



School Readiness Quality Improvement Plan Guide

SUMMARY/PURPOSE

The purpose of this program guidance is to serve as a guide to the early learning coalition (ELC) for developing and selecting appropriate continuous quality improvement (CQI) strategies and initiating and managing the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

IMPLEMENTING THE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP)

Providers attaining a composite program assessment score in the QIP range may contract to offer SR services but must complete a 12 month targeted QIP. The purpose of the QIP is to provide support, technical assistance and training to improve the teacher-child interactions in a provider's childcare program as evidenced by improvement in CLASS scores. The ELC is responsible for selecting which staff at a site participate and which strategies they participate in up to a maximum of two strategies per staff. The ELC initiates a QIP after the program assessment composite score is generated and the provider's composite score is determined to be in the QIP range. The coalition shall place the provider on a QIP within ten (10) calendar days after the provider is notified of the composite program assessment score. In some cases, this will be prior to the SR contract the program assessment score was calculated for and will overlap fiscal years. In this case, the ELC must amend the current fiscal year's SR contract to include the QIP.

The provider's status in QPS is "QIP Composite". The QPS system will require the provider to update their roster before the ELC can assign strategies.

Exhibit 3 of Form OEL-SR 20, Statewide SR Provider Contract includes a checkbox for the ELC to indicate the provider is required to be on a QIP and space for the provider to initial for each assigned strategy. During the contract execution phase, the provider will initial underneath the checked boxes where indicated, acknowledging acceptance of the selected options prior to signing the contract.

Quality Improvement Plan – Notification to the Provider

In accordance with the Form OEL SR-20 SR Provider Contract, the ELC must notify the provider in writing if it is required to complete a QIP. The notice must identify the specific requirement(s) the provider is required to complete and set a deadline for completion of the QIP. The ELC will issue to the provider a QIP Notice (see Attachment B1 – Sample QIP Notice) that includes the following elements:

- Date of issuance.
- Names of parties involved.
- Brief summary notifying the provider that the provider is required to participate in a QIP.
- For each selected personnel:
 - Description of the assigned strategy, contract requirements and timeframe for completion. See Attachment B2 - School Readiness Quality Performance Tasks and Deliverables Schedule.

QIP Notice Attachments

The ELC shall attach Attachment B2 - School Readiness Quality Performance Tasks and Deliverables Schedule to the QIP Notice. Attachment B2 – School Readiness Quality Performance Tasks and Deliverables Schedule describes the evidence required to be uploaded in the QPS and the timeframe for submitting the evidence.

Optional Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

SR providers may voluntarily participate in continuous quality improvement strategies even though not required by their composite CLASS score. The ELC user adds a QIP to the provider by clicking on Optional CQIP from the provider management icon. The completion of the QIP set up is the same as described below.

CQI STRATEGY DESCRIPTIONS

The provider's participating staff must successfully complete each QIP deliverable by the due date provided by the QIP Notice in Attachment B2. Providers are required to submit evidence of completion for each selected staff for each assigned strategy. Staff are considered non-participating if they fail to complete the assigned strategy by the due date in Attachment B2. Staff participating in any strategy must complete the tasks during the QIP period. Prior completion of coursework or coaching does not substitute for completion during the QIP period.

Exhibit 3 of Form OEL-SR 20, Statewide SR Provider Contract, contains additional information and a description of each QIP strategy for providers and ELCs.

The ELC reviews the submitted evidence for compliance with the requirements of the QIP and approves or denies the submitted deliverable. See Deliverable Validation section below.

CLASS Group Coaching (CGC) - formerly Making the Most of Classrooms Interaction (MMCI)

This strategy is appropriate for anyone who has no or limited knowledge of the CLASS System and has not already completed Infant/Toddler and/or PreK MMCI. Pre-K MMCI certificates of completion are not acceptable for proof of completion of Infant/Toddler MMCI and vice versa.

Prequalification: None.

