



School Readiness Attendance Process, Monitoring Process, Reimbursement and Adjustment Process Technical Assistance and Information for Providers

- References:** Chapter 1002.84, Florida Statute Statewide School Readiness Provider Contract, Form OEL-SR 20, 6M-4.500 Child Attendance and Provider Reimbursements, F.A.C. Coalition Provider Monitoring Plan; ELCPC-61.3.5 School Readiness Attendance Monitoring Policy
- Purpose:** To establish procedures for School Readiness Attendance documentation and to ensure that the Coalition complies with its contractual requirement to conduct monitoring activities to validate the accuracy of payments of the monthly reimbursement claims for the School Readiness Program
- Background:** The Statewide School Readiness Provider Contract, Form OEL-SR 20 states: “Provider agrees to maintain daily attendance documentation, including a documented “sign in sign out” process in accordance with Rule 6M-4.500(1) F.A.C. which accurately documents attendance and absences.”

Sign in Sign out Sheets

PROVIDER agrees to maintain daily attendance documentation, including a documented “sign in sign out” sheet process that meets Rule 6M and that is implemented and maintained by the PROVIDER, and which accurately documents attendance and absences for every enrolled child funded through the Coalition. PROVIDER agrees to retain the attendance documentation in accordance with COALITION's records retention requirement established in accordance with s. 1002.84(10), F.S. and as stated in the Statewide contract.

It is very important that providers know the retention of records requirements as 5 years of records is required to be submitted to the Coalition if a provider's contract is terminated for any reason.

This Coalition policy and procedure is inclusive to all caregiver settings that are receiving School Readiness (SR) funding. These requirements also apply to any children funded through local dollars such as Pre-K All Day or SR Plus. The Department of Education Teen Parenting Program is excluded; however, providers may choose to have these clients follow these requirements in order to become accustomed to these requirements if they were eligible to roll into SR or other local funding during the summer or after they graduate.

Authorized Signature

Authorized signature is the **authentic signature** of the client of record whether the parent, the guardian or other authorized person at least 16 years of age that **is not the childcare provider**. An authorized signature may only include a provider designee for children who are transported by the provider to or from school from the provider's child care site. **The signature must be written in ink, as pencil is not allowed.** An authorized signature may also be in the form of an electronic attendance-tracking system as long as it meets Rule 6M and is maintained at the provider site to validate the attendance data.



Technical Information for SR Providers

The Coalition will conduct monitoring activities designed to ensure the accuracy of payments of the monthly reimbursement processing. Coalition staff will provide individual provider technical assistance as needed or as requested by the provider. Written resources via email may be sent to the provider to inform the provider of any non-compliance with any of the processes or procedures written in this technical assistance document.

Daily attendance documentation shall be maintained by each school readiness provider based on the terms of the Statewide School Readiness Provider Contract, specified in Rule 6M-4.610, F.A.C.. The provider must record daily child attendance using a paper sign in sign out sheet log or electronic attendance tracking system that is maintained at the provider site to validate the attendance data. For electronic attendance systems, the provider must backup records on a regular basis to safeguard against loss.

The sign in sign out forms will vary by provider but must contain the following information:

- Child care provider's site name preferably located at the top of the sign in sign out sheet as well as the month and year that the sign in sign out sheet is for.
- Child's first and last name must be included and must be the child's name that is on the electronic attendance in the Provider Portal system.
- Time in and time out must be actual time in and time out and not a rounded time in or time out and must include the AM and PM designation.
- Date including the year and every day of the month must be included on the sign in sign out sheet. For electronic sign in sign out sheet programs, please be sure to electronically mark the children absent when they are not in care. Skipped dates may lead to an error in the processing of the attendance accurately.
- An authorized signature that verifies each child's attendance or a unique identifier if the provider is using an electronic sign in sign out sheet system.
- A signature and the date of that signature must be included at the bottom of the sign in sign out sheet for the person at the child care site who verifies that the sign in sign out sheet is true and accurate. The sign in sign out sheet, the teacher roll if a child care center, the food program claim sheet, and the recorded attendance should always match exactly. There should never be any discrepancies between any of these documents.
- Children who attend on a before and after school type schedule must have an in and out time for the AM care and an in and out time for the PM care

Any changes made to the attendance documentation must be completed with a **strike-through, initialed, and dated by the client or the authorized individual who drops off and picks up the child**. The use of whiteout on any document submitted for attendance verification purposes is **NOT** allowed. Whiteout is completely prohibited and if used may cause that day to be non-reimbursable. Siblings must not be grouped together on one sign in sign out sheet; each child must be signed in and out separately on their own sign in sign out sheet.



