



**Early Learning
Coalition
of the Nature Coast**

At Risk/Rilya Wilson Act Frequently Asked Questions

Provider Alert! Please note your responsibilities as defined by At Risk status/Rilya Wilson Act for the following children enrolled at your School Readiness facility:

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_____, Case Manager Phone: _____

Referring Agency: _____ Date: _____

What does "At Risk" mean?

It means there is an allegation or determination that a child is At Risk of abuse, neglect or abandonment. The child(ren) question have been placed in child care for their protection pending the outcome of the case.

What is the Rilya Wilson Act?

This Florida State law was developed in 2003 to ensure the safety and well being of children who have been determined to be at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation by either the court system or by a community based Family Safety Agency. The Rilya Wilson Act was originally intended to protect children between the ages of three (3) and five (5); however, it was never the legislative intent to exclude children from birth to three (3) years of age from the provisions of the act.

What is my responsibility as child care provider if At Risk/Rilya Wilson children are placed in my care?

If you are providing care for a child in either of the funding sources BG1 or BG3R At-Risk, you are required by law to notify the **Referring Agency** each time **an At Risk/Rilya Wilson** child has either an unexcused absence, or seven (7) consecutive excused absences. (The funding source is listed directly below the parent/caregiver's home phone number on the Child Care Certificate).

What about At Risk children who are not in the home where the alleged incident occurred but are in the care of a relative or foster parent?

School Readiness provider reporting responsibilities apply to children in foster care and out of home relative/non-relative care as well as those under in-home investigation or supervision.

What is the difference between an excused absence and an unexcused absence?

An excused absence means an absence in which the parent or caregiver with whom the child resides reports the child's absence by the end of the business day on which the absence occurs, or provides advance notice that the child will not be attending care. Here are some examples:

- Parent or caregiver notifies you in advance, in writing, that a child will be on vacation the following week.
- Parent or caregiver calls you before the end of your business day to report that the child won't be attending that day and provides an acceptable reason for absence.

An example of an unexcused absence:

- Your business day ends at 6 PM; the child has not attended that day and you were not notified that the child would not attend.

How do I know when to report?

You must report absences in either of the following situations:

- By the end of the business day of an unexcused absence.
- On the day of the seventh excused absence.

Who do I notify?

You should try to contact the child's caseworker. Their name is listed on the Child Care Certificate.

If you are unable to reach them (voice mail is not acceptable):

The absence must be reported by fax to the **Referring Agency**. Rilya Wilson Act Child Absence Reporting Form EXAMPLES re: Citrus Protective Investigation/Protective Supervision reporting, Sumter County reporting, and Dixie/Gilchrist/Levy Counties reporting are available for providers.

What happens with the information that I call in?

The referring caseworker will decide if it is necessary to visit the family home to confirm that the child is safe. If the caseworker is unable to locate the child, the child will be immediately reported as missing.

How does the reporting of an excused absence of duration seven days relate to School Readiness policy of paying up to three excused days per month?

There is no relationship. The current School Readiness policy of paying for up to three excused days of missed attendance still applies.

What is my responsibility if the parent (or foster parent) changes the schedule of care? For example, they ask to change to three (3) days per week from five (5) days per week?

Any change in amount of days of care must be approved by the referring case worker through an amended court order. If the parent tells you they will be changing the number of days of care from their approved schedule, you must contact your ELCNC Client Services Counselor to notify them. Understand the schedule of days can not be changed until you receive authorization via the ELCNC Client Services Counselor.

What process do I follow if I decide that my facility can no longer provide services for a child covered by the Rilya Wilson Act?

Notify your Client Service Counselor. They will work with the parent on transferring the child to an approved site for At-Risk/Rilya Wilson children.

You are a valued member of this process! Your actions in reporting absences of At Risk/Rilya Wilson children are vitally important to keep our community's children safe! Thank you for not only the services that you provide to ready our children for school but also your diligence in making a call/sending a fax as outlined by At Risk requirements and the Rilya Wilson Act.

ELCNC use only:

Copy: Client File Parent/Guardian Provider