		
PAPERWORK for Parents to be Re-determined Eligible for Services			X
Enrollment of Children at the Provider's Site		X	
Maintain Proof of Child's Attendance for Payment and Monitoring Purposes		X	
Payment of Parent Co-payment Directly to the Provider			X
Collection and Providing Receipt of Parent Co-payment to the Parent		X	
Submission of Attendance Rosters and Other Attendance Documents as Requested by Coalition		X	
Payment for Documented Child Attendance and Attendance Monitoring	X		
Technical Assistance: contract requirements, reimbursement, curriculum, and child screening & assessment	X		
Staff Development and Training: Providers Must Ensure Staff have Required Training		X	



ABOUT THE COALITION

Mission Statement

Revolutionize early learning to inspire children, engage families, and elevate educators.

Vision Statement

Every child will confidently enter Kindergarten ready for success in school and in life.

Core Values

Empathy

Inclusion

Accountability

Innovation

Knowledge

Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc.

2536 Countryside Blvd., Suite 500
Clearwater, FL 33763

Lobby Hours:

Monday - Friday
8:00am - 5:00pm

Appointments are required for parents to meet with their caseworkers and for Providers to meet with a Contract or Program Support Specialist.

SCHOOL READINESS REQUIREMENTS

Licensed Provider - Health and Safety

The Coalition must ensure that School Readiness Providers maintain a healthy and safe environment and appropriate staff-to-child ratios. Therefore, all School Readiness Providers must demonstrate compliance with requirements during onsite observations by the Child Care License Program and Coalition Staff. School Readiness Health and Safety standards are inspected and enforced in accordance with DEL [Rule 6M-4.620](#) Health and Safety Checklists and Inspections.



Licensed Providers – Child Care Licensing Fines and Enforcement Actions

School Readiness Providers are required to notify the Coalition of any fines issued by the Child Care License Authority – Pinellas County License Board (PCLB). All School Readiness Providers are required to maintain a healthy and safe environment. Health & Safety standards are enforced in accordance with the Coalition's SR Provider Enforcement Policy (ELCPC-61.2). *Providers sanctioned with a state Class 1 violation may be at risk of Gold Seal designation removal, six-month Probation, or SR Contract Termination.*

Unusual Incidents

All School Readiness Providers must report any unusual incidents to the Coalition via phone or in writing by the close of business, the day after the incident occurred. Additionally, the Provider must submit a *Child Accident or Unusual Incident Report*, ([SR-61F-19](#)) within three (3) business days of the incident. Unusual incidents should be reported to the Provider's assigned Contract Specialist. Forms must be emailed to the Provider's assigned Contract Specialist and uploaded into the Provider's Document Library Unusual Incidents folder in the Portal.

Ratios and Group Sizes

All School Readiness Programs are required to maintain ratios and group sizes required by the Pinellas County License Board (PCLB). Any violations of ratios and group sizes will result in a loss of program funding for the day of the violation.

Discipline

School Readiness children may never be subjected to discipline that is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest, toileting, spanking or any other form of physical punishment. Examples of inappropriate discipline may include, but are not limited to yelling and pointing in a child's face, tying a child to a chair, withholding snack/meals, denying use of the restroom, or requiring a child to run around the playground as a consequence for unwanted behavior.

Section [1002.88\(j\)](#) of the Florida Statutes implements minimum standards for child discipline practices that are age-appropriate and consistent with the requirements in s. [402.305\(12\)](#). Such standards must provide that children not be subjected to discipline that is associated with food, rest, or toileting. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is prohibited.

Curriculum

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum

All School Readiness Providers serving children age's birth to five (5) years old are required to offer a developmentally appropriate curriculum.

1. Providers must use a curriculum from the DEL approved list found at <http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/school-readiness/school-readiness-providers/school-readiness-curriculum>.



Character Education Program

All School Readiness Providers are required to offer a character education program with activities documented on lesson plans. Providers may choose from the following options:

1. Providers may use the Character Education component as part of their DEL approved curriculum, if applicable.

OR

2. Providers using a Character Education curriculum not on the DEL approved list must submit a Self-Assessment Study for each applicable age group (Infant, Toddler, Two's and/or Preschool). Providers should use the *Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards* as reference to help them through the process. (*Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards Birth to Four Years* **OR** *Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds*).

Ages and Stages Questionnaires-(ASQs) Developmental Screenings

ASQ's are mandatory for children ages birth to five (5) years who are enrolled in an Early Learning Coalition School Readiness program. The ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE screenings are observations of the child's skills through play and/or an activity. Skills addressed using the ASQ-3 are *communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal-social*.

The results are used to identify possible areas of concern, communicate these concerns with families, caregivers, and teachers and may be used for program planning and implementation.



The Early Learning Coalition tracks all due dates for children in care needing a developmental screening. Providers will be responsible to track through the Provider Portal when a child is due for a screening. This is defined by law as being within 45 days of the child's first enrollment in the SR program and each year thereafter on their re-determination date. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ-3) Results Letter is accessed online within the Provider Portal by the Provider. The Provider is required to share results of screening with families and provide documentation of parent notification during monitoring visits.

General information about the Ages and Stages program is available through their website: agesandstages.com.

Monitoring

School Readiness Providers acknowledge that the Coalition, the Division of Early Learning, and other local, state, and federal officials have the right to examine any documents and records that contain information about the School Readiness program. These agencies and the Coalition may conduct onsite monitoring and desk reviews. **In signing the Statewide School Readiness Provider Contract, Providers are granting access to their program space during posted business hours.** Refusal to allow timely entry is a Contract violation and could result in termination of the Provider's School Readiness Provider Contract.

Enforcement

It is the goal of the Coalition to provide the necessary technical assistance and resources to support Providers in providing high quality School Readiness programs and maintaining compliance with the School Readiness Contract and Coalition policies. At times, providers may not be in compliance with the terms of the Contract, which requires enforcement action to be taken by the Coalition. This includes, but is not limited to, corrective action, probation, financial consequences, termination of the Contract, and revocation of eligibility to provide a SR program.

Please refer to [Coalition policy ELCPC-61.2](#), for the School Readiness Provider Enforcement Policy. Additional information on enforcement procedures can be found in the School Readiness Health & Safety Standards Handbook ([Form OEL-SR-6206](#)).

