

Florida Department of Education
Office of Early Learning
Suspension of Administrative Rules
Related to the Voluntary Prekindergarten and School Readiness Program
In Accordance with Section 4B, Executive Order 18-276

As a result of Hurricane Michael, the Governor issued Executive Order 18-276, granting state agencies the authority to suspend orders, rules and statutes if strict compliance with these orders or laws would prevent, hinder or delay action necessary to cope with the emergency and the action is ordered by the State Coordinating Officer or prescribed in the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. Therefore, the following statutes and rules are waived as described herein to allow families and providers to continue to participate in in the Voluntary Prekindergarten and School Readiness programs and provide other relief so as not to impede recovery from the hurricane:

1. Provisions of law and rule related to the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program
 - (a) The provisions of subsections (1)(b) and (3)(a) Rule 6M-8.620, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), related to the Florida VPK Assessment to the extent necessary to extend the Assessment Period 1 (AP1) for an additional 30 calendar days to permit sufficient time for the administration of the assessment.
 - (b) The provisions of subsection (3)(c) Rule 6M-8.620, F.A.C., related to the reporting of student data from the Florida VPK Assessment to the extent necessary to extend an additional 30 days to permit sufficient time for providers and school districts to enter and submit data for the AP1 on the Bright Beginnings website.
 - (c) Rule 6M-8.204(5)(a)1, F.A.C., to the extent necessary to allow a student to be considered in attendance for all VPK program days offered during a temporary emergency closure for a combined total of seven (7) instructional days, rather than five (5) days.
 - (d) Rule 6M-8.204(5)(a)3, F.A.C., to allow a private provider or school district to revise its class schedule to restore VPK instructional days which are lost due to temporary closures caused by emergency circumstances in excess of seven (7) instructional days, rather than five (5) days.
 - (e) Rule 6M-8.300(2)(c), F.A.C. to the extent that a VPK provider may notify a coalition of a change in schedule as a result of the impact of Hurricane Michael up to 30 days after the change.
 - (f) The provisions of Sections 1002.55 (2) and 1002.63(2), F.S., related to the requirement that each school-year program be comprised of at least 540

instructional hours allowing early learning coalitions to approve modified VPK calendars comprised of only 480 instructional hours where an affected provider has suffered a hardship limiting the provider's ability to provide the 540 instructional hours.

2. Provisions of law and rule related to the School Readiness Program

- (a) The provisions of Rule 6M-4.200, F.A.C., requiring a 12-month eligibility period.
- (b) The provisions of Rule 6M-4.208, F.A.C., to the extent that applicants and families currently receiving services may be deemed eligible and enroll or continue in the School Readiness Program without having provided the documentation required in subsection (4) of the rule for an initial temporary eligibility period of up to three (3) months. At the end of the initial temporary eligibility period, the coalition may redetermine continued eligibility on a case-by-case basis subject to the family's displaced status, documentation and funding availability.
- (c) The provisions of Rule 6M-4.300, F.A.C. regarding waiting list revalidation and removal shall be suspended through December 31, 2018.
- (d) The provisions of Rule 6M-4.400(6), F.A.C, and Section 1002.84(8), Florida Statutes, regarding a coalition's authority to waive the required copayment on a case-by-case basis for a child whose family income is at or below the federal poverty level and whose family experiences a natural disaster, to the extent that a coalition may waive the copayment regardless of family income, including those children whose family income is above the federal poverty level.
- (e) The provisions of Rule 6M-4.400(7), F.A.C., requiring a parent to submit documentation from a prior school readiness provider that the copayment has been satisfactorily fulfilled before the parent can transfer to the new provider.
- (f) The provisions of Rule 6M-4.500, F.A.C., requiring that reimbursement shall be authorized for no more than (3) absences per calendar month per child except in the event of extraordinary circumstances in which case the coalition or its designee shall provide written approval for payment based on written documentation provided by the parent justifying the excessive absence for up to an additional seven (7) days. For families displaced by Hurricane Michael, the absences for extraordinary circumstances will be increased from seven (7) days to twelve (12) days. The written documentation of these absences is still required.
- (g) The provisions of Rule 6M-4.620, F.A.C, requiring School Readiness personnel to complete preservice training requirements within the first 90 days of employment, to the extent that for those personnel whose 90-day time period expired between October 1 and November 30, 2018, the time period shall be

extended an additional forty-five (45) from the date of the original expiration date. During the extension, the personnel must continue to be supervised until the training requirements are met.

- (h) The provisions of Rule 6M-4.720, F.A.C., requiring screenings for children enrolled in the program, to the extent that children must undergo initial screening within sixty (60) calendar days, rather than forty-five (45) days, and subsequent screenings within 30 days after redetermination (if screenings are done by coalitions) or within 30 days after the child's birth month (if screenings are done by the child care provider).
- (i) The provisions of Sections 1002.82(2)(i) and 1002.88(1)(c), F.S., Rules 6M-4.620 and 6M-4.610, F.A.C., relating to the inspection of School Readiness program compliance with s. 1002.88, F.S. and the health and safety checklist adopted by the office. This waiver is limited to any providers that are inspected and permitted to provide services under the Emergency Order issued by the State of Florida Department of Children and Families (Case No. 18-125-CF, Rendition No. DCF-18-247 EO.)

This Order applies to all families or providers who have been affected by Hurricane Michael and are located in the counties included in the State of Emergency declared by the Governor in Executive Orders 18-276 and 18-277, and shall remain in effect for 90 days from the date hereof subject to extensions as permissible under the executive orders.

ENTERED in Tallahassee, Florida, this 13th day of November, 2018.



Pam Stewart, Commissioner of Education