



Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast

Serving Citrus – Dixie – Gilchrist – Levy – Sumter Counties

Provider Alert #30

Date: May 23, 2008

Subject: VPK Provider Attendance Policy Training

Florida Statute Chapter 1002 Part V requires Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten providers to adopt a child attendance policy.

Although the Florida Statute does not specifically state the intent of the provider attendance policy, it is reasonable to believe the intent is for providers to enforce attendance policies that require children to attend the maximum number of program hours possible to increase the children's readiness for kindergarten and correspondingly increase provider's readiness rates.

In an effort to encourage providers to adopt attendance policies for the purpose of maximizing the number of hours a child attends the VPK program, and to develop a system for the Coalition to meet its obligation to monitor VPK providers for compliance with state law the Coalition will implement a more stringent Attendance Policy review during the VPK contracting process.

The Attendance Policy Review will include a review of the following mandated requirements:

- The Provider adopted an attendance policy
- The attendance policy requires the parent of each student to verify, each month, the student's attendance in the prior month.
- The attendance policy includes the provider's program hours and late fees charged for late pick-up, if applicable.
- The attendance policy includes the provider's dress code if specific uniforms or clothing are required.
- The attendance policy describes and parent involvement or other types of commitment, if applicable.

Provider attendance policies must meet all of the items listed above prior to the execution of a VPK contract.

In addition, the Attendance Policy Review will include a review of recommended criteria related to excused and unexcused absences and associated penalties for non-compliance.

If the Provider's attendance policy does not include the recommended criteria the provider may still enter into a contract to provide Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten services.

Attached is the document the Coalition will utilize to monitor attendance policy compliance.

If you have any questions or concerns or would like assistance developing an attendance policy please email your District Manager at thiers@elc-naturecoast.org or ijellis@elc-naturecoast.org or call your District Manager at the number below:

Tonya Hiers: 352-490-5855

Ingrid Ellis 352-563-9939 Ext. 228



Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast

Serving Citrus – Dixie – Gilchrist – Levy – Sumter Counties

Checklist for VPK Provider Attendance Policy

Law, Rule, Policy, Best Practice	Source	Rational	Evidence	Verified
<p>Each parent enrolling his or her child in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program must agree to comply with the attendance policy of the private prekindergarten provider or district school board, as applicable. Upon enrollment of the child, the private prekindergarten provider or public school, as applicable, must provide the child's parent with a copy of the provider's or school district's attendance policy, as applicable.</p>	<p>Law FS 1002.71(6)(a) MANDATORY</p>	<p>To ensure parent understands attendance expectations.</p>	<p>Attendance Policy</p> <p>The Attendance Policy includes a parent acknowledgement: For example: <i>"By signing the VPK attendance policy I acknowledge that have read, understand and agree to comply. (Provide a copy of the attendance policy to the parent and keep a signed copy on file)</i></p>	
<p>Each private prekindergarten provider's and district school board's attendance policy must require the parent of each student in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program to verify, each month, the student's attendance on the prior month's certified student attendance form.</p>	<p>Law FS 1002.71(6)(b) MANDATORY</p>	<p>To ensure parent understands attendance expectations.</p>	<p>The Attendance Policy includes the requirement for parents to verify their child's attendance each month for the prior month's services on the Student Attendance Form.</p>	
<p>Services for a child may be suspended or terminated if the child does not regularly attend during the program hours.</p>	<p>Best Practice RECOMMENDED</p>	<p>To encourage parents to bring their children to school on a regular basis to ensure readiness for kindergarten.</p> <p>To ensure an acceptable VPK provider readiness rate.</p>	<p>The Attendance Policy includes the program hours of operation and days of the week.</p> <p>The Attendance Policy establishes the number of hours a student may be absent prior to the suspension or termination of services.</p>	
<p>Services for a child shall be suspended if the child does not attend at least 1 instructional day during a calendar month.</p>	<p>Best Practice RECOMMENDED</p> <p>Note: RULE for Reimbursement Purposes FAC 60BB 8.204</p>	<p>To encourage parents to bring their children to school on a regular basis to ensure readiness for kindergarten.</p> <p>To ensure an acceptable VPK provider readiness rate.</p>	<p>The Attendance Policy includes statement that services for a child shall be suspended if the child does not attend at least one program day during a calendar month.</p>	

