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PARENT'S CHOICE OF TYPE OF CHILD CARE

Coordinated Child Care of Pinellas, Inc. (CCC) administers state and federally funded “parent choice” School Readiness Child Care Scholarship programs. The legal child care choices under the School Readiness Child Care Scholarship program in Pinellas County include:

- 1. LICENSED AND LEGAL EXEMPT CCC SCHOOL READINESS SUB-CONTRACTED CARE:** Child care providers under this category are licensed (Family Child Care Homes, Child Care Centers or School Age Programs) or legal/licensed exempt (Faith-based or School Age programs) and choose to sub-contract with CCC. These providers must meet additional quality standards and requirements above that of the local County License Board child care licensing standards. *Parents who receive scholarship funding from Protective Services/Investigations In-Home Placements or JWB-LIEF funding **MUST** select their child care provider from CCC School Readiness Sub-Contracted Care as required by the funder.*
- 2. LICENSED AND LEGAL EXEMPT SCHOOL READINESS NON SUB-CONTRACTED CARE:** Child Care providers under this category are licensed (Family Child Care Homes, Child Care Centers or School Age Programs) or legal/licensed exempt (Faith-based or School Age programs) and School Readiness Approved provider and choose **NOT** to sub-contract with CCC. These providers must meet local County License Board child care licensing standards.
- 3. NON-LICENSED UNREGULATED CARE (Relative or In-Home Non-Relative):** Child Care caregivers under this category are **not licensed and not regulated** under licensing standards. Informal provider is defined as a responsible relative (non-parent) including siblings, age 18 or older. The relative may care for the child (ren) in the relative’s home or the child (ren) home; a person (**non-relative**), age 18 or older, who cares for the child (ren) in the **child (ren) own home**. The maximum reimbursement for this is one-half the established state and local approved rate. Non-Licensed Unregulated Care (Informal) requirements are as follows:
 - All caregivers in this program are **required** to attend /complete the six (6.0) Hour Family Child Care Rules & Regulations Class and pass the Family Child Care Rules & Regulations Competency Exam.
 - Successfully complete CPR & First Aid Training.
 - Pass the Abuse Background Check completed for all household members who are 13 years or older.
 - A home site visit completed by a CCC Provider Consultant at the home where child(ren) will be cared for to determine if the environment is safe, is required.
 - Complete and submit the Curriculum and Character Education Compliance Forms.
 - Sign and submit the School Readiness Agreement.
 - Complete and submit the CCC Finance Packet.

NOTE: Payment will not start until all above requirements have been met and the caregiver has signed a School Readiness Child Care Agreement with CCC to receive funding.

- 4. VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM (VPK):** VPK is a free program for all children who turned 4 years old on or before September 1st each year. VPK classrooms are established throughout Pinellas County and offered by private community providers and Pinellas County Schools. There are 2 VPK programs offered within the year; a school year program that is a maximum of 540 hours and a summer program that is for 300 hours. Ask a CCC Family Services staff member for detailed information about VPK. Each 4 year old may attend only one of these programs (school year or summer). Only **one** transfer will be permitted within a VPK program or between VPK programs if the conditions meet the program guidelines. Please check with a CCC Family Services staff **prior** to moving your child to determine if eligible to transfer your child and so you can make an informed decision.
- 5. Head Start/Early Head Start:** is an alternative care choice that may be available to you if your child is birth to mandatory school age. If you are interested in this program contact your local Head Start office at 547-5900.
- 6. CCC Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R)** unit can provide you with assistance in locating any type of School Readiness Child Care Approved Provider, subcontracted, licensed or legal exempt care that meets yours and your child(ren)’s needs. CCR&R staff will also provide you with information regarding “Gold Seal” sites, VPK sites and providers convenient to where you live, work or attend school. Call CCR&R at **547-5750** or visit our website at www.childcarepinellas.org to request a list of child care providers specifically selected by your choices.

Federal civil rights requirements provide that: No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance (42 U.S.C. § 2000d).

PARENT/GUARDIAN SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. SCHOOL READINESS APPROVED:** Your child care scholarship voucher(s) is/are only valid at **Coordinated Child Care School Readiness Approved Providers**. CCC will not be responsible for charges you acquire from a provider who has not completed CCC School Readiness Approved Process. For a list of School Readiness Approved providers in your area please call **547-5750** or visit our website at www.childcarepinellas.org and complete an online request for information.

