

# The ABCs of the ELC

**A**dvancing education one child at a time.  
**B**uilding strong foundations.  
**C**reating educational opportunities for children.

June 1, 2024

# Welcome to the Early Learning Coalition of SWFL

Dr. Melanie Stefanowicz, Chief Executive Officer  
Richard Cocchieri, Chief Financial Officer  
Gilda Duran, Chief Programs Officer  
Wynetta Upshaw, Chief Administrative Officer  
Leona Adkins, Chief Quality Officer

## What do we do?

- **School Readiness** - Florida's School Readiness Program (SR) offers financial assistance to eligible low-income families for early education and care so they can become financially self-sufficient, and their young children can be successful in school in the future.

<https://www.fldoe.org/schools/early-learning/parents/school-readiness.stml>

- **Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten** - or VPK - prepares early learners for success in kindergarten and beyond; offered to Florida residents that are 4 years old on or before Sept 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year.

<https://www.fldoe.org/schools/early-learning/parents/vpk-parents.stml>

- **Child Care Resource and Referral** - free community service that offers information and referral services to all families that are looking to find childcare information in Southwest Florida. CCR&R assists families in finding early education programs that best meet their needs.

<https://elcofswfl.org/what-is-ccrr/>

# Curriculum

## **School Readiness**

Your curriculum must be DEL approved and cover each age group served. Please visit the link for a list of approved curriculums.

Providers must have a Character Development curriculum (Curriculums with an \* next to it include character development).

You will need to show proof of curriculum prior to contracting. If you have multiple locations each center must have a curriculum on site.

## **Voluntary Pre-K**

Curriculum needs to be developmentally appropriate. Providers may select or design curriculum unless they are on probation, at that point they must use an approved curriculum from DEL.

# Lesson Plans

**School Readiness** – Each classroom must have a posted lesson plan in a place where parents can easily access it. For more detailed information on what needs to be outlined in lesson plans please see page 18 of the DCF Child Care Facility Handbook available on the DCF website or The School Readiness Health and Safety Handbook on page 19&20.

**Voluntary Pre-K** – Lesson plans must be posted weekly, and they must align with the Florida Standards in Preschool Classrooms: 3 Years Old to Kindergarten (the most recent version of the Florida Voluntary Pre-K standards).

# Child Care Facilities SR Ratios & Group Size

Age Group	Ratios	Maximum Group Size
Birth to 12 months	1:4	12
One Year Olds	1:6	12
Two Year Olds	1:11	22
Three Year Olds	1:15	30
Four, Five, Six Year Olds	1:20	40
School-Age (>6)	1:25	50

- In mixed age groups that have children under the age of 2 the group size is based on the youngest child.
- In mixed age groups that have children over 2 the group size is based on the majority age level.

# Family Child Care Home SR Ratios & Group Size

## Registered and Licensed Family Day Care Homes

Ratio clarification chart is on the left. The Florida Statute, (Chapter 402.302(7)), are in boxes on the right for **both** registered and licensed FCC homes. Provider's own children (0-12) are included in the count.

Infant (0-11 mos.)	Preschool (12 mos-5 yr+)	School Age (In K & older)	Total
4	0	0	4
3	3	0	6
3	2	1	6
3	1	2	6
3	0	3	6
2	4	0	6
1	5	0	6
0	6	0	6

a) A maximum of four children from birth to 12 months of age

b) A maximum of three children from birth to 12 months of age, and other children, for a maximum total of six children

c) A maximum of six preschool children if all are older than 12 months of age

## Large Family Child Care Homes

Ratios are for **licensed large family child care homes** (Section 402.302(8), F.S.) Homes with **2 providers present** (one must have a Staff Credential caring for the children. Provider's own children (0-12) are included in the count.

Infants & Toddlers (0-23 months)	Preschool & School Age (24 months and older)	Total
8	0	8
7	1	8
6	2	8
5	3	8
4	8	12
3	9	12
2	10	12
1	11	12
0	12	12

a) A maximum of 8 children from birth to 24 months of age

b) A maximum of 12 children, with no more than 4 children under 24 months of age

# SR CDA Requirements

Each classroom that requires a second teacher is required to have one teacher who has a credential as a National Child Development Associate (CDA) or a Florida Child Care Professional Certificate (FCCPC).

