

October 9, 2017

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Executive Directors, Florida's Early Learning Coalitions and Redlands Christian Migrant Association

**FROM:** Rodney J. MacKinnon, Executive Director 

**SUBJECT:** **Support for Families from Puerto Rico Impacted by Hurricane Maria**

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While Florida is still recovering from the devastating effects of Hurricane Irma, both Irma and Maria hit our friends in Puerto Rico. Last week, Governor Rick Scott signed an [executive order](#) declaring a state of emergency in all 67 Florida counties in response to Maria's catastrophic impact. This will provide resources and assistance to help meet the needs of families impacted by Hurricane Maria when they come to Florida. Many displaced families are already here. Others are arriving.

Early education and child care are critical needs for displaced families with young children. You may have begun hearing from some of them. What can we do as an early learning community? Here are some steps we are taking and some resources for coalitions.

**Assisting new families with services**

- Our office is temporarily increasing the VPK classroom size/teacher ratio requirements.
- OEL is temporarily extending the documentation requirements for immunization and birth certificate paperwork (Rule 6M-4.208, FAC) for families displaced due to the hurricane.
- The Child Care Resource and Referral Services state office has numerous resources for families dealing with the impact of hurricanes. Families can call their toll-free number – 866-357-3239. The state office is also available to suggest additional resources for coalition CCR&R staff.
- One of those resources is a [fact sheet from FEMA](#) specifically addressing child care assistance.
- OEL's website [has a page for helping families cope after a hurricane](#).

You may have questions about we will implement these processes and we will be providing further detail. Please let us know if you have recommendations or questions that may arise from circumstances in your service area.

Thank you.

RJM/jf

**RODNEY J. MACKINNON**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

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