



AUGUST PROVIDER MEETING



DATE: 8/20/2026



TIME: 9:00 AM &
6:30 PM



LOCATION: ELCMC
OFFICE, 2300 SW 17TH
RD, OCALA, FL 34471

AGENDA

Announcements – Welcome to the New Year!

2025-2026 VPK Performance Metric Outcomes Announced

ELC Updates – LaTrisha Sims

- Provider Fraud
- Capacity
- Early Learning Updates

VPK/SR Program Assessment (CLASS®) – Elizabeth Deola

- QPS Monthly Roster
- Classroom Schedules
- Pre-K 2nd Edition Tool

VPK Updates – Elizabeth Deola

- Progress Monitoring 1 Reminder
- Testing within Instructional Hours
- Non-Participation Status Update
- Testing Students outside of Enrollment

School Readiness Updates – Mary Brewster, Cheyenne Fort, Elizabeth Deola

- Good Moral Character Attestation
- Closure Calendar VS VPK Calendars
- Temporary Closures
- Background Screenings
- Child Assessment
- Waitlist/Enrollment Reminder

General Childcare Business Updates - Elizabeth Deola

- Staffing - Challenges; Best Practices - Provider Appreciation Materials Update
- Accreditation Renewal Reimbursement
- Inclusion - MAJOR Special Needs Rate Update coming in 2027!
- Environmental Protection Agency Water Testing Requirements

Compliance Corner – Delanea Price

- School Readiness Monitoring

Professional Development – Elizabeth Deola

- Professional Development Opportunities
- Staff Training Day Update - Video available!

Closing Announcements - Elizabeth Deola

- Meeting Schedule Change starting January 2027



A MESSAGE TO OUR PROVIDERS

Thank you for the important work you do every day to educate, nurture, and support the children and families in our community. You are the early learning professionals on the front lines. Your dedication, patience, expertise, and commitment provide children with the strong foundation they need to succeed.

As we begin a new fiscal year, we want to keep you informed about local progress, state-level priorities, and our goals for Fiscal Year 2026–2027.

KEY PROGRAM UPDATES

SCHOOL READINESS

The School Readiness waiting list has been cleared.

At this time last year, more than 500 children were on the School Readiness waiting list.

Provider Action:

If you know a family who may need child care assistance, please encourage them to apply.

If a family believes they are still waiting for funding, please encourage them to contact us so we can identify and address any issues or barriers preventing them from accessing available assistance. Funding is still available.

VPK ENROLLMENT

VPK enrollment continues to be a challenge throughout Florida—not just in Marion County.

- **1,586** — State-projected VPK enrollment for Marion County
- **2,300+** — Children already determined eligible for VPK
- **7,000** — Approximate statewide decline in VPK enrollment compared with previous years

ELCMC GOAL: SURPASS THE PROJECTION

Providers and community partners can help by:

- Sharing VPK information with eligible families.
- Encouraging families to enroll.
- Helping families understand the benefits of VPK.
- Connecting eligible children with quality VPK programs.

Together, we can reach more families and provide more children with access to quality early learning.

STATE LEADERSHIP UPDATE

Chancellor Cari Miller resigned from the Division of Early Learning effective July 31, 2026.

Katerina Maroney, Deputy Director, will serve as Interim Chancellor until further notice.

We will continue to monitor state-level developments and share information as it becomes available.



Early Learning Coalition of Marion County

DIVISION OF EARLY LEARNING

Strategic Framework • 2026–2029

The Division of Early Learning has provided Early Learning Coalitions with its Strategic Framework for 2026–2029.

The framework identifies **four strategic goals** that will help guide Florida's early learning system.

01 | FAMILY & PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Support family choice, economic mobility, and parent engagement.

Focus areas include customer service, School Readiness Plus awareness, provider support, and resources to strengthen family communication and engagement.

02 | QUALITY & KINDERGARTEN READINESS

Increase access to high-quality early learning programs.

Focus areas include expanding access, promoting quality care and education, and ensuring learning experiences meet the individual needs of children.

03 | EARLY LEARNING WORKFORCE

Strengthen and support Florida's early learning workforce.

Focus areas include recruiting, supporting, and retaining qualified early learning professionals.

04 | OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Achieve operational excellence and implement rigorous, accountable programming.

Focus areas include programmatic and fiscal monitoring, operational efficiency, data accuracy, fraud prevention, and oversight.

PROPOSED STATE-LEVEL PRIORITIES

The Association of Early Learning is advocating for several proposed priorities currently being discussed with legislators.

These priorities are intended to address provider needs and strengthen Florida's early learning system.

IMPORTANT

These priorities are PROPOSED.

They are not finalized policies or legislation, and nothing is guaranteed at this time. They represent issues being discussed, considered, and advocated for as potential legislative priorities.

01 | PROVIDER REIMBURSEMENT RATES

A proposed increase in reimbursement rates to help providers manage rising operational costs while creating opportunities to:

- Improve teacher compensation
- Support staff stability
- Strengthen workforce recruitment and retention

02 | VPK QUALITY

A proposed targeted funding stream to strengthen VPK quality through:

- Higher instructional standards
- Classroom improvements
- Professional development
- Improved kindergarten readiness



Early Learning Coalition of Marion County

03 | SCHOOL READINESS QUALITY DIFFERENTIALS

A proposed increase in quality differentials to provide additional recognition and financial incentives for higher-performing providers while encouraging continuous quality improvement.

04 | PARENTING PLANS & CHILD SUPPORT

A proposed update to parenting plan and child support considerations to recognize early learning and the full net cost of child care.

Goal: Improve transparency for families and ensure child care costs are appropriately reflected in child support calculations.

OUR COMMITMENT TO PROVIDERS

We believe providers should understand not only what is happening today, but also the conversations and potential changes that may affect you and the children and families you serve.

Our commitment is to:

INFORM

Share important updates and information as it becomes available.

COMMUNICATE

Maintain open communication with our early learning providers.

LISTEN

Recognize provider experiences, challenges, and perspectives.

ADVOCATE

Support efforts that strengthen early learning and the provider workforce.

COLLABORATE

Work together to improve outcomes for children and families.

