Provider Manual
The Strong Minds Network is Palm Beach County’s new Quality Rating and Improvement System. As issues arise, they may warrant amendments to current policies and procedures, therefore, all information contained within the manual is subject to change. Any changes made to the Strong Minds Network Provider Manual will be posted to the Children’s Services Council's website and provider portal with its effective date. It is the provider’s responsibility to read and adhere to the most current provider manual. Application to the Strong Minds Network does not guarantee a program’s ability to participate. Participation in the Strong Minds Network is contingent upon available funding.
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Introduction

1.0 History

More than 10 years ago, the Children’s Services Council [CSC] of Palm Beach County created a Quality Rating and Improvement System [QRIS] with the ultimate goal of preparing children for kindergarten. At the time, Quality Rating and Improvement Systems were the nation’s newest approach to increasing quality in Early Care and Education programs and only few states had adopted the model. Although the state of Florida was not one of the states that implemented a QRIS, the Children’s Services Council took the lead in establishing a QRIS in Palm Beach County through the creation of Quality Counts [QC]. The goals of Quality Counts were to:

- produce positive outcomes for children
- provide consumer education to help parents recognize, expect and seek out quality in child care settings
- articulate the standards for quality to child care providers, as well as to parents
- define, advocate for, and obtain the resources necessary to encourage, support and promote quality early care and education

The Quality Counts system looked at several rating indicators which worked cohesively to create a supportive quality improvement system, which would lead to positive outcomes for children. These indicators, which were often referred to as ‘Pathways to Quality’ included: staff qualification, staff-child ratio, group size, family engagement, learning environments and program administration. Each Pathway possessed achievable standards that were assessed and assigned ‘Star Ratings’ ranging from 0 to 5 stars. These ratings were then calculated using a weighted formula that resulted in each program receiving an overall ‘Star Rating’.

Extensive resources were made available to programs that were a part of the QC system. Each participating QC program was assigned a coach who worked in tandem with the provider to improve quality across the Pathways. In addition to having a personal coach, these programs received access to services such as: career advising, SEEK scholarships, salary supplements, and professional development. Due to the obvious benefits, participation in the QC system increased steadily and so did the quality in many of the
participating early childhood programs. Although the QC system was successful at increasing the quality of early childhood environments in participating programs, it did not, however, show the same success in meeting one of its critical goals—school readiness.

Since the inception of QC, research has failed to deliver a relationship between increased star levels and school readiness. Given the extensive investment into the system, stakeholders were understandably concerned about the effectiveness of the Quality Counts system on child outcomes. The lack of consistent evidence to demonstrate progress toward producing positive outcomes for children raised questions about the validity of the QC design and its effectiveness on child outcomes.

Recognizing the situation, the Children’s Services Council of Palm Beach County worked with a national consultant to conduct a thorough needs assessment on the QC System. The assessment revealed that the QC system did not indicate a strong correlation between QC star ratings and the state-mandated child assessment for kindergarten readiness, the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener [FLKRS]. In addition, the system faced various challenges such as the high cost of coaching and career advising, along with the high cost of financial incentives for centers and homes (i.e., mini-grants and quality enhancement payments). The data all pointed toward one solution—a new approach was needed.

1.1 The Need for Change

The Children’s Services Council identified the need to create a new system that contains costs, focuses on program efficiency and improves school-readiness results. Based on the learning and reviews from national studies, CSC decided to sunset the QC system and replace it with the Strong Minds Network. The Strong Minds Network has a greater emphasis on achieving child outcomes through more effective teacher-child interactions. As suggested by relevant research, the Strong Minds Network directs resources to enhancing the validity of the early care network by targeting a few indicators with demonstrable links to positive child outcomes. Studies have shown that when children experience effective teacher-child interactions in their early learning environment, they are more likely to be ready to learn upon entering kindergarten.

The Strong Minds Network focuses on resources that support the child care provider’s ability to improve the quality of the learning environment and, in particular, the effectiveness of the teacher-child interaction. The leadership of the Strong Minds Network believes that intentional program leaders, who take advantage of the array of resources, will achieve higher quality standards and provide quality early care and education experiences for the children and families in Palm Beach County. Our logic model depicts the logical relationships between the resources, activities, outputs and outcomes of the Strong Minds Network. Sufficient support and resources are made
available to child care programs, leaders, practitioners and families to ensure children receive high-quality care and effective teaching that will ultimately prepare them for kindergarten. To view our logic model, please see Appendix D.

The Strong Minds Network seeks to improve the lives and learning of young children by improving outcomes in the following areas:

- child care programs’ learning environment for children
- child care practitioners’ quality and practice
- family engagement
- child development and kindergarten readiness

The former QC system has played a critical role in laying a solid foundation for the Strong Minds Network. Child care programs that were a part of the QC system provide substantially higher levels of quality than was provided in Palm Beach County 10 years ago. Many directors, practitioners and early childhood staff members have obtained Associate and Bachelor degrees in Early Care and Education and numerous others have received informal training. The Children’s Services Council of Palm beach County has acknowledged the need for a new network, made recommended changes and feels that the early childhood community is better positioned to embark on a new journey—one that will empower program directors to assume their role as intentional leaders, encourage programs in their continuous quality improvement efforts and will most importantly lead us to achieve positive child outcomes in Palm Beach County.

1.2 Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles

The mission of the Strong Minds Network is to use research and data to increase the quality of early care and education programs through integrated supports and resources offered to the early learning community, children and their families.

Our vision is that children will have quality early educational experiences that will increase their chances of achieving school success and becoming productive members of society. Members of the new network are guided by the following principles:
## Strong Minds Network Guiding Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>We are…</th>
<th>We believe…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>solution focused</td>
<td>in access to quality childcare for all children, especially those at risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accountable for child outcomes</td>
<td>in maximizing resources to get the best outcomes for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research and data driven</td>
<td>in community partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advocates for children and families</td>
<td>in program leadership as the driving force of change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strength-based</td>
<td>in continuous quality improvement (through assessment, professional development, evaluation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culturally competent and value diversity</td>
<td>a well-trained and educated work force will lead toward child outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invested in technology and resources</td>
<td>children thrive when engaged in positive relationships with peers, adults, and families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motivated and intentional</td>
<td>quality child care will help close the achievement gap for children at risk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.3 Manual Updates

The Strong Minds Network provider manual will be updated annually in October. The current version of the Strong Minds Network provider manual will be accessible through both the provider portal and Children’s Services Council Website under the Provider tab. The Strong Minds Network provider manual posted on CSC’s website and the provider portal replaces all former versions of the Strong Minds Network provider manual. Providers are responsible for reading and adhering to the current provider manual.
In the event that a Strong Minds Network policy change is made in between annual updates, the information will be posted on CSC’s website and the provider portal.
Strong Minds Network Partners

2.0 Overview

There are several organizations in Palm Beach County that are critical to the success of the Strong Minds Network. They are the Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County, Palm Beach State College’s Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education, the School District of Palm Beach County and the Children’s Forum. These agencies are key partners in the direct implementation and administration of the Strong Minds Network. Each agency plays a distinct role in providing resources to the Early Care and Education programs that are a part of Strong Minds. A layout of the Strong Minds Organizational Chart is captured in the diagram below. For a detailed summary of each agency and the role it plays in the Strong Minds Network see Appendix A.
Automated Network

3.0 The Provider Portal

The Provider Portal is an online, web-based platform designed to