The ELC shall:

- Assign CGC only to staff who have not previously completed CGC.
- Schedule and provide CGC training that meets the contractual needs of participating providers under contract with the ELC by the due date listed in Attachment B2 for specific requirements.
- Designate MMCI trainers who shall provide CGC training to participating staff by the due dates in Attachment B2 from the QIP Notice.
- Provide the provider with information about where they can purchase MMCI kits. MMCI kits are not reusable or shareable and must be purchased new each contract year.

The MMCI Participant Kit is available for purchase in the Teachstone Trainer's Panel.

CLASS Group Training Requirements

Any CGC training provided to provider staff under the terms of the QIP shall be conducted by Teachstone Training, LLC-certified MMCI trainers. The ELC may provide CGC training to staff using qualified ELC staff or subcontract with other qualified entities to provide this training.

CGC training provided by or on behalf of the ELC shall:

- Provide twenty-four (24) instructional hours of CGC training on the CLASS Infant/Toddler dimensions or the PreK dimensions and include twelve (12) hours of self-study.
- Instruct staff on understanding the key teacher-child interactions that improve children’s learning as the CLASS dimensions describe.
- Teach staff to define and identify teacher-child interactions, as the CLASS observation instruments describe, that predict children’s development.
- Use Teachstone-approved MMCI participant materials.
- Be offered at a time and place convenient to the majority of providers in the area.

Make-up Sessions

Staff in a CGC training are part of a cohort and progress through each session as a group. Therefore, an absence from training may not be made up unless the ELC provides make-up sessions. CGC make-up sessions are not guaranteed. Providers should make every effort to attend all training sessions as scheduled.

In the event an ELC offers make-up sessions, the original trainer does not enter attendance into their Teachstone Trainer’s Panel until the substitute trainer sends an electronic copy of the make-up session sign-in sheet to the original trainer.

Participating providers are responsible for ensuring all staff actively participate in the sessions and do not cause a disruption while attending the CGC training courses. Participating staff are expected to participate actively by demonstrating a focus on the materials covered by the MMCI Trainer and be able to understand the course materials sufficiently.

MMCI Trainers may dismiss staff from the CGC training for one or more of the following reasons:

- Failing to participate in the course actively; including not completing assigned homework or failure to bring required MMCI kit to each session consistently.
- Focusing on personal electronic devices rather than the course.
- Disrupting the class by moving furniture to alter the flow of information or by not following the rules of the classroom.
- Failure to correct conduct after being warned by the MMCI Trainer.

Dismissed staff may, with approval of the MMCI trainer, and if available, attend one or more CGC make-up sessions within the allowable timeframes.

Early Childhood Training System (ECTS) Courses

This strategy is appropriate for staff who would like to increase their knowledge and skills in a variety of early childhood topics.

Prequalification: None.

This strategy includes the successful completion of two (2) ECTS courses in any one of the formats available: online, blended, or community of practice (COP) within the timeframe specified in the QIP Notice. Each course has a specific start and end date.

Staff not registered by course registration deadlines will not be able to participate in training. Staff not achieving course mastery at course end will be considered “non-participating”. Staff participating in this strategy must take the course during the QIP period. Prior completion of coursework does not substitute for completing the course during the QIP period.

The ELC shall:

- Notify the provider regarding the approved courses including course registration, course start and course end dates. Coordinate with project staff to schedule and manage courses for participating staff.
- Assign and distribute course codes to participating providers based on the classroom care level (infant/toddler or preschool) by the dates listed in Attachment B2.

The contracted vendor’s website, including the list of courses, is available at www.earlylearningflorida.com.

Please note: Health and Safety courses are not approved for inclusion as a QIP strategy.

Professional Development

This strategy is appropriate for staff interested in pursuing a certificate, credential, specialization or degree in early childhood. Staff in the Professional Development strategy create a Professional Development (PD) Plan and make progress in achieving the certificate, credential, specialization or degree they indicate on their PD Plan.

Staff provide documentation in the Registry to determine the Career Pathway designation they qualify for and the goal they want to make progress towards achieving.

IMPORTANT: The DEL highly recommends researching the requirements of the selected certificate, credential, specialization or degree before selecting this strategy as costs and travel requirements vary by training agency and/or college.

