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## **Provider/Client Grievance Policy & Procedure**

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### **PURPOSE:**

Child care providers or clients who have a grievance regarding services provided directly by the Early Learning Coalition will have a venue to discuss their concerns.

### **PROCEDURE:**

The first stage is informal communication and occurs immediately when the provider or client expresses dissatisfaction. The first line Coalition staff must immediately address the matter. The activities that occur in this stage must be documented and the supervisor informed immediately, even if the situation is satisfactorily resolved at that stage. If the issue is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction, then the Coalition staff supervisor is to be directly involved for further assistance upon immediate communication from the provider or client. Within 3 (three) business days of the first stage objection, the supervisor will review all of the information and contact the complainant to attempt to informally mediate the issues. The supervisor must document their communication.

If the informal mediation is unsuccessful and the complainant still considers the matter unresolved, the supervisor must immediately contact the Director of Operations for formal problem resolution. Within 7 (seven) business days, the Director of Operations must review all available information and communicate directly with the complainant. A letter summarizing the final decision or outcome of the complaint dispute will include a notice to the individual of their right to file a grievance with the Early Learning Coalition Chief Executive Officer within 10 days. A copy of the letter will also be promptly forwarded to the CEO of the Coalition.

If the Coalition CEO receives a grievance from the complainant, they will make a final determination and notify the grievant in writing of the decision within 10 business days. The letter must include a notice of the right to hearing before a special ad hoc appeals committee composed of at least three members of the Board of Directors of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County. The letter must be sent by certified, return receipt requested mail or be hand-delivered. A copy of the correspondence must be maintained by the Coalition, and a copy must be placed in the complainant's file.

A complainant who remains dissatisfied following the decision of the Coalition CEO shall send written notice to the Director of Operations within seven (7) business days following the issuance of the Coalition CEO's decision of the desire for a formal hearing before an ad hoc appeals committee. Such written notice must include the name and address of the center, as well as the reason for appealing the Coalition decision. Upon receiving such written notice from the complainant, the Chief Executive Officer, or his or her designee(s), shall contact at least three (3) members of the Coalition Board of Directors to coordinate a time for a one-hour hearing to be held within thirty (30) days of receipt of the complainant's notice and shall notify the complainant of the date, time, and location of such hearing. Such hearing shall proceed as follows:

- At the outset of the hearing, the committee shall select a chairman from among its members.



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- Coalition staff shall present in short, plain terms the nature of the dispute and the recommended action to be taken at the meeting. Such presentation shall not exceed fifteen (15) minutes.
- The complainant shall then present in short, plain terms the reason for the appeal, any evidence supporting a different conclusion, the desired outcome from the hearing, and any other closing remarks. Such presentation shall not exceed twenty-five (25) minutes.
- Coalition staff shall have ten (10) minutes to present any rebutting evidence and make any closing remarks.
- Throughout the hearing time and afterwards, the members of the committee shall have the right to ask questions.
- Additional time may be granted to Coalition staff and the complainant in the discretion of the chairman.
- The Coalition's attorney will be present at all hearings.

At or following the conclusion of the hearing, the committee shall render its final decision, to be memorialized in a writing signed by the chairman of the committee. The Coalition will provide such written decision to the complainant within ten (10) business days following the conclusion of the hearing. The decision shall be by majority consensus of the members of the committee, and the committee's decision shall be the final decision of the Coalition with no further appeal rights.