



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

Provider Alert # 19

Date: March 27, 2008

Subject: Teacher Incentive Payment Program Revisions

During the March 2008 Provider Meetings, Coalition staff notified providers that the Teacher Incentive Payment Program must be revised due to a copyright concern noted by the Attorney representing the W.A.G.E.S. Program. (The W.A.G.E.S. program is a similar program designed to promote continuity of care.) In addition, the Administrative Committee noted a flaw in the program as it relates to the absence of a minimum number of children served requirement within the policy.

As a result, Coalition staff drafted a revision to the program that includes the following changes:

- Teachers must serve a minimum of four (4) children in their classroom to be eligible to participate in the Teacher Incentive Program.
- Teachers must work in the same classroom for the entire program year to be eligible to receive a stipend.
- In order to ensure that each teacher works the entire year in the program stipends will be awarded only one time a year.
- Level of awards and stipends will be reduced as indicated in the attached draft policy and procedures.

It is the intent of Coalition staff to recommend the attached draft Teacher Incentive Payment Program revisions during the Advisory Council meetings scheduled in April 2008 as follows:

- Sumter County Advisory Council – April 9, 2008
- Tri-County Advisory Council – April 11, 2008
- Citrus County Advisory Council – April 14, 2008

It is important that provider comments, questions, and concerns are considered PRIOR to the meetings and during the meetings. To ensure consideration the Coalition is respectfully requesting providers to review the attached Teacher Incentive Payment Program Policy and Procedures and submit written comments, questions, and concerns to the Coalition by **April 2, 2008**.

All responses should be emailed to sbosanko@elc-naturecoast.org or mailed to 1564 North Meadowcrest Blvd. Crystal River, FL. 34429.



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Teacher Incentive Payment Program Guidelines (TIP Program)

The Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast realizes that continuity of care in high quality facilities is the key to helping children become ready for school. The Coalition also realizes that the early education industry in our service area is unable to offer high wages to teachers, to encourage them to stay in the field of early education. It is crucial to our children that the work force be stabilized.

The Teacher Incentive Payment Program (TIP Program) is designed to improve early education quality by reducing teacher turnover. This program will be available to teachers and directors in child care centers and family child care homes that are contracted to provide school readiness or VPK services. This program provides education-based salary supplements to persons providing educational activities/instruction to school readiness or VPK children between the ages of **0 – kindergarten entry**, in accordance with the program guidelines.

Designed to provide preschool children with more stable relationships with their classroom teacher, this program rewards teachers for working in the same early childhood classroom for an entire school year. If a teacher leaves the classroom they were in at the beginning of the school year he/she will no longer be eligible to receive a stipend check for that school year. The TIP Program will be offered on a first come, first served basis. If funding is exhausted, a waiting list will be developed.

Any participant that is employed by a program that offers school readiness and VPK services will receive only one annual supplement.

Teachers will report the classroom and facility that they are employed to teach at the beginning of the school year. Continued employment and service in the assigned classroom will be verified throughout the year. At the end of the school year, teachers that have remained in the same classroom for the entire year will be awarded a stipend.

Program Enrollment Criteria:

- Applicants must have a minimum of four (4) school readiness or voluntary pre-kindergarten children enrolled in their classroom at the time of initial application.
- An enrollment period will be conducted during the month of August each fiscal year. The ***Initial Application Form*** will be distributed to all early learning providers by the Coalition, and must be submitted according to stipulated timelines.
- A minimum educational level of a valid FCCPC must be attained at the time of application.
- Applicants that are employed in school readiness programs must provide educational activities/instruction to Coalition-funded school readiness children ages **0 – kindergarten entry** a minimum of **20 hours per week**.

Educational activities and instruction include:

- Planned classroom activities such as circle time, center time, outdoor play, etc.
- Planned instructional activities such as math activities, literacy activities, small group activities, etc.
- Routine classroom activities such as meal time, personal hygiene activities, etc.

Management activities that DO NOT qualify as educational activities/instruction include:

- Completion of student screenings and assessments
 - Meeting attendance, including travel time to/from the meeting
 - Completion of paperwork, such as attendance rolls, USDA food program paperwork, payroll documentation, etc.
 - Time spent with parents completing payments, paperwork, program tours, etc.
- VPK classroom lead instructors and assistants must provide educational activities/instruction to Coalition-funded VPK children in a program offering **540 instructional hours**. Instructors/assistants who work in a VPK classroom less than 540 hours are not eligible.

At the close of the enrollment period, applicant information will be verified with the employer. The annual budget for the TIP Program will be recommended by staff, reviewed and recommended by the local Advisory Councils, and approved by the Coalition board, based on available funding. Applicants will be notified in writing regarding their acceptance into the program and the supplement level assigned.

Participant Enrollment Priorities:

- **Priority One:**
Existing School Readiness TIP Program teachers (previously participating in the 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 in the 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.