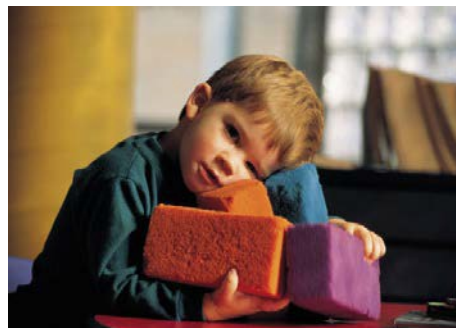
School Readiness Certification and Contract Process for Licensed Child Care Providers

The Coalition offers quarterly orientations in which potential new Providers may become eligible to offer School Readiness (SR) services. These “Open Certification” periods for new Providers occur in January, April, July, and October. Already contracted SR Programs are encouraged to register newly hired directors to attend.

New Provider Orientation Session

The Coalition hosts mandatory orientation sessions quarterly for potential new Providers. Providers are required to register for a session and attend the orientation prior to being Contracted. Sessions provide an overview of the School Readiness program requirements and answer all new Provider questions.

New Providers are required to have a current active child care license, complete an orientation session, and submit a completed SR Contract and required documents to the Coalition for review within three months of attending. Documents submitted after that time period will require the New Provider to attend the next Orientation before finalizing their SR Contract. Check the Coalition website for more information.



Providers interested in offering a School Readiness Program should contact the Provider Contacts and Compliance Department at 727-400-4412 or check the Coalition Website for more information.

New Licensed School Readiness Provider Application

Once the provider has successfully completed the New Provider Orientation Session and prior to the end of the three-month Certification period, they will be given access to the SR Provider Profile and Contract through the DEL Provider Portal. The completed SR Provider Contract Package must be submitted with the following required documents:

- One completed School Readiness Provider Contract ([Form OEL-SR 20](#)), including applicable DEL attachments (Forms OEL-20L, 20LE)
- Current Certificate of General Liability Insurance with proper limits and the ELC named as the additional insured and certificate holder
- Copy of current license issued by the Child Care License Program
- Copy of current driver's license or government-issued identification card (if applicable)
- IRS W-9 form completed and signed as reflected on the Provider's Social Security Card or Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN)

- A copy of the Provider's Social Security Card/Federal Employer Identification Notice (EIN). (147C Employer Identification Number Verification Letter or Form SS-4)
- Sunbiz (Florida Department of State Division of Corporation), if applicable
- Finance Department Agreement for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) for Child Care Provider Payments ([SR-61F-9](#)) to include a voided check or letter from banking institution
- Proof of purchase of state-approved curriculum
- Character Education Curriculum – complete the Character Development Program Self-Assessment Study if you selected a state-approved curriculum that does not include a Character Education component. Once the Character Development Program Self-Assessment Study has been submitted, it does not need to be updated yearly unless there are curriculum changes (This study document can be attained from the Contract Specialist)
- Child Care Resource and Referral Annual Provider Update (APU – DEL provider profile)
- A signed and notarized E-Verify Affidavit (This document is required annually)

Completed contracts for Providers must be submitted using the DEL Provider Portal. Providers are required to have, maintain, and monitor a working computer/personal electronic device and an email address for document submission and Coalition communications. Please note that some smart phones may not have the necessary capability to manage the Portal programs.

Approval for Child Care Provider

The Coalition will review the application within ten (10) business days. You will be contacted if additional information is required.

Once the complete application is approved, a fully executed copy of the SR Provider Contract will be available in the DEL Provider Portal. The SR Provider Contract must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Early Learning Coalition or designee **before** your program may begin. The Coalition will not authorize payment to a Provider without an SR Contract.

School Readiness Provider Contract

A School Readiness Contracted Provider can be a licensed center or family child care home, that provides child care in Pinellas County or participates in early care and education as stipulated in a signed Contract with the Coalition for children accessing services out of county. The provider must be providing child care legally based on regulations of the county in which they reside.

School Readiness Provider Contract Renewal Process

Renewal of Contract

Existing School Readiness Providers must renew their Contract annually in accordance with the terms of the Contract in order to continue serving School Readiness families. The Coalition will hold Contract Renewal Meetings for Providers as necessary to address changes in requirements. These will be communicated using the Coalition’s ENews information system. The table below illustrates the typical timeline for renewal. **It is very important** to complete the contract by the due date in order to ensure there is no disruption in payment.

The renewal Contract must be completed online at <https://providerservices.floridaearlylearning.com/Account/Login>.

Provider Type	Contract Period	Annual Provider Profile Update Due	Contract Due
All Providers	July 1 – June 30	**March 1	**June 1

****These dates are subject to change based on DEL Portal accessibility & functionality****

1. School Readiness Provider Contract Renewal Documents

Providers must submit the complete renewal package in the Portal.

Completed School Readiness Provider Contract (Form OEL-SR 20), including applicable attachments (Forms OEL-20L, 20LE), and Provider Profile with required documents.

The following forms are not required annually unless there are changes:

- IRS W-9 form completed and signed as reflected on the Provider’s Social Security Card or Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN)
- A copy of the Provider’s Social Security Card/Federal Employer Identification Notice. (147C Employer Identification Number Verification Letter or Form SS-4 from the IRS)
- Finance Department Agreement for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) for Child Care Provider Payments ([SR-61F-9](#)) to include a voided check or letter from banking institution
- Copy of current driver’s license or government-issued identification card

2. Approval

The Coalition will review the documents/paperwork within ten (10) business days. You will be contacted if additional information is required.

Once the complete application package is approved, a fully executed copy of the SR Provider Contract will be available in the DEL Provider Portal. The renewal SR Provider Contract must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Early Learning Coalition or designee **before** the current SR Contract expiration date. The Coalition will not authorize payment to a Provider without an SR Contract.

Reporting Changes to Your School Readiness Program

Change in Owner

PRIOR to a change in ownership, the New Owner will be asked to meet with Coalition staff to discuss requirements and complete paperwork needed to execute the new contract. Provider may receive a site visit by Coalition Staff.

