

Child Care for Health Care Workers and First Responders

The Office of Early Learning (OEL) and Florida's early learning coalitions provided access to child care through Florida's School Readiness (SR) program for more than 28,000 children of first responders and health care workers to support Florida's response to COVID-19. The application process required an employer referral and the application period closed on July 31, 2020.

The last day for renewal applications is December 31, 2020.

- Families that submit a renewal referral by December 31, 2020, can continue to receive child care through the program for up to 3 months.
- Families currently enrolled in the program can continue to participate through the end of their already established 3-month referral period.
- Families with referrals expiring before December 31, 2020, and wish to seek a renewal must obtain a renewed referral from their employer's Human Resources office to continue participation.
- Participation in the Child Care for Health Care Workers and First Responders Program will end on or before March 31, 2021, based on the referral end date.

Parent copayments will resume on January 1, 2021.

To support families and providers during the COVID-19 pandemic, OEL waived copayments for families participating in the SR program beginning in April 2020.

- Families who receive a renewed referral to continue participating in the Child Care for Health Care Workers and First Responders Program may continue to have their copayment waived for the duration of the referral period.
- Beginning on January 1, 2021, families participating in the SR program that did not receive a renewed referral, will begin paying or resume paying the parent copayment as established by the early learning coalition prior to the copayment waiver period.

Options are available for qualifying families.

Families currently participating in the Child Care for Health Care Workers and First Responders Program and have an income less than 85 percent of the State Median Income will be given three (3) months to establish a new purpose of care to continue to qualify for SR program participation through the end of the 12-month authorization period. The Child Care Resource and Referral program, available through the local early learning coalitions, can answer questions and assist with options for ongoing child care. Contact information can be found at: <http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/family-resources/find-quality-child-care/locate-your-early-learning-coalition>.

Providers serving children as part of the Child Care for Health Care Workers and First Responders Program that have not reached the maximum \$12,000 per facility will continue to receive a bonus while a valid referral is in place.



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