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1. Do you think there will be VPK probation next year?

We are awaiting confirmation from DEL, but we do not believe so.

2. Will we be audited regarding grant [money]?

Yes, auditing is already taking place.

3. Will more grants be coming?

There will be additional ARPA funding and CRRSA funding opportunities.

4. How do we assist parents in recertifying?

ELC stresses to families that it is their responsibility to complete a redetermination by the deadline, but we appreciate provider support with this!

To see the enrollments with upcoming eligibility redeterminations, login to your Provider Portal account and go to Enrollments > Manage SR Enrollments > Redeterminations > Upcoming Redeterminations.

You can remind families of their upcoming redetermination date and encourage them not to wait until the last minute, in case it takes them more than one try to provide ELC with everything we need.

5. How many days can a VPK child be absent?

VPK follows the 80/20 rule. Students in VPK are allowed to be absent for 20% of the school year.

6. The reimbursement report, it does not break down the gold seal or QPI anymore.

Unfortunately, the State's Provider Portal (EFS MOD) does not currently break down the gold seal or QPI, which is the system that generates the reimbursement reports. Providers are encouraged to refer to their ELC Contract, page 15, under "Rates" for this breakdown until the Division of Early Learning adds this to the report.

7. Share info on CLASS assessment scoring & minimums required to pass.

- For more information about SR CLASS Assessments please visit:
<https://www.floridaearlylearning.com/statewide-initiatives/school-readiness-program-assessment>
- For more information about VPK CLASS assessment please visit:
<https://www.floridaearlylearning.com/vpk/vpk-program-assessment>
- The minimum threshold is 4.00 or higher at this time. The highest rating is a 7.00.

8. [How is ELC] helping to pay with training for staff?

ELC currently has the (ARPA) Build a World Class Workforce Initiative grant and the (CRRSA), Workforce Initiative for Early Educators grant.

9. ELC grants?

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
- Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA)

10. What is the best way to communicate with ELC? Phone, email, etc.

The best way to communicate with ELC is by email. Even if a call is needed to resolve an issue, having an email outlining the question or concern allows ELC staff to complete some preliminary research before contacting you.

11. Is there a way or can one be made to have a quicker response for questions?

ELC's goal is to return voicemails (not missed calls) and emails by close of business on the following business day. If you have not received a response by close of business on the following business day, please reach back out and request to speak to a supervisor.

12. What is the process, and do we expedite [it], if a child really needs help?

If a child is in danger of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or abandonment, you need to immediately report the situation to the Abuse Hotline. If an investigation or protective services case is warranted, the responsible agency can send ELC a child care referral for the family.

If a family is experiencing homeless or domestic violence, there are organizations that can assist the family; that assistance could include sending ELC a child care referral for the family.

If a family is in need of assistance with the cost of child care, please encourage them to complete a School Readiness application right away. Funding is not always immediately available, so the sooner they can start the process, the sooner they may receive assistance.

13. Are CLASS trainings free?

CLASS training is free for contracted providers. We offer virtual and face-to-face training. Contact resources@elcbigbend.org for more information.

14. Is it possible to be observed by CLASS at the beginning and the end of the school year?

At this time, we are unable to do the beginning and end of the school year due to the capacity of observers. In addition, law only requires us to do the assessment once per year.

15. Will you ever have in-person classes/trainings again? When?

ELC is currently offering in-person training to anyone that needs it. Please contact resources@elcbigbend.org to request a training.

16. When will the resource room open for teachers?

The Resource room is open to all teachers. You can place an order on our website and the ECE team will prepare the order for you to pick up or we will deliver. Use this link to place an order today: <https://form.jotform.com/212568682558166>

17. Can we be provided with feedback about the CLASS assessment, not only the scores?

Each Provider has access to the assessment results through the WELs system. We also offer coaching to anyone who requests it. Contact resources@elcbigbend.org for more information.

18. Additional resources for families to assist with children’s developmental needs.

Contact resources@elcbigbend.org for more information. We offer a variety of resources to assist with helping teachers, families, and children dealing with special needs.

19. Think about the increasing tuition and reimbursement rates for children 2+.

ELC did increase its rates as of 07/01/22. The State has indicated that ELC can no longer increase its rates; going forward this will be completed at the state level. It’s important to complete your provider profiles with accurate information about your private pay rates as this information is used to help determine the reimbursement rates.