A minimum of **thirty (30) calendar days BEFORE** the change occurs the following form must be signed by the selling owner and submitted to the ELC Provider Contracts Department for approval. **Failure to do so may result in the final payment being withheld.**

- Completed Provider Change Notification Form ([SR-61-F-2](#))

The following documentation is required upon completion of the sale:

- Change of Ownership Form from Child Care Licensing
- Completed School Readiness Provider Contract (Form OEL-SR 20), including applicable attachments (Forms OEL-20L, 20LE)
- Current Certificate of General Liability Insurance with proper limits, with new address, and the ELC named as the additional insured and certificate holder
- Copy of current driver's license or government-issued identification card (if applicable)
- Copy of current license issued by the Child Care License Program
- Completed W-9 form
- A copy of Employer Identification Notice (EIN). (147C Employer Identification Number Verification Letter or Form SS-4)
- Finance Department Agreement for Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) for Child Care Provider Payments to include a voided check or letter from banking institution
- Sunbiz (Florida Department of State Division of Corporation)
- Proof of purchase of state-approved curriculum
- Character Education Curriculum – complete the Character Development Program Self-Assessment Study (this is available from a Certification Specialist) if a state-approved curriculum is selected that does not

include a Character Education component. Once the Character Development Program Self-Assessment Study has been submitted, it does not need to be updated yearly unless there are curriculum changes

- Child Care Resource and Referral Annual Provider Update (APU – DEL provider profile)
- A signed and notarized E-Verify Affidavit (this is required annually)

Change in Site Director

If there is a change in Director, the Provider must notify the Coalition in writing and submit the following at least fourteen **(14) calendar days BEFORE** the change occurs:

- Completed Provider Change Notification Form ([SR-61-F-2](#))
- Electronic 20A SR Contract Amendment (if signature of authority is changing)

Change in Physical Address

If there is a change in Address, the Provider must notify the Coalition in writing at least fourteen **(14) calendar days BEFORE** the change occurs and the following documents must be submitted to ELC for approval:

- Provider Change Notification Form
- Copy of the new Child Care License
- Certificate of General Liability Insurance with proper limits, with new address, and the ELC named as the additional insured and certificate holder
- W-9 with new address
- EFT with new address
- One (1) completed School Readiness Provider Contract, including applicable OEL attachments ([Forms OEL-20L, or 20LE](#)) (These will be executed within the Portal)

Change in Curriculum and/or Character Education Program

If there will be a change in the Provider's curriculum and/or character education program, the Provider must notify the Coalition in writing and submit the following at least fourteen **(14) calendar days BEFORE** the change occurs.

- Provider Change Notification Form ([SR-61F-2](#))
- Receipt for new curriculum as proof of acquisition
- [SR 20A Contract Amendment](#) (These will be executed within the Portal)

Change in Teacher

The Coalition does not track individual teacher data for Contract purposes. However Providers are required to notify the Coalition of any staff changes other than the owner or director for VPK classrooms. Providers who are active participants in School Readiness Program Assessment, a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), and Child Assessment Programs must follow all staff reporting guidelines outlined in the various programs.

Contact Information Changes

The Coalition's primary method for communicating with Providers is electronically (email). **The Provider is required to maintain and monitor a working email address for sending and receiving communications from the Coalition.**

In the event a Provider's email is found to be invalid, the Provider will be notified and required to provide a valid email address within three (3) business days. A Contract Amendment may be needed to record the change. However the Provider will still be responsible for response to any communications sent by the Coalition.

If there will be a change in the landline telephone number, mailing address (that does not constitute a physical move), or email address, the Provider must notify the Coalition in writing, update their profile in the [DEL Portal](#), and submit the following at least fourteen **(14) calendar days BEFORE** the change occurs.

- Provider Change Notification Form ([SR-61F-2](#))
- Update DEL provider profile

Calendar Changes

Temporary closure affecting scheduled hours of care that are within the control of the Provider, such as extra holidays or vacations, will not receive reimbursement for the time disrupted by the closure unless they are submitted prior to the closure and are within the approved number of reimbursed closures allowed by the Coalition.

Temporary closure due to circumstances outside the control of the Provider such as hurricanes, break in a waterline, or power outages may be reimbursed. Notification of such closures must be submitted as a Temporary Closure in the Provider's Portal Account (Attendance Tab) by the end of the first closure day; verification/documentation must also be submitted if requesting reimbursement, unless the closure is due to local or state government emergency declarations.

General Liability Insurance

All Providers are required to maintain and furnish written evidence of sufficient General Liability Insurance as indicated in the School Readiness Provider Contract.

Providers must procure and maintain General Liability Insurance in the minimum amounts of \$100,000 per incident/\$300,000 general aggregate, including coverage of transportation of children (if SR children are transported by the program). The Provider is required to list the Coalition as an "Additional Insured" and as a "Certificate Holder" in order to verify proper coverage. Any disruption and/or lapse in the insurance coverage will result in loss of funding for the affected days, and long term lapses could result in termination of the School Readiness Provider Contract.

Workers' Compensation and Unemployment Compensation

Providers with four (4) or more employees are required to obtain and maintain Workers' Compensation under Chapter 440, F.S., and any required re-employment assistance or unemployment compensation coverage under Chapter 443, F.S. in accordance with S.S.1002.55(3)(k), F.S. Any disruption and/or lapse in the insurance coverage will result in loss of funding for the affected days.

SCHOOL READINESS PROVIDER REIMBURSEMENT

The information included in this section is provided as a tool in understanding the reimbursement policies and procedures for child care providers. Please review the manual as it contains valuable information and links to necessary forms. These forms are supplied by the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County, Inc. (Coalition) and are to be completed at the time of application and/or renewal. The Reimbursement Department and the Provider Contracts and Compliance Department work together to ensure these required forms are received and completed correctly, so Providers may receive timely reimbursement for child care services. Forms must be complete and submitted prior to receiving reimbursement for services provided to families receiving School Readiness scholarships.

Provider Rates for School Readiness Contract Providers

Reimbursement for School Readiness services will be based on a proposed rate per child/per day, but will not exceed the maximum Coalition approved rate or the Provider's current published rate schedule for the general public, whichever is lower.