OUR LOCAL GOALS

Fiscal Year 2026–2027

ADVOCATE

For early learning and VPK participation throughout our community.

STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS

Build stronger relationships with businesses, nonprofit organizations, and community stakeholders.

SUPPORT & RECOGNIZE PROVIDERS

Engage, collaborate, and build meaningful relationships with early learning providers.

STRENGTHEN PROGRAM INTEGRITY

Enhance fraud prevention processes to promote accountability, program integrity, and responsible stewardship of resources.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

The success of our early learning system depends on all of us working together.

As we begin **Fiscal Year 2026–2027**, we look forward to continuing our partnership with you, supporting your work, and ensuring that children and families have access to the high-quality early learning opportunities they need.

LaTrisha Sims

Chief Executive Officer



Early Learning Coalition OF Marion County

What is Fraud in Early Learning?

AUGUST 20, 2026

Purpose for Training

Equip child care providers with the knowledge and tools to prevent, detect, and report fraud, while ensuring compliance with program requirements and safeguarding public resources dedicated to early childhood education.

Florida Statute 1002.91

Fraud is an intentional deception, omission, or misrepresentation made by a person with knowledge that the deception, omission, or misrepresentation may result in an unauthorized benefit to that person or another person, or any aiding and abetting of the commission of such act. The term includes any act that constitutes fraud under applicable federal or state law.

Reporting of Fraud

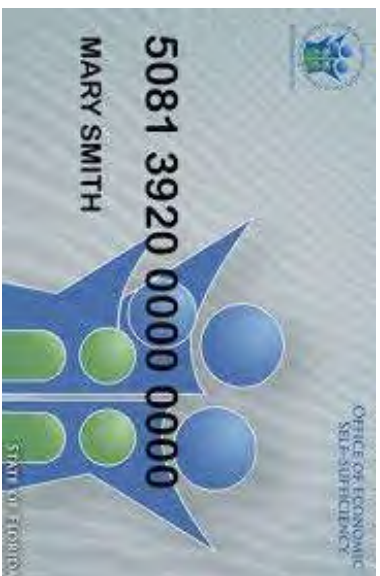
Reporting of possible abuse or fraud is mandatory, in accordance with Rule 6M-9.400, FAC., and no exceptions or monetary thresholds are authorized in rule.

Types of Fraud

RECIPIENT FRAUD- Intentionally misrepresenting information or misusing benefits to obtain child care assistance that one is not entitled to, potentially leading to a criminal penalty or repayment of funds.

PROVIDER FRAUD- Deceptive practices used by child care professionals to gain financial advantages from the School Readiness or VPK program.

Employee Fraud- Assisting or encouraging a recipient/provider to qualify for benefits or contract for services.



Provider Fraud

State Level

- Increased attention on ensuring that Early Learning Coalitions have effective processes to identify, report, investigate, and address potential fraud concerns.



Anti-Fraud Plan



- Each Early Learning Coalition shall adopt an anti-fraud plan addressing the detection and prevention of overpayments, abuse, and fraud relating to the provision of and payment for School Readiness program and Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program Services.
- Board approved and submitted annually to Department of Education Office of Inspector General, Fraud Prevention Unit on an annual basis.

What Does This Mean for Providers?



What Constitutes Provider Fraud?

Sale or transfers of facility ownership to avoid identification of true owner of the child care center

Coaching parents how to complete applications for services with false information in order to help the parent be approved for services

Falsifying verification of employment documentation

Signing children in/out who are not in attendance

Providing false/altered insurance documents

Red Flags

Sign in/sign out times are the same

Child Care Center workers signing children in and out

Child has perfect attendance every month

Signatures of the parent do not match the known signature of the parent

Penmanship on the sign in/out is the same

Statewide Contract- School Readiness and VPK-Fraud (#76)

- Payment Certificate Fraud Investigation- If it is determined that Provider has given any cash or other consideration to the beneficiary in return for receiving a payment certificate, COALITION or its fiscal agent shall refer the matter to the Department of Financial Services pursuant to s. 414.411, F.S. for Investigation.
- Suspension or Termination for Suspected Fraud- In accordance with s. 1002.91(4), F.S., COALITION may suspend or terminate PROVIDER from participation in the School Readiness Program when it has reasonable cause to believe that PROVIDER has committed fraud. PROVIDER may request a review of Coalition's determination to suspend PROVIDER as described in paragraph 76. This review shall be limited to a determination of whether COALITION has reasonable belief that fraud occurred. If suspended, PROVIDER shall remain suspended until the completion of any investigation by the Division of Early Learning, the Department of Financial Services, or any other state or federal agency, and any subsequent prosecution or other legal proceedings.

Statewide Contract- School Readiness and VPK

- Termination for Fraud- In accordance with s. 1002.91(5), F.S., if PROVIDER, or an owner, officer, or board director thereof, is convicted of, found guilty of, or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to, regardless of adjudication, public assistance fraud pursuant to s. 414.39, F.S. or is acting as the beneficial owner for someone who has been convicted of, found guilty of, or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to, regardless of adjudication, public assistance fraud pursuant to s. 414.39, F.S., COALITION shall refrain from contracting with, or using the services of, PROVIDER for a period of five (5) years. In addition, COALITION shall refrain from contracting with, or using the services of, any provider that shares an officer or board director with a provider that is convicted of, found guilty of, or pleads guilty or nolo contendere to, regardless of adjudication, public assistance fraud pursuant to s. 414.39, F.S. for a period of five years.
- Termination for National Disqualification- In accordance with s. 1002.91(7), F.S., if PROVIDER is placed on the United States Department of Agriculture National Disqualified List, COALITION must terminate this CONTRACT for cause. In addition, if PROVIDER shares an officer or board director with a provider that is on the United States Department of Agriculture National Disqualified List, COALITION must terminate this Contract for cause.

Due Process Procedures

PROVIDER may request a review of determinations made by COALITION under this Contract. Reviews will be conducted in accordance with Exhibit 7: Due Process Procedures. While a request for a review is being examined, PROVIDER is not required to implement corrective action. In accordance with s. 1002.82(2)(m), F.S., PROVIDER may not offer any School Readiness services while a request for a review regarding termination of PROVIDER'S School Readiness Contract is being examined.