Prequalification: Completion of the Career Pathways Foundational Child Care Training & Core Training:

Career Pathways Foundational Child Care Training		
Child Care Facilities	Family Child Care Homes	School Age Care
DCF Part I Training (30 hours) DCF Part II Training (10 hours) Early Literacy (5 hours) DEL Approved Introductory Training	DCF Family Child Care Home Training (30 hours) Early Literacy (5 hours) DEL Approved Introductory Training	DCF Part I Training (30 hours) DCF Part II Training (10 hours)
Core Training Requirements		
FL Early Learning Standards Training	FL Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education training	Trauma-Informed Care for Child Care Professionals (TICC) training

Specific course titles are found on DCF’s Child Care Training and Credentialing website at <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-care/training.shtml>.

For trainings not hosted in the DCF Training System/Florida Professional Development Registry, individuals must complete the training and upload the training certificates into the Registry.

Additional Information

The Florida Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners, the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards, Trauma-Informed Care for Child Care Professionals, DCF Part I and Part II and the Introductory Child Care courses are available online through the DCF Registry. The system allows a limited number of attempts for staff to complete the core competency course post-test successfully. Anyone exceeding the number of attempts is locked out of the course for six (6) months. Therefore, it is required the staff complete the above steps before selecting this strategy.

Staff in possession of a Bachelor’s degree or higher in early childhood or a related field are not eligible to participate in the Professional Development strategy unless they are pursuing a new degree in a related field.

Staff assigned this strategy must demonstrate progress in achieving their PD Plan goal. The Early Childhood/School Age (EC/SA) Educator I is considered an informal designation. Both EC/SA II and III are considered formal designations.

Early Childhood or After-School Educator I (EC/SA I)	Early Childhood or After-School Educator II (EC/SA II)	Early Childhood or After-School Educator III (EC/SA III)
Core Training Requirements	Core Training Requirements	Core Training Requirements
Foundational Child Care Training	Foundational Child Care Training	Foundational Child Care Training
Florida Staff Credential or one of the following: National Early Childhood Credential (formerly CDA) Formal Educational Qualification (e.g. academic degree) Birth through Five Child Care Credential (FCCPC, ECPC or CACC) School-Age Child Care Credential (FCCPC or SAPC)	Associate degree or higher in field* or Associate degree with at least 21 early childhood education/child development, child development, early education or youth development credits from US Department of Education accredited institutions.	Bachelor’s degree or higher in field* or Bachelor’s degree with at least 36 early childhood education/child development, family and child sciences, elementary education or youth development credits from a US Department of Education accredited institution.
*Degrees in areas outlined for DCF Florida Staff Credential will be considered in field.		

See Rule 6M-4.735, F.A.C. - Early Learning Professional Development Standards and Career Pathways and Form OEL-SR 735, Early Learning Professional Development Standards and Career Pathways Handbook (August, 2020) for more information.

Visit the Early Childhood Education Directory on the Children’s Forum Portal at <https://login.thechildrensforum.com/degreedatabase> for colleges offering specializations.

Providers and coalitions can log in and access the Florida Early Care and Education Professional Development Registry (Registry) through the Department of Children and Families’ online Child Care Training System at <https://training01-dcf.myflorida.com/studentsite/admin/login.jsf>.

To access the Career Pathway, the staff logs in and updates the demographic section of the Registry. The individual clicks the continue button at the bottom left of the screen and chooses Florida Pathway from the Personal Menu.



Clicking on “Florida Pathway” opens a screen containing multiple tabs related to the Career Pathway and includes directions for working through the Career Pathway, including the development of a PD plan based on the individual’s previous completed training and qualifications. Individuals may need to upload documentation under the tabs, but most online courses taken through DCF will prepopulate into the Registry tabs.

Staff assigned to the Professional Development strategy must make an appropriate choice in the Professional Development PD Plan in which to demonstrate progress on the certificate, credential, specialization or degree they are interested in completing. Providers should not select Foundational or Core Training as a PD goal because completion of these courses is prerequisite to choosing this strategy.