The reimbursement rate is based on the rates submitted in the Provider Profile in the [DEL Provider Portal](#). Published rates must be supported by the actual rate charged to the general public or full fee-paying families. It is the Provider's responsibility to collect the assigned copayments from the client and issue payment receipts. **Failure to collect copayments and issue itemized receipts is a Contract violation.**

The Coalition will pay up to the [maximum allowable rates for Pinellas County](#), minus the state-mandated assigned client copayment. Any differential between the Provider's general public rate and the approved Coalition Maximum reimbursement rate minus the assigned copayment is strictly a matter between the Provider and the client. If a Provider collects a differential, it must be fully disclosed at the beginning of the relationship when the child is enrolled in the individual client agreement with the child care site **and must be noted on all itemized parent payment receipts**. Please remember that assigned copayments need to be collected on a regular basis and parent payment receipts issued.

Reimbursement rates will be paid based on a child's care level and unit of care as defined by the Coalition's approved provider rate schedule. Please refer to the certified School Readiness contract for the site's approved reimbursement rate. **An SR Provider cannot receive reimbursement for a child prior to their first physical day of attendance nor can they receive reimbursement after the child's last physical day of attendance.**

Gold Seal Providers

Providers may receive up to 20% higher differential rate if they have obtained, and submitted their Gold Seal certificate and acknowledgement notice from the Department of Children and Families (i.e., APPLE, NAEYC, NAFCC, etc.) to the Coalition. The Provider's established general public rate must allow for any or all of the Gold Seal stipend amount in order for it to be reimbursed and the total daily rate cannot exceed the approved maximum allowed reimbursement rate for Pinellas County. The gold seal stipend is dependent on funding availability as [funder policy](#) allows, and as funding is available.

Special Needs Rates

A child with special needs is defined as a child who has been determined eligible as a child with a disability in accordance with [Chapter 6A-6, F.A.C.](#), and is participating in a program for children with disabilities provided by the school district or a child who has an individualized education plan (IEP) or family support plan (FSP).

A School Readiness Provider may be paid at a higher rate if caring for any school readiness child with special needs requiring additional care. To receive a special needs rate, a child care provider must submit a current copy of the child's IFSP/IEP, a completed Matrix (provided through ELC/DEL), and a list of the special needs services or accommodations it is providing for each child with special needs that goes above and beyond what is required by ADA law and, in addition to the routine school readiness services. A special needs rate may be negotiated up to 20% percent above the youngest care level stated on the Provider's child care license. but may not exceed the maximum infant care rate established by the Coalition. However, this rate shall not exceed the Providers private pay rate for infant care.

To receive a special needs rate, in addition to the base rate, the special needs rate must be requested by the Provider and approved by the Coalition. A special needs rate may be reimbursed for a school readiness child with a documented physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral condition that requires a higher level of care in the child care setting. The child's condition must be validated by a licensed health, mental health, education or social service professional other than the child's parent or person employed by the child care provider.

Holidays for School Readiness Contract Providers

In accordance with Coalition Policy, SR Providers may be reimbursed for up to twelve (12) chosen holidays per Contract year (July 1 – June 30)

The Provider's approved 12 reimbursable holidays will appear in the provider's certified School Readiness Contract (Exhibit 6). Providers should select all of their program's observed holidays and closure dates at the time they are updating their provider profile for the contract year for all dates between July 1 and June 30.

Changes to the approved holidays must be made via the provider's profile with the holiday changes made and the submission of a completed 20A form. This will allow the contract to be amended for the requested changes. This must be completed prior to the date of the holiday that a provider wants to change. Please allow time for the processing of change requests. *Per ELC policy, no changes can be made after the fact.*

Available Funding Groups for Licensed School Readiness Contracted Providers

BG1	BG5
BG3	BG8
BG3R	LOCAL
BG3W	

Procedures Submitting Attendance Rosters

Attendance rosters must be submitted through the Provider Portal and received by the Coalition on or before the day/date indicated each month. Please refer to the attendance due date specifically stated for each month in the attendance roster screen of the DEL Provider Portal.

Attendance rosters submitted late will be processed and paid in the next open payment cycle. No out of process reimbursements will be issued. It is the provider's responsibility to ensure the attendance is submitted by the due date.

Providers must submit all requests for payment (i.e. attendance rosters), payment discrepancies, overpayments, and underpayments within sixty (60) calendar days of receiving the payment detail reports available through the DEL Provider Portal attendance tab.

For more information, please refer to the user guide from the Division of Early Learning that is available on the provider's dashboard on the DEL Provider Portal.

Confirmation of Receipt of Enrollment/Attendance Certification Forms

When a provider submits the electronic attendance through the DEL Provider Portal, the status for each child submitted on the attendance will change to “⊕ SUB” in green next to each child's name. When the electronic attendance is processed by the Coalition staff, the status will change to “√ APP” for approved for each child being reimbursed. Providers can also confirm submission of their attendance electronically by looking for the attendance *submitted to Coalition on XX/XX/XXXX [DATE] by XXXXXXXX@XXXXX.com [EMAIL ADDRESS] message* that will appear in the top right hand corner of the attendance screen in the blue box. It is recommended that providers make a screen print of this message for their records. ***It is also suggested that providers check this status daily to make sure there have not been any rejected attendances sent back to the provider by Coalition staff.*** Attendance for children that have been rejected will have “⊖ REJ” in red next to their name. This means corrections are needed. If the provider has submitted their attendance rosters and does not see the confirmation message in the blue right-hand box, the provider should contact their reimbursement specialist immediately.

Please refer to the user guide for providers that is available on your provider dashboard of the DEL Provider Portal for more specific instructions or refer to the School Readiness Provider [Tip Sheet](#) that is available on the ELC website.

Provider Reimbursement Report

The Reimbursement Detail Report is available through the attendance tab of the DEL Provider Portal once the attendance has been processed and the payment period finalized. The Provider Reimbursement Report provides information

such as the child's name, the child's unique identifier number, the child's care level, the child's unit of care, the funding source, the number of days reimbursed, the provider's daily rate for each child, and the amount deducted for the client's assigned daily copayment. Providers need to review the Reimbursement Detail Report and report any discrepancies within sixty (60) calendar days from the date of reimbursement. Timely verification of the reimbursement information may avoid denial of payments for discrepancies. Payment questions or disputes should be reported as soon as possible to the assigned reimbursement staff. A Reimbursement Report [tip sheet](#) is on the Coalition Website.

Failure to comply with this timeline will result in delayed and/or denied reimbursement if a discrepancy is confirmed in a provider's monthly reimbursement.