Potential Consequences of Fraud

Suspension of the SR
and/or VPK Contract
Termination of
contract
Restitution
Arrested/Restitution

Federal Level “Stop Child Care Scams Act of 2026”

Stop Child Care Scams Act of 2026

Refers to a proposed federal legislation intended to strengthen oversight, accountability, and fraud prevention within child care assistance programs funded through the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)

Key Provisions of the Proposed Bill

Requires the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to withhold certain federal child care funds from states that repeatedly fail to address fraud, waste, abuse or serious program violations.

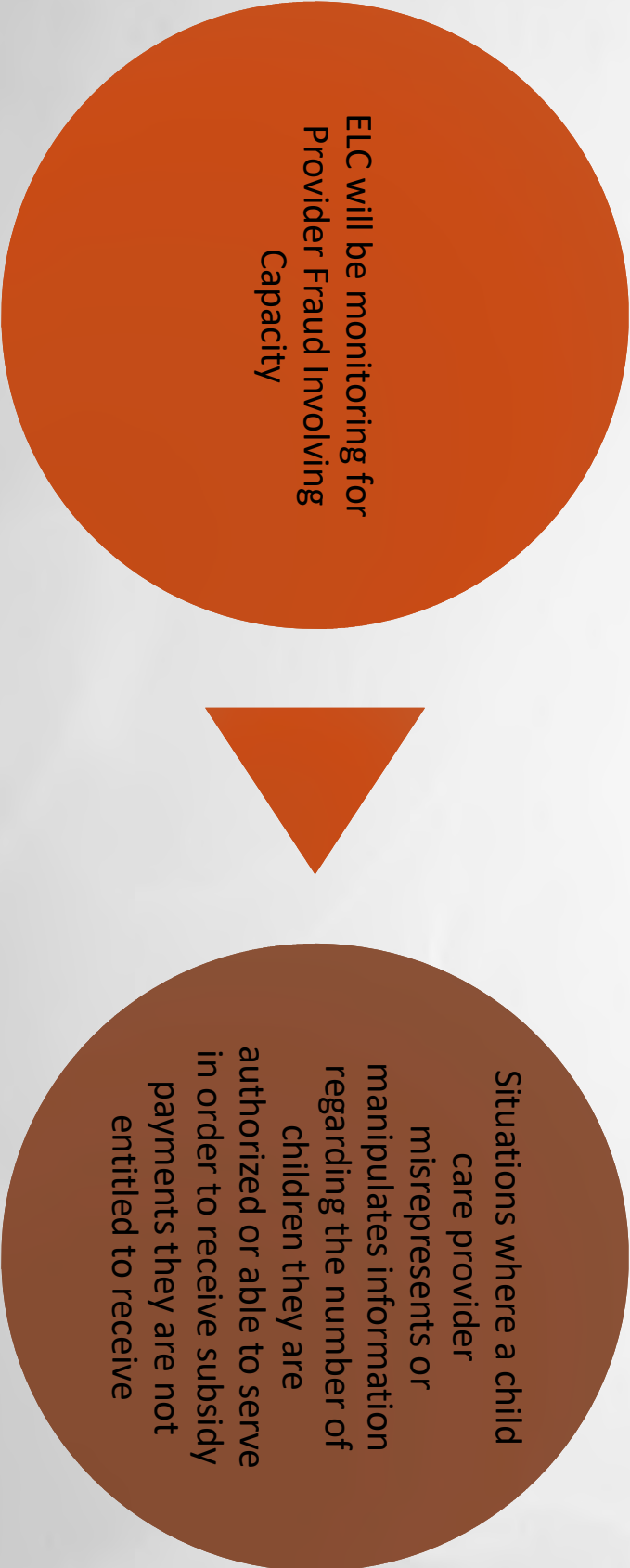
Making some enforcement actions mandatory, rather than leaving them to HHS's discretion.

Increasing state reporting and accountability requirements related to fraud and program integrity.

Establishing stricter standards and penalties for misuse of federal child care funds by states and providers.

**Why does this
matter to Child
Care Providers?**

What's New



ELC will be monitoring for
Provider Fraud Involving
Capacity

Situations where a child
care provider
misrepresents or
manipulates information
regarding the number of
children they are
authorized or able to serve
in order to receive subsidy
payments they are not
entitled to receive

Examples

Exceeding

Exceeding
licensed
capacity

Billing

Billing beyond
approved
capacity

Misrepresenting

Misrepresenting
Enrollment or
attendance

Manipulating

Manipulating
Records

ELC Prevention and Detection Efforts

Verifying provider licensing status and approved capacity

Monitoring enrollment and attendance patterns

Reviewing Unusual billing trends, including payments consistently exceeding licensed capacity.

Payments and gifts given to ELC employees for steering cases to specific Child Care centers.

Coordinating with the Department of Children and Families (licensing) when discrepancies are identified.

Maintaining documentation of reviews, findings, corrective actions, and recovery efforts.

Punishment Guidelines

3rd Degree Felony-
aggregate value of \$200
or more, but less than
\$20,000 in any 12
consecutive months

2nd Degree Felony-
Aggregate Value of
\$20,000 or more, but less
than \$100,000 in any 12
consecutive months

1st Degree Felony-
aggregate value of
\$100,000 or more in any
12 consecutive months



Agencies



Fraud Administrators



Michelle Eurbin, Family Services
Director, Ext. 239

Michaela Powell, Programs
Compliance Director, Ext. 259

Marcey Easter, Chief Administrative
Officer, Ext. 219

Email-fraud@Elc-marion.org



Questions

CLASS Updates

Staff Monthly Roster

Per Rule 6M-4.740, *Program Assessment Requirements for the School Readiness Program*,

(c) Providers must electronically report in the DEL-defined system a director, the number of classrooms, and teachers and care levels assigned to those classrooms, as outlined in Form DEL-SR 740.

Pre-k 2nd Edition Tool:

All Pre-K observations during the 2026-2027 fiscal year would be completed using the Pre-K 2nd Edition Tool.

