

6M-4.200 School Readiness Eligibility Provisions.

(1) Definitions. The following definitions are applicable to all rules under Chapter 6M-4, F.A.C.

(a) though (d) No change.

(e) “Payment ~~C~~ertificate” means the document issued by the coalition authorizing School Readiness payment for a specific child to a specified child care provider for a defined period.

(f) “Person ~~W~~ho ~~S~~tands in ~~L~~oco ~~P~~arentis” means a responsible adult with whom the child lives, who is responsible for the day-to-day care and custody of the child when the child’s parent by blood, marriage, adoption or court order is not performing such duties.

(g) “Purpose for ~~C~~are” means the reason the parent needs care, such as employment, education and training, job search as indicated on a valid Department of Children and Families (DCF) or Workforce Child Care Authorization form, work activity, respite services, child protection, seasonal work, disability and special needs.

(h) No change.

(i) “Special Needs” means a child who has been determined eligible as a child who requires additional accommodations beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and has a documented special need in accordance with Section (s.) 1002.87(1)(c)6., F.S. ~~with a disability in accordance with Chapter 6A-6, F.A.C., and is participating in a program for children with disabilities provided by the school district or a child who has an individualized educational plan (IEP) or family support plan (FSP).~~

(j) through (k) No change.

(2) Authorization period and purpose for care. A family’s eligibility for school readiness services depends on an established purpose for care. A coalition must authorize services in accordance with the family’s purpose for care. During the authorization period the child ~~must shall~~ be considered eligible and ~~will shall~~ receive services at least at the same level, regardless of a change in family income remaining at or below 85% SMI or a temporary change in the ongoing status of the child’s parent as working or attending a job training or educational program.

(a) No change.

(b) Twelve-month authorization period. The coalition ~~will shall~~ authorize at-risk, economically disadvantaged, special needs children, and a parent who has an Intensive Service Account or an Individual Training Account under ~~s.~~Section 445.009, F.S., for 12-months of child care funding.

1. At-risk. Eligibility is based on a documented child care authorization from the Florida Department of

Children and Families (DCF) or its contracted provider, DCF-designated Lead Homeless Coalition Continuum of Care agency or Certified Domestic Violence Center. “~~At-risk~~ ~~At Risk~~ ~~c~~Child” is defined in ~~s. Section~~ 1002.81(1), F.S.

a. Child care authorizations for at-risk and protective services categories ~~must shall~~ be valid for the duration determined by the referring entity.

b. A child may continue to maintain eligibility under the at-risk or protective services categories as long as there is a current and valid child care authorization. Each time a child care authorization is renewed during the 12-month authorization of child care funding, child care services will continue in increments defined by the referring agency. If an additional referral is granted to the parent that extends the purpose for care beyond the initial 12-month authorization period, the coalition ~~must shall~~ authorize the parent for an additional 12-month authorization period.

2. Intensive Service Account or an Individual Training Account under ~~s. Section~~ 445.009, F.S. Eligibility is based on a documented child care authorization from the local workforce development board or its contracted provider, as defined in ~~s. Section~~ 445.009, F.S.

a. Child care authorizations for a parent with an Intensive Service Account or an Individual Training Account ~~must shall~~ be valid for the duration determined by the referring entity.

b. A child may continue to maintain eligibility under the Intensive Service Account or an Individual Training Account category as long as there is a current and valid child care authorization. Each time a child care authorization is renewed during the 12-month authorization of child care funding, child care services will continue in increments defined by the referring agency. If an additional referral is granted to the parent that extends the purpose for care beyond the initial 12-month authorization period, the coalition ~~must shall~~ authorize the parent for an additional 12-month authorization period.

3. Economically disadvantaged. To be eligible under this category the family must meet the following requirements -

a. Family Income. The family’s income, ~~as defined in Section 1002.81(8), F.S.,~~ must be at or below the State Median Income (SMI) threshold defined in s. 1002.81, F.S., 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for initial eligibility and 85 percent (85%) State Median Income (SMI) for continued eligibility. ~~If 85 percent of the State Median Income (SMI) is less than 150 percent of the FPL, then 85 percent of the SMI is the income threshold for entry into the school readiness program~~

b. Assets. A family ~~cannot shall not~~ have assets that exceed one million dollars (as certified by the family member applying for services). This applies to all children funded with Child Care and Development Block Grant funds.

c. Working Family. The family must also meet the definition of “Working family” as defined by ~~s. Section~~ 1002.81, F.S.

4. Special needs. To be eligible under this category, a child must have the documentation required by s. 1002.87, F.S. ~~be age three to kindergarten admission and have documentation of an individual education plan from the local school district.~~

(c) No change.

