



SLIDING FEE SCALE AND FEE WAIVER POLICY

POLICY

The Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. has established a sliding fee scale that provides opportunity for economically disadvantaged families to have equal access to early learning programs currently available to families who do not qualify for financial assistance for School Readiness (SR) services due to their income level. Families of an economically disadvantaged child must pay a parent fee, established by the sliding fee scale.

PROCEDURE

1. The sliding fee scale establishes a parent fee (co-payment) for parents based upon their family size and their family income.
2. The parent fee will be in effect for the family's eligibility period unless:
 - a. A subsequent redetermination is conducted; or
 - b. The referring case manager and/or parent/guardian requests and is granted a reduction in the parent fee due to special circumstances.
3. Sliding fee scales are based on the most recent report of the Federal Poverty Levels (FPL).
4. When the FPL is released by the Florida Office of Early Learning (OEL), the Coalition must adopt a new sliding fee schedule no later than July 1 of each year.
5. Eligibility staff will ensure the child's parent and child care provider are notified of any changes to the respective parent fee the next time the child's eligibility staff is redetermined.
6. Parents are required to share in the cost of child care by paying the parent fee as arranged with the SR provider. Providers are statutorily required to collect and document the receipt of the parent fee.
7. Parents who are in arrears, as documented by the SR provider, will be notified in writing of their non-compliance and provided a deadline, not to exceed ten (10) days, in which to either pay or develop a mutually agreed upon payment plan with the SR provider. The written notice will also advise the parent that failure to comply with the deadline will result in suspension or termination from the program.
8. Parents may not transfer from one SR provider to another until it is verified that parent fee payments are current for the most recent thirty (30) days.
9. If a SR provider terminates the child care based on the parent's failure to comply with payment of parent fees, the child may not be placed in another SR program until the parent and provider have come to a mutually agreed upon payment plan.
10. Requests for temporary reduction or waiver of parental fees completed by the referring case manager will be considered by the coalition on a case-by-case basis, under the circumstances listed below in #11.
11. Temporary reduction of parent fees may be granted by the coalition under the following documented circumstances:

- a. Parent/guardian is in prison.
 - b. Parent/guardian is in the hospital or residential treatment facility.
 - c. Parent/guardian is unemployed.
 - d. Parent/guardian is unable to work due to illness or incapacitation.
 - e. Death of a parent/guardian.
 - f. Parent/guardian is homeless or living in a shelter.
 - g. Parent/guardian are over-extended or a type of financial hardship.
 - h. Parent/guardian experienced an emergency (i.e., natural disaster, fire, etc.)
 - i. Whereabouts of parent/guardian is unknown.
12. Unless circumstances otherwise warrant, referring case managers must make a written request to the coalition for a reduction in parent fees as soon as the need exists. Proof of need for reduction must be submitted with the written request and must be approved by the coalition prior to implementation.
 13. The reduction in parent fees is limited to the time period the parent/guardian is unable to make the required payment. A beginning and end date will be assigned by the eligibility staff.
 14. Eligibility staff will document the fee waiver and send a notice to the provider and the parent/guardian.

Approved:
Board of Directors – July 23, 2015
Revisions Approved by Executive Committee:
February 15, 2017