Age Group	Ratios	Maximum Group Size	No Active Credential Required	1 Active Credential Required	2 Active Credentials Required
Birth to 12 months	1:4	12	1-4 children	5-8 children	9-12 children
One Year Olds	1:6	12	1-6 children	7-12 children	N/A
Two Year Olds	1:11	22	1-11 children	12-22 children	N/A
Three Year Olds	1:15	30	1-15 children	16-30 children	N/A
Four, Five, Six Year Olds	1:20	40	1-20 children	21-40 children	N/A
School-Age (>6)	1:25	50	1-25 children	26-50 children	N/A

*\* This is a SR requirement that is monitored by DCF during your annual inspection*

# Pre-Service Requirements

**SR-** All program personnel must complete one of the following within **90 days of initial employment**. Those who do not complete this may not be allowed to be left alone with children. (see page 41 of SR Handbook- section 18)

## **Option 1: DCF (24 hours)**

<https://training01-dcf.myflorida.com/student/site/admin/signin>

Health, Safety and Nutrition (8 hours)

Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect (4 hours)

Child Growth and Development (6 hours)

Behavior Observation and Screening (6 hours)

## **Option 2: Early Learning Florida health and safety modules**

<https://collabornation.net/login/floridaearlylearning>

Health and Sanitation

Safety of the Environment

Precautions in Transporting Children

Safe Sleep Practices

Child Safety and Prevention

Planning for Emergencies

Prevention of Child Abuse and Supporting Children in Trauma

## **And one of the Following**

Supporting the Social-Emotional Development of Infants/Toddlers

Supporting the Social-Emotional Development of Preschool Children

Supporting the Social-Emotional Development of Mixed Age Group Care



# DCF Health & Safety Training Requirements

All current SR childcare personnel must complete two new health and safety courses (Health and Nutrition in the School Readiness Program and Safety Practices in the School Readiness Program) by **June 30, 2024**.

# Screenings & Assessments

**SR- Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQs)** - are a screening tool required to be completed and entered in the Portal within the first 45 days for a new student and yearly after. For more information on ASQs contact Sharyn Harris at (239) 935-6194 or [Sharyn.Harris@elcofswfl.org](mailto:Sharyn.Harris@elcofswfl.org).

**SR- MyTeachingStrategies™**- is an on-going assessment of a child's progress that involves observing the child's development and entering data into the online system. This is done three times per year. For more information and assistance contact Bronwyn Gogia at (239) 935-6167 or [Bronwyn.Gogia@elcofswfl.org](mailto:Bronwyn.Gogia@elcofswfl.org).

**\*Optional however incentive 5% is provided for participating**

**VPK- Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring: Florida's Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) using Star Early Literacy-** A computer-adaptive assessment conducted three times a year (fall, winter, spring) on all VPK children. For more information you can contact Bronwyn Gogia at (239) 935-6167 or [Bronwyn.Gogia@elcofswfl.org](mailto:Bronwyn.Gogia@elcofswfl.org).

# Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)

**Both the ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2 screenings will be required for all School Readiness children.**

All **new** providers are required to take the “Introduction to ASQ-3” Training in English or Spanish

Register for this training at: <https://elcofswfl.org/events/category/trainings/>

**ASQ notifications-** Provider Portal must be checked regularly for screening due dates Providers be sure to check your provider portal regularly for screening due dates.

Parents are being asked to consent and administer both ASQ screenings for their child(ren) when they come in for their initial and redetermination appointments. **Parents have three options to choose from:**

They can choose to do the screenings in person at the office.

They can opt to do them later, which is five days after their appointment date. Lastly, they can choose to have the provider do the screening.

# Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)

**You are required to share the ASQ screening with the parents.** Once the ASQ screening is complete, providers must have parents sign and date the completed screening when the ASQ results are shared. Providers must place the signed copy in the child's file.

Providers will receive a courtesy email reminder two (2) days prior to the screening due date.

