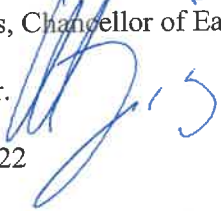




Tom Grady, *Chair*
Ben Gibson, *Vice Chair*
Members
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Esther Byrd
Grazie Pozo Christie
Ryan Petty
Joe York

MEMORANDUM

TO: Matthew Mears, Chancellor of Early Learning

FROM: Manny Diaz, Jr. 

DATE: October 18, 2022

SUBJECT: **Division of Early Learning Program Requirements**

As you know, Hurricane Ian made landfall on Wednesday, September 28, 2022, causing significant damage to communities along its path from the southwest coast of Florida to the northeast coast, severely disrupting the operations of many businesses including early learning providers and early learning coalitions, and displacing countless citizens forced to evacuate. We are acutely aware of the importance to our state of the Voluntary Prekindergarten and School Readiness programs that are overseen by your division. The impacts of the hurricane could complicate access to those programs by those displaced or significantly impacted by this disaster. In order to facilitate the rapid response to and recovery from Hurricane Ian, the following deadline extensions and flexibility shall be extended to families and providers impacted by Hurricane Ian:

- (1) The Progress Monitoring 1 (PM1) period in Rule 6M-8.620(4)(a), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), is extended for an additional ten (10) instructional days.
- (2) The period for the reporting of student performance results from the coordinated screening and progress monitoring to the students' parents in Rule 6M-8.620(2)(a), F.A.C., is extended to within seven (7) calendar days of reopening the VPK program following a temporary closure due to Hurricane Ian.
- (3) The time frame for an observer to enter and save all dimension scores and notes into the FDOE-approved vendor system in Rule 6M-8.621(3)(c), F.A.C., is extended to ten (10) business days after conducting the classroom observation.
- (4) The VPK temporary emergency closures in Rule 6M-8.204(5), F.A.C., are extended, as needed, up to October 31, 2022, for VPK providers impacted by Hurricane Ian. Providers shall be paid for temporary emergency closures.
- (5) The time frame for VPK providers to notify a coalition of a change in schedule in Rule 6M-8.300(2)(c), F.A.C., is extended as a result of the impact of Hurricane Ian up to thirty (30) calendar days after the change.

- (6) The monthly attendance verification requirement in Rule 6M-8.305(2), F.A.C., is not required for September and October of 2022, where such documentation is not available for enrolled VPK children due to family displacement or provider closure because of Hurricane Ian.
- (7) The time frame to submit documentation necessary to validate/verify eligibility in Rule 6M-4.208, F.A.C., is extended to sixty (60) calendar days.
- (8) The time frame for waiting list revalidation in Rule 6M-4.300(4), F.A.C., is extended to sixty (60) calendar days.
- (9) Coalitions are permitted to cover the copayments in Rule 6M-4.400(6), F.A.C., for families impacted by Hurricane Ian for the period from September 28 through October 31.
- (10) Families transferring to a new provider before October 31, 2022, because of impacts by Hurricane Ian are not required to provide documentation in Rule 6M-4.400(7), F.A.C., from a prior school readiness provider indicating that the copayment has been satisfactorily fulfilled.
- (11) For October 2022 only, the monthly reimbursable absences in Rule 6M-4.500(4), F.A.C., are extended up to eight (8) additional days for families impacted by Hurricane Ian.
- (12) The end date of Assessment Period One in Rule 6M-4.500(8)(c), F.A.C., is extended by fourteen (14) calendar days to mitigate the impacts of Hurricane Ian.
- (13) The period required for initial screening and subsequent redetermination screenings in Rule 6M-4.720(2), F.A.C., is extended by fourteen (14) calendar days.
- (14) The time frame for an observer to enter and save all dimension scores and notes into the FDOE-approved vendor system in Rule 6M-4.740, F.A.C., is extended to ten (10) business days after conducting the classroom observation.

For questions regarding any of the provisions above, please contact Katerina Maroney, Deputy Director of Programs and Policy/Division of Early Learning, at katerina.maroney@oel.myflorida.com.

The department is committed to working with Early Learning Coalitions and Early Care and Education Providers to ensure that children can return to in-person learning.