

ELC of Sarasota County

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) related to Hurricane Irma

September 14, 2017

Frequently Asked Questions

For Parents

How can parents apply for childcare services if their child's birth certificate is lost or destroyed?

Several alternative documents can be submitted for childcare services.

For the School Readiness and VPK Programs:

- An original or certified copy of the child's baptism certificate or other religious record of the child's birth, accompanied by an affidavit, that the child's parent swore to or affirmed, stating that the certificate is true and correct.
- An insurance policy on the child's life that has been in force for at least two years.
- A passport or certificate of the child's arrival in the United States.
- An immunization record that a public health officer or licensed practicing physician signed.
- Florida SHOTS documentation.
- A valid military dependent identification card.
- Official court documents.
- Protective services and Temporary Assistance to Need Families referrals, if the referral includes the child's age.
- Official vital statistics records.
- Hospital records.
- If none of the above supporting documentation is available, the parent may submit an affidavit and a signed certificate from a public health official or licensed practicing physician who has examined the child and believes that the age shown on the parent's affidavit is true and correct.

What happens if parents cannot submit their School Readiness redeterminations by the due date because of Hurricane Irma?

During the state of emergency, school readiness redeterminations received after the due date will still be processed and childcare services will not be disrupted, as long as the family continues to remain eligible.

What should parents do if their childcare program is unable to open after the storm?

Parents should email Child Care Resource and Referral at info@childcareconnectionsarasota.org or call 941-556-1600 ext. 106 for assistance with finding an alternative childcare program.

What if a child is experiencing higher than normal anxiety or is fearful of attending school?

The following are two links with resources to help children and families. There are also resources to assist teachers and parents to help children cope.

<http://www.nctsn.org/trauma-types/natural-disasters/hurricanes> <http://www.nctsn.org/trauma-types/natural-disasters/hurricanes>

<https://www.ready.gov/kids/parents/coping> <https://www.ready.gov/kids/parents/coping>

For Providers -

Who should providers contact if their programs are unable to open after the storm?

Childcare providers should be in contact with Sarasota licensing (861-6650) to determine their requirements and protocols to reopen.

Providers should notify ELC by sending an e-mail to information@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org or by leaving a message at 954-4830, ext. 228

When can providers reopen?

Providers can reopen when they can meet all health and safety standards required by the Department of Children and Families.

Will providers be reimbursed for the days their programs were closed due to the storm?

Childcare providers who were unable to open due to Hurricane Irma will be reimbursed at their normal rate.

If there is an extenuating circumstance to prevent reopening, we will discuss the situation individually with you.

How do I mark the OPS attendance sheet for the days that our site was closed and unable to resume operations?

It will be necessary for providers to submit their September attendance rosters with the code "D" for disaster, reflecting the days that the program was closed.

All providers should remember that programs are funded with state and federal dollars and ensure all documentation that is submitted is accurate and correctly reflects the services that were provided and the children who were served.

Our site closes when public schools are closed. Will we be paid based on school closure days?

No, the SR payment does not align with the school calendar. You will be paid for your closure days if you have an approved holiday for that day or in the case of Hurricane Irma, when a state of emergency was declared and your site is unable to open.

My site was open, however parent evacuated and child did not attend for several days. Can I be paid for these absences?

In the event of extraordinary circumstances such as Hurricane Irma, reimbursement for a child's absences beyond the "three absences per month" may be paid as follows:

- If the parent submits a written request of the reason for the additional absences and supporting documentation. The ELC does have documentation of the state of emergency so in this case, the parent would need to provide the written request including the reason for the request (evacuated, etc.)
- The written request must be provided to Reimbursement at the time that attendance roster are submitted for September payment.
- The ELC reviews the requests and if approved, can pay for up to seven (7) days under the extraordinary absence request.

How do absences related to Hurricane Irma impact VPK?

1. A student is considered to have attended all VPK program hours offered during a temporary closure caused by emergency circumstances for a combined five (5) instructional days for each VPK class if the private provider or school district submits notification in writing to the coalition the dates, which the provider was closed.

- a. A closure is temporary if the provider resumes instruction following the closure.
- b. A closure is caused by emergency circumstances when federal, state or local officials for the area in which the provider is located declare a state of emergency.

2. A temporary closure caused by emergency circumstances is not payable for any student who does not attend a VPK instructional day following the closure.

3. A private provider or school district shall revise its class schedule to restore VPK instructional days, which are lost due to temporary closures caused by emergency circumstances in excess of five (5) instructional days for a VPK class.

4. A private provider or school district may revise its class schedule to restore the instructional days lost because of a temporary closure caused by emergency circumstances instead of accepting payment for a temporary closure.