Law, Rule, Policy, Best Practice	Source	Rational	Evidence	Verified
<p>Services for a child may be terminated if absences are unexcused or if excused absences exceed three (3) calendar days per month.</p>	<p>Best Practice RECOMMENDED</p> <p>Note: RULE for Reimbursement Purposes FAC 60BB 8.204</p>	<p>To encourage parents to bring their children to school on a regular basis to ensure readiness for kindergarten.</p> <p>To ensure an acceptable VPK provider readiness rate.</p>	<p>The Attendance Policy includes a list of allowable reasons for excused absences. For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Illness or injury of the child or the child's family member which requires hospitalization or bed rest; 2. Physician or dentist appointment; 3. Infectious disease or parasitic infestation; 4. Funeral service, memorial service, or bereavement upon the death of the child's family member; 5. Life threatening illness or injury of the child's family member; 6. Compliance with a court order (e.g., visitation/subpoena) 7. Special education or related services as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1401 (2004) for the child) 8. Observance of a religious holiday or service because the child's or parent's religion forbids secular activity on the instructional day; 9. Family vacation, not to exceed five excused absences per program year; 10. Extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of the child and the child's parent. <p>The Attendance Policy includes the penalties for non-compliance (termination of services).</p>	
<p>Services for a child may be terminated if the child's parent does not document excused absences.</p>	<p>Best Practice RECOMMENDED</p> <p>Note: RULE for Reimbursement Purposes FAC 60BB 8.204</p>	<p>To encourage parents to bring their children to school on a regular basis to ensure readiness for kindergarten.</p> <p>To ensure an acceptable VPK provider readiness rate.</p>	<p>The Attendance Policy includes a statement that the parent is responsible for providing a written statement to explain absences.</p> <p>The Attendance Policy includes the penalties for non-compliance (termination of services).</p>	
<p>Services for a child may be terminated if the child is absent beyond seven (7) excused absences, if a person other than the child's parent does not document the excused absence. The person must be unrelated to the child or the child's parent and the documentation must show that the person has personal knowledge of the reason for the child's absence (e.g., letter from a physician).</p>	<p>Best Practice RECOMMENDED</p> <p>Note: RULE for Reimbursement Purposes FAC 60BB 8.204</p>	<p>To encourage parents to bring their children to school on a regular basis to ensure readiness for kindergarten.</p> <p>To ensure an acceptable VPK provider readiness rate.</p>	<p>The Attendance Policy includes a statement that the parent is responsible for providing a third party written statement of a child's absence beyond seven (7) excused absences.</p> <p>The Attendance Policy includes the penalties for non-compliance (termination of services).</p>	

Law, Rule, Policy, Best Practice	Source	Rational	Evidence	Verified
<p>A private pre-kindergarten provider or public school must notify the parent in writing of scheduled pick up periods for the VPK program and the fees or charges for late pick up. This notification must be reviewed and signed by the parent. If a parent fails to pick up his or her child from a VPK program before the end of the pick-up period the additional services provided for the child after the pick-up period are not considered part of the VPK program. A private pre-kindergarten provider or public school may require payment of fees or charges for late pick-up. A provider or school may not assess late pick-up fees or charges for children in the VPK program at rates that exceed the rates assessed for children who are not in the program.</p>	<p>OEL-PI-0027-05 ELPOP 4-2 I. 2. MANDATORY IF LATE FEES ARE CHARGED</p>	<p>To ensure parent understands program expectations and penalties for non-compliance.</p>	<p>If late fees are charged the Attendance Policy clearly states the scheduled drop off and pick up times and the fees or charges for late pick-up.</p>	
<p>The term "dress code" means the policy of a private pre-kindergarten provider or public school which requires children to wear specific types of clothing (e.g., white t-shirt and blue shorts) or which requires children to wear particular clothing (i.e., uniforms) If a provider or school adopts a dress code, the provider or school must notify the parent in writing of the dress code before delivery of VPK instruction has begun for the child. Thus if a parent enrolls the child with a provider or school that has a dress code, the parent voluntarily chooses to comply with the dress code. A provider's or school's dress code is considered a fee or charge for a child, and is consequently prohibited by the VPK program, if the provider or school does not notify the child's parent in writing of the dress code before the delivery of VPK instruction has begun for the child and/or adopts or makes changes to the dress code after the delivery of VPK instruction has begun for the child: or does not require all children attending the provider's or school's programs to comply with the dress code, regardless of whether the children are enrolled in the VPK program.</p>	<p>OEL-PI-0027-05 ELPOP 4-2 I. 5. MANDATORY IF DRESS CODE IS REQUIRED</p>	<p>To ensure parent understands program expectations and associated costs.</p>	<p>If a dress code is required the Attendance Policy clearly notes the requirement.</p> <p>The Attendance Policy includes the penalties for non-compliance, if applicable.</p>	

Law, Rule, Policy, Best Practice	Source	Rational	Evidence	Verified
<p>A private pre-kindergarten provider or public school may require the personal involvement or participation of parents in the delivery of the VPK program to their children, if the provider or school notifies each child's parent in writing of its parental involvement policy before the delivery of VPK instruction has begun for the child. As part of its parental involvement policy, a provider or school may require the personal attendance of parents at the provider's or school's VPK site for a specified period (i.e, volunteer hours). The provider or school may not, however, require parents to pay fees or charges in lieu of their personal involvement or participation.</p>	<p>OEL-PI-0027-05 ELPOP 4-2 I. 6. MANDATORY IF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IS REQUIRED</p>	<p>To ensure parent understands program expected commitments.</p>	<p>If parental involvement is required the Attendance Policy clearly notes the requirement.</p> <p>The Attendance Policy includes the penalties for non-compliance, if applicable.</p>	

Comments:

District Manager Signature

District Manager Name

Date

Technical Assistance Required?

Yes

No

If yes, forward a copy of the completed form to the Contract Coordinator.

Technical Assistance Plan:

Date Plan Completed: _____

Contract Coordinator Signature

Contract Coordinator Name

Date

Provider Signature

Provider Name

Date