20. Due to center prices going up, is there a plan for school readiness coverage to increase?

ELC did increase its rates as of 07/01/22. DEL has indicated that ELC can no longer increase its rates; going forward this will be completed at the state level. It’s important to complete your provider profiles with accurate information about your private pay rates as this information is used to help determine the reimbursement rates.

21. Can VPK parents get certificates for the fall?

Yes, the VPK application for the 2023-2024 program year became available on January 1, 2023.

22. What can you do for families that don’t meet the income guidelines (high FL minimum wage)?

ELC is working on securing local funding to create a new eligibility category for families whose income is over 150% of the Federal Poverty Level, but below 85% of the State Median Income. Once this eligibility category is funded, ELC will notify providers so you can share the information with families that may be eligible.

23. What is the process for families in protective services, concerning vouchers?

The protective services investigator/case manager sends a child care referral to ELC. After we ensure the referral is complete and accurate, the Family Services Specialist will contact the family (making at least three attempts) and advise the family how to act on the referral to establish eligibility services. Even with a referral, there is required documentation that the family must provide before they can be determined eligible.

24. Notify center about children that getting enrolled into their center.

This information is available in the Provider Portal. Go to Enrollments > Manage SR Enrollments > View/Edit SR Enrollments > Pending Family Acceptance.

25. Explain to parents how their parent fees work.

The Terms and Conditions and Certificates notify families that ELC-assessed parent fees are based on their household size and income and that ELC-assessed parent fees may not be all they have to pay for child care.

ELC encourages families to review the Certificate with their provider and to obtain from the provider a written statement of their total cost of care.

ELC is working with the State to improve the Certificate so it does a better job of explaining how School Readiness and ELC-assessed parent fees work; stay tuned for opportunities to provide feedback!

26. Parent fees should be paid directly to ELC instead of the center.

Florida Administrative Code (aka State rules) state that collecting ELC-assessed parent fees is the responsibility of the provider.

27. What would be a preferred way to refer a parent to another center when you're full?

If you are full, please encourage all families (not just School Readiness or VPK families) to contact the ELC for a customized listing of child care providers that may meet their needs. This is one of the services that we offer free to the entire community.

28. Are attendance forms due by the 3rd or is it just the attendance online?

Yes, all attendance forms are due to ELC by the 3rd business day of the month.

29. Can Family Services remind parents of the importance and requirement of signing their children in and out daily?

Many families only interact with ELC through the Early Learning Portal, and ELC is unfortunately unable to customize the Terms and Conditions given to parents in the Early Learning Portal. We will, however, recommend that the State include this requirement in the Terms and Conditions. We also support your efforts to enforce this requirement and encourage you to do so – if a family does not sign in their child, do not let that child enter your program! Doing so puts children and staff at risk.

30. Can [ELC] provide any special needs resources?

Contact resources@elcbigbend.org for more information. We offer a variety of resources to assist with helping teachers, families, and children dealing with special needs.

31. Special needs rates?

ELC is working on this - stay tuned for more information!

32. Confusion about part-time and full-time rates for School Aged Children

Most school-age children (though not all) and some other children who participate in additional programs (ESE, Head Start, etc.) have schedules that vary depending on whether it is a school (or ESE, Head Start, etc.) day or not.

The Certificates do not currently do a good job of showing these children's schedules and ELC is working with the State to improve that. In the meanwhile, you can look at the child's schedule on the attendance roster. If it says "PT" for any particular day, that means the child is only authorized for part time care on that day (up to, but not including, 6 hours of care a day). If the child attended full time anyways (6 or more hours per day), you'll need to collect the difference between your full-time private pay rate and ELC's part time reimbursement from the family.

33. Who can offer child care training in Gadsden County?

Ms. T. Preston can offer the 45-hour training and is available on Saturdays. Contact ELC for more information or for Ms. Preston's information.

34. What are some strategies to handle escalating food costs?

Meals on Wheels, Clipping coupons, group field trips to Costco/Sam's to take advantage of bulk pricing.

35. Regarding F.A.S.T Child Assessments, why are questions designed the way they are - in terms of difficulty?

The questions increase in difficulty based on the child's performance throughout the assessment.

36. How will child assessments count against their readiness rates this year?

According to DEL, 2022-23 will be used as an informational baseline year for readiness rates. The results of this year will be used to build the accountability system which will happen over the summer and then be communicated out.