SR providers are required to submit the sign in sign out sheets to the Coalition by uploading them to the OEL Provider Portal document library folder titled **Monthly Sign in out Sheet** each month for the previous month's service period. If a provider must fax the site's sign in sign out sheets, they can do so by faxing to 727-400-4472. **Sign in sign out sheets must be received by the same due date as the electronic attendance regardless of whether they are uploaded or faxed to the Coalition.** **The due date is designated in the attendance screen of the Provider Portal System.**

It is important that providers read the School Readiness Reimbursement Tip Sheet that is available on the Coalition website at www.elcpinellas.net to know in what order and in what format the sign in out sheets must be uploaded or faxed. Attendance processing is more efficient and therefore likely to be more accurate if providers follow this guidance.

Failure to submit both the required electronic attendance and the sign in sign out sheets by the due date noted in the system will result in a delay in the provider's monthly reimbursement, could lead to possible deductions in the provider's reimbursement due to discrepancies and or the termination of the provider's SR Contract.

- When processing the provider attendance, the Coalition staff will compare the submitted electronic attendance to the authorized signatures on the submitted sign in sign out sheets. This will ensure that the provider payments reflect actual attendance and will help to avoid overpayments and the possibility of adjustments.
- The Coalition will review and correct payment validation issues discovered during the course of processing the monthly attendance.
- The Coalition will adjust payments, as needed, because of attendance validation issues and non-compliance with attendance and monitoring requirements per Rule 6 M, the Statewide SR Contract, and other written Coalition policies regarding attendance and monitoring. .
- If extensive and/or serious discrepancies are found and there is a reasonable belief and supporting evidence that a provider knowingly or intentionally may have committed fraud or misrepresentation. The Coalition will take appropriate action, such as:
 - Referral of the matter and supporting evidence to the Division of Early Learning Inspector General's Office and the Department of Financial Services, Public Assistance Fraud Unit
 - Termination of contract/agreement
 - Refusing re-entry to any new or existing School Readiness or Voluntary Prekindergarten funded Programs as a program owner, stakeholder, officer, fiscal officer or director of a program
 - Denying further participation in new or existing School Readiness or Voluntary Prekindergarten Early Learning Programs as a program owner, stakeholder, officer, fiscal officer or director of a program
- Reimbursement staff will review the monthly sign in sign out sheets and compare them to the submitted monthly electronic attendance. This process is completed every month of the fiscal year barring any unforeseen Provider Portal system issues that may affect SR reimbursement processing and that



would lead to a delay in the timely delivery of provider SR reimbursement by the contractual deadline of the 20th of the month.

- Reimbursement staff will make necessary payment adjustments for children who do not have a corresponding signature in accordance with Rule 6M, Coalition established monitoring policies and standard audit requirements and practices.
- A reimbursement report will be available to the providers reflecting any adjustments that occurred during the processing of the electronic attendance. Providers should verify that their monthly reimbursement is accurate by reviewing the Reimbursement Detail reports each month. This report is available through the attendance tab in the Provider Portal. Any errors or discrepancies must be reported to the Coalition within 60 days of receipt of the reimbursement with the exception of the months May and June. The provider should submit a Monthly Adjustment Request Form by uploading it to the Provider Portal document library folder titled Monthly Adjustment Request. The details of the error should be explained on the form and any supporting documentation necessary to support the error should also be uploaded with the form.
- Providers must submit any Monthly Adjustment Request forms for errors with the May and June reimbursement by July 25th. This is due to the fiscal year ending on June 30th. The Monthly Adjustment Request forms that are received after the July 25th deadline will **NOT** be processed. This requirement would also apply to the late submission of any un-submitted attendance for any prior months' attendance from July through June of the fiscal year. A provider who does not meet the July 25th submission deadline for adjustment requests or who does not submit any un-submitted attendance by the July 25th submission deadline will forego receiving the adjustment and the reimbursement dollars forever.