Attendance Validations

In accordance with [Rule 6M-4.500](#), the Coalition must conduct monitoring activities to ensure the accuracy of payments of the monthly reimbursements. All School Readiness providers will be monitored at least once during each fiscal year. Providers may be monitored more frequently based on the DEL School Readiness Monitoring Tool guidelines. Assigned Coalition staff will review providers' attendance records and compare to the submitted sign-in/sign-out sheets on an annual basis for all School Readiness Providers.

Providers are required to submit their monthly sign-in/sign-out sheets to the DEL Provider Portal document library folder titled Monthly Sign in-out Sheet. Providers being monitored will have their submitted attendance compared to the sign-in/sign-out sheets submitted for each School Readiness child. Any discrepancies between the two will be adjusted regardless of whether the net amount is positive or negative. The Coalition has a fiduciary obligation to validate as many Providers' reimbursements as possible each contract year. As a reminder, Providers must retain original sign-in/sign-out sheets and attendance rosters for a minimum of five (5) years. Records must be retained onsite for a minimum of one (1) year. Coalition staff will monitor attendance records via onsite visits, records request/desk audit, or both. This request can be for one month or more at the Coalition's discretion. The Coalition can request documents up to five (5) years prior. **Upon termination of the SR Contract, the provider is contractually obligated to transfer all documentation for SR Children to the Coalition.**

Technical assistance is provided upon request and in conjunction with errors and payment adjustments.

Evidence of false or misleading documentation, action, omission, or statements made by individual client/recipient or provider will result in the termination of the School Readiness Contract in accordance with the *Possible Provider-Client Fraud and/or Misrepresentation Policy* (ELCPC-50.1). Cases of suspected fraud will be reported to

the Florida Department of Financial Services Public Assistance Fraud Unit and the Division of Early Learning (DEL) as required by DEL.

Sign In/Out Sheets

All providers serving School Readiness children must maintain a daily Sign-in/Sign-out sheet for each child in their care. The monthly sign-in/sign-out sheets are to be uploaded to the DEL Provider Portal document library folder titled Monthly Sign in-out Sheet. These must be uploaded at the same time that the attendance roster is completed in order to avoid a delay in provider reimbursement. The Sign-in/Sign-out sheet must include the site's name, child's name as per the child's eligibility documentation, the month, the day of the week and the date, the time the child entered the program and the time (with AM or PM), the child left care for the day, and the client's **authorized signature** verifying the information for each day is correct. The provider must ensure that the client signs the Sign-in/Sign-out sheet daily to verify the attendance is correct as shown. Providers will not be reimbursed for children whose attendance cannot be verified by Sign-in/Sign-out sheets. There must be a provider signature and a signature date at the bottom of the sign-in/sign-out sheet, which attests that the information is true and accurate. Please contact your designated SR Contract Specialist for assistance with any questions or concerns regarding the attendance monitoring process and sign-in/sign-out sheet requirements.

SCHOOL READINESS RESOURCES

Early Learning Coalition Community Trainings, Professional Development Initiatives, and Supports

ELC's Community Trainings:

The Professional Development department's main goal is to bring trainings into the community that will benefit the Early Learning Practitioner and the children in their care. Professional Development brings new information into the community providing early learning practitioners the latest information on what makes children successful in their programs.

Trainings are categorized into Core Knowledge Areas. Core Knowledge is defined as the specific knowledge, competencies, and characteristics needed by early care and education practitioners to work effectively with young children and their families. Each subject area describes the knowledge and skills that practitioners need in order to work with children birth through age five (5) and their families. These areas include:

- Health, Safety, and Nutrition
- Child Development and Learning
- Building Family and Community Relationships
- Teaching and Learning Environments and Interactions

- Curriculum
- Observing, Documenting, Screening, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Their Families
- Professionalism

Training and Coaching (Outcomes Driven Training (ODT) :

The Early Learning Coalition offers opportunities for early learning educators to become proficient in multiple topics in the field of early childhood education. This type of training model includes multiple training nights and coaching visits in-between to ensure the concepts presented in the trainings are transferred and implemented in the classrooms. Coalition Specialists develop goals with teachers and help them reach those goals through continued on-site and telephone support, as well as linking them to other resources. They also offer technical assistance and mentor early educators to address issues such as challenging behaviors, social emotional competency, literacy, and overall quality programming.

Early Care and Education Conference:

This conference is held every year in January and has multiple training tracks (Infant/Toddler, Director, Inclusion, and Preschool)

Trainings offered through the Early Learning Coalition, the Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Children and Families (DCF), as well as other local agencies are found on the Early Learning Coalition [website](#).

Professional Development Initiatives:

Connecting the Dots (Child Assessment Initiative):

The Coalition offers support and technical assistance for early learning educators to access the proper assessment tools and resources for the children in their classrooms or home programs.

Teaching Strategies Gold:

As an online assessment, Teaching Strategies GOLD is a tool that is used by Early Learning Coalitions all throughout the state to assess children in School Readiness Programs. This tool allows providers to complete pre and post assessments online and have access to various reports on results for individual children, groups, and areas identified as concerns. The program also allows providers to access ideas and activities for lesson plans as part of intentional planning and developing curriculum. Trained Specialists at the Coalition can offer training or can provide onsite technical support to providers in their own centers or homes. Reports can be generated by the ELC for the provider and technical assistance and support is offered.

Building a Bridge (Family Engagement Initiative):

This initiative is designed to increase quality family engagement events offered by the providers and promote quality relationships between families and providers. Training and coaching support will be provided to ensure quality family engagement is increased.

Quest Leadership Initiative:

This initiative is designed to equip directors and assistant directors with strategies to improve staff's instructional quality while also building community with their peers. (Instructional Leadership) The preschool staff is able to pursue a Preschool Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) and receive coaching support to ensure training concepts are transferred into the classroom and all CDA requirements are met.

Right from the Start (Infant Toddler Initiatives):

The Infant/Toddler Program is a quality initiative of the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas, Inc. The program has been in place since 1999, and is staffed by a full-time Infant/Toddler Specialist. Recognizing the importance of the first three years of life, the Infant/Toddler program is committed to enhancing the professional development of infant and toddler teachers and improving the quality of care in infant and toddler programs. Right from the Start Initiative is twofold, including the Infant/Toddler Professional Development and the Infant Capacity /Building.