All staff must demonstrate progress in their chosen PD plan by the due date in the QIP Notice. Staff must register for classes and programs in time to meet the deadline.

Staff assigned the Professional Development strategy may choose to work on the following options:

OPTION	Credential, Certificate, Specialization, Degree	Career Pathway Designation
Option 1 (see Table B1 for definition of progress)	Staff Credential	Career Pathway EC/SA Educator I
Option 2 (see Table B1 for definition of progress)	Infield Associate Degree	Career Pathway EC/SA Educator II
Option 3 (see Table B1 for definition of progress)	Formal EC degree	Career Pathway EC/SA Educator III
Option 4 (see Table B1 for definition of progress)	Specialization	N/A

The Florida Early Care and Education Career Pathway defines the required progress for each option. See Form OEL-SR-20 Statewide School Readiness Provider Contract – Exhibit 3 for the minimum progress required for each option.

Please note:

- A Career Pathway designation will not show on the PD Plan until practitioners have completed all of the core requirements and uploaded the documentation into the Registry.
- Providers choosing this strategy are required to navigate multiple online resources and should possess some ability in doing so or have support from their ELC in accessing online information, completing forms, uploading and downloading documents and other technological requirements.

The ELC must:

- Verify staff meets the prerequisite before assigning the strategy.
- Provide technical assistance to providers and their staff in accessing the Registry.
- Provide information on resources needed to complete the chosen PD Plan of staff.

IACET-Approved Training

This strategy is appropriate for staff who want to broaden their knowledge base.

Prequalification: None

This strategy involves the participation of a provider’s staff in a minimum of 20 hours of IACET face-to-face or online training related to early childhood education (must be eligible for CEUs if not IACET approved). The approval must meet the definition of Registry-approved by DCF. Some acceptable topics include teacher-child interactions, behavior or classroom management, social and emotional development of young children, trauma-informed care, daily routines, indoor and outdoor environments, developmentally appropriate practices, and language development. Conference workshop CEUs do not meet the requirements for this strategy even if IACET approved.

The ELC shall:

- Select no more than three 20-hour IACET approved trainings to offer to providers. Providers may select one of the three choices to participate in.
- Bundle shorter length trainings into one umbrella topic and offer as one cohesive 20- hour training if not offering a 20-hour course.
- Notify providers of the training dates, times and locations.
- Provide a registration process to confirm registration of staff in the course and provide registration confirmation to each staff.
- Maintain attendance records.
- Provide staff with a completion certificate at the end of the course.

Trainings not authorized by the ELC are not acceptable under this QIP. DCF mandated courses and Health and Safety courses do not meet this requirement.

Certified Coaching

This strategy is appropriate for staff who would benefit from a coaching model when learning new skills and abilities such as teacher-child interaction, behavior management, child assessment, learning environments, language development and other competencies related to early childhood.

Prequalification: None

Providers selecting this option participate in 20 hours of coaching with ELC staff or a contracted vendor using a certified coaching model for each participating classroom. Examples of approved coaching models include My Teaching Partner (Teachstone), Practice Based Coaching and Early Learning Florida (ELFL) Certified Coaching. ELCs wishing to use other coaching models must submit details of the coaching model to DEL for approval prior to implementing the model with providers.

The ELC must:

- Use certified coaches with five (5) years of experience in an early learning environment to provide the 20-hour coaching.
- Schedule and provide certified coaching visits to each of the provider’s classrooms focusing on improving the provider’s CLASS observation scores at the times and places scheduled.
- Document and maintain records related to the date and time of the visit, who was present, the general topic of the coaching visit, and any subtopics discussed and the length of the visit. Written documentation should include date, time and follow up plans for future visits.
- Identify and follow the chosen certified coaching model and implement it with fidelity.
- Provide a coach who can establish rapport and build relationships with the staff of the site.
- Provide coaching to the staff of the participating classroom including time outside of the classroom if the coaching model requires time away from the classroom for adult discussion and interaction.

