



Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast

Serving Citrus-Dixie-Gilchrist-Levy-Sumter Counties

Provider Alert #10

Date: January 14, 2008

Subject: Board Meeting

On January 9, 2008 the Coalition Board held their regularly scheduled monthly meeting. The following action (related directly to early learning programs) was taken:

Re-allocation of the Four Percent (4%) Budget Reduction: As addressed in the November 29, 2007 Provider Alert, the Coalition Board approved the Administrative Committee's recommendation to re-allocate the four percent (4%) budget reduction with one amendment. The amended allocation is as follows:

- a. An allocation of \$86,354 to the following Quality Initiatives:
 - i. Mini Grant Accreditation \$12,180
 - ii. Professional Development \$10,938
 - iii. Quality Resources \$ 3,568
 - iv. Teacher Incentive Payment Program \$32,418
 - v. Provider Recruitment/Expansion \$14,900
 - vi. Training and Conferences \$ 4,850
 - vii. Resource Room \$ 2,500
 - viii. Inclusion \$ 5,000
- b. An allocation of \$90,530 to the Coalition's Operating Budget. This allocation will restore the previously reduced allocations in the Coalition's line item budget. In addition, the allocation will allow the Coalition to establish an additional education specialist for the Dixie, Gilchrist and Levy area and a staff assistant in the Crystal River office.
- c. An allocation of \$59,737 to Childhood Development Services. It is important to note that during this budget reduction exercise Childhood Development Services conducted a study on the number of eligibility cases assigned to each eligibility clerk. In addition, CDS reviewed the additional workload on all eligibility clerks as a result of the new eligibility guidelines recently released by the Agency for Workforce Innovation. It was noted that an additional clerk is needed to support Dixie, Gilchrist, and Levy County clients, and an additional clerk is needed to support Sumter County clients. This allocation considers the positions identified by CDS as well as additional positions and revised positions to accomplish the following:
 - i. Increase internal control by removing eligibility and enrollment responsibilities from the Reimbursement Specialist.
 - ii. Establishing a Child File Review for the purpose of quality control.
- d. An allocation of \$102,908 to direct services.
- e. The repeal of the following provision in the Early Learning Contract with Childhood Development services effective January 1, 2008:
 - i. Effective immediately the service provider shall not be required to re-certify the eligibility of all children enrolled in the school readiness program every six months; however the service provider shall recertify the eligibility of 50% of the children enrolled in the school readiness program bi-annually through a random process.

Citrus and Dixie County Reimbursement Rates: As addressed in the December 21, 2007 Provider Alert, the Coalition Board approved the Administrative Committee's recommendation to increase the following Citrus and Dixie County rates:

CITRUS COUNTY FULL TIME WEEKLY RATE INCREASES

	Infants	Toddler	Two	Three	Fours	School Age
Centers	10.00	10.00	10.00	5.00	5.00	9.00
Gold Seal	12.00	12.00	12.00	6.00	6.00	10.80
Licensed Homes	35.00	32.00	20.00	20.00	10.00	10.00
Registered Homes	10.00	0.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	19.00

CITRUS COUNTY PART TIME WEEKLY RATE INCREASES

	Infants	Toddler	Two	Three	Fours	School Age
Centers	7.50	7.25	7.50	4.00	4.00	6.25
Gold Seal	9.00	8.70	9.00	4.80	4.80	7.50
Licensed Homes	25.75	24.00	15.25	15.25	7.75	7.25
Registered Homes	7.50	0.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	14.00

DIXIE COUNTY FULL TIME WEEKLY RATE

	Infants	Toddler	Two	Three	Fours	School Age
Registered Homes	15.00	5.00	5.00	10.00	10.00	0.00

Teacher Incentive Payment Program Revisions: As addressed in the December 21, 2007 Provider Alert, the Coalition Board approved the Administrative Committee's recommendation to revise the Teacher Incentive Payment Program Policy. As a result, early learning program owners are no longer eligible to participate in the program. In addition, the following priority for funding has been established:

- Priority One:
Existing School Readiness TIP Program teachers (previously participating the in TIP program) will be served as funding allows (this does not include program owners who are also teachers). If funding cannot support all existing school readiness participants, the teachers shall be placed on a priority one waitlist in the order the applications are received.
- Priority Two:
New School Readiness TIP Program applicants will be served as funding allows (this does not include program owners who are also teachers). If funding cannot support all priority one participants and/or new applicants, the teachers shall be placed on a priority two waitlist in the order the applications are received.
- Priority Three:
Existing Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten TIP Program teachers (previously participating the in TIP program) will be served as funding allows (this does not include program owners who are also

teachers). If funding cannot support all priority one and two participant/applicants, the teachers shall be placed on a priority three waitlist in the order the applications are received.

- Priority Four:
New Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten TIP Program applicants will be served as funding allows (this does not include program owners who are also teachers). If funding cannot support all priority one, two, and three participants/applicants, the teachers shall be placed on a priority four waitlist in the order the applications are received.

Revision to the Professional Development Program Policy: As addressed in the December 21, 2007 Provider Alert, the Coalition Board approved the Advisory Council's recommendation to revise the Professional Development Program Policy. The revision provides additional detail to applicants about the requirement to seek other scholarship opportunities where applicable and/or available.

Revisions to the Early Learning Program Operating Procedures – As addressed in the December 21, 2007 Provider Alert, the Coalition Board approved the Advisory Council's recommendation to revise the Early Learning Program Operating Procedure. The revisions provide additional clarification regarding the transfer of services from CDS to the Coalition (training, technical assistance, and provider observation), further detail regarding the procedures that must be followed if a school readiness provider is not in compliance with Coalition policies or contract requirements, and minor language changes to documentation of residency.

Part Two of the Board Retreat: As addressed in the November 8, 2008 Provider Alert, the Coalition Board engaged in a second session of the Board Retreat to address the following items:

- Quality Initiative Funding Priorities: Early learning providers approached the Executive Director with regard to the board's priority for funding and awarding quality initiatives. The early learning providers stated their understanding of the federal purpose for quality initiatives is to improve the quality of all early learning programs including school readiness and non-school readiness programs. However, the early learning providers stated that due to the lack of school readiness funding the board should consider adopting priorities for awarding quality initiatives to school readiness programs prior to awarding funds to other early learning programs such as the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten and Head Start programs.
- Guiding Principles
 - Quality vs. Quantity: Recently, the board engaged in a budget reduction exercise as a result of a statewide decrease in public funds. During this exercise the board noted the absence of, or inconsistent perception of, guiding principles related to quality early education versus quantity of early education services.
 - Development vs. Academic: The board recently engaged in discussion with regard to the board members' individual philosophy on the development of young children. 100 percent of the board members that were engaged in the discussion stated and acknowledged that the family unit is the single greatest barrier to academic achievement of children. The board members strongly agreed that the focus on a child's appropriate development is far more critical than a focus on a

child's academic success which appears natural in typically developing children. Noting this, the board members committed to addressing this problem.

The Board unanimously voted to develop an action plan that will achieve the following:

1. A description of the process the Coalition will utilize to evaluate the effectiveness of the early learning programs implemented by the Nature Coast Coalition.
2. A description of the process to research current best practices indicated by research.
3. A description of the process to research male involvement with at-risk children. In addition, if the research indicates male involvement is critical, a description of the process to develop male involvement programs.
4. A description of the process to strengthen the Coalition's relationships with agencies that interact with the entire family unit, such as the Department of Children and Families and their contracted service providers.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for March 5, 2008 beginning at 9:00 am. The meeting will be held at the VFW Post 7991 located at 3107 West Dunnellon Road (CR 488) Dunnellon, FL 34433. Coalition staff has arranged for the meeting to be provided to the public through a conference call; however, testing of this service at the above location can not occur prior to the meeting. The call in number is 1-800-503-2899 (conference code # 4937505.)

For more information or a full copy of the Board agenda please visit the Coalition's website at www.elc-naturecoast.org