

ENROLLMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN THE VOLUNTARY
PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM AND THE SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM
BY FAMILIES DISPLACED BY HURRICANE MARIA.

As a result of the devastating effects of Hurricane Maria, students and their parents from Puerto Rico and elsewhere have evacuated to Florida and wish to participate in the Voluntary Prekindergarten and School Readiness programs. Many of these families lack the required documentation to enroll, either because such records were left behind in haste, or were destroyed, and may otherwise be impacted by eligibility requirements. Therefore, in accordance Executive Order 17-259, Section 4B., Section 252.46, and as directed by the State Coordinating Officer, I order the following statutes and rules are waived or suspended to allow for the enrollment of students who have been displaced by Hurricane Maria in Voluntary Prekindergarten and School Readiness programs:

- The provisions of Sections 1002.55(3)(f) and 1002.63(7), Florida Statutes, regarding Voluntary Prekindergarten classroom size and teacher ratio requirements.
- Rule 6M-8.201, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), to the extent necessary to allow early learning coalitions to determine that children are eligible to participate in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program and issue a Certificate of Eligibility to enroll such children where such records are unavailable to the child's parents.
- The provisions of Rule 6M-4.200, F.A.C., requiring a 12-month eligibility period for the School Readiness Program.
- The provisions of Rule 6M-4.208, F.A.C., to the extent that applicants may be deemed eligible and enroll 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 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.
- The provisions of Rule 6M-4.400(6), F.A.C., and Section 1002.84(8), Florida Statutes, regarding the ability of a coalition 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.
- 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 calendar days, rather than forty-five days if screenings are conducted by a coalition, and subsequent screenings within 30 days after the child's birth month if screenings are conducted by a provider.

This order shall expire upon the earliest of the expiration of Executive Order 17-259; or November 1, 2017, subject to 30-day extensions.

ORDERED in Tallahassee, Florida, this 9 day of October, 2017.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pam Stewart". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Pam Stewart, Commissioner of Education