

Frequently Asked Questions from the Early Learning Coalition of Seminole regarding COVID-19

Dear Providers:

The **Early Learning Coalition of Seminole** is closely monitoring information concerning the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak and its impact on families and child care providers we serve. We are committed to providing helpful information to answer questions you may have regarding VPK and/or School Readiness (SR) services. Here are a few:

****PLEASE NOTE:** All dates and answers are subject to review and revision every 15 days by the Department of Education and Office of Early Learning, due to the changing circumstances revolving around the pandemic.

1. Will additional absences, due to parents keeping their children at home, be paid while providers are open? Yes. Providers will be paid for these unanticipated absences beginning March 1 without additional documentation.

2. Will providers be reimbursed for absences (active enrollments) during temporary closures? Yes. Providers will be reimbursed for current/active enrollments during temporary closures without additional documentation regardless of the duration of the closure.

3. Are child assessments and developmental screenings of SR children still required? No. These screenings have been cancelled for the remainder of the 2019-20 program year.

4. Are the VPK assessments required to be administered? No. These screenings have been cancelled for the remainder of the 2019-20 program year

5. Are the 2019-20 program assessments (CLASS) for SR providers still required to be completed by June 30, 2020 for contracting for the 2020-21 contract year? No. The deadline for completing program assessments will be extended.

6. Are the Quality Improvement plans (QIPs) required for SR providers still required to be completed in 12 months? No. The timelines for these will be extended.

7. Are the applications for Good Cause Exemption available to VPK providers on probation for three years (POP3) still required to be completed by March 23, 2020? No. The timeline for these is extended to April 15th.

8. Will coalitions' review of SR families' eligibility and their redetermination of eligibility continue? No. ALL terminations of SR families' eligibility have been suspended effective March 15th. Redeterminations of eligibility is extended an additional 60 days. No families should be removed from the SR program.

9. Are providers still required to collect parent copayments for SR families? No. Providers are not to collect SR parent copayments and will be reimbursed for these copayments beginning April 1.

10. The State of Florida just issued an Emergency Stay at Home Order through April 30, 2020. Can I still provide child care? Yes, if you meet the following criteria. "Childcare facilities providing services that enable employees exempted in this Order to work as permitted. To the extent possible, childcare facilities should operate under the following mandatory conditions: 1. Childcare must be carried out in stable groups of 10 or fewer (inclusive of childcare providers for the group). 2. Children and child care providers shall not change from one group to another. 3. If more than one group of children is cared for at one facility, each group shall be in a separate room. Groups shall not mix or interact with each other."

11. I am struggling to financially keep my child care program open. Are there any financial supports available? Yes. The federal government has included support for small businesses through the CARES Act Small Business Interruption Loan Program <https://www.sbc.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/guide-to-the-cares-act>. Contact your local bank for assistance with applying for this important loan that offers loan forgiveness options.

12. Does a child enrolled under the Rilya Wilson Act need to be in child care?

Unless the child or someone in the household has a compromised immune system or they have flu-like symptoms and they have been advised to remain home or self-quarantine, they should continue to comply with the Rilya Wilson Act. If child care program or school closes down, they will be unable to comply with the Rilya Wilson Act for the period of time that they are closed. This should be considered an excused reason for the violation of the Rilya Wilson Act."