

EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF BREVARD COUNTY

CO-PAYMENT FEE ADJUSTMENTS

ITEM: 440A.03

EFFECTIVE DATE: 1-26-2022

REVISED: 07/01/2025

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POLICY STATEMENT

The Early Learning Coalition of Brevard County (Coalition) has established a sliding fee scale that provides the opportunity for low-income families to have equal access to early learning and child care services currently available to families who do not qualify for financial assistance for school readiness services due to their income level. Families of an economically disadvantaged child must pay a copayment, established by the sliding fee scale, and shall not exceed ten percent (6%) of the family's income, regardless of the number of children in care.

In the event that a child is in relative care, non-relative care, or in a foster care setting, the co-payment shall be assessed in accordance with the Coalition Plan approved by the Division of Early Education/Department of Education (DOE/DEL). Co-payment fees may be temporarily reduced or waived on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the approved Coalition Plan for Brevard County.

PROCEDURE

The central agency shall use the 6% fee worksheet to ensure that no parent co-payment exceeds 6% of the family's income. Prior to a child's enrollment in the school readiness program, the person determining eligibility shall inform the parent/guardian and the SR service provider of the co-payment to be paid by the parent and additional fees which are charged by the school readiness provider may apply. The amount of the co-payment shall be in effect for the family's eligibility period, except during a temporary reduction due to extreme circumstances. Redetermination of parent/guardian co-payments shall be conducted at least annually. The central agency shall establish the parent co-payment for children in protective services out-of-home placement (relative/non-relative/foster care) according to the following guidelines:

A. At Risk Out Of Home Placement

1. For protective services out-of-home placement (relative/non-relative/foster placements) where the child does not receive a TANF "child only" benefit, relative caregiver payment, or other income, the co-payment shall be waived during the referral period.
2. For protective services out-of-home placement (relative/non-relative/foster placement) where the child receives a TANF "child only" benefit or TANF at-risk (Relative Caregiver Program) participants, based upon documentation identifying the child as TANF at-risk or an a TANF "child only" benefit recipient, from the court system or the Department of Children and Families, or its designee, the copayment shall be assessed against the child's income and paid by the relative or guardian.

B. Temporary Reduction Under Extreme Circumstances

1. Temporary reduction of parental/guardian co-payment fees may be granted under the following documented circumstances:
 - a. Child's parents/guardians are in prison
 - b. Child's parents/guardians are in residential treatment
 - c. Child's parents/guardians are or have become incapacitated
 - d. Death of a child's parents/guardians
 - e. Child's parents/guardians become homeless and/or living in a shelter
 - f. Child's parents/guardians experience a natural disaster (hurricane, tornado, etc.)
 - g. Child's parents/guardians experience an emergency situation such as a fire or robbery, or
 - h. Child's parents/guardians become unemployed
 - i. Child's parents/guardians are a victim of domestic violence

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2. Unless circumstances otherwise warrant, the child's parents/guardians may apply for a co-temporary payment reduction or waiver at any time by submitting a written request to the central agency. Proof of the need for the reduction or waiver must be submitted with the written request and must be approved by the Coalition prior to implementation. The following guidelines shall apply to all requests:
 - a) The reduction in fees shall be limited to the time period during which the documented circumstances listed above are evident. A beginning and ending date will be established by the central agency, and approved by Coalition, before being implemented. Beginning on the day after the ending date of established time period, the parent/guardian co-payment will be resumed.
 - b) Parent/guardians may file for an extension of the co-payment reduction/waiver period by submitting a request in writing. Required documentation substantiating the need for an extension must accompany the request. With the Coalition's approval, the central agency may grant the extension and establish a new ending period in which the parent/guardian's co-payment will be resumed.
 - c) If an early education and care provider terminates a child care arrangement based on a parent's/guardian's failure to comply with their established co-payments, the child may not be placed in another school readiness program or granted a temporary reduction or waiver request until the payment arrangement has been satisfactorily resolved between the parent/guardian and early education and care provider.
 - d) The central agency will notify the early education and care provider of the temporary reduction or waiver of co-payments in writing, verifying the beginning and ending dates to ensure proper implementation.

C. Other Related Parent/Guardian Co-Payment Adjustments

1. If an incorrect parent/guardian co-payment was originally assessed by the eligibility determiner as a result of an error made by the eligibility determiner, the central agency may implement corrective action to reduce or increase the parent/guardian's co-payments accordingly

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