Coalition Approved Strategy

ELCs may assign providers to a locally designed strategy provided it is designed to improve teacher-child interactions thereby increasing CLASS scores. Any locally designed strategy is subject to DEL approval as part of the ELC SR Plan. Any training component offered as part of the locally designed

strategy must be CEU-approvable according to the DCF definition for CEU. See the Quality Performance System User Guide for instructions to add ELC designed strategies to QPS.

ELC Administrative users of QPS must create their locally designed strategy including the strategy name, a description, instructions to the provider and whether the deliverable is a provider or individual upload or a checkbox, deliverables, and evidence of completion.

Once submitted, the strategy is added to the dropdown box for all providers in the ELC's area.

*Please note: While a user is creating a strategy, the QIP strategy assignments are frozen and no other user can work with a QIP. The strategy assignments must be unfrozen after the locally designed strategy is added. If a user attempts to add strategies when the strategy assignments are frozen, QPS alerts the user to "unfreeze" the strategies by navigating to the Manage Strategies page and toggling the "Freeze Strategy Assignments" switch to the "off" position.

Deliverable Tracking System Setup

Immediately upon QIP Composite status determination of a provider, the ELC shall notify the provider to log in to the QPS and update the Staff Roster. The ELC only assigns strategies after the provider has updated their roster. See **THE QUALITY PERFORMANCE SYSTEM – INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PROVIDER** section below for more information.

As each contract is individually tailored to a specific provider, required deliverables and evidence of completion can vary from contract to contract. It is important that the ELC accurately assign strategies in the QPS. This will enable the ELC to efficiently check a provider's deliverables against the provider's actual contract requirements and track the provider's compliance with required performance standards. Once the ELC sets up the provider's contract deliverables in the QPS, the system will only reflect those deliverables the provider is required to complete instead of all of the deliverable options and possibilities in the contract. This will increase the ELC's deliverable tracking efficiency and reduce confusion.

To create a QIP in QPS, the ELC user clicks either the QIP icon on the left or in the green notifications box in the upper right corner.

The provider's updated roster is displayed along with QIP details: start and end date, and provider contact information.

The ELC user selects strategies from the dropdown box for any staff person participating in the QIP and adds a due date for each associated deliverable.

The ELC will:

- Assign at least one but no more than two strategies to each staff selected to participate in the QPS.
- Under Strategies, click on the dropdown box of strategies and assign the strategy (ies).
- Insert the required due date for each assigned deliverable.
- After the ELC assigns strategies for each selected staff, the ELC can download the Strategy Assignments report from the Reports tab.

The ELC can use the Strategy Assignments report showing the assigned strategies for each participating staff in place of the manually completed table in the QIP Notice. The ELC must provide all other parts

of the QIP Notice to the provider.

THE QUALITY PERFORMANCE SYSTEM – INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PROVIDER

The QPS houses the QIP strategies and evidence of completion drop boxes allowing providers and ELCs to maintain and track strategy assignments and QIP completion requirements. Providers with a QIP will update staff rosters on a monthly basis and upload evidence of completion of assigned QIP strategies in the QPS.

Immediately, upon receiving direction from the ELC, the provider in a QIP Composite status shall log in to the QPS and take the following action:

- Update the Staff Roster by adding any new staff or inactivating those no longer employed at the site.

Providers must add any required staff not included in their original registration to assist in determining strategies for each selected staff. This is an opportunity for the provider to edit their Staff Roster and add any new classrooms created since the time of registration.

- Update monthly and whenever staff turnover occurs in accordance with Exhibit 3 of the Statewide SR Provider Contract.
- If there are no updates to the roster, the provider submits the roster in the QPS as is.

To add staff to the roster, the provider navigates to the section labeled “Staff,” clicks on “Add Teacher” and completes the information.