**Check your Provider Portal regularly for any incomplete ASQ screening requests.**

Contact Assessment and Screening staff for further questions:

**Bronwyn Gogia -Director of Assessment and Screening 239-935-6167**

**Sharyn Harris - Lead Assessment and Screening Specialist 239-935-6194**

**Ivonne Orengo - Developmental Screening Specialist 239-935-6143**

# Florida's Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST)

## Progress Monitoring Windows

**Progress Monitoring 1:** Within the first 30 instructional days

**Progress Monitoring 2:** Within 40-60% of program completed

**Progress Monitoring 3:** Within the last 30 instructional days.

**ALL VPK Children must be assessed 3 times per year within the designated window to avoid compliance issues including non-payment and/or termination of VPK Contract.**

Renaissance Testing site: <https://global-zone05.renaissance-go.com/welcomeportal/7957988>

At least one person as an Authorized Renaissance User or “admin” for VPK FAST Star Early Literacy in [DEL Provider Portal](#) .  
(These users are VPK Program owners, directors, or VPK Directors that will have access to the VPK Renaissance Testing Site and are responsible for implementing the VPK FAST Star Early Literacy administrative tasks)

# Renaissance-U

**Any person administering FAST must complete the required training prior to administering assessment.**

New **Renaissance-U participants** should use the below instructions to create an account and access the training courses.

1. Click this link <https://www.renaissance-u.com?KeyName=VPKFLCSPM> and complete the Sign- Up form by filling out all required fields.
2. In the Employee Number field, enter your **DCF Student ID**.
3. In the Location field, enter your **Early Learning Coalition**. (Southwest Florida)
4. When all required fields have been completed, click Sign Up.
5. After completing the Sign Up you will be directed to the Renaissance-U Dashboard. Click on Your Library to access the courses.

**Important Reminder:** When you return to Renaissance-U later, you must log in through your Renaissance site or use this link <https://www.renaissance-u.com/#/login> and enter your email address as your username and the password you create during this process.

# Inclusion Services

The Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida provides Inclusion services for childcare providers and families of Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties.

The Inclusion Coordinator is available for on-site environmental technical assistance, educational support for programming, teachers, and challenging behavior observation.

# SR Program Assessments

Program Assessment is required for all SR providers using the CLASS tool which measures teacher-child interactions. New providers are **exempt** from program assessment **until** they reach **20% of SR enrollments** (2 SR children for FCCH) or they may choose to opt-in prior to contract being initiated for the program year.

Assessment scores are combined to create an overall score for the center called a **Composite Score**

If provider's composite score falls below 4.00 provider may lose their SR contract for up to 5 years or may request a reassessment (fee applies)

Incentive pay is applied to providers who receive a composite score of 4.5 or above will qualify for tiered

reimbursement: 4.50-4.99 is **4%**

5.00-5.99 is **7%**

6.00-7.00 is **10%**



# VPK Program Assessments

All VPK Classrooms will be assessed using the CLASS tool which measures teacher-child interactions.

Performance Metric will be calculated using: (coming soon)

Composite Score- from all VPK Program Assessments (CLASS)

Development learning outcomes of performance standards and Learning Gains (FAST)

*More details to come as Division of Early Learning (DEL) works on developing Rule related to House Bill 419 (HB419)*

# School Readiness Monitoring

**School Readiness** – Monitoring is conducted by the Risk Management Department.

**Tier 1 Compliance Monitoring** is conducted annually on all SR program providers as a desk review of the following:

- **Date of submission of School Readiness Contract Documents** in accordance with Rule 6M-4.610, FAC.
- **Date of completion and submission of Health and Safety Checklists** (for license-exempt, non-public schools, and informal providers) in accordance with Rule 6M-4.620, FAC.
- **Conducting Developmental Screenings** (if applicable) in accordance with Rule 6M-4.720, FAC.
- **Date of completion and submission of annual CCR&R Provider Updates** in accordance with Rule 6M-9.300(5), FAC.
- **Accurate completion of monthly enrollment/attendance certifications** in accordance with Rule 6M-4.500(2), FAC.
- **Use of statewide information system as applicable.**

**Tier 2 Compliance Monitoring** is a random sample size of SR program providers using the OEL-SR 20M (sample monitoring tool is included in your Information packet) <https://elcofswfl.org/school-readiness-information/>

**It is important to review the contract closely as it outlines all the required monitoring documents.**

# VPK Monitoring

**Voluntary Pre-K**– Monitoring is conducted by an Early Childhood Specialist

This monitoring is conducted as a partial desk review followed by an on-site visit