(3) Re-establishment period for purpose of care. When a parent experiences a loss in purpose for care, the coalition must provide the parent a ~~three (3)~~ month period to re-establish purpose for care, at which time the parent must meet purpose for care to remain eligible. If the child served is subject to ~~12-month~~ twelve-month eligibility, then the child will remain eligible for the remainder of the twelve-month authorization period. The child ~~will shall~~ continue to receive services at the same level and provider ~~will shall~~ continue being reimbursed during the ~~three (3)~~ month re-establishment period.

(a) At-risk, relative caregiver, welfare transition program and Intensive Service Account or an Individual Training Account participant. The parent no longer maintains the current purpose for care upon the child care authorization’s expiration or upon notification of termination from the referring agency to the coalition, whichever comes first. The coalition or contracted designee ~~must shall~~ inform the parent and DCF or local workforce referral agency that when the child care authorization expires or is terminated the parent will have ~~three (3)~~ months to provide documentation to establish a purpose for care under the same eligibility category or another eligibility category to continue to receive services.

(b) through (c) No change.

(d) A family will not be limited to a single ~~three (3)~~ month period to reestablish a purpose of care.

(4) Redetermination. All redetermining eligible ~~at-risk~~ At risk, ~~e~~ Economically ~~d~~ Disadvantaged, ~~s~~ Special ~~n~~ Needs children and Intensive Service Account or an Individual Training Account participants will be authorized for 12-months of child care.

(a) Family Income. The family’s income must remain at or below 85% percent of the ~~State Median Income~~

(SMI) as the upper level of the program subsidy support to be eligible for a subsequent authorization.

~~(b) All redetermining clients are subject to the graduated phase-out requirements defined by subsection 6M-4.400(3), F.A.C. if the family unit income increases to above 150% FPL and remains at or below 85% SMI.~~

~~(b)(e)~~ No change.

(5) Notification to parents. The coalition or contracted designee ~~must shall~~ notify the parents of their responsibility and the method to notify the coalition or contracted designee within fourteen (14) calendar days of any change of circumstances related to:

(a) through (d) No change.

(e) Income exceeds 85% of the ~~state median income (SMI)~~.

(6) Payment Certificate. Upon determination of eligibility, a parent ~~will shall~~ be given a payment certificate to submit to an eligible child care provider to enroll the child in its school readiness program. The payment certificate ~~must shall~~ at a minimum include the child(ren) for whom a coalition authorized child care, the provider the family selected, signatures of both the beneficiary and school readiness provider representative, the assessed parent copayment for each eligible child, the authorized hours of care and the authorized begin and end dates for school readiness services.

(7) Transfer of School Readiness Services. Eligible families ~~will shall~~ continue to receive school readiness services during the 12-month authorization period due to a change in residence within the state to a different coalition service area.

(a) The school readiness funding ~~must shall~~ transfer to the coalition service area that the family relocates to. Funding ~~must shall~~ reflect the remaining balance of 12-month authorization. Transferring families are subject to the same documentation requirements found under subsection 6M-4.208(4), F.A.C. The coalition ~~must shall~~ make every effort to coordinate with the transferring coalition to obtain documents that would be valid regardless of the location of the coalition, such as birth certificates, shot records or proof of parental relationship.

(b) The parent copayment may not be increased due to a transfer of services outside of the coalition service area, unless the family is in graduated phase-out at the time of the coalition transfer in accordance with subsection 6M-4.400(3), F.A.C.

(c) No change.

(d) If the family transfers during a reestablishment period for purpose of care, the family must reestablish a

purpose of care by the end of that same ~~three (3)~~ month period for services to be continued in the new coalition service area.

(8) Termination of School Readiness Services. Services ~~will~~ shall be discontinued for a family prior to the end of the 12-month authorization period under limited circumstances. The family and provider will be notified of disenrollment at a minimum of two weeks prior to termination of services or at the end of the current authorization period, whichever comes first. The notification to the parent ~~must~~ shall include the reason for termination.

Qualifying events for termination include:

(a) Excessive unexplained absences that exceed ten (10) calendar days during a total month of attendance. The coalition ~~must~~ shall document three attempts to contact the family and the provider regarding excessive absences prior to disenrollment.

(b) Substantiated fraud or intentional program violation determined by the coalition or its designee pursuant ~~ss. Sections~~ 1002.91 and 1002.84(18), F.S.

(c) No change.

(d) Purpose of care is not reestablished at the end of a ~~three (3)~~ month period.

(e) No change.

Rulemaking Authority 1001.02(1),(2)(n) FS. Law Implemented 1002.81(1), (6), (14) ~~(8), (16)~~, 1002.82(2)(f), 1002.87(1), (5), (6) FS. History—New 4-21-03, Formerly 60BB-4.200, Amended 7-31-14, 12-18-16, 8-20-18, 6-11-20, 11-23-21.