Infant Toddler Professional Development:

This initiative will assist Infant/Toddler teachers to obtain certification through Quest or a higher education program specifically in Infant/Toddler care. Infant/toddler teachers will also have ongoing support from the Infant Toddler Specialist through, coaching, and technical assistance.

Quest:

Quest is a CDA Gold Standard training program that prepares participants for their National CDA with Infant-Toddler Endorsement. The core program consists of 80 clock hours that encompasses the entire CDA preparation process and specifically meets the Eight CDA Subject Areas. This includes face-to-face training and on-the-job training/coaching. An additional 40 hours are available for students, as needed, to complete the 120-hour training requirement for the National CDA.

Infant Capacity /Building:

This initiative will support the opening of high-quality infant rooms in existing centers that are currently licensed for infant care. The centers will receive ongoing support from the Infant Toddler Specialist including teacher education (Infant/Toddler Professional Development Initiative), technical assistance, and stipends for classroom for equipment/materials.

Infant Toddler Technical Assistance:

The Infant/Toddler staff are available by phone or onsite for individualized consultation to address concerns or questions providers may have regarding the care of infants and toddlers. Some topics they can assist with include how infants and toddlers learn, developing language skills, guidance, and discipline, working with families, understanding cultural differences, room arrangement, setting up the environment, appropriate learning activities, health and safety concerns, and more.

Professional Development Supports:

Technical Assistance

The Coalition offers Technical Assistance to help Providers reach their curriculum and quality goals. Technical assistance is available upon request to any School Readiness Provider to help improve home/classroom curriculum and quality. This can take many forms i.e.: (templates, samples, coaching, email, and telephone conversation).

Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards

The *Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards* describe skills typically demonstrated by children at the end of the respective year. These standards are grouped around areas of development including:

- Physical Development
- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Language and Communication
- Cognitive Development and General Knowledge



The standards are most helpful when used to optimize the daily experiences of children. Training on the Education Standards is available through the Early Learning Coalition.

For training opportunities, visit www.elcpinellas.org and <https://training01-dcf.myflorida.com/studentsite/admin/login.jsf>

Did You Know?

The Florida Department of Education (DOE) has defined curricula as written materials that:

- Can be reproduced.
- Address the use of materials, scheduling, arranging the environment, and interaction between children and adults.
- Includes more than activity suggestions and theory.
- Aligns with the Florida Education Standards.

Screening and Intervention Services

Service Overview

All children in Pinellas County who are enrolled in the School Readiness Program through the Coalition are screened upon enrollment and annually during their re-determination period, using an Ages and Stages Questionnaire-3 (ASQ-3) and Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social/Emotional (ASQ-SE).



The Screening and Intervention Services Department receives and interprets screenings, and provides intervention or referrals within the community as needed. Those who score a result indicating the need for some kind of intervention may be considered for Supportive Intervention Services. These services include **Developmental or Behavior Specialist Services**, along with referrals to other services in the community; i.e., *FDLRS, Early Steps, mental health services, other therapeutic or behavior support services, etc.* In addition, parents and providers are given pertinent information concerning child development, behavior, inclusive practices, and other topics of interest.

If a child is referred internally for Supportive Intervention Services, a specialist will visit the early learning educator to observe the child and gather information to determine which service to provide:

1. An onsite TA Plan to provide the individual teacher with short-term technical assistance and coaching on specific areas of concern.
2. An individual Child Plan to provide 1:1 services to the identified child, to overcome developmental delays and reach milestones or address specific behavior challenges in the classroom.
3. A Provider Plan to provide the teacher or entire site with more intensive technical assistance and coaching on how to implement new teaching strategies, use materials, and address behavior challenges using the Positive Behavior Support Model, ABA techniques, and Conscious Discipline.
4. An Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) created by the specialist based on the child's needs, for the classroom teacher to implement for 8 weeks with continued support and guidance from the specialist.
5. Offer Developmental Activities and/or Refer the child for other services.

**Services are provided based on need (of the child AND the early learning educator) and can last up to 4 months for Developmental concerns and up to 2 months intensive + 2 months consultation services with an ILP for Behavioral concerns. At any time

during the service, a child can be referred for other services, or stepped down to an ILP.**

Inclusion Specialist - Warmline

Overview

Each regional Warmline provides assistance and consultation to child care centers and family child care homes regarding health, developmental delays, disabilities, and special needs issues of the children they are serving. The Regional Warmline Inclusion Specialist provides onsite technical assistance, when requested, to assist child centers and family day care homes with inquiries regarding:

- Curriculum issues
- Strategies for Managing Behavior
- Child Development Concerns
- Health
- Environmental Adaptations
- Laws and Regulations (i.e. The Americans with Disabilities Act)



The Warmline

The Warmline's Inclusion Specialist is available for phone consultation (727 545-7536) or onsite, as needed, for screening, observation, staff conferences, community resource referral information, room and furniture adaptation, curriculum adaptations, IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) & ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), and as a resource to help you to communicate with families.

Inclusion Library

There are a variety of videos, resources and print materials available, which can be obtained by contacting the Inclusion Specialist through the Warmline.

Community Screening

With the help of many community partners, we provide additional comprehensive developmental screenings free of charge for children ages four (4) months to five (5) years. The event is open to all families that live in Pinellas County and our goal is to reach children who are not in child care, or do not receive annual developmental screenings through their child care providers.

Children are screened for the following health and developmental issues:

- Vision
- Hearing

- Speech/Language
- Cognitive Development
- Fine and Gross Motor Development
- Social Emotional Development

Parents have the opportunity to consult with therapists and specialists about any concerns they may have. After the screening, families receive an exit interview where the results are discussed. If a concern is identified that requires further evaluation, the referral is processed at that time.

Community Screenings are held monthly, throughout the county, and can be scheduled through the Warmline. Parents should call at least one month prior to the screening to allow for the time it takes to do the intake, schedule the appointment, and to receive and fill out the paperwork necessary prior to the screening. A screening takes two to three hours to complete.