Documentation reviewed as part of monitoring:

- Star Test Activity report (shows Progress Monitoring's completed and not completed)
- VPK Attendance Verification forms (Short Form or Long Form)
- Sign in/out sheets for the prior reimbursement month.
- VPK Certificates (DEL-02 Form)
- Workers Compensation Insurance (if applicable)
- Reemployment Compensation Assistance quarterly report (RT6 Form) if applicable
- VPK APP Documentation (Directors, Teachers, Calendar, and classroom information)



# Attendance

## **School Readiness**

Daily attendance of children must be taken and recorded accurately by the Child Care Personnel. This includes when the child arrives and leaves the program. Each classroom must have an attendance sheet for the group occupying that space. For more detailed information please see:

DCF Child Care Facility Handbook page 62 (*section 7.5- Daily Attendance*)

The School Readiness Program Health and Safety Standards Handbook on page 47 (*section 19.3- Attendance*)

## **Voluntary Pre-K**

VPK providers must document daily attendance in the facility (sign-in/sign-out sheets) and in the classroom.

Parents are responsible for certifying their child's attendance each month by signing the VPK Short Form (DEL-VPK03S) or the VPK Long Form (DEL-VPK03L).

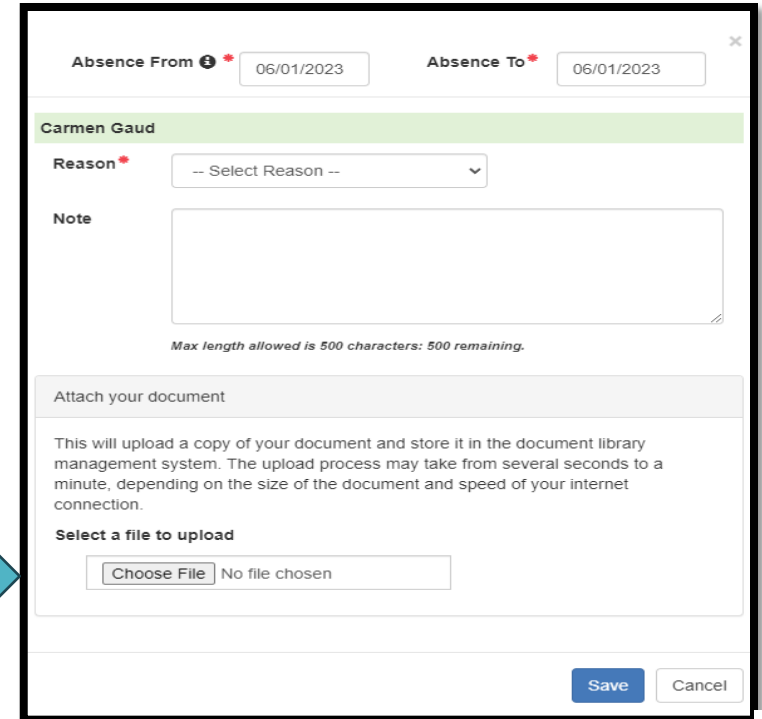
# School Readiness Attendance

- SR Attendance will automatically show all days the child is enrolled with an “X” for present and Providers must change present days to absences.
- Absences cannot exceed **13 absences per month** per child.
  - 1st three (3) Absences are **excused without documentation** (E)
  - 4<sup>th</sup> thru 13<sup>th</sup> Absences is **payable with documentation** (A)
  - Absences greater than 13 or non-excused are coded.

**Enrolled/Non-Reimbursable (N)**

## SR ATTENDANCE EXCUSE NOTES

You may upload an excuse note to the day child was absent by clicking “Choose File” under **Select a file to upload**.



Absence From  Absence To

Carmen Gaud

Reason

Note

Max length allowed is 500 characters: 500 remaining.

Attach your document

This will upload a copy of your document and store it in the document library management system. The upload process may take from several seconds to a minute, depending on the size of the document and speed of your internet connection.