Changes in QPS and VPK-App

Once a provider is in **Pending Composite Score** status or after the two-week observation window has been sent, changes are **not permitted** in QPS or the VPK-App.

- Any change made in QPS will trigger the system to reselect classrooms, which may impact on the observation process.
- Changes made in the VPK-App are not communicated to our team, as the system does not notify us of updates.

Classroom Schedules

Providers are requested to share classroom schedules in advance. This information helps assessors plan their arrival more effectively and ensures observations begin on time. Providing schedules helps avoid delays caused by assessors arriving before teachers are present.

Thank you for your cooperation and continued support. If you have any questions, please contact our office.



**Early Learning
Coalition**  Marion
County



**Early Learning
Coalition** of Marion
County

2300 SW 17th Road Ocala, FL 34471

PHONE 352-369-2315

FAX 352-369-2308

www.ELC-Marion.org

Scan Here for the Crosswalk



VPK Provider Updates

General Progress Monitoring Discussion- VPK Progress Monitoring Reminders-PM1-

- ❖ PM1: Is the **first thirty (30) instructional days** of the VPK class schedule beginning with the first VPK instructional day.

VPK FAST Progress Monitoring is a requirement for all enrolled VPK children.

- ❖ **Can parents choose to opt-out their child from participating in the Star Early Literacy Assessment for VPK?**

No, Section [1002.53\(6\)\(d\)](#), Florida Statutes, require that each parent who enrolls their child in the VPK program **must** allow their child to participate in the coordinated screening and progress monitoring program. In addition, when parents complete the application for their child to participate in VPK, they also certify that, “**Upon enrollment of my child in the VPK Program, I understand that I must allow my child to participate in the Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring Program (Section [1002.68](#), Florida Statutes)**”

Non-Participation Status has 4 options

- ❖ Failed Practice
- ❖ Not Present During Testing Window
- ❖ Non-English Speaker
- ❖ Assessment Inappropriate

Students should be given **three attempts** to pass the practice items. If after three attempts, the student continues to fail the practice items, the student should receive a non-participation status of “Failed Practice.”

- ❖ VPK Program Administrators will use Non-Participation Status for students unable to pass the practice test items or for another reason why the student did not test.
- ❖ Non-public school providers are no longer permitted to use the Assessment Inappropriate non-participation status, as this designation required a documentation such as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. Providers should use the Failed Practice status as appropriate.
- ❖ ***If a student has a Nonparticipation Status and a score the Division of Early Learning will not take the score.***

Florida's Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) VPK Non-Participation Status Attempt Form

VPK FAST/Progress Monitoring Technical Assistance:

Testing outside of enrollment

- ❖ During the 25/26 program year we have identified that some providers have administered the VPK FAST assessment to students who are not fully enrolled in your program.

Before testing, please verify the following:

- ❖ Ensure the student's COE is completed accurately.
- ❖ Confirm the student's enrollment has been submitted and accepted by the Early Learning Coalition.
- ❖ Verify the student appears on your VPK class roster in the provider portal and Renaissance roster.
- ❖ If the student is not appearing on your roster, contact the Early Learning Coalition for assistance.

Reminder:

Students should only be assessed after their enrollment has been processed and they appear on both the class roster in the provider portal and the class roster in Renaissance. Administering an assessment before enrollment is completed will result in testing errors and delays in assessment reporting.

Testing outside of instructional hours

- ❖ During the 25/26 program year we have identified that some providers have administered the VPK FAST assessment outside of their VPK program instructional hours. This

Prepared by:

Janet Honor, M.A.Ed.

Provider Relations Manager

Early Learning Coalition of Marion County

includes assessments completed before the instructional day begins and several hours after the instructional day has ended. As a reminder VPK FAST assessments must be administered during your approved VPK instructional hours only.

To help ensure compliance:

- ❖ Post your daily VPK instructional schedule in the testing area so staff know when your program officially begins and ends.
- ❖ Verify that the testing takes place during approved instructional hours before your staff administers the assessment.

Reminder:

Assessments completed outside of institutional hours will result in:

- ❖ Assessments data reporting issues.
- ❖ Assessments not being included in reporting.
- ❖ Potential compliance issues.



Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Instructor *Standards* and Emergent Literacy Course Requirements

Sections [1002.55](#) and [1002.63](#), Florida Statutes (F.S.), require that public school and private provider VPK instructors complete the **Early Learning Standards** and three 5-hour **emergent literacy** courses.

The following Division of Early Learning (DEL) course meets the requirement for the **Early Learning and Developmental Standards and is offered online, virtual instructor-led and in-person.**

- ❖ **Implementing the Florida Standards in Preschool Classrooms: 3 Years Old to Kindergarten** (online VFSP) 5 hours; 0.5 CEUs or virtual instructor-led and in-person (SPC3TK) 3 hours; 0.3 CEUs

The following DEL trainings meet the **Emergent Literacy course requirements and are offered online, virtual instructor-led and in-person.**

- ❖ **Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors** (online VPK21) 5 hours; 0.5 CEUs
- ❖ **Language and Vocabulary in the VPK Classroom** (online LVPK21) 5 hours; 0.5 CEUs
- ❖ **Phonological Awareness Development for Preschoolers** (online VIPA21; in-person and virtual instructor-led PAP21) 5 hours; 0.5 CEUs
- ❖ **Dialogic Reading: Language and Vocabulary Development for Preschoolers** (in-person and virtual instructor-led DRP) 5 hours; 0.5 CEUs
- ❖ **Book Embedded Vocabulary Instruction: Language and Vocabulary Development for Preschoolers** (in-person and virtual instructor-led BEP) 5 hours; 0.5 CEUs
- ❖ **Scaffolding and Think, Show, Tell, Talk: Language and Vocabulary Development for Preschoolers** (in-person and virtual instructor-led STSTTP) 5 hours; 0.5 CEUs
- ❖ **Building a Strong Foundation for Emergent Literacy** (online VIEL21; in-person and virtual instructor-led BSFEL) 5 hours; 0.5 CEUs

Successful completion of one of the following courses can fulfill the emergent literacy course requirements:

- ❖ **Preschool Language Development** (online) 20 hours; 2.0 CEUs – *Lastinger Learning*
- ❖ **The Building Blocks of Preschool Literacy** (online) 20 hours; 2.0 CEUs – *Lastinger Learning*
- ❖ **Competency 1** of the Florida Reading Endorsement
- ❖ **Emergent Literacy Micro-Credential** (component 1) 20 hours; 2.0 CEUs – *Lastinger Learning*
- ❖ **Elementary Literacy Micro-Credential** 60 hours; 6.0 CEUs – *Lastinger Learning*
- ❖ **Florida Department of Education (FDOE) Early Childhood Professional Certificate (ECPC)** –Completed during or after 2025 Fall semester
- ❖ **Associates of Science in Early Childhood Education** – Completed during or after 2025 Fall semester

School Readiness Provider Updates

- Good Moral Character Attestation (M.B)
 - Slide of ELCMC website. All newly hired teachers must complete a 2024 GMC form that can be found on the ELCMC website.
 - Teacher name on the VPK App and on the GMC form must match the **BGS** name.
 - Teacher must sign the name as it appears on the **BGS**
 - Teacher date and witness date must match
 - Check both pages of the GMC; the facility name on the form must match the facility name on the portal. This includes “INC” & “LLC”.
- Closure Calendar VS VPK Calendars (M.B)
 - Providers are responsible for ensuring that their profile closure calendar and VPK calendar agree at all times. If the facility is closed to the public and there are no parent sign in/out for a day; VPK class cannot be in session on that day. The VPK calendar must show the date as a non-instructional day.
 - VPK providers must deliver the full 540 hours. There are repercussions if the full 540 hours are not delivered, even if it is a calendar oversight.
 - When providers add a closure to their closure calendar that does not agree with their VPK non-instructional days; this will create a non-compliance issue.
 - All Providers (including SR only) must email Quality@elc-marion.org whenever calendar changes are being made and submitted, specifying what dates are changed.
- Temporary Closures (C.F)
- Background Screenings (C.F)

Prepared by:
Mary Brewster,
Provider Relations-Client Services Counselor
Cheyenne Fort,
Provider Relations-Client Services Counselor



Provider Portal



Family Portal

[Click Here for Meeting and Event Calendar](#)



Early Learning Coalition OF Marion County

Provider Resources

[School Readiness Provider Resources](#)

[VPK Provider Resources](#)

DCF Child Care Attestation of Good Moral Character

[Provider Newsletters](#)

[How To: Quick Tip Sheets](#)

Provider HowTo-Temporary Closure

[Provider Meetings](#)

[Provider Resource Links](#)

[Finance](#)



EN

Child Assessment Additional Information

Note: This document is derived from portions of Rule 6M-4.500 F.A.C., 6M-4. and DEL 420.02-C SR Child Assessment Guide

AUTHORITY/REFERENCES

Sections(s) 1002.82(2)(n) Florida Statutes (F.S.)

Chapter 2018-136, Laws of Florida

Department of Early Learning (DEL) Grant Agreement

Rule 6M-4.500 Child Attendance and Provider Reimbursements

BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW

In 2018, the Florida Legislature passed legislation that affects SR providers and the children they serve in a number of ways. The legislation allows for SR providers to conduct on-going child assessments to receive a differential payment.

DEFINITIONS

- **Assessment Tool** – An DEL approved instrument used for assessing the current skills of children ages birth to kindergarten entry relative to where they should be compared to typical child development, as well as to modify teaching and learning activities to improve children's attainment of skills.
- **Assessment System** – The assessment tool's online assessment system.
- **Assessment Period** – Three time periods during the SR contract year (July 1st to June 30th) when eligible staff conduct and report assessment data on SR children ages birth to kindergarten entry. SR children will receive assessments.
- **Child Eligibility Period** – A period at least 60 days prior to the end of an assessment period in which a child must be enrolled in SR at a provider in order for that provider to assess the child and receive the child assessment differential for that child.
- **Exempt** - When a provider meets the required criteria for exemption and is not required to have a program assessment. See Rule 6M -4.740 for more information regarding exempt providers.
- **Family Portal** – The location in the Single Statewide Information System (SSIS) where a parent may access their child's School Readiness child assessment report.

Initial Creation Date: 7.27.2019 Updated: 7/31/2026

- **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)** - A targeted 12-month plan to improve a provider's program quality using performance goals and strategies.
- **Quality Performance System (QPS)** - Web-based application used by DEL, ELCs, and required SR providers to register for program assessments, submit evidence of reliability, and maintain records for quality improvement plans (if applicable).
- **Register** - Process of a provider submitting all of the data in the QPS needed by the ELC to approve the provider for a program assessment.
- **School Readiness Child (SR child)** – A child receiving SR services while attending a childcare provider under contract with the State to provide SR services.
- **School Readiness Provider**– Status of providers under contract with the ELC for serving SR children.
- **Single Statewide Information System (SSIS)** - The SSIS is the DEL application that tracks child attendance, child assessment scores and serves as a repository for various required documentation. The SSIS consists of three major components: the Provider Portal, the Coalition Portal, and the Family Portal.
- **Submission Period** – The last 30 days of the assessment period. Providers should ensure that all eligible children have received assessments and their data uploaded to the assessment instrument.
- **Technical Assistance Period** – A 30-day technical assistance period following the submission period to allow ELC's time to provide technical assistance to providers who have not completed and uploaded assessments into the assessment system for eligible children.

ASSESSMENT TOOL

ELCMC has chosen the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment for this purpose.

PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY

1. SR providers must meet the initial program assessment composite score of 4.0 or be exempt from program assessments to participate in child assessment implementation.
2. Providers wishing to provide SR services and to implement child assessments for an additional differential payment, log in to the Provider Portal in the SSIS and indicate in the SR contract that they wish to participate.

3. The SSIS informs any provider who indicates that they are implementing child assessments that they must log in to the QPS and upload current reliability certificates for at least 75% of the personnel as defined by Rule 6M-4.620 F.A.C. on their roster.

