



School Readiness Quality Performance

OF INTEREST TO

The Division of Early Learning (DEL, the Division), Early Learning Coalitions and Redlands Christian Migrant Association (ELCs, Coalitions), and Coalitions' contracted service providers.

AUTHORITY/REFERENCES

Sections(s) 1002.82(2)(n), Florida Statutes (F.S.)

Chapter 2018-136, Laws of Florida

Child Care and Development Fund Plan (CCDF) Florida State Plan

Division of Early Learning (DEL) Grant Agreement

[Rule 6M-4.740 Program Assessment Requirements for the School Readiness Program](#)

[Form OEL-SR 740 Program Assessment Requirements Handbook](#)

[Rule 6M-4.741 Program Assessment Threshold Requirements for the School Readiness Program](#)

[Rule 6M-4.610 Statewide Provider Contract for the School Readiness Program](#)

[Form OEL-SR 20 Statewide SR Provider Contract](#)

[Rule 6M-4.500 Child Attendance and Provider Reimbursements](#)

Forms OEL-SR 6202, OEL-SR 6204, and OEL-SR 6206 - [Florida Administrative Rules, Law, Code, Register - FAC, FAR, eRulemaking \(flrules.org\)](#)

BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW

In 2018, the Florida Legislature passed legislation that affects school readiness (SR) providers and the children they serve in a number of ways. The legislation requires all non-exempt SR providers enrolling children birth to kindergarten entry have a program assessment to measure the quality of teacher-child interactions and meet minimum scores for contracting purposes. Providers meeting the minimum contracting threshold, but not the quality improvement threshold, may serve SR children only if they are on a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). In addition, the ELC may waive the minimum contracting threshold requirement if the provider is predetermined to be essential for meeting childcare capacity in a geographic area. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS[®], CLASS) is the program assessment procured by DEL for conducting program assessments for SR providers.

In addition to program assessment requirements, the legislation allows providers to earn higher reimbursement rates for demonstrating higher levels of quality as evidenced by composite CLASS scores and for implementing a DEL-approved child assessment.

Please reference Section 1002.82(2)(n) and (o), F.S.

DEFINITIONS

Activate Account - The process whereby a provider activates their account in the Quality Performance System (QPS) by entering their DEL ID # and their license/registration number and email address to create a username and password.

Administrative Director - A staff role for a person who functions exclusively as a director. The administrative director is not considered in the provider's child assessment reliability rate.

Approved – The ELC reviewed the evidence of completion submission for compliance with the deliverable requirement and determined the submission meets the evidence of completion the QIP requires.

Certified Coaching – Coaching provided to participating staff by certified coaches from a nationally recognized early learning coaching program with five (5) years of experience in an early learning environment.

CHILD ASSESSMENT PERIODS - Three time periods during the contract year in which children's skills and abilities are observed and recorded.

Child Eligibility - The time period a child must be enrolled or start enrollment with that provider in order to be eligible for the assessment.

CLASS Group Coaching (CGC)– Formerly Making the Most of Classroom Interactions© (MMCI) – A quality improvement strategy whereby staff complete twenty-four (24) Infant/Toddler or Pre-k hours of instruction provided by a Teachstone-certified MMCI specialist plus an additional 12 hours of self-study. CGC training teaches staff how to define and identify teacher-child interactions as the CLASS observation instrument describes. CGC is a training component of CLASS by Teachstone.

Classroom - Refers to any well-defined room in which childcare is provided or classes are held; a room arranged with materials and equipment and set up as a learning space with intent to implement a plan of activities for the SR program. The classroom provides a space where learning can take place uninterrupted by outside distractions. If floor to ceiling walls are not present, the classroom walls must be defined by stable barriers, and must adhere to the requirements for such barriers as established in Forms OEL-SR-6202, OEL-SR-6204, and OEL-SR-6206, as incorporated by reference in Rule 6M-4.620, F.A.C. Any classroom eligible to receive a SR child enrollment at any time is considered under this definition. Any classroom that serves children in the SR program for less than two hours a day is not considered a “classroom” per this definition.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®, CLASS) – An observation-based program assessment instrument and associated system of learning, measuring and improving teacher-child interactions. CLASS is a registered trademark of Teachstone Training, LLC (Teachstone).

