



FIRST RESPONDERS & HEALTHCARE PERSONNEL FAQ GUIDE

1. Q: What is the School Readiness Program?

A: School Readiness is a state wide program that offers financial assistance for child care for qualifying families.

2. Q: What are the eligibility requirements for first responders and health care workers to receive care?

A: Florida has created a referral process, through employers, for early child care services. The eligibility requirements are that the child is a U.S. citizen or qualified alien, the family resides in Florida and one or both parents are employed as a first responder or health care worker.

3. Q: What are the ages for children to receive care?

A: Children between the ages of birth up to 13 years are eligible.

4. Q: How long will services last?

A: Services will be authorized for periods of three months or less. The continued need for child care will be reevaluated prior to the end of services.

5. Q: Will parents have to pay for a portion of care?

A: In most cases, child care provider may charge some additional fees for services.

6. Q: How do first responders and essential health care personnel apply for this service?

A: First responders and health care personnel can receive the available application (referral) from their employer's Human Resources department. Once approved by the employer, the parent creates a [Family Portal Account](#), completes an online application and uploads the referral form. The early learning coalition will approve the application and the parent can select their child care provider through the Family Portal. Parents can also contact the early learning coalition as soon as the referral is approved if they need assistance with the family portal, 850-833-3627.

7. Q: Whether a new applicant or established client, do we need to send ELC a copy of the birth certificate(s) or do you get that once ELC processes the application? If the applicant is already receiving services from ELC, and they want to apply for this program, do we just check "redetermination" or "update" on the form?

A: Check the "update" box and fill out the remainder of the referral if they are already receiving services and would simply like to switch programs. For new clients, please provide the birth certificate attached to the referral. For established clients, we do not need the birth certificate.

8. Q: Which child care providers are accepting children for care?

A: Parents can request a list of available providers from the Child Care Resource and Referral Department at 850-833-9333 or online [here](#).

9. Q: Is there a difference in the benefits of this program versus School Readiness traditional funding?

A: The difference for a parent in switching from traditional school readiness funding to funding from the first responders and essential healthcare personnel program, is the eligibility requirements. A family utilizing traditional school readiness funding must have a purpose for care, through income requirements, as well as both parents must be working/attending school for a minimum of 20 hours combined. A family utilizing first responders and essential healthcare personnel funding does not need to meet income requirements, both parents do not need to be working, nor is there a minimum requirement of hours worked. This means if a family picks up additional hours and therefore becomes over income for traditional funding, they will still be eligible for first responders and essential healthcare personnel funding. The same goes the other way, if one, or both parents, lose hours, as long as one parent is still employed with an essential healthcare or first responder employer, they are still eligible to receive first responders and essential healthcare personnel funding. Only one parent has to have a purpose for care under the first responders and essential healthcare personnel funding, if the other parent loses their job, they are still eligible for the 90 day referral. After the 90 day referral ends, if parents still have a purpose for care they can switch back to traditional school readiness funding. In addition, by enrolling in the first responders and essential healthcare personnel program, parents allow the state to keep track of the emergency enrollments during the COVID-19 pandemic per provider, providers receive bonuses for the number of children they have enrolled in this program, as an incentive to remain open during this crisis.

10. Q: How can I find out about licensing inspection reports?

A: Florida's Department of Children and Families has reports listed publicly online [here](#).