“Program Personnel” refers to any person employed by or who volunteers at the school readiness program for an average of ten (10) or more hours per month and who either works directly with children and/or is unsupervised with children in care at any time and for any portion of the program day during the program’s hours of operation. – School Readiness Program Health & Safety Standards

Handbook, February 2017

# of total staff employed meeting the definition above	Number of Staff who Must be “Reliable” (upload their certificate to the QPS website)
1	1
2	2
3-4	3
5	4
6	5
7-8	6
9	7
10	8
11-12	9
13	10
14	11
15-16	12
17	13
18	14
19-20	15

4. ELCs are required to verify each certificate uploaded into the QPS and to approve or reject the providers' submissions. Only providers exempt from program assessment and those with a score of 4.0 or higher have system access to upload reliability certificates. If providers neglect to upload the required reliability certificates within the timeframe specified, the ELC must amend the contract to remove the child assessment selection and differential payment.
5. The provider must submit and the ELC must verify the certificates before the beginning of the first assessment period (August 1). **ELCMC will make an exception for this as the program is not starting prior to the beginning of the first assessment period.**
6. ELCs shall notify providers not meeting the 75% minimum that the child assessment selection will be removed from the contract and the provider will not receive the differential.
7. Providers must maintain a reliability rate of 75% of their staff roster. The QPS sends a notification to the ELC when a provider has dropped below the 75% threshold.

8. Providers not maintaining 75% reliability must inform the ELC within five business days. The provider has 45 calendar days to come back into compliance with the 75% reliability requirement before forfeiting the differential. ELC's will ensure that all new reliability certificates are uploaded by the provider into the QPS before issuing payments.
9. Rule 6M-4.500 (Child Attendance and Provider Reimbursements) requires that only teachers reliable on the provider's chosen assessment tool conduct child assessments. Providers without reliable teachers in each classroom shall have reliable teachers assigned to conduct child assessments in each room and input child assessment data into the assessment system.

CHILD ELIGIBILITY

Before every assessment period, the SSIS generates an eligible child list by provider and ELC and assigns each eligible child a unique ID. Providers are required to ensure that each eligible child and their unique ID is listed in the provider's selected assessment instrument system. The unique child ID allows data matching between the assessment system and the SSIS so that assessment data transmits correctly.

A child may be determined not eligible for screening or assessment if the parent declines child assessment during the child enrollment process. The child will not be identified in the eligible child assessment list and the child's unique user ID will not be provided to providers or the assessment instruments.

A child must be enrolled for a minimum of 60 days before the end of an assessment period to be considered eligible for that period. Children not enrolled a minimum of 60 days will not receive a unique ID for child assessment purposes during that assessment period. Although a child enrolled under the 60-day assessment window will not receive an assessment during that period, the child may be eligible for the next assessment period.

Providers will only receive differential payments for complete and valid child assessments.

CHILD ASSESSMENT PERIODS

Providers must conduct and enter assessments into their selected assessment instrument system during the appropriate assessment period. There are three child assessment periods, child eligibility, and submission periods during the contract year as listed below in the table. Once each assessment period is finalized completely, the assessment outcome for each child will be uploaded to the Family Portal to allow parents to have access to their children's information.

	Child Assessment Timelines		
	Assessment Periods Children's skills and abilities should be observed and recorded during this time period.	Child Eligibility Periods Child must be enrolled 60 days prior to end of the assessment period to be eligible to be assessed.	Submission Periods Providers review and ensure eligible child assessments are uploaded to the assessment system
Timelines	One: August 1 through October 31	September 2	October 1 to October 31
	Two: November 1 through January 31	December 3	January 1 to January 31
	Three: February 1 through April 30	March 2	April 1 to April 30
INCOMPLETE ASSESSMENTS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR DIFFERENTIAL PAYMENTS			

7.27.2019 E. Deola X: Drive; Programs Department; QI Dept; Quality Performance System; 2019-2020- Child Assessments

NOTE: Assessments may not be finalized prior to or after the submission period.

Initial Creation Date: 7/27/2019 Updated: 7/31/2026

FAMILY PORTAL

The Family Portal receives eligible child assessment results and compiles them into a summary report for the parent to view. This report is a modified version of each assessment report. Families will be encouraged to view the full reports by contacting their Provider or by accessing the assessment instrument system. ELC should encourage providers to share the full assessment reports with families after each assessment period.

QUALITY ASSURANCE – MONITORING FOR INTEGRITY

Quality assurance protocols for implementing child assessments includes (but is not limited to):

- Verifying assessors are reliable and certificates are uploaded to the Quality Performance System (QPS)
- Ensuring children are assessed using the correct tool
- Ensuring children assessed have adequate parental consent
- Ensuring assessment data is uploaded and submitted timely
- Random sampling of child assessments to review for "red flags" such as a child or groups of children making large developmental gains over short periods
- Other protocols may be utilized as need arises

CHILD ASSESSMENT DIFFERENTIAL PAYMENTS

In order to receive the differential payments, providers must ensure that *all eligible* children receive a completed (all applicable domains) developmental assessment which is input into Teaching Strategies GOLD by a reliable assessor during the appropriate assessment period. Providers assessing all eligible children receive the differential within 60 days of conclusion of the assessment period for each child with a complete and valid assessment. Once a provider fails to maintain the 75% reliability for an assessment period as defined in Rule 6M-4.500 or fails to complete eligible child assessments they may no longer participate in the child assessment differential for the remaining **contract term**.

Differential Payment Timeline:

Assessment Period 1 – December

Assessment Period 2 – March

Assessment Period 3 – June

NOTE: This document is a **WORKING DRAFT** and maybe updated periodically to ensure the most current information is included.



