



Frequently Asked Questions

Related to School Readiness/VPK Program Services during Pandemic COVID-19

Send feedback to: Scott Stevenson, Quality Initiatives Director at SStevenson@elc-marion.org

UPDATED: April 22, 2020

Topic	Question	Answer
VPK (Program)	I have only had 2 VPK kids show. Can I still do VPK with only two children or does the mandatory 4 VPK kids still apply?	Yes - you need 4 children enroll to start a VPK program. Once it is started, the program is up and running.
VPK (Payment)	Do we still get reimbursed for VPK even if students do not show?	Effective for March/April 2020 only at this time: Yes – just mark the absences in the attendance sheet in the provider portal and upload the long or short form and sign in/out sheets to BlueJean.
VPK (Attendance)	Do we only mark A's for the days we were open, and the children were not present or also for the days we closed?	Mark all children enrolled in VPK with an 'A' if your site voluntarily closed. Leave the X for the days the child attended while you were open.
VPK (Attendance)	I see that my attendance is already correct on my calendar. Do I still need to wait until I get an email to proceed?	Yes – please look for an email from an ELCMC staff member before moving on with your attendance.
VPK (Long/Short Forms)	For voluntary closure do we also write COVID-19 on the short/long form as well?	Yes
VPK (Improvement Plans for Providers on Probation)	Regarding VPK Improvement Plans, can we just submit the Improvement plan for now and implement the plan at a later date when more training options are available?	Yes, at this time providers are only required to submit their Improvement Plan (choosing their 2 Target areas no later than May 30th). Time will be allowed for providers to complete the plan.
VPK (Curriculum)	What happens with the VPK readiness rate for 2018-2019 and the purchase of new Curriculums?	The 2018-19 VPK Readiness Rates are still in effect and providers on probation still have the option to select either a New Curriculum or Staff Development Plan as their first target area of their Improvement Plan.
VPK (Curriculum)	Does it matter where you purchase the new curriculum?	You can purchase the curriculum anywhere as long as it is a legitimate vendor and is the currently approved version.
VPK (Curriculum)	Our curriculum is no longer on the list. So, even if you are not on probation, we still have to choose a new curriculum?	No. It is not necessary for you to purchase a new curriculum if you are not a provider on probation. Even for providers on probation, purchasing a new curriculum is one option, there is also a professional development option to meet the requirements of the improvement plan.



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VPK (Improvement Plans for Providers on Probation)	Does VPK Improvement Plan apply for 19-20 school year or 20-21 school year?	VPK Improvement Plans submitted now are based on the VPK Kindergarten Readiness Rates from Program Year 18-19 and are effective starting Program Year 20-21.
VPK (Attendance)	In light of the Governors rest of the year school closure, what will be the status of VPK for the rest of the school year?	There is no guidance at this time. Please see attendance guidance for documenting attendance – look at email updates for guidance.
VPK (Attendance)	If VPK is open and no kids, do we put a absent on the attendant?	Yes

Topic	Question	Answer
School Readiness (Health & Safety Inspections for new SR Contracts)	<p>We are license exempt and adhering to the ten person CDC guideline, at this time we have not allowed anyone that is not necessary to come in our building to protect the health and safety of the staff and children.</p> <p>We have had our accreditation visit, DOH school inspection, kitchen/food inspection and our fire Inspection.</p> <p>Can we take the first responder parents without having another inspector in our building?</p> <p>We do not want anyone who has been in and out of other schools and facilities. The reason we are so hesitant is to keep everyone safe.</p>	<p>In order to be paid School Readiness funds to enroll First Responder/Essential Medical Personnel families, you must be contracted with ELC for the SR program. Part of the contractual requirement is to pass a DCF coordinated Health & Safety inspection based on SR requirements. There is no option around this at this time.</p> <p>We encourage you to require any visitors to your building to wear gloves and a mask – if they do not have any on them, provide them.</p>
School Readiness (Attendance)	When we enter our first "D" and write "Absence due to Disaster" once, do we need to repeat it for every absence thereafter?	Yes - you can copy and paste the comment.
School Readiness (Attendance)	How do we mark as "D"?	Mark the absence as an "A" – choose the Absence Due to Disaster comment, once you view the Summary, you will see the "D" appear.
School Readiness (Health & Safety for New SR Contracts)	Can ELCMC do the health and safety inspection for the first responders as we know the staff and trust that they are not going from one center to another?	No – DCF is the only entity that can conduct SR Health & Safety Inspections at this time.