Classroom Care Level – The following table defines each Single Statewide Information System (SSIS), Quality Performance System (QPS) and CLASS care level:

SSIS	QPS	CLASS
Infant	Infant ≥ 0, up to 18 months	Infant = 0-18 months
1-Year-Olds	Toddler ≥ 19, up to 35 months	Toddler = 15 months to 36 months
2-Year-Olds		
3-Year-Olds	Pre-K ≥ 36 months up to	Pre-k = 3 years to 5 years

Pre-K	kindergarten entry	
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Classroom List – List of active or inactive classrooms found in the QPS that are or were eligible to serve a birth to kindergarten entry age SR child.

CLASS Observation – Observational assessment measuring teacher-child interactions performed in a classroom by a Teachstone-certified observer.

CLASS Observation Contractor – Entity under contract with DEL to coordinate and conduct CLASS observations.

Coalition Approved Strategy – A quality improvement strategy designed locally by the ELC for use in a QIP.

Composite CLASS score – A score determined by averaging 50% of CLASS observations by CLASS care level at a participating provider including each CLASS dimension except Negative Climate.

Continuing Education Unit (CEU) - A standard unit of measure of coursework used for training and credentialing purposes. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) accepts CEUs for training offered by the Department of Education, Division of Early Learning, from educational institutions accredited and recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, organizations accredited by the International Association of Continuing Education and Training (IACET), or from nationally affiliated member based state professional organizations. CEUs awarded for training and credential purposes are calculated at a rate of one continuing education unit for every 10 hours of contact training.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) – A process to ensure early learning programs are systematically and intentionally improving quality services and increasing positive outcomes for the children/families they serve.

Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQIP) - A voluntary improvement plan for providers.

Contract Minimum Threshold – The minimum composite score a provider must attain from their program assessment in order to be eligible to receive an SR contract with the ELC.

Early Childhood Training System (ECTS) Courses – A quality improvement strategy whereby staff successfully complete two online/blended professional development courses offered through the statewide learning system for early learning professionals.

Exempt – When a provider meets the required criteria for exemption and is not required to have a program assessment. See Rule 6M-4.740, F.A.C. for more information regarding exempt providers.

Instructional Director - A staff role for a person who functions as a director and may also be a classroom teacher. The instructional director is counted in the provider's child assessment reliability rate.

International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) Training – A quality improvement strategy whereby staff complete 20 hours of training that carries IACET continuing education units (CEUs).

Interrater Reliability Certificates - A certificate of mastery issued by the developer of a child assessment tool indicating the recipient is proficient in administering the assessment.

MMCI Participant Kit – A training package required for CGC participants that includes training and

materials supporting effective interactions in real classrooms and how to interact intentionally to increase children’s learning. MMCI Participant Kits include 24 hours of CGC training, a CLASS Group Coaching Participant Guide, a CLASS Dimensions Guide and access to the online course. DEL has established a state negotiated rate for the purchase of MMCI kits.

Needs Correction – The ELC reviewed the evidence of completion submission for compliance with the deliverable requirements and the submission did not meet the evidence of completion the QIP requires or was not submitted.

Professional Development (PD) – A quality improvement strategy whereby staff choose a PD goal and make progress in achieving the goal.

Program Assessment – The activity of conducting observation-based CLASS assessments on the provider’s classrooms randomly selected by the WELS system and generating CLASS composite scores from the required classroom observations in accordance with Rule 6M-4.740, F.A.C.

Program Status - The status assigned to providers in the QPS.

Program Status in the Quality Performance System	
Status	Description
Needs Activation	The provider must activate a QPS user account.
Needs Registration	The provider has activated its QPS user account, but has not started a program assessment registration.
Registration Pending Review	The provider has submitted a registration and is ready for ELC review.
Pending Composite Score	The ELC has approved a provider’s registration. The ELC will then schedule and perform, or cause to be performed, a program assessment on each provider classroom selected in WELS.
Score Below Contracting Threshold	The provider has received a composite CLASS score less than the contract minimum threshold. ELCs can waive the program assessment score if they determine through needs assessment, the provider is necessary to meet childcare capacity needs.
QIP Composite	The provider received a composite CLASS score within the range for a QIP as established in Rule 6M-4.741, F.A.C.