**Hot
Topics**

General Childcare Business Updates

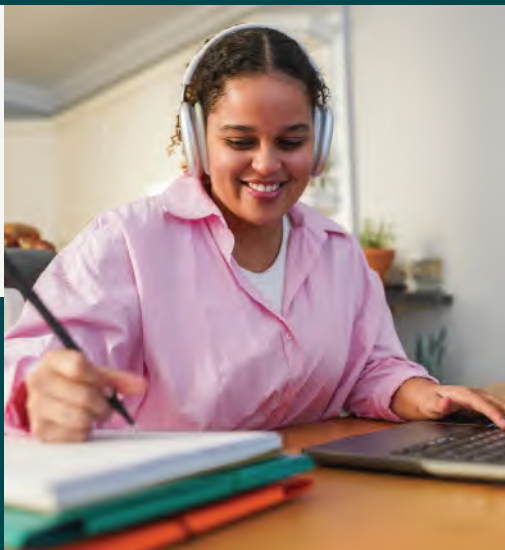
Discussion Topics:

- Staffing - Challenges; Best Practices
- Provider Appreciation Materials Update
- Accreditation Renewal Reimbursement
- Inclusion - MAJOR Special Needs Rate Update coming in 2027!
- Environmental Protection Agency Water Testing Requirements

Devereux Center for Resilient Children (DCRC)

Virtual Trainings & Free Webinars

- Fostering resilience and supporting social and emotional development in young children
- Promoting resilience in adults who work with and care for young children



Questions?

Debi Mahler
dmahler@devereux.org
(610) 574-6141



VIRTUAL TRAININGS



FREE WEBINARS

Professional Development Calendar 2026

ELCMC Training Schedule

1st Quarter July, August, and September

#	TRAINING & INSTRUCTOR	DATE & TIME	LOCATION	FEE	CEUS	DESCRIPTION
1	CPR/First Aid with Nelson Green	Saturday 8/15/2026 9:00 am to 1:30 pm	ELMC: 2300 SW 17th Rd. Ocala, FL 34471	20.00	.4 CEUS	CPR/First Aid/AED: Register online and submit payment at www.elc-marion.org . This course covers Adult, Child and Infant CPR, First Aid and AED. You must attend the entire course to receive your card. No exceptions. You must arrive on time.
2	New In-Person Instructional Support for Educators Pre-K-2nd ed. with Lilianna Howard	<i>First Session of 12 On:</i> Saturday 8/8/2026 8:00 am to 1:30 pm	ELMC: 2300 SW 17th Rd. Ocala, FL 34471	FREE	2.4 CEUS	Interaction Essentials for Educators is the NEW , updated version of MMCI (CGC) . Discover the New 2nd Edition CLASS Observer tool for PreK . Offers 2.4 CEUs for participating in all 12 sessions. See Website calendar for full details on schedule: https://www.elc-marion.org/calendar/ On 8/8/2026 12-session series: August 8 – October 24, 2026 20 slots available Participants completing all 12 sessions will earn a \$375 stipend
3	CPR/First Aid with Nelson Green	Saturday 9/12/2026 9:00 am to 1:30 pm	ELMC: 2300 SW 17th Rd. Ocala, FL 34471	20.00	.4 CEUS	CPR/First Aid/AED: Register online and submit payment at www.elc-marion.org . This course covers Adult, Child and Infant CPR, First Aid and AED. You must attend the entire course to receive your card. No exceptions. You must arrive on time.

Thank you for investing in early learning!
We look forward to learning and growing together in 2026.



Greetings,

We are excited to announce that the [Emergent Literacy Micro-Credential](#) applications are now open for the fall 2026 term.

This no-cost, 60-hour micro-credential can be completed in 14 weeks. Educators gain emergent literacy knowledge and skills through online modules and then apply their learning in their classrooms.

This program will run from August 31 to December 8.

How to Apply

Step 1

All learners must create an account in the new Lastinger Learning portal to apply to and participate in our programs.

[Create your account.](#)

Step 2

Apply by August 7!

[Apply on the website.](#)

The application window may close earlier if capacity is reached.

Benefits

- Possible \$1,000 completion stipend for eligible instructional personnel
 - Stipends are limited to one (1) per person. For full eligibility and stipend distribution details, please visit the [Stipends Hub](#)
- 60 professional learning hours / 6.0 CEUs
- 40 hours to satisfy the Reading Requirement
- Emergent literacy skills and knowledge with high-quality content

Program Information

- Created in partnership with the Florida Department of Education and the Division of Early Learning
- Free to enroll for Florida child care personnel
- Work at your own pace
- Implement new instructional strategies in real-time
- Receive individualized feedback and one-on-one support from a course navigator
- **Seats are limited! Apply by August 1 for the fall 2026 term**

Program Eligibility

The Emergent Literacy Micro-Credential is available for free to birth through pre-kindergarten child care personnel in Florida (public or private), including but not limited to:

- Teachers
- Program directors
- Interventionists
- Instructional coaches
- Head Start personnel
- Early Learning Coalition Personnel physically working with a provider, such as instructors, directors, and coaches

To learn more about the Emergent Literacy Micro-Credential, including eligibility, please visit the [Lastinger Learning website](#). If you have any questions, please email lastinger@coe.ufl.edu.

Online Courses



The UF Lastinger Center for Learning is the administrator of the state of Florida's Early Childhood System. Created in partnership with the Florida Department of Education's Division of Early Learning, Lastinger Learning's early childhood courses provide practical teaching strategies, are standards-aligned and mastery-based. Courses include interactive elements, collaborative discussion forums and continuous feedback from a credentialed instructor.

Who is eligible?

These online courses are free and offered to all School Readiness & VPK providers in Florida including:

1. Educators
2. Family Child Care Providers
3. Directors
4. Owners
5. Program Leaders

Infant-toddler courses

- Infant Toddler Social-Emotional Development (ITSE)*
- Engaging Families of Infants and Toddlers (ITFE)*
- Infant Toddler Health, Safety, and Nutrition (ITHSN)*
- Language Development for Infants and Toddlers (ITLD)

Preschool courses

- Guiding Preschool Behavior and Building Classroom Community (PGB)*
- Instructional Support in Preschool: Quality of Feedback (PQF)*
- Getting Organized for Learning in Preschool (ACT 1)
- Understanding and Promoting the Development and Learning of Young Dual Language Learners in Preschool (DLL1)
- Why Ask Why? STEAM in Preschool Learning Environments (STEAM)
- Supporting Learning in Preschool Classrooms (SLP)
This course is completed in 10 hours and provides 1.0 CEU, 10 professional learning hours and a \$125 stipend
- The Building Blocks of Preschool Literacy (PLIT)
- Preschool Language Development (PLD)

**Indicates the course is available in English and Spanish.*

Why participate?