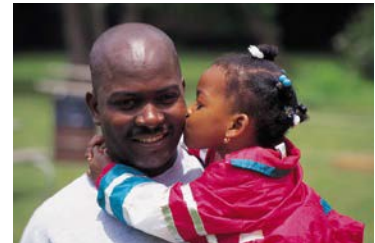
Screenings take place at three locations throughout the county:

- Clearwater
- St. Petersburg
- Tarpon Springs

Parent Involvement

Providers are expected to demonstrate that they are involving parents as their child's first teacher and supporting family education. Suggestions for meeting these criteria include:

- Parent education bulletin board
- Regular parent newsletters with suggested activities to do at home with the children and why the activities are important
- Parent meetings where school policies are discussed
- Parenting education meetings/activities
- Information available for parents on child development issues
- Information available for parents on adult educational opportunities in the community
- Regular meetings with parents to discuss the ongoing monitoring of their child's progress through the Provider's curriculum
- Specialized intervention services for children in SR programs in coordination with parents and the child's provider
- Referral services for children in need of additional evaluation or other family services



SERVICES FOR FAMILIES

School Readiness Scholarships

Children under Protective Services or receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), from birth up to 13 years of age are eligible for School Readiness (SR) funding. Economically disadvantaged children from birth up to 13 years of age are also eligible for School Readiness funding.

If a family meets the following eligibility criteria, they may qualify for child care funding either through a referring agency or by applying to our wait list.

- Parents or guardians who receive cash assistance for the family or for their relative children
- At risk children under Protective Services or in foster care – regardless of income
- Children living in an economically disadvantaged family where a parent/guardian works, attends school, or completes a combination of both work and school that totals at least 20 hours per week (combination of 40 hours per week for two-parent households).

Wait List

Based upon funding priorities, families not immediately eligible for care must apply to the wait list. In order to be eligible for the wait list, families must be:

1. employed at least 20 hours per week (combination of 40 hours per week for two-parent households), or
2. attending a technical/vocational school at least 20 hours per week, or
3. attending 12 credit hours at an accredited college/university or
4. employed and attending school for a combination of 20 hours per week.

Families can apply for the wait list on the [Family Portal](#). Families **must** update their wait list status with the Coalition every six (6) months. Failure by the parent/guardian to keep their information up to date results in termination from the wait list. Unborn children or children who are receiving school readiness funding cannot be on the waitlist.

Providers should always report to ELC any changes of which they are aware regarding parents of children in their care. Parents will be required to provide subsequent documentation based on the provider report of changes. Failure to report may result in loss of care, non-payment for care days, and termination of the child's scholarship. If you are uncertain about a family, please call ELC to verify their eligibility status.

Parents may be contacted at random during their eligibility period to ensure they:

- are still employed
- are employed by the same employer
- have no increase in income

- are still attending school
- have no changes in marital status
- have no changes to income such as Child Support or Social Security benefits

Payment certificates will appear in the DEL Provider Portal of all eligible and approved children. Families can also access a copy of the payment certificate in their Family Portal account. Ensure that all families sign the payment certificates located in their accounts in order to properly view the scholarship details and guarantee payments. Please contact ELC at (727) 400-4411 if a parent shows up and you have no paperwork. **Care provided to children who are not funded by the ELC will not be paid. The Coalition does not authorize back payments.**

ELIGIBILITY PRIORITIES

New Placements

Referral/Non-Waitlist Priority Service Categories

Non-Waitlist Priority	Eligibility Category
1	At Risk of Welfare Dependency
	A child younger than 13 years of age from a family that includes a parent who is receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and subject to the federal work requirements.
2	Children under 9 years of age At-Risk - Diversion At-Risk - Homeless At-Risk - Domestic Violence At Risk - Protective Services At Risk - Foster Care At Risk - Out of Home Placement At-Risk - Relative Care Giver At-Risk - Protective Investigations

Waitlist Priority Service Categories

Waitlist Priority	Eligibility Category
3	Children 9 to 13 years of age At-Risk - Diversion At-Risk - Homeless At-Risk - Domestic Violence At-Risk - Protective Services At-Risk - Foster Care At-Risk - Out of Home Placement At-Risk - Relative Care Giver At-Risk - Protective Investigations
4A	Economically Disadvantaged Children Ages birth to 5 prior to kindergarten eligibility.
4B	Economically Disadvantaged TANF Child Only Ages birth to 5 prior to kindergarten eligibility.
	Contingent upon the availability of funds, priority within Priority 4 will be given to eligible families participating in: VPK Wrap Teen Parent Clearwater Family Literacy Camelot Independent Living Program (ILP) or Ready for Life JWB Family Services Initiative- PEMHS System Navigation (Limit 10)
5	Transitional Child Care (TCC) or Education/Training TCC/TEd) Ages birth to 5 prior to kindergarten eligibility.
5 continued	Economically Disadvantaged Income Eligible Children Ages 5 (kindergarten eligible) to younger than 13 years.
5 continued	Economically Disadvantaged TANF Child Only Ages 5 (kindergarten eligible) to younger than 13 years.
	Contingent upon the availability of funds, priority within Priority 5 will be given to eligible families participating in: Teen Parent Clearwater Family Literacy Camelot Independent Living Program (ILP) or Ready for Life JWB Family Services Initiative- PEMHS System Navigation

6	Transitional Child Care (TCC) or Education/Training TCC/TEd Ages 5 (kindergarten eligible) to younger than 13 years.
7	Children 3 years to eligible for admission to kindergarten who have been determined eligible as a student with a disability, has a current IEP with a Florida school district.
8	Children eligible under Priority 1-4 but who are also enrolled concurrently in Head Start and Voluntary Prekindergarten

Recertification

Families receiving a child care scholarship are required to recertify regularly by submitting an online recertification application in their Family Portal account. Families will be notified by email 45 days prior to their recertification deadline and are encouraged to complete the online application as soon as possible. Be advised that incomplete submissions will delay the recertification. Failure to submit a complete application in a timely manner [defined as 10 (ten) calendar days prior to the redetermination date] may result in termination and private pay days for the family. The parent is responsible for total payment of child care services on private pay days. **The provider must document this in writing as a policy of the program (center/home) and provide it to the parent upon registration.**

Upon completion of the recertification, providers will be able to view the family's payment certificate in the DEL Provider Portal, including the funding group, assessed parent copayments, authorized hours of care (full time or part time) and next recertification date. (Note: eligibility end date can change.) Ensure that all families sign the payment certificates located in their accounts in order to properly view the recertification details and guarantee payments.

Both the parent and Provider are notified of child care funding terminations that may occur.

