

EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF OSCEOLA COUNTY

AT RISK REFERRAL ENROLLMENT GUIDELINES

ITEM: 404A.02

EFFECTIVE DATE: 6-9-15

REVISED: 6.25.25

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The Coalition will enroll all children identified as being at risk in accordance with all state statutes, and rules adopted by Division of Early Learning/Department of Education (DOE/DEL). At-risk families must have a child care application and Authorization form (Referral) from the Department of Children and Families (DCF), or its contracted provider DCF designated Lead Homeless Coalition Continuum of Care agency or Certified Domestic Violence Center.

PROCEDURE

I. Definitions:

A. At- Risk

1. **At-Risk:** Any child considered to be at-risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation as determined by a Family Services Counselor, usually from a report from the abuse hotline or who is receiving services from Family Safety units, DCF, Gulf coast and/or their identified designees.
2. **Family Unit:** A family consists of a parent or parents living together, their minor children and any other minor child for whom they are legally responsible. A family may also include other adult(s) that the parent considers part of the family unit such as an aged grandparent that is supported by the family unit. The family unit for a TANF participant shall be based on the cash assistance group as determined by Economic Self-sufficiency Policy (Career Source). In some instances, in an at-risk out of home placement, the child alone may be considered the family unit.

B. Purpose for Care

1. **Child Protection:** Child care is needed to help ensure the child is protected from abuse, neglect or exploitation in his/her own home by increasing the child's visibility in the community and/or reducing stress in the family. (No income is required)
2. **Employment:** The service is needed for the relative caregiver or foster parent to maintain employment. The referring worker submits income information if applicable for income eligibility on the application to determine parent fee for the child.
3. **Therapeutic Plan:** The service is necessary to help remedy the adverse effects of abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

C. Eligibility Categories

1. **Protective Services (In Home):** Children of families under investigation or under supervision due to an allegation of abuse, neglect or exploitation including closed protective services' cases. These children may only use licensed providers. Parent income is considered when determining eligibility.
2. **Out of Home Placement:** Pursuant to Rule 65-C-45.005 Children who are in foster care or emergency shelter shall attend a licensed early education or child care program chosen by the caregiver(s). These providers must be participating in the school readiness program through the local Coalition. These licensed programs include Gold Seal, Licensed, Public School and Licensed exempt, including religious, registered and nonpublic schools. Coalition must assess a co-payment for all families but may waive on a case-by-case basis.

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3. Out of Home Placement – Relative / Non-Relative: Children who are in relative care. These children can use any type of provider except an informal provider. Applicable fees apply and only the income considered is income for the child, (such as child support of TANF for child only).
4. TANF At-Risk (Relative Caregiver Program): Child Care for children who have been adjudicated dependent and have had an approved home study and have been either placed by the court with the relative under protective supervision or the relative has been given temporary custody by the court. The child must be a recipient of the Relative Caregiver Program payment. These children can use any type of provider except an informal provider.

Choosing a Child Care Provider

Parents/Guardians shall choose child care for children in licensed out-of-home care of their choice.

- a. Gold Seal accredited child care providers or providers participating in a quality rating system, as applicable.
- b. Licensed Center or Licensed Family Child Care Home
- c. License Exempt (for example, school-age extended day program)

Placement Process

- a. The referring partner is responsible for determining eligibility for at risk children. They complete the Child Care Authorization Referral Form (CF-FSP 5002 – DOE/DEL- DV/HM01, Part A) **in full** and submit it to agency supervisor for final approval.
- b. The referring partner will submit referral via Coalition's secure Share file Point access that meets confidentiality requirements.
- c. The SR Eligibility Specialist (SES) will verify that the referral is filled out completely and contains the following information: parent/guardian names, child names, SSNs, dates of birth, care authorized dates, family size, income, signatures of referring worker and supervisor. If the referral is not complete, the referring agency will be contacted to identify what further information is needed.
- d. Once the complete referral has been received, the SES staff will contact the parent/guardian to explain the process of completing their online EFSM account and submitting all of the required documentation to proceed with the eligibility determination.
- e. The parent or guardian must provide proof of age for each child. Accepted documents to verify proof of age are birth certificates, immunization records, physician's records, hospital records (must include child's and parent's name as well as date of birth), court records, or any other official public document that verifies proof of age for the child. If these are not available to the parent or guardian the referral from the agency may be used if child is determined by referring Agency as Medicaid eligible.
 - i. Once the (completed and approved) authorization form is received by the SES staff, the
 - ii. eligibility determination will be completed.

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- f. In instances where a parent misses or declines to come in for a determination appointment, the referring agency will be contacted and notified of the parent's non-compliance.
- g. In order to ensure that children are not left in vulnerable situations, the central agency will advise the referring Child Welfare Case Manager, within three (3)-days of receipt of a complete referral status of care. The information from the authorization form is input into the EFSM, parent co-pay is assessed, and a computerized child care certificate is generated from the system.
- h. The parent or guardian must sign the Terms and Conditions/Rights and Responsibilities documents within their online EFSM account as well as sign their certificate of enrollment electronically.
- i. Copies of the child care certificate are available for the parent within their EFSM account. The parent/guardian may now take the child care certificate to the provider listed on the certificate and services will begin at the time authorized.

Referring agency's responsibilities:

- a. Incomplete authorization forms will not be considered "received" or processed until all necessary information has been provided.
 - b. It is the referring agent's responsibility to note if the child is covered under the Rilya Wilson Act. The referring agent is responsible for notating this on the authorization form by checking the appropriate box.
 - c. The referring agent is responsible for notifying if the referred child has special needs.
 - d. The referring agent is responsible for reviewing cases at least every ninety (90) days and notifying the Coalition when a case is closed.
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PARTIES AFFECTED

Current Coalition Employees

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS / FORMS

At-Risk Referral Form