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School Readiness (First Responder Childcare Program)	If a parent just started as an ELC essential, do they need to sign from April?	Parents need to sign in/out effective the first day they are enrolled in your program. If they were a private pay enrollment – you will already have sign in/out sheets. DO NOT FALSIFY DOCUMENTATION!!!
School Readiness (Attendance Closure)	If we were closed for this month (April), we don't have Sign In/Out sheets, do we still have to upload the attendance on the provider portal?	Yes – refer to attendance submission instructions above.
School Readiness (Zero Balance)	How will we know if they transferred? If we aren't doing zero balance?	Zero Balance Transfer Forms are only waived for children transferring from sites that have temporarily closed. ELCMC Staff will be paying attention to enrollments at closed sites as children transferring cannot be enrolled at a closed location and at an open location simultaneously. ELCMC Staff will contact the providers if additional information is needed.
School Readiness (Emergency Closure Attendance)	My SR attendance change today to and now my closure days have an asterisk is that correct? and what does that mean?	Yes - this is correct. This means that our staff are inputting the necessary emergency closure data on the administrative side. Please do NOT submit your attendance until an ELC Team member contacts you.
School Readiness (Parent Fees)	Are we getting paid separately for Parent Fees?	No – Parent fees will be paid with your SR reimbursement at this time.
School Readiness (School Aged)	Will school age children continue to be reimbursed at the part time rate?	ELCMC is getting further clarification from OEL on this topic.
School Readiness (Suspensions)	Will we be directly notified if parents suspended services?	Yes – ELC Staff are calling providers with this information.
School Readiness (1 st Responder Info)	If we have first responders that have signed up with ELCMC but haven't heard anything from you all, do we submit their sign in/out sheets also.	Yes – you will be paid for these enrollments (as long as they were enrolled on April 1, 2020)



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School Readiness (Enrollment)	Ok what if they are paying to hold their spot but not coming?	This is a business decision for you to make. The funding provided should be used for a family needing services regularly and not on an individual basis.
School Readiness (Sign In/Out Sheets)	Will we have to submit sign in/out sheets for April if we choose to remain closed?	No – you will not have any to submit.

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COVID-19 (Closure)	Are providers who elected to temporarily close due to Covid 19 circumstances being reimbursed while closed as stated in the OEL guidance?	Yes – for March/April 2020 only at this time. We are awaiting further guidance from OEL for May 2020.
COVID-19 (Masks)	Has there been any directives from any state agency that mandates staff to wear masks at work?	No. The CDC is recommending that people wear masks while in public, but this is not a requirement.
COVID-19 (Masks)	Must staff and children wear mask when outside?	CDC is recommending everyone now wear masks anytime in public.
COVID-19 (Mini-Grants)	Do we send in paid invoices for this grant? (Referring to Infrastructure Grant – Appendix B)	We are getting more information on this topic from OEL.
COVID-19 (Mini-Grants)	If this is only for expenses after approval, but can only be used for the time period of the "during and after disaster and declared state of emergencies" then if I understand it correctly, our expenses would only be between now and possibly April 30th.	There is a period of 30 days after the end of the declared disaster period that funds can be expended.
COVID-19 (Mini-Grants)	Can we apply for each grant or just one?	We have not received any guidance on this yet. At this time, you can apply for each grant until additional guidance is provided.
COVID-19 (Mini-Grants)	For clarification if a facility is a provider on probation or on an improvement plan the employees of that facility do not qualify for Professional Development Stipend?	Yes
COVID-19 (Mini-Grants)	Do the teachers or center have to pay the training in advance?	Yes – this is actually a stipend for attending training. ELCMC can reimburse the teacher for registration fee to take the training.
COVID-19 (Mini-Grants)	I understand trainings they have already taken, but what about new courses they take from this point forward? (Pertaining to Professional Development Stipends)	Stipends are paid out for the trainings taken based on the timeframe within the approved application submitted. Providers and Teachers must meet all requirements and successfully complete approved trainings listed in the supplemental document "Early Childhood Online Professional Development – April 2020"



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COVID-19 (Mini-Grants)	If we apply for the infrastructure/operating costs grant, what is needed document wise after we obtain the grant? Will we be submitting documents showing where we spent the money?	We are obtaining further guidance on this – at this time, please keep all receipts for purchases associated with each mini-grant opportunity.
COVID-19 (Mini-Grants)	Where do we get these forms to apply for the mini grants?	These will be posted to our website and have been sent via email.
COVID-19 (Mini-Grants)	Does the center have to be open for the teacher to apply?	Yes – or preparing to open (ideally within the next two weeks)
COVID-19 (CDC Social Distancing Guidance)	Do we know how long the CDC is estimating we will be staying at 10 to a room?	No
COVID-19 (Mini-Grants)	When is the due date for mini-grant applications?	There is no set deadline at this time.
COVID-19 (Enrollment Capacity)	If they lift that rule and then we go back what do we do if we have taken on 1st responder kids and now don't have enough staff?	We recommend staying as flexible as possible week-to-week as circumstances are changing quickly. As the community opens back up, we can look at possibilities to assist families and providers with capacity concerns.
COVID-19 (General Precaution)	We normally do water days over the summer. Are their restrictions on things like water slides and bounce houses?]	ELCMC recommends consulting with your liability Insurance company and DCF representative. We also encourage you not to allow different groups of children to share the same body of water to avoid cross contamination.
COVID-19 (Mini-Grants)	Do we have to submit different applications for each grant?	No – mark all you are applying for on one application and submit it to SStevenson@elc-marion.org
COVID-19 (Attendance Reimbursement)	Regarding the payment for children not attending due to COVID-19. Is ELC paying only for SR children not private pay?	Yes – School Readiness and VPK enrollments are eligible for this reimbursement only.