



**Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida, Inc.**

<b>Subject:</b> Single Point of Entry and Unified Waiting List For School Readiness and VPK Programs		
<b>Policy #:</b> ELCSWF-SR-0003A-08	<b>Child Eligibility</b>	<b>Reference #</b> OEL-SR-404
<b>Approval:</b> Updated 9/27/08	<b>Effective Date:</b> 9/27/08	<b>Replaces (policy # and date):</b> ELCSWF-SR-0003-05 approved March 17, 2005, 7-26-06

- I. **PURPOSE:** To establish a policy for a single point of entry for prospective families wishing to apply for early learning services, and the waiting list for services.
- II. **REVIEW HISTORY:** This policy replaces any previous written or verbal directives issued in any of the four counties.
- III. **CONTACT:** Chief Executive Officer
- IV. **PERSONS AFFECTED:** Resource & Referral, Eligibility Staff; VPK staff and individuals wishing to apply for early learning services.
- V. **POLICY:** This policy sets the process in which non-referral individuals apply for early learning services and the determination for placement on the unified waiting list.
- VI. **RATIONALE:** The availability of funding often limits the number of children who can be served at any given time.
- VII. **CROSS REFERENCES:** 45CFR98, Chapter 411.01 (5) (c), Florida Statutes, Rule 60BB-4.200 and 60BB-4.300, Florida Administrative Code, Chapter 1002.51-79, Florida Statutes and Rule 60BB-8, FAC.
- VIII. **DEFINITIONS:**

“AWI” refers to the Agency for Workforce Innovation.

“Contractor” refers to “Community Coordinated Care for Children (4C).the agency under contract with the Coalition to carry out the daily responsibilities for the School Readiness program.

“Coalition” refers to “Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida, Inc. (ELC-SWF), a coalition created under s 411.01, F.S. and serving Collier, Hendry, Glades and Lee counties.

“Single Point of Entry” means an integrated information system that allows a parent to apply for early learning services for his or her child. The parent may apply in person, by telephone, or through an internet website. The internet website uses a unified waiting list to track eligible children waiting for enrollment in the early learning programs.

“Unified Waiting List” means the statewide computer program designed to track the eligible children waiting for enrollment in the school readiness program.

X. **PROCEDURES:**

**A. General**

1. All individuals wishing to receive early learning coalition child care services may apply in person, by telephone or through the internet website provided by the Agency for Workforce Innovation, Office of Early Learning currently at <https://spe.schoolreadiness.org/pe/>.
2. To assist parents, the contracted central agencies and the Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida are expected to provide a link to the single point of entry from their local websites.
3. All potentially eligible applicants will be entered into the Unified Waiting List (UWL) computer program, and update information as appropriate.
4. Families will be removed from the UWL system upon authorization for placement.
5. Clients who are referred for services either through the Work Force Development Board, Department of Children and Families or their contracted providers, are not subject to the waiting list.
6. Eligible clients referred from these agencies must be promptly served upon receipt of a completed referral form.

**B. Process**

7. An application for services must be completed to determine eligibility for early learning services. Parents may apply in person, or online, for School Readiness and/or Voluntary Prekindergarten services.
  - a. If applicants apply through the internet website single point of entry, they are to be contacted by staff within 2 business days for an interview and explanation of services.
  - b. Individual applicants who apply in person or by telephone will be promptly interviewed and information entered into the Single Point of Entry website and the EFS system, as appropriate.
8. Staff are expected to conduct a preliminary screening of every applicant, to determine if they are eligible for the service requested.

- a. For school readiness services, the determination for eligibility must take into account the family's statement of income, family size, type of service requested, whether the child or parent is disabled, their eligibility priority and the need for care. An unborn child may not be included in the family size.
  - b. If potential eligibility is determined for school readiness services, the applicant and the identified children are placed on the waiting list with the date of their application
  - c. For VPK services, eligibility is based on the child's age and the county of residence. Families eligible for the VPK program will be processed and served once all information has been received and validated. Eligible VPK families are not subject to a waiting list; however approval is generally made prior to the initiation of classes
9. Following the preliminary screening, the applicant is notified, either orally or in writing, whether they appear to be eligible. Applicants deemed to be ineligible for services will be advised of the reason for the ineligibility. Applicants and children may also be referred to other services which may be appropriate for their needs.
  10. The applicant must be informed that to maintain their place on the waiting list, they must apprise the Coalition or Contractor of any changes to their address, telephone number or employment.
  11. All potentially eligible children are placed on the wait list under the child's legal name, age, and probable eligibility category. Unborn children are not eligible to be placed on the waiting list.
  12. The wait list for each county must be reviewed regularly by staff to ensure there are no duplicate entries of names and the number of waiting families is accurate.
  13. Enrollment and payment for child care services is contingent on availability of funding and placement prioritization.
  14. Priority selection of families from the waitlist is based on the criteria outlined in Coalition Policy #ELCSWF-SR0002A-06 (see Chapter 1 – General Requirements.)

### **Managing the Waitlist**

15. When funding becomes available, the families on the wait list are contacted and called in for an interview. Priorities 1 and 2 must be exhausted before proceeding further. The wait list is then evaluated to determine who falls within categories 4 and 5. Each family is ranked depending on their eligibility category and they are contacted in order.
16. Once a child has been approved to receive School Readiness services, their name maybe removed from the waiting list.

17. On or about the first of each month, a report must be run of all prospective applicants who have applied from each of the four counties on the Unified Waitlist website.
18. Staff must validate the family's continued eligibility a minimum of every six (6) months from the date of the initial application.
19. At the six month re-validation, the parent, guardian or responsible adult is to be contacted. At least three attempts must be made to contact the parent to update information. Notification should include notification by:
  - A letter to their home
  - A telephone call to their home (leaving a message if warranted) and;
  - A telephone call to place of employment (leaving a message if needed).

All contacts must be documented with the type of contact made, when the contact was made, who they spoke to and what number was called.
20. The parent, guardian or responsible person will be given at least 10 business days to respond and must be notified that failure to timely respond will result in removal of their family from the waiting list.
21. Staff will review the updated information provided and determine the family's continued eligibility for the waiting list. If the family is no longer eligible, or the need no longer exists, their name will be removed from the Unified Waitlist system.
22. In the event the three attempts to contact the parent, guardian or responsible adult have been made and they fail to respond within the allotted timeframe, the family may be removed from the waiting list. Every effort must be made to contact a family before removing them from the waitlist.
23. Once a family has been removed from the wait list, any subsequent applications for services will be treated as an initial application. The family's prior position on the waiting list will not be reinstated.

IX. EXHIBITS: None