



**Early Learning  
Coalition**  
OF PINELLAS COUNTY

## 5. PARENTAL CHOICE

- a. Parents are required by federal and state law to be given a choice of child care programs where their child can be placed.
- b. Parents may choose from a list of legally operating child care programs or school-based child care programs who have signed a Provider Contract with the local Coalition and meet health and safety requirements. The program types are:
  1. Licensed child care centers
  2. License-exempt faith-based child care centers
  3. Licensed Family Child Care Homes
  4. Public Schools
  5. Non-Public schools
  6. Informal care (Relative and In-home care)

Your local Licensing staff can clarify if there are restrictions or conditions within your community concerning the legal status of child care providers.

- c. Legally operating child care centers and family child care homes are listed on the DCF website at: [www.myflorida.com/childcare](http://www.myflorida.com/childcare). Public and Non-Public schools offering Pre-K or Afterschool programs, should be listed on the Department of Education website at [www.fldoe.org](http://www.fldoe.org). In addition, CCR&R should also have a comprehensive list of child care programs.
- d. Family Service Specialists must ensure that the child care provider chosen by the parent is one who is authorized by Coalition guidelines to accept SR children.
- e. Parents or caregivers of –At Risk children, under the supervision of the Department of Children and Families or designees, may only select licensed or public school system child care programs who have an contract with the Coalition to serve SR children unless provided a waiver from DCF. (409.175 F.S. and Rule 65C-13 F.A.C.)

## 8. PARENT ACCESS

- a. Section 45CFR98.31 of the Code of Federal Regulations require that –parents have unlimited access to their children, and to the child care providers caring for their children, during normal hours of operation and whenever the children are in the care of the provider.¶
- b. Parents must be advised of their right to access their children at all times, either in person or by telephone. (Parent Handbook)
- c. Proof that the parent was advised is supported by the parent's signature on the application that they received the Parent Handbook for school readiness. This signed and dated document must be maintained in the parent/child's eligibility files.

- d. Child Care Providers shall be notified of this requirement through the Coalition's Statewide Provider Contract.

- e. Parental access and/or telephone contact must be available during normal hours of operation and whenever the children are in the care of the provider.
- f. Sanctions may be imposed by the Coalition (such as non-payment for services or exclusion from services) for any SR child care provider who fails to permit a parent the unlimited access as required by law.