



Early Learning Performance Funding Project 2017-18 Overview | July 10, 2017

The 2014 Florida Legislature created the Early Learning Performance Funding Pilot Project in the 2014-15 General Appropriations Act and directed the Office of Early Learning to organize a workgroup of early learning stakeholders who would provide input to OEL on determining the details. Each year since then, the Florida Legislature has reauthorized the project, which is no longer a pilot.

Approximately 1,000 providers and their instructors will have an opportunity to receive additional funding for improving school readiness program outcomes. The method for allocating funds to early learning coalitions must include

- A funding differential incentive for high-need populations.
- A professional development system to significantly improve instructor quality.
- A research-based observational system to significantly improve instructor interactions with children.

Providers will be assigned to one of five tiers by using a Classroom Assessment and Scoring System® (CLASS) composite score. The score is determined by averaging the CLASS observation dimension scores together from each classroom. Once assigned to tiers, providers will choose one continuous quality improvement strategy from a menu of options. (See below.)

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT (CQI) STRATEGY OPTIONS

PD Progress

- Making progress in completing a certificate, credential or degree in early childhood education (Those with an associate degree or higher are exempt.)
- OEL will define minimum levels of progress in Program Guidance.

MMCI

- 20 hours for *PreK Making the Most of CLASSroom Interactions* training
- 24 hours for *Infant/Toddler Making the Most of CLASSroom Interactions* training

Early Learning Florida

- Two courses

Locally selected IACET-approved training

- Minimum of 20 hours related to early learning
- Must be approved by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training or OEL

Certified Coaching

- Minimum of 20 hours of coaching per classroom using a certified coaching model such as Early Learning Florida Certified Coaching Model

The following exceptions apply to the tiers:

Tier 1 providers must first complete the following strategies before choosing from the CQI menu (may be done in more than one year).

- A two-hour Introduction to CLASS online module + 20 hours of *Making the Most of CLASSroom Interactions* training.
- Two Early Learning Florida courses.

Tier 2 providers must first complete the following strategies before choosing from the CQI menu (may be done in more than one year).

- A two-hour Introduction to CLASS online module + 20 hours of *Making the Most of CLASSroom Interactions* training.
- Two Early Learning Florida courses.

Tier 4 and 5 providers do not have to participate in a CQI strategy. However, if they choose to implement child assessments, they will receive an additional financial incentive.

Classroom Assessment and Scoring System

The project will use CLASS, an observation-based program assessment instrument that measures teacher-child interactions in five different domains (depending on the age level): emotional support, classroom organization, instructional support, engaged support for learning and responsive caregiving. CLASS has been validated in thousands of classrooms and is used to support research, monitoring, evaluating and professional development efforts nationwide. Each classroom will receive a CLASS observation to measure program outcomes.

High-Need Populations

Providers identified as serving in areas where at least 40 percent of the birth to 5 population are living at or below the federal poverty level are given additional consideration for priority participation.

Eligibility and Participant Requirements

Providers agreeing to participate will be assigned to one of the five tiers. Providers in each tier will complete a contract with their coalition that outlines expected benchmarks/deliverables. Coalitions will also complete a contract with OEL.

To be eligible to participate, **providers** must

- Have a minimum of 20 percent of their birth-5 enrollment made up of children in the School Readiness Program.
- Have all of the center/home/school's infant to prekindergarten classrooms agree to participate.
- Agree to have the evaluator conduct assessments.
- Agree to all of the benchmarks and to submitting information to OEL and the early learning coalition.
- Agree to have the director participate in all training.
- Agree to pay for instructors' access to selected CLASS training (estimated at \$75/instructor) or child subscriptions to an online assessment system (estimated around \$11 per child in school readiness), if applicable.

Award Timeline and Benchmarks

Payments to providers for completing benchmarks/deliverables successfully are based on the number of children receiving school readiness services at the center/home/school. They will receive an additional differential on top of the per-child reimbursement rate, calculated as follows:

- Tier 1: No additional differential (*If funding is available, a bonus is awarded at the end of the project to providers in Tier 1 that improved their teacher-child classroom interactions from fall to spring as evidenced by CLASS scores.*)
- Tier 2-5: Additional differential ranging from 3-12 percent determined by the tier.
- Tier 3-5: An additional differential is available for implementing child formative assessments.

How to Apply

Apply online at <https://earlylearningpfp.fldoe.org/Home/Welcome>.