2. **SCHOLARSHIP AUTHORIZATION:** Your child care scholarship **CAN NOT START** until you and your provider(s) **ACTIVATE** your scholarship(s). Please discuss this process with CCC Family Services Staff who can confirm that placement has occurred and authorized prior to payment being made. **Each scholarship authorization is only valid for no more than 15 calendar days. Please note the “Expiration Date”.** Your child(ren) must start care prior to the “Expiration Date” indicated on the form. It will be CCC’s assumption that child care is not needed, if the child is not enrolled by that date.
3. **VISITATION RIGHTS:** Regardless of who funds your child care CCC strongly encourages you to visit your child while he/she is in care. **You may visit anytime unannounced** and let the provider know that you want to see where your child will PLAY, EAT AND SLEEP. Discuss each of these activities with the provider as well as discipline and toilet learning policies. It is also recommended that you inquire about how this provider will help pre-school age children be ready to learn when they start school.
4. **RESPONSIBILITY TO PAY PARENT FEES:** Parents/guardians are responsible to pay their child care provider the established daily parent fees assigned from the approved sliding fee schedule. If the provider charges more than CCC's contracted child care rate, **you will have to negotiate or pay** the extra money in addition to your parent fee. It is important that you inquire about any additional provider fees before selecting your child care provider. While many providers will negotiate this additional cost they are not required to do so but they must give you a written disclosure regarding the rates and fees for you to sign and keep a copy.

Note: You must keep current in your payment of parent fees to your provider(s). This fee may change due to changes in your income and/or family size. The fee is due whether or not the child (ren) is/are in care, and on CCC approved holidays. When your child is in a full-time program, you must pay the full-time parent fee. When your child (ren) is/are in a part-time program, you must pay the part-time parent fee. You may be responsible for payment, **IN ADVANCE**, of a portion of the cost of your child care. **Unpaid fees may be cause for termination from this and any other child care scholarship program.**
5. **RIGHT TO CHANGE PROVIDERS (TRANSFERS):** If you need to **CHANGE PROVIDERS**, you must call CCC to get a new authorization before you transfer your child (ren). You will not be allowed to change providers unless parent fees are current. However, no parent will be held accountable by CCC for more than 30 days of unpaid state-mandated parent fees. This applies **even if your child is going back to a provider. If you move your child prior to obtaining authorization from CCC you will be responsible for the full cost of care.** **If you are not comfortable with the quality of child care being provided,** you should immediately notify CCC and remove your child, especially if there are questions about the children’s **safety** in the child care site.
6. **RESPONSIBILITY TO MAINTAIN ATTENDANCE:** Your child (ren) **must go** to care. Reimbursement for absences shall be authorized for **no more than** a total of three (3) absences per calendar month per child, except in the event of extraordinary circumstances (ask your provider about their attendance policy). Either way your scholarship will be terminated if you do not use this scholarship or if you exceed the Funder regulations. If you remove your child from a child care location for more than 10 days in any month without notifying CCC your child care scholarship will be terminated. This includes but is not limited to removal of the child from a care location for the summer months or during school breaks without making prior arrangements with CCC. If your child is sick, you **must call your provider** so that they will know what is happening.
7. **SCREENINGS AND ASSESSMENTS:** As a requirement of the State and as part of your acceptance of receipt of a school readiness child care scholarship, your child (ren) will receive a developmental screening/assessment completed by your child care provider, CCC staff or both. If CCC staff verifies the possibility of a developmental delay, CCC will notify you and assist with accessing additional services. Another benefit, that is part of your scholarship, is that a vision and hearing screening may also be administered to your child (ren) by qualified professionals periodically throughout the year at your child care provider’s site.

INFORMATION REGARDING PROVIDER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **PROVIDER EXPECTATIONS:** All child care providers (for all Funders) are required to report any unusual marks, bruises, etc... on any child. If your Funder is the Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County (ELCP) and you are under the “At-Risk” category (Protective Investigations, Protective Service or Foster Care): Your child care provider is required to call your Case Manager on the first day of care, if your child is absent for two or more consecutive days and when you remove the child from care.
2. **HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATION RECORDS:** Within 30 days of starting child care, all children **must have current health and immunization records** on file at their child care site.
3. **DEVELOPMENTAL APPROPRIATE PRACTICES AND HEALTH & SAFETY:** All child care providers accepting ELCP school readiness child care scholarship children must have a developmentally appropriate curriculum and commitment to character education program approved by the ELCP and comply with State and local health and safety requirements.
4. **MONITORING AND ATTENDANCE:** Federal, State and local funding agencies have the right to monitor/review each and every provider site and participant’s record (funded by them) without prior notice. The provider is responsible for submitting the Enrollment/Attendance Verification Form to CCC’s Finance Department **by the 3rd (before close of business 5:00p.m.) of the following month.** The provider must verify, in the upper left hand box, that their full name, address, phone number, social security number and the children in their care are complete and correct. **The provider is required to complete the enrollment/attendance verification using the “Key” located at the bottom left corner. Payments will be sent to the provider by the 20th of that month,** providing all paperwork is complete. Please call (727) 547-5770 if you have any questions.