Select a file to upload

No file chosen

“Attendance” folder in Document Library contains all uploaded Excuse Notes

# School Readiness Absences

## Payable Absences "A"

Reason\*

Note

- Select Reason --
- Child Hospitalized
- Child Illness
- Death in Family
- Court Ordered Visitation
- Military Deployment
- Other Reason
- Enrolled/Non-Reimbursable Day
- Absence Due To Disaster

## Non-Payable Absences "N" (do not code as "A")

- Vacation**
- Transportation Issues**
- Summer Break**
- Suspended**
- Other Reason**

## Attendance Codes

<b>X</b>	<b>Enrolled/Present</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>CR</b>	<b>Reimbursable Temporary Closure</b>
<b>CN</b>	<b>Non-Reimbursable Temporary Closure</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>Non-Reimbursable Day</b>
<b>NS</b>	<b>Non-Reimbursable/Non-Scheduled Days</b>
<b>H</b>	<b>Paid Holiday Days</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>Terminated/Enrollment Ended</b>
<b>*</b>	<b>Closed</b>
	<b>Attendance has not started</b>

# VPK Attendance

- VPK Attendance will automatically show all days the child is enrolled with an “X” for present and Providers must change present days to absences “A” for days child did not attend.
- Excuse notes are **not** required for VPK.
- The Early Learning Coalition will reimburse for up to 20% of VPK absences (School Year = 108 hours, Summer = 60 hours)
- Parents are required to adhere to providers VPK attendance policy.

The screenshot displays the VPK Attendance system interface. On the left, a table lists 11 enrolled children with columns for Child Name, DOB, Age (Sitting Group), and Status. The main area shows an 'Attendance Calendar' for October 2018, with days marked as present (X) or absent (A). A legend in the bottom right explains the codes: X for Enrolled/Present, A for Absent, N for Non-Reimbursable/Non-Scheduled Days, H for Paid Holiday Days, T for Terminated/Enrollment Ended, and a grey square for Closed. A 'Child's Current Information' box on the right shows details for Church Latham, including DOB, Age, Status, Cert, and Class.

Be sure to save attendance for each child, each time you enter new data and prior to submitting.

- Days the site is closed are marked with an asterisk “\*.”
- Days the child is scheduled to attend are marked with an “X” for present.
- A legend is provided in the bottom right for more code descriptions.

To change a present day to absent, click on the “X.” The “X” for present will now appear as an “A” for absent. Absences entered by mistake can be changed back to present by clicking on the “A.”

# Sign in/out Sheets and VPK Attendance Verification Forms

Attendance for School Readiness and VPK must be submitted online in the Provider Portal by the third (3) business day of the following month.

Sign-In and Sign-Out sheets must be uploaded to your Document Library by the third (3) business day of the following month.

VPK Long Forms or VPK Short Forms must be uploaded to your Document Library by the tenth (10) business day of the following month.



# VPK Instructor Requirements

## **VPK Directors**

Director Credential with VPK Endorsement

## **VPK Lead**

- Staff Credential (CDA, FCCPC, NECC, or Formal Education)- must be listed on DCF transcript.
- Implementing the Standards in Preschool Classrooms: 3 years old to kindergarten.
- Three 5-hour Emergent Literacy courses initially (One 5-hour Emergent Literacy course every 5 years as continued education)
- Attestation of Good Moral Character
- Background Screening

## **VPK Aide**

- Attestation of Good Moral Character
- Background Screening

## **VPK Substitute**

- DCF Transcript showing 40-hour Introductory Child Care Training courses (Facility) or 30-hour family Child Care Training course.
- Attestation of Good Moral Character
- Background Screening

Instructions on how to complete your VPK APP are included in your information packet.

# VPK Vouchers

Vouchers (VPK02) are entered in the Portal under 2024-2025 VPK Enrollment Certificates (can be done as a bulk upload using an Excel spreadsheet or individually). Do not allow a child to begin until you have their voucher and enrollment is accepted in the Provider Portal, enrollments cannot be backdated in the system.

Vouchers need to be completed and signed by the parent and the provider (must be kept for 5 years).

Attendance and enrollment need to always match.

Give ELC staff time to process VPK Enrollments before making changes to child's enrollment (it can lock the child's account).

If a child has not started VPK do not terminate the child but use the Orange Child Never Enrolled button to remove from their attendance rosters.

