



OFFICE OF
Early Learning
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September 28, 2020

Dear SR and VPK Providers:

This is an important update on your SR and VPK payments for October.

Since March 2020, the Department of Education (DOE) and the Office of Early Learning (OEL), in coordination with the early learning coalitions, have allocated over \$363 million in funds to support the state's early learning and child care facilities through the COVID-19 pandemic – to help with cleaning supplies, teacher training, and to keep open and re-open providers. Getting these dollars in the hands of our early learning partners as quickly as possible was a top priority. Based on the feedback we have received, the timeliness of the funds provided much needed relief. These funds have come from the federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), the Preschool Development Grant, the Coronavirus, Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and general revenue funds.

DOE and OEL have worked to find flexible and meaningful ways to help providers meet the financial challenges brought on by the pandemic. From April through September, both SR and VPK providers were reimbursed based on enrollment instead of attendance. We know that this reimbursement has been a lifeline for many providers. However, given the fiscal impact of the reimbursement policy (an investment of over \$363 million over the last 6 months) and a current 2% statewide closure rate of our contracted providers, we are making changes beginning in October for both SR and VPK. OEL will continue with the standard practice of paying for temporary closures due to COVID or another state emergency.

For open SR providers, you will be paid based on attendance in October but will be reimbursed for an additional 6 absences per SR child. Documentation for absences will not be required. This means that you will be reimbursed for up to 16 total absences or for 73% of the month without documentation as this was waived in a DOE executive Order. Please note, the absence reporting requirements in Rule 6M-4.500(4)(a)-(d), F.A.C., have not been waived. Providers are still required to report excessive absences.

In continued support of parents and providers, OEL will continue to reimburse providers for the required parent co-payments through the month of October.

For open VPK providers, starting in October, you will be reimbursed according to the “80/20 rule” consistent with the VPK contract. This means that you will be reimbursed 100% for students that attend at least 80% of the month.

We remain fully committed to working in partnership with early learning coalitions and our front line contracted early learning partners to support their efforts to serve Florida's children, families and workforce.

If you have questions, you may contact you early learning coalition for more information.

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