

EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF BREVARD COUNTY

TITLE: Fee Waiver

ITEM: 404A.044

EFFECTIVE DATE: 3/16/2026

REVISED:

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POLICY STATEMENT: The Early Learning Coalition of Brevard establishes this Fee Waiver Policy in accordance with the Florida Department of Early Learning School Readiness Program requirements and Rule Florida Administrative Code Rule 6M-4.400, which authorizes coalitions to assess and, when appropriate, waive parent copayments based on family circumstances and the best interest of the child. In alignment with Florida statutes and administrative rules governing the School Readiness Program, including provisions for at-risk children and family eligibility, the Coalition recognizes that temporary or ongoing financial hardship may impact a family's ability to pay an assigned copayment. Therefore, the Coalition may waive copayments to support continued access to early learning services.

PROCEDURE:

ELC will assess a parental copayment for all families receiving SR services based on family size, hours of care needed, and income in accordance with the sliding fee scale approved by DEL.

There will be part-time and full-time copayments based on authorization level. The ELC may waive copayments for families with at-risk children as defined in Florida Statute s. 1002.81(1), whose household income is at or below 100% FPL, or who experience temporary/ongoing circumstances that limit parent's ability to pay such as: At Risk child, if, natural disaster, incarceration, or placement in residential treatment, homelessness, or household fire or burglary, or parent participation in parenting classes, or participation in an Early Head Start Program or Head Start Program.

1. The coalition has two options when preparing to waive the copayment for families with at-risk children who do not provide income documentation."

These include:

- i. Set the copayment at the most common copayment amount for the coalition (85% SMI), then,
 - Decrease the copayment if the family's copayment would be lower than the originally assessed copayment, or
 - Maintain the initially assessed copayment if the family's copayment would be higher than originally assessed.
- ii. Set the copayment to \$0 initially and the family continues to have a \$0 copayment until redetermination.

When the ELC does receive income documentation, the copayment will decrease if appropriate or maintain original copayment amount if documentation information would increase copayment.

2. If a copayment was waived, coalition staff will document the request and identify the reason for a fee waiver.

- i. A referring agency can request a copayment to be waived for at-risk children. Additionally, a parent can request for a copayment to be temporarily waived for a child whose family's income is at or below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), or

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whose family experiences a natural disaster or an event that limits the parent's ability to pay the assigned copayment such as incarceration, placement in residential treatment, becoming homeless, an emergency situation such as household fire, or burglary or the parent is participating in parenting classes or in an Early Head Start program or Head Start Program.

1. To request a fee waiver the referring agency or parent must submit a completed coalition created Fee Waiver Request form. If the parent is requesting the fee waiver documentation to verify the parent meets the fee waiver requirements is also required.
2. If a fee waiver is approved, coalition staff must ensure the Fee Waiver Request Form and supporting documentation (if applicable) is uploaded in the SSIS. In addition, the fee has been overridden in the child's eligibility section of the SSIS. Note: reinstating to the initial fee after the duration of a fee waiver is not considered a copayment increase.

PARTIES AFFECTED:

Relative caregivers, non-relative caregivers and/or foster parents caring for children in protective services in-home placements and out-of-home placements in which the child does or does not receive a TANF "child only" benefit, relative caregiver payment, or other income

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS / FORMS:

Income calculator