# Causes for Amendments

Location of Principal office address

Adding or deleting Partner Location(s)

Curriculum/ Character Development

Change in Signature Authority

Change in exemption from Program Assessment Requirements

Care Level Served

Holiday Schedule

Gold Seal Status

Liability Insurance Carrier

# Additional Information

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Provider meetings are held throughout the year to communicate important program information (in-person or via Microsoft Teams).

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Town Hall meetings are held monthly through Microsoft Teams during nap time (you will receive an email with log in information prior to the meeting).

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Be sure your current email is on file to ensure you receive all emails through constant contacts which contain important information

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ELC hosts a variety of trainings that are listed in our training calendar located on our website.

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Your Early Childhood Specialist is available for Technical Assistance (TA)- lesson plans, room arrangement, class assessment, etc.



# Important Links

Provider Portal: <https://providerservices.floridaearlylearning.com>

DCF Training & Credentialing: <https://training01-dcf.myflorida.com/studentsite/admin/signin>

University of Florida Lastinger Center: <https://collaboration.net/login/floridaearlylearning>

ELC Training Calendar: <https://elcofswfl.org/events/category/trainings/>

ELC School Readiness Information: <https://elcofswfl.org/school-readiness-information/> **(SR Monitoring Tool)**

ELC VPK Information: <https://elcofswfl.org/download-central/vpk-information/>

MyTeachingStrategies™ : <https://my.teachingstrategies.com/>

DCF Child Care Facility Handbook: [https://www.myflfamilies.com/sites/default/files/2022-12/FacilityHandbook\\_0.pdf](https://www.myflfamilies.com/sites/default/files/2022-12/FacilityHandbook_0.pdf)

School Readiness Program Health and Safety Standards Handbook: <https://elcofswfl.org/index.php/download/health-and-safety-handbook-for-facilities-a/?wpdmdl=3820&masterkey=58e4dbaa5832e>

Renaissance Stars Early Literacy (FAST): <https://global-zone05.renaissance-go.com/welcomeportal/7957988>

Renaissance-U: <https://www.renaissance-u.com/#/login> or <https://www.renaissance-u.com/#/dashboard>

Teachstone: [www.teachstone.com](http://www.teachstone.com) *(Contact your Early Childhood Specialist for a free subscription)*

# Contact Information

## **Director of Early Childhood**

Cheryl Carpenter: [Cheryl.Carpenter@elcofswfl.org](mailto:Cheryl.Carpenter@elcofswfl.org)

## **Early Childhood Coordinator**

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## **Lead Early Childhood Specialist**

Michelle Aguiar: [Michelle.Aguiar@elcofswfl.org](mailto:Michelle.Aguiar@elcofswfl.org)

## **Director of Professional Development:**

Brenda Griffin: [Brenda.Griffin@elcofswfl.org](mailto:Brenda.Griffin@elcofswfl.org)

## **Provider Contracts Coordinator:**

Angelica Zavala: [Angelica.Zavala@elcofswfl.org](mailto:Angelica.Zavala@elcofswfl.org)

## **Provider Contract Specialist (VPK):**

Grant Thompson: [Grant.Thompson@elcofswfl.org](mailto:Grant.Thompson@elcofswfl.org)

## **Assessment & Screening:**

**Director-** Bronwyn Gogia: [Bronwyn.Gogia@elcofswfl.org](mailto:Bronwyn.Gogia@elcofswfl.org)

## **Coordinator-**

**Lead-** Sharyn Harris: [Sharyn.Harris@elcofswfl.org](mailto:Sharyn.Harris@elcofswfl.org)

**Specialist-** Ivonne Orengo: [Ivonne.Orengo@elcofswfl.org](mailto:Ivonne.Orengo@elcofswfl.org)

## **Directors of Program Services (SR & VPK Child Enrollments):**

Cora Rice: [Cora.Rice@elcofswfl.org](mailto:Cora.Rice@elcofswfl.org)

Sesia Dominguez: [Sesia.Dominguez@elcofswfl.org](mailto:Sesia.Dominguez@elcofswfl.org)

Amanda Devariste: [Amanda.Devariste@elcofswfl.org](mailto:Amanda.Devariste@elcofswfl.org) (Collier)

## **Reimbursement- (Attendance & Payment):**

Supervisor- Ginger Paugh: [Ginger.Paugh@elcofswfl.org](mailto:Ginger.Paugh@elcofswfl.org)