It is extremely important that families notify ELC of any changes within 10 (ten) days of the change. Providers can also report family changes to ELC (loss of job, school, move, etc.), however, parents will still be required to provide documentation regarding those changes. Unreported changes may result in a loss of child care funding.

Transfers

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure SR Child Transfer Request forms are completed and submitted to the Coalition at least 72 hours prior to changing providers. Once copayments have been verified through the transfer request form or current

verifiable receipts, a payment certificate will appear in the DEL Provider Portal. Ensure that all families sign the payment certificates located in their accounts in order to properly view the eligibility details and guarantee payments. Any attendance with a new provider prior to this form being issued will not be reimbursed. Providers should verify copayments are made before accepting a new child through a transfer process.

Parent Copayments

All parents/caregivers are assessed a copayment, also known as parent fees. In rare instances, a parent may have their fee waived for a temporary period. The ELC does not get involved in fees the Provider charges beyond the parent copayment. (For example, differential fees or field trip fees). Providers must issue receipts to parents clearly indicating the amount of parent copayments paid and the amount of other fees paid separately with care dates noted. *Best practice is to collect parent fees on Friday for the upcoming week.* Additionally, any payment plans or arrangements made with a parent that are different than what is assessed should be in writing and signed by both parties.

At Risk Children (Rilya Wilson Act)

Providers who care for children funded under the Rilya Wilson Act must report the first unexcused absence or seven consecutive absences to the Eckerd Connects RWA Hotline at 727-456-0600 (option 2). These children are indicated with billing group 1 (BG1) on paperwork and attendance sheets. A Rilya Wilson child is a child receiving services due to an abuse and neglect referral. Reporting at risk absences is extremely important for the safety of these children.

Enrollment Confirmations

All parents are required to sign a new payment certificate in their Family Portal account in order to transfer providers. ***Do not accept a new child into care without the certificate or notification from ELC staff***, or Providers will not be reimbursed for those days prior to the certificate being obtained.

Sign In/Out

All parents/caregivers (or anyone approved to drop-off/pick-up) MUST sign their child/ren in and out each day. They must sign using their legal name as well as the exact time (w/AM or PM) they are dropping off or picking up the child/ren. Failure to sign in and out could result in an adjustment to payments made to Providers for child care provided. Providers have the right to bill the parent for any days not covered by the ELC for not signing their child in and/or out, if this is stated in the program's attendance policy. However, the Coalition cannot hold the parent/caregiver responsible to pay these days – only if Providers have a contract in place prior to billing their parent copayment.

Child Care Terminations

Providers need to monitor their DEL Provider Portal to view when a family is due to recertify. This end date will also be located on the family's payment certificate. A phone call will be made to the provider if the family's eligibility terminates earlier than the date stated on the notice. Providers will not be able to mark attendance once a family's eligibility is terminated.

CCR&R (Child Care Resource & Referral)

Program Overview

The Early Learning Coalition maintains a database of all Pinellas County child care providers. For parents looking for child care in Pinellas County, The Early Learning Coalition offers free, unbiased, personalized information on child care programs and providers in the area. Families who contact us for provider information are given child care listings customized to the criteria they submit. Services include:

- A customized search for child care based on criteria selected such as location, schedule, curriculum, environment, special needs, and more
- Information on rates, fees, hours, and credentials of providers
- Information regarding financial assistance for child care programs
- Educational materials and support for parents with questions on early childhood development
- Tips on identifying quality child care
- Information provided on other community resources such as clothing, food, counseling, etc.

Customized child care search results are requested through our online form, by calling us, or by visiting our office. Face-to-face consultation is available, but not required for this service. To see the criteria from which families select, please view our [Child Care Referral Request](#) form online.

Families are educated on identifying quality within a program and encouraged to screen providers by phone, drop-in unannounced, and research licensing reports. Once families receive the child care listings, it is up to them to make this important personal decision. They are encouraged to monitor for quality even after their child has been placed in a program.

The information we circulate to families comes directly from information that providers report to us. Therefore, it is essential that providers notify us when there are changes to their programs.

Update Your Provider Information with Us

The provider information in our resource and referral database is solely self-reported. This means that the information we make available to families is only as good as the information Providers give us.

SR Providers are required to update their entire profile once annually; however, changes can occur within a program at any time. It is extremely important that the information given is accurate so that it can reflect what the program has to offer the families in Pinellas County. This is very important for the families that are searching for child care options in the community. CCR&R strives to inform the community of its services as well as inform parents of available resources.

Providers have the right to request that their name not be referred to families searching for child care in Pinellas County. Family Child Care Home Providers may also indicate they do not wish to have their address print out on the child care listings.

Note: Provider marketing of any kind at our office, inside or outside, is prohibited.

Annual Provider Update (DEL Provider Profile)

This update is required of all SR providers on an annual basis by DEL and requested of all other providers in Pinellas County. Careful consideration should be given to the responses, as this is what is used for provider profiles in the DEL portal. The accuracy of this information is critical as it is also used to populate the Provider's Contract and generate provider listings. Please review thoroughly and ensure the Coalition receives notification if there are changes in:

- Hours/Schedule
- Rates
- Fees
- Location
- Phone/Fax Number
- Contact Email Address
- Staff Credentials
- Transportation services

Current copies of the following documents may also be requested by the Coalition:

1. A copy of your license/registration/exemption letter - each time it is renewed or changed
2. Copies of any accreditation certificates (if applicable) - each time it is renewed or changed
3. Gold Seal certificate (if applicable) - each time it is renewed or changed

To Submit Provider Information Changes

1. Log into the DEL provider portal and go to the current program year profile
2. Make necessary changes/updates – upload documents to the documents tab of the profile (if applicable)
3. Submit for approval
4. Complete the contract amendment (if applicable) initiated by the Contract Specialist

Please NOTE: Some of the requested changes require a written notification prior to the change – for example, a Provider Private Rate change for all or any age group requires a 14 day written notice. The submission of the profile for the change is considered a written notice and rate changes would be effective 14 days after the submission. As always, if you have any questions, please connect with the Contract Specialist.

RESOURCES

Additional Websites

<https://providerservices.floridaearlylearning.com/Account/Login>

<http://elcpinellas.net/downloads>

Who do I Contact?

<http://elcpinellas.net/elc-staff>

