



Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida, Inc.

Subject: Eligibility and Enrollment for School Readiness Services		
Policy #: ELCSWF-SR0011-09	Category: Child Eligibility	Reference # OEL-SR-404
Approval: Revisions 1/21/09	Effective Date: January 21, 2009	Replaces (policy # and date): ELCSWF-SR0011-05 of May 1, 2005 ELCSWF-SR0011A-06, 9/26/07, 9/27/08

- I. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to establish a policy for individuals seeking to obtain school readiness services, and the criteria required for approval.
- 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:** Eligibility Staff; and Parents and Providers.
- V. **POLICY:** This policy sets the process in which parents may apply for school readiness services.
- VI. **RATIONALE:** To establish standardized policy and procedures for each eligibility category.
- VII. **CROSS REFERENCES:** 45CFR98, Federal Code, Chapter 411.01, F.S. Rule 60BB-4 FAC., Policy # ELC-SWF-SR0010-08 "Sliding Fee and Parent Co-Payments", Policy # ELC-SWF-SR-0006-08 "Children at Risk of Abuse, Neglect, Abandonment and Exploitation", Policy # ELCSWF-EL0013-08, Complaints and Grievance/Dispute Process, Policy # ELCSWF-EL0029-08 "Administrative Sanctions: Fraud and Misrepresentations, and Policy # ELCSWF-EL0015-06 "Appeals and Hearing".
- VIII. **DEFINITIONS:**

"At Risk" refers to children at risk of abuse, neglect abandonment and/or exploitation.

"Coalition" or "coalition" means an early learning coalition created under s. 411.01, FS.

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ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT**

“**DCF**” refers to the Florida Department of Children and Families, the state agency responsible for the licensing activities related of child care providers.

“**Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida, Inc. (ELC-SWF)**” means the coalition responsible for Collier, Hendry, Glades and Lee counties.

“**School Readiness**” refers to the School Readiness Act in Chapter 411.01.

“**Working Poor**” applies to families whose income does not exceed 150% of the federal poverty level.

X. **PROCEDURES:**

1. **General Requirements**

a.) The Coalition’s “Eligibility Policy and Procedures Manual for School Readiness” (ELCSWF-SR0011A-08), incorporated by reference and as amended thereafter, will be the guiding document for eligibility staff in conducting client interviews, obtaining information and determining eligibility.

b.) The referenced manual shall incorporate all requirements contained in Federal Regulations (45CFR98), Section 411.01, F.S. and Rule 60BB-4, Florida Administrative Code.

2. **Child Eligibility**

To be eligible for school readiness services, children must be:

- Age birth through 12 years of age;
- A U.S. citizen, or qualified (legal) alien(s)
- Residing in one of the counties served by the Coalition.

Note:

- School age children under the age of 19 years who have a documented physical or mental incapacity that deems them incapable of self care, or under court supervision by virtue of their incompetence, are also eligible for services.

3. **Purpose of Care**

All families must have a purpose for care consistent with Rule 60BB-4.100 (22) F.A.C. for each parent/guardian living in the same household of any child for whom funding is requested.

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ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT**

4. Parental Choice

All parents/guardians participating in the VPK or School Readiness programs will be given a full choice of programs and child care settings where their child can be placed. The Coalition sets forth Parental Choice obligations and responsibilities in Policy # ELCSWF-EL005A-08.

5. Resource and Referral Services

All new or prospective families must be directed to R&R services for assistance in the selection of child care providers. Coalition sets forth Parental Choice obligations and responsibilities in Policy # ELCSWF-EL007. See most updated version.

6. Priority Group

The Coalition set forth the priority for families who participate in the School Readiness Program. These priorities can be changed with the approval of the Coalition Board. See Policy # ELCSWF-SR0002A for the most updated version.

7. Wait List –

- a. The eligibility priorities are set by the ELC-SWF Coalition Board based on the needs of the community.
 - b. A waiting list of all eligible families must be maintained using the Unified Wait List. Parents may apply for School Readiness Services online via the Single Point of Entry or in person. See Policy #ELCSWF-SR-0003 for most updated version.
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