Annual Composite	The provider received a composite score in the range for an annual program assessment as established in Rule 6M – 4.741, F.A.C.
Biennial Composite	The provider received a composite score in the range for a biennial program assessment as established in Rule 6M – 4.741, F.A.C.

QIP Deliverable - Quantifiable goods or services such as evidence of completion of training or coaching that must be provided as part of a quality improvement plan.

QIP Notice – The required notification to a provider a QIP must be initiated, identifies the participating staff, the assigned strategies and the associated due dates for evidence of completion for the QIP.

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) - A targeted 12-month plan to improve program quality using performance goals and strategies.

Quality Improvement Threshold – Program assessment composite score required in order for a provider to be eligible to contract for SR services without a QIP.

Quality Performance Rate – A differential in addition to the base reimbursement paid to providers for each SR child in attendance during the month, based on the provider’s program assessment composite score. See Rule 6M-4.500, **F.A.C.** for more information.

Registration - The process whereby an SR provider registers in the QPS system for a program assessment.

School Readiness Child (SR Child) – A child receiving SR services while attending a childcare provider under contract with a coalition to provide SR services.

School Readiness Program Assessment (SRPA) (a module within the web-based Quality Performance System (QPS)) – Where SR providers activate accounts and register for program assessments. The system uses data from the SSIS and provider input to create a record of each SR provider including their list of instructors, classrooms and classroom assignments. The system records CLASS Composites as received from WELS. Additionally, providers on a QIP upload evidence of completion in the system to satisfy the QIP requirements. The system tracks reliability rates of providers to determine eligibility to implement child assessments.

School Readiness Provider – A provider under contract with the ELC for serving SR children.

Single Statewide Information System (SSIS) (Provider Portal) - The SSIS is the DEL enterprise system that tracks child attendance, **and** child assessment scores and serves as a repository for various required documentation. The SSIS consists of three major components: the Provider Portal, the Coalition Portal, and the Family Portal. Also known as **Enhanced Field System (EFS) Modernization**.

Staff Roster – List of teachers/directors, their credentials and training entered into the QPS by a participating provider using a Web-based form application.

Statewide Professional Development Registry (Registry) – The information technology solution integrating the Florida Career Pathway that tracks and supports competency-based career development.

Submission Period 1 - Time period of October 1 to October 31 in which providers review and ensure eligible child assessments are uploaded to the assessment system.

Submission Period 2 - Time period of January 1 to January 31 in which providers review and ensure eligible child assessments are uploaded to the assessment system.

Submission Period 3 - Time period of April 1 to April 30 in which providers review and ensure eligible child assessments are uploaded to the assessment system.

Teachstone Trainer's Panel – A training panel contained within the Teachstone web-site where certified trainers request to schedule and conduct a cohort for CLASS Group Coaching.

Teachstone Training, LLC (Teachstone) – Early education company founded by CLASS authors Robert C. Pianta and Bridget K. Hamre that provides training and supports for the CLASS.

Web-based Early Learning System (WELS) - The early learning classroom support system into which CLASS observers input CLASS observation data and generate ratings for each provider.

FUNDING

Notices of Award (NOA) issued by the Division to the ELC provides a funding allocation for conducting program assessment pursuant to the early learning grant agreement between the Division and the ELC.

DEL Program Guidance 250.01 – Other Cost Accumulators (OCAs) includes OCAs that define allowable activities for program assessments required by Sections(s) 1002.82(2)(n), Florida Statutes (F.S.).

ELC Invoicing Requirements

The ELC must submit monthly invoices for program assessments conducted by the coalition to DEL in accordance with DEL Program Guidance 240.06 – Reimbursement Request Requirements. Pursuant to reporting requirements established with the early learning grant agreement, ELCs must comply with ad hoc data requests by DEL as part of the invoice support expenditure review process.

The early learning grant agreement and DEL Program Guidance 240.01 – Cash Management allows the ELCs to request an advance based on immediate cash need for the current business cycle. Any advance requests and monthly reconciliation of advances must follow the request format specified within DEL Program Guidance 240.06 - Reimbursement Requests.

Unless otherwise noted within this guidance, the ELCs must follow DEL Program Guidance 240.01 – Cash Management to manage funds for this requirement on an on-going basis.

