

## OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING HEALTH AND SAFETY CHECKLISTS and HANDBOOKS: WHAT'S NEW?

It is very important to familiarize yourself with the content in the health and safety checklists and handbooks. Providers may come to the coalition with questions regarding the health and safety requirements. Even though the coalition is not performing the actual on-site inspection, coalition staff should be able to assist the provider in understanding the new regulations and requirements. Below are some important highlights:

### Pre-service Training Timeframe:

- All school readiness providers/staff must comply with **one** of the pre-service training options outlined in the Health and Safety Handbook (DCF **or** Early Learning Florida) within the first 90 days of employment. During the first 90 days, personnel **cannot** be unsupervised with children unless their pre-service training is complete.
- All personnel must complete pre-service training within the prescribed 90-day timeframe from the start date of employment. If pre-service training is not completed within the 90-day window, staff are ineligible to be in the classroom until they have completed the training, regardless of supervision.

### Group Size:

Age Group	Maximum Group Size	No Active Credential Required	1 Active Credential Required	2 Active Credentials Required
Birth to 12 Months	12	1-4 children	5-8 children	9-12 children
1-Year-Olds	12	1-6 children	7-12 children	N/A
2-Year-Olds	22	1-11 children	12-22 children	N/A
3-Year-Olds	30	1-15 children	16-30 children	N/A
4-5-6-Year-Olds	40	1-20 children	21-40 children	N/A
School-Age (>6)	50	1-25 children	26-50 children	N/A

- For each of the group sizes listed above, appropriate staff to child ratios must also be maintained at all times.
- For **mixed-age groups** where all the kids are 2 years old and up – group size for majority population applies.
- For **mixed-age groups** that include children under 2 years old – group size for youngest population applies.
- Group sizes do not apply during **outdoor play, dining, and special events/assemblies** or during **sedentary activities** for school-age only programs, as long as supervision and ratios are maintained.

### Stable Barriers:

- When floor-to-ceiling walls are not present, stable barriers must define classrooms. Barriers must be constructed in a sturdy manner and anchored together, or to floor or walls, must be stable and secure and must not pose a threat to falling.
- The stable walls or barriers must be a minimum of 32 inches in height from the floor in classrooms for children ages birth through 2, and must be a minimum of four (4) feet in height from the floor in classrooms for children ages 3 and older. All classrooms must continue to meet fire code requirements for classroom entrance(s) and exit(s).

### Emergency Preparedness:

- The operator must develop a written emergency preparedness plan that includes, at a minimum, procedures to be taken by the facility during a fire, evacuation, relocation, shelter in place, lockdown and inclement weather (for example: hurricanes, tropical storms or tornadoes), and to facilitate parent/guardian reunification onsite and offsite

## OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING HEALTH AND SAFETY CHECKLISTS and HANDBOOKS: WHAT'S NEW?

- The plan must include accommodations for infants and toddlers, if applicable, and must describe how the facility will meet the needs of all children, including children with special needs or with chronic medical conditions, during and following an emergency event.

### Linen Storage:

- Linens that are stored by the facility/program, such as isolation area linens, used linens, etc., must be stored in individual, enclosed containers to prevent cross-contamination.
- Programs have permission to store the child's naptime linens in their individual cubbies or openly when stacking cots, as long as the linens are not touching each other.

### Ground Cover:

- All permanent or stationary playground equipment must have a minimum of six (6) inches of resilient, impact-resistant ground cover (i.e., sand, mulch, or artificial grass/turf) or other protective surface such as rubber padding under the equipment and within the fall zone.
- Providers will need to ensure maintenance of installed protective surfaces in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines.

### Expulsion:

- All school readiness providers must have a written policy regarding expulsion of children in care. The program must provide the expulsion policy to parents upon enrollment and must obtain the parent's signature indicating receipt.
- Programs are permitted to combine their policy for expulsion with their child discipline policy.

### Background Screening:

- All School Readiness Program personnel are required to undergo a Level 2 background screening. All screening and rescreening must be processed using the Background Screening Clearinghouse. For questions concerning background screening requirements, please contact Cindy Campbell (DCF) – 850-717-4536.

### Enforcement:

- Corrective action by LLA versus corrective action taken by ELC on contract.
- Follow-up/re-inspections will be conducted by DCF or the LLA for non-compliant items not corrected at the time of the inspection.
- Licensing counselors should set corrective action plans and timeframes with providers to correct noncompliance issues. The timeframes provided in the handbook are recommended guidelines.
- Timeframes for corrective action should be set on a case-by-case basis, depending on the violation and the time needed to bring it into compliance.
- ELC will issue separate corrective action pursuant to terms of the provider contract.
- Licensing staff who conducted the inspection may be asked to participate in ELC due process proceedings and provide testimony regarding violations cited during inspection when action is taken by ELC to terminate a contract.

If you have any questions regarding the Health and Safety Checklists or Handbooks, please feel free to contact Molly Grant – 850-717-8578, Christian Summers 850-717-8574, Katerina Maroney 850-717-8614, or send an email to [OEL.Questions@oel.myflorida.com](mailto:OEL.Questions@oel.myflorida.com) .