



Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast
Serving Citrus – Dixie – Gilchrist – Levy – Sumter Counties

Provider Alert # 18

Date: March 10, 2008

Subject: March 5, 2008 Board Meeting

On March 5, 2008 the Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast Board held its regularly scheduled Board meeting. The following action (related directly to early learning programs) was taken:

Reimbursement Rate Increase: The Board voted unanimously to revised Action Item #2007-08-48 to the following (the revision was based on the information contained in Provider Alert #16)

1. Authorize the Executive Director to increase in the reimbursement rates for school readiness services provided to children birth to kindergarten entry that are equal to the 2007 Market Rate for the period of March 1, 2008 to June 30, 2008.
 - i. Pay the increased reimbursement rates retro-active (included in the June 2008 payment) if funding is available.
 - ii. If funding to support the entire increase is not available the Executive Director is authorized to reduce the rate by calculating the percentage of the 2007 Market Rate that can be supported by the direct services budget. (For example the direct services budget may support an increase to the reimbursement rates equal to 98% of the 2007 Market Rate.)
 - iii. If funding is not available to support any increase this action item will be considered repealed.

ELCNC Audit Report: The Board voted unanimously to approve Action Item # 2007-08-49. As a result the Coalition will be executing all School Readiness Agreements in FY2008-2009. The decision was based on staff recommendations to change the current process of CDS executing the School Readiness Agreements because the contracting activity is currently conducted by both agencies; there is a certain degree of disconnect in this process due to CDS (contracting agency) gathering the necessary documents to execute the School Readiness Contract and the Coalition being responsible for monitoring the on-going compliance on each Contract.

Utilization of Surplus Funds: The Board voted unanimously to approve Action Item #2007-08-50 which created a surplus plan for the implementation of additional Quality Initiative Programs in the event of an unexpected surplus. The plan authorizes the following:

Coalition staff to utilize surplus funds that may be allocated to Quality Initiatives by the Administrative Committee prior to the end of the fiscal year, according to the following priorities:

1. Funds to support requests for existing quality programs that were under funded. This would allow staff to approve applications that meet all program guidelines that may have been put "on hold" due to lack of funding – dollar amount to be determined according to applications collected
2. Door prizes to support the Coalition's training program – not to exceed \$6,000.00
3. *Handwriting Without Tears* trainer fees and materials needed to offer a training workshop on this Coalition-approved curriculum – not to exceed \$5,000.00

4. Purchase of *Baby Cue Cards*, an infant toddler classroom resource. Cards would be purchased and given to participants at a future training event – not to exceed \$4,000.00
5. Purchase of training materials to enhance the Coalition's training program – not to exceed \$5,000.00
6. Purchase of materials to enhance early learning provider environments, as indicated by the provider observation or provider request – dollar amount flexible

NOTE: ALTHOUGH THE ITEMS ARE LISTED ABOVE IN A DRAFT PRIORITY ORDER THIS ACTION ITEM IS INTENDED TO ALLOW THE ADVISORY COUNCILS TO DETERMINE THE PRIORITY ORDER BASED ON INDIVIDUAL COUNTY NEED.

THE TRI-COUNTY ADVISORY COUNCIL REVISED THE ORDER OF PRIORITY BY MOVING #2 TO THE END OF THE LIST.

Change in CDS Employee Positions and Employees: The Board voted unanimously to approve Action Item #2007-05-56 and 2007-08-58. As a result of the action item the following changes to CDS' organizational chart and employees will occur:

1. The Parent Services Specialist position from the Dixie, Gilchrist and Levy County office will transfer to the Citrus County office.
2. The Administrative Assistant position in Sumter County will change to a Parent Services Specialist position.
3. Shellie McCollister will become the County Manager removing Tom Scheffey from the position.

Revisions to the Early Learning Program Operating Procedure: The Board voted unanimously to approve Action Item # 2007-05-59 revising the Early Learning Operating Procedure. The revisions include the following:

1. Parents requesting school readiness services must sign a statement indicating who is in their household and what relationship they have to any child for whom they are requesting services. All people living in the home should be listed on the statement with clearly defined relationships to each child. This amendment is due to audit findings noted by the Office of Early Learning with regard to acceptable eligibility documentation.
2. Special Provisions for In-County School Readiness Providers with No Enrolled School Readiness Children
 - a. The Coalition realizes that there may be times when a provider contracts for school readiness services but does not have any school readiness students enrolled in their program. If this occurs, that provider's school readiness agreement will be placed in an in-active status. During the in-active status, the following procedures will be followed.
 - b. The provider and the provider's staff will not be eligible to participate in any quality initiative programs.
 - c. The provider will not be required to meet any of the school readiness rules, regulations, and mandates, such as program guidelines, attendance at provider meetings, submission of quarterly reports, etc.
 - d. Prior to the enrolling of a child into the provider's school readiness program the following must occur:

- i. A provider observation must be conducted. All requirements must be met. The education specialist will provide technical assistance as needed to ensure that the provider meets all criteria on the provider observation tool.
 - ii. A health and safety inspection must be completed (or obtained from Child Care Licensing if appropriate). All requirements must be met.
 - iii. The provider must submit all insurance and other certifications, if expired documents are on file.
- b. After a provider's contract is moved from in-active to active, the District Manager will continue to conduct health and safety inspections every six months in accordance with approved policy and procedures for the remaining months of the fiscal year.
- c. Once the contract is active, the District Manager will calculate the number of program observations that must be completed by the end of the fiscal year utilizing the following calculation: currently, the requirement for full year contracts is a minimum of six observations per year, which calculates to an average of 0.5 observations per month. If the in-active provider becomes active for three (3) months in the fiscal year, the provider would be required to have 1.5 (3 x 0.5 = 1.5) observations per year, rounded up to the nearest whole number, which would be two (2).
- d. Attendance at provider meetings must be calculated utilizing the method above, realizing that 80% of provider meeting attendance is required.

The purpose of this amendment is to reduce overhead cost as they relate to provider service costs with no direct benefits to school readiness children.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Sonya Bosanko at sbosanko@elc-naturecoast.org or 352-563-9939.