Determination of TIP Program supplement amounts and procedure for processing supplement checks:

- New program participants will be assigned a supplement level based on the *Initial Application Form* and supporting documentation received during the enrollment period. These participants will be funded at that assigned level for the entire school year, regardless of any upward change in educational level that might occur during the year.
- In May of each fiscal year, approved program participants will receive a *TIP Program Participant Form* and *W-9 Form* from the Coalition. The forms will be mailed to the participants' place of employment. Completed forms must be returned to the Coalition in accordance with stipulated deadlines for submission. The information will be verified with the participant's employer and supplement checks will be processed. Supplement checks will be mailed to the participants at the mailing address provided on the form during the month of July or August.
- To receive the annual stipend, the teacher must have remained in the same early learning classroom throughout the entire school year. Classroom assignment will be verified throughout the year through observation by Coalition staff members, and will be attested to by the program director on the *TIP Program Participant Form*. Additionally, there must be a minimum of four (4) school readiness or voluntary pre-kindergarten children enrolled in the classroom at the time of verification. Note: any teacher that has transferred to another classroom during the school year will be immediately disqualified from the program.
- School readiness program participants that provide educational activities/instruction on a part-time basis of a minimum of **20 hours per week but less than 30 hours per week** will receive a part-time supplement, calculated at **50%** of the supplement amount for their assigned supplement level.
- School readiness program participants that provide educational activities/instruction **30 or more hours per week** will receive a full-time supplement, calculated at **100%** of the supplement amount for their assigned supplement level.
- VPK classroom lead instructors and assistants that provide educational activities/instruction in classrooms that offer a **540 instructional hour** program will receive a full-time supplement, calculated at **100%** of their assigned supplement level.

Maintaining eligibility for the TIP Program:

- Once approved for participation in the TIP Program, a participant retains his/her eligibility until he/she no longer meets the program participation criteria, as long as the program continues to have funding available.

Termination/Removal from the TIP Program:

- Program participants who change their place of employment or change their assigned classroom during the school year will be dropped from the program, as continuous service in the same classroom is required. Classroom assignment will be monitored throughout the school year.
- Program participants who allow their FCCPC credential or CDA National credential to expire will be removed from the program until such time as they again meet the enrollment criteria. Participants

are responsible for providing copies of updated certification to the Coalition. Applications and supplement checks will not be processed until verification of renewal has been received.

- Program participants that hold a Florida CDA-E are required to be in compliance with DCF Rule regarding CDA-E Renewal by December 31, 2008. See www.myflorida.com/childcare/training for more information. After that time, participants will be held accountable for maintaining current FCCPC certification.

Teacher Incentive Payment Program Supplement Scale

Level	Education Completed	Total Annual Amount (full-time)	Total Annual Amount (part-time)
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development, or • Florida Teaching Certification with Pre-K Endorsement (current or expired), or • Master's Degree or Doctorate in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, or related field 	\$1,500.00	\$750.00
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associate's Degree (AA or AS) in Early Childhood Education or Child Development, or • Bachelor's Degree in related field (such as Elementary Education) 	\$1,000.00	\$500.00
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Education Associate's Degree (AA) 	\$750.00	\$375.00
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current CDA National Credential 	\$450.00	\$225.00
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current FCCPC Credential 	\$200.00	\$100.00

All education awarded as Early Childhood Education or Child Development must be focused on children ages 0 – 5. Documentation is required.

***Note: Funding for level 1 on the above scale is temporary. Teachers awarded at level 1 must obtain level 2—either the national CDA or 12 credit hours in Early Childhood Education or Child Development within two years in order to retain eligibility. Family Child Care providers must reach level 2 within three years for continued funding.*



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**Teacher Incentive Payment Program
(TIP Program)
Initial Application for Participants**
Please PRINT clearly!

Name: _____ Social Security Number: _____

Mailing address: _____

Employer's name: _____

Employer's address: _____

Employer's phone: _____ Employer's county: _____

Average number of hours per week spent offering early learning educational activities/instruction: _____

Current educational level: _____
(Attach proof of current educational level)

Classroom assignment: _____

Number of school readiness children enrolled: _____

Number of voluntary pre-kindergarten children enrolled: _____

***This application must be received by the Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast
by _____, along with proof of current educational level.***

Applications will be approved as funding allows, following the approved priorities.

<i>For Coalition use only</i>	
Verification of employment/hire date _____	Full time or part time _____
Educational level verified _____	Supplement scale level assigned _____
Date verified _____	Coalition staff initials _____



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Teacher Incentive Payment (TIP) Program TIP Program Participant Form Please PRINT clearly!

Name: _____ Social Security Number: _____

Mailing address: _____

Is the above address new? _____ Yes _____ No

Employer's name: _____

Employer's address: _____

Employer's phone: _____ Employer's county: _____

Average number of hours per week spent offering early learning educational activities/instruction: _____

Classroom assignment: _____

Number of school readiness children enrolled: _____

Number of voluntary pre-kindergarten children enrolled: _____

This form must be mailed or faxed to your local office of the Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast by _____, along with a completed W-9 Form.

I certify that the above named individual has been continuously employed at my early learning facility for this TIP supplement period, that he/she has been assigned to the classroom noted above for the entire school year, and that the information contained on this form is true to the best of my knowledge.

Employer's Signature Date

<i>For Coalition use only</i>	
Verification of employment _____	Full time or part time _____
Credentials current _____	Supplement scale level _____
Date verified _____	Coalition staff initials _____
RFE # _____	Amount of stipend: _____