GUIDANCE

Application Process

Providers begin the SR contracting process in the Provider Portal. Providers must mark "Yes" in the general tab to indicate they want to offer SR services. If no is marked, the provider's information will not upload into the QPS for activation and registration, therefore no SR contract can be initiated. Once providers have an approved profile, their data is uploaded to the QPS making it possible for the provider to activate their QPS account. All providers serving or intending to serve birth to kindergarten entry age SR children are required to activate their account in the QPS. Those providers determined non-exempt from program assessment based on capacity or health and safety violations and those

who are exempt but opting in to program assessment must complete and submit a registration in the QPS in order to receive a program assessment. See Attachment A – Program Assessment Guide for more information.

Conducting School Readiness Program Assessments

ELCs conduct SR program assessments for their service area using ELC staff, qualified contractors, DEL-contracted providers, or a combination. Each ELC determines the best approach for accomplishing program assessments based on its analysis of the cost of using internal staff and/or qualified contractors and available budget.

CLASS observations must be:

- Conducted by qualified CLASS observers that are Teachstone-certified reliable in the applicable assessment (Infant, Toddler, Pre-k) at the time the observer conducts a CLASS observation.
- Conducted using the age of the majority of children in the classroom to determine the appropriate CLASS tool: Infant, Toddler or Pre-k.
- Conducted following Teachstone’s observation protocols below:
 - Pre-k observations shall be four (4) cycles of twenty (20) minutes of observation for each cycle followed by a period of scoring for each cycle.
 - Toddler observations shall be four (4) cycles of twenty (20) minutes of observation for each cycle followed by a period of scoring for each cycle.
 - Infant observations shall be four (4) cycles of fifteen (15) minutes of observation for each cycle followed by a period of scoring for each cycle.
 - Observe outdoor playtime for Pre-k only when there is a planned activity.

The observer who completed the observation is responsible for entering the observation data including the raw score and detailed observation notes into the WELS information system or other DEL-designated information system in accordance with the requirements below.

All scores and notes must be entered into the DEL-defined system within 72 hours (excluding federally recognized holidays) of conducting the final observation required to generate a CLASS composite score.

- The observation entered in WELS should match the classroom listed in the QPS exactly.
- The number of children should be averaged across 4 cycles, and the number of teachers should be rounded up and listed.
- The CLASS observer shall record detailed notes for all CLASS dimensions during an observation.
- The notes should fully support the score given, with use of examples and quotations from the observation (in the original language used in the classroom). Sentence fragments and easily understood abbreviations are permitted.
- Electronically reported observation data may not be edited once it has been entered in the DEL-defined system, unless a request for editing is received and approved by DEL.
- The DEL may request additional documentation to support the validity of the changes.
- Data elements for each observation shall include:

- Assessment type (Infant, Toddler, or Pre-k).
- Observation date.
- Classroom name.
- Observer name.
- Phase (baseline, second observation, retired or non-PFP/non-SR).
- Number of adults in classroom.
- Number of students in classroom (average across observation cycles).
- Observation start time.
- Observation end time.
- Dimension scores for each dimension.
- Subscale scores for each domain.
- Detailed behavioral observation notes.

The ELC must approve the rating and generate a composite in the DEL-defined system within 72 hours of entering the final observation required to generate a composite score.

See Form OEL-SR 740 Program Assessment Requirements Handbook for more information.

CONTRACTS

In addition to meeting health and safety requirements, SR providers must meet the contract minimum threshold before receiving a SR contract (see Rule 6M-4.741, F.A.C. Program Assessment Threshold Requirements for the School Readiness Program). Providers who do not meet the minimum threshold score are not eligible to receive a contract for SR services unless the ELC has determined the provider to be essential in meeting the childcare capacity in the local area. The ELC may waive the program assessment score for essential providers but the provider must be on a QIP. Providers with no SR enrollment or enrollment below the capacity for their provider type may contract without a program assessment.

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Program Assessment Guide

Attachment B – School Readiness Quality Improvement Plan Guide

- Attachment B1 – Sample QIP Notice
- Attachment B2 – School Readiness Quality Performance Tasks and Deliverables Schedule

Attachment C – School Readiness Child Assessment Guide

- Attachment C1 – School Readiness Quality Performance Parent Portal Child Assessment Summary

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