- Courses available in English and Spanish
- Earn a \$250 successful completion stipend
- Earn 2.0 IACET CEUs per course
- Earn 20 professional learning hours per course

LEARN MORE:

Online Courses



lastinger.link/OnlineCourses

Cursos en Línea



El Centro de Aprendizaje Lastinger de UF es el administrador del Sistema de Early Childhood Training del estado de Florida. Creado en asociación con el Department of Education's Division of Early Learning de Florida, los cursos de Lastinger Learning early childhood brindan estrategias de enseñanza prácticas, están alineados con los estándares y se basan en el dominio. Los cursos están llenos de elementos interactivos, foros de discusión colaborativos y comentarios continuos de un instructor del curso acreditado.

¿Quién es elegible?

Estos cursos en línea son gratuitos y se ofrecen a todos los proveedores de School Readiness y VPK en Florida, incluyendo:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Educadores | 3. Directores |
| 2. Proveedores de cuidado infantil familiar | 4. Propietarios |
| | 5. Líderes de programas |

¿Por qué participar?

- Cursos disponibles en inglés y español
- Gana un estipendio entre \$250 al completar
- Gana 2.0 CEUs de IACET por curso
- Gana 20 horas de aprendizaje profesional por curso

Cursos sobre bebés y niños pequeños

- Fomentando el Desarrollo Socioemocional Saludable En Los Bebés Y Niños Pequeños (ITSES)
- Participación Familiar: Involucrando a las Familias de Bebés y Niños Pequeños (ITFES)
- Salud, Seguridad y Nutrición para Bebés y Niños Pequeños (ITHSNS)

Cursos de preescolar

- Pautas De Comportamiento Y Creación De Comunidad En El Ámbito Preescolar (PGBS)
- Apoyo Instructivo en el Preescolar: Calidad de los Comentarios (PQFS)
- Desarrollo del Lenguaje en Niños Preescolares (PLDS)

PARA MÁS INFORMACIÓN:



lastinger.link/OnlineCourses

Supporting Learning in Preschool Classrooms



The Supporting Learning in Preschool Classrooms course provides preschool teachers with strategies designed to improve classroom instruction and support kindergarten readiness.

What is it?

Supporting Learning in Preschool Classrooms is an online, asynchronous course made up of five cycles

1. Foundations of Supporting Learning
2. Supporting Children as They Develop Concepts
3. Incorporating Effective Instructional Feedback
4. Nurturing and Supporting Language Development
5. Mastery

Participants will:

- Use their own lesson plans to implement and reflect on new strategies
- Review case study examples of real classrooms
- Encourage the use of critical thinking skills
- Incorporate feedback into classroom instruction

Who is eligible to participate?

Enrollment priority will be given to our state's VPK providers on probation.

Important dates

Applications: October 7, 2025 - October 24, 2025

Term duration: November 10, 2025 - January 12, 2026

Why participate?

- Receive a \$125 stipend
- Earn 1.0 CEU (10 instructional hours)
- Improve instructional practice
- Enhance teacher/child interactions
- Help children develop concepts and real world connections

LEARN MORE
AND APPLY:



lastinger.link/PreschoolCourse



July, August & September Opportunities

COALITION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

For the full professional development schedule, visit the [ELC-Marion.org/Calendar](https://www.elc-marion.org/Calendar).

Intro to Pre-K 2nd Edition Crosswalk On Demand

In the 2026-2027 fiscal year, all prekindergarten classrooms, including VPK, will be observed using the new Pre-K 2nd edition CLASS® tool. [This video](#) will help you understand how the CLASS® tool organizes effective teacher-child interactions. The [Crosswalk guide](#) details the changes made to the Pre-K CLASS® tool. Link: <https://www.elc-marion.org/provider-resources/>

The Coalition provides a variety of high-quality training opportunities throughout the year for early childhood educators contracted for School Readiness or VPK programs. Materials received through training are the property of the contracted child care provider. **If you are not an early childhood educator working at a contracted site or need assistance with Coalition registrations, please call [352-369-2315](tel:352-369-2315) ext. 231 or email Training@ELC-Marion.org.**

DEL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

The following trainings are offered by or in partnership with the Florida Division of Early Learning (DEL).



CLASS® Strategies Summit: Infant and Toddler

Available on Demand until October 2026

These two previously recorded virtual sessions, one for each age level, focus on improving classroom interactions and provide impactful strategies you can implement immediately. In addition to the recordings, downloadable tip sheets will be available on demand for six months. **To access the recordings, click the button below, then click on the “RSVP TODAY” button, and complete the registration form.**

<https://events.bizzabo.com/FL-DEL-2026?hsCtaAttrib=212097302378>

Lastinger Learning: Emergent Literacy Micro-Credential

August 31 - December 8

Free | Online

[Emergent Literacy Micro-credential](#) applications for the Fall 2026 term open July 27. This 60-hour, 14-week course can be completed at your own pace and satisfies the 40 hour Reading Requirement.

Seats are limited, and there is a **possible \$1,000.00 Completion Stipend**.

See end of packet for letter with more details

Link to apply: <https://lastingerlearning.com/emergent-literacy-micro/>

Additional Educational Opportunities

Note: The Early Learning Coalition of Marion County does not endorse any commercial product, service, or company.

Devereux Center for Resilient Children

[Devereux Center for Resilient Children](https://centerforresilientchildren.org/) (DCRC) is committed to fostering resilience and supporting the social-emotional development of infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children, while strengthening the resilience of the adults who care for and work with them.

DCRC offers virtual trainings, free webinars, and resources to support early childhood professionals. See links below for more information:

<https://centerforresilientchildren.org/>

<https://centerforresilientchildren.org/home/webinars/>

2026 Annual FLAEYC Conference

The Power of Play: Imagine. Explore. Discover.
Wednesday - Friday, October 16-18
Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront

Early bird pricing for the annual FL Association for the Education of Young Children (FLAEYC) conference is available through July 31.

<https://www.flaeyc.org/conference>



Copyright (C) 2026 Early Learning Coalition of Marion County. All rights reserved.