To add new classrooms or edit existing classroom information, navigate to the Classroom List and select “Add Classroom” or select the room from the list.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN MANAGEMENT

Once an ELC issues a QIP, the ELC will manage the QIP in the following manner:

1. Provide any technical assistance to the provider in completing their QIP in accordance with Form OEL-SR 20, Exhibit 3.
2. For the strategies selected for the provider, confirm and validate in a timely manner the evidence of completion that provider has uploaded and submitted into the QPS as required.
3. Communicate and follow up with provider regarding project timelines, timeliness and any missing deliverables documentation.
4. Monitor any QIP deliverables submitted by the provider.
5. Be available to meet with the provider’s staff as needed to keep provider informed about ongoing QIP activities.
6. Amend QIPs in response to staff turnover and other provider changes affecting the SR contract.
7. Provide written notice to the provider it has satisfactorily completed its QIP once the provider has completed the QIP strategies as outlined in the QIP Notice.
8. Conduct or cause to be conducted a program assessment within 60 calendar days prior to the end of the 12-month QIP term.

Deliverable Validation

At each QIP deliverable due date, the ELC shall confirm delivery and inspect and validate accuracy of all

required evidence of completion documentation submitted into the QPS by participating providers. The ELC shall review the provider's submitted evidence of completion and indicate in the QPS each required deliverable is either approved or needs correction. Definitions of Approved and Needs Correction are below.

To validate a provider's deliverables, the ELC will log in to the QPS prior to the end of each due date period, review and approve or indicate Needs Correction for each submitted deliverable no later than the first business day following the due date.

To approve or reject a deliverable in the QPS, the ELC will:

- Log in to the QPS and select the provider name from the Provider tab whose deliverables the ELC is reviewing.
- Review the documentation for compliance with the terms and conditions of the QIP Notice.
- Click each QIP deliverable and review individually.
- Approve any deliverables that are satisfactory and meet the required evidence of completion.
- Reject by indicating "Needs Correction" any deliverables not satisfactory. NOTE: Provider deliverables uploaded in the QPS by the due date the ELC determines to be unacceptable are considered delinquent.

Amending the QIP

The QIP may be amended under certain circumstances. In the event a provider requests a second assessment and the resulting composite score is no longer in the QIP range (see Rule 6M-4.741, F.A.C.) or a staff is no longer employed at the provider or is otherwise unable to continue participation in their assigned strategy due to extenuating circumstances, the QIP may be amended.

The ELC uses discretion in amending the QIP based on whether there is sufficient time remaining in the QIP period for a staff to complete the assigned strategy.

The ELC shall:

- Notify the provider to update their Staff Roster in the QPS within five (5) business days of the notification from the provider changes in staff or classrooms occurred.
- Click either Reset Plan to Roster Incomplete (staff changes) or Reset Plan to Strategies Incomplete (strategy changes.)
- Assign strategies to staff in the QPS.
- Issue a new QIP Notice for the remainder of the 12-month period.
- Follow the process outlined above for initiating a QIP.
- Amend the SR provider contract using Form OEL-SR 20A Amendment to Statewide Provider Contract.

SECOND ASSESSMENTS

Providers on a QIP may request a second assessment at their expense if they believe it will improve their composite scores, wish to conclude their QIP and possibly be eligible for quality differential rates. The ELC must select "Second Assessment" from the Provider Management icon.

Second assessment composites are treated the same as the annual program assessment composite including the termination of SR provider contracts if the second assessment composite is below the contract minimum threshold or the second assessment composite score is in the QIP range. *See special one-time exception for FY 20-21 in Rule 6M-4.740, F.A.C.

Providers must coordinate the administration of a second assessment through their local ELC. See Form OEL-SR 740 Program Assessment Requirements Handbook for more information.

See Attachment A, Program Assessment Guide for more information on the QPS tasks associated with second assessments.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Issuance of this guidance represents approval by DEL management of the indicated guidance and related administrative forms. This program guidance is effective as of the most recent date listed below. These procedures will be in effect as of the date of this guidance.

HISTORY

Original issued July 1, 2019. Rev. July 1, 2020. Rev. July 1, 2021.

Please direct questions and comments to Division of Early Learning at (866) 357-3239 or email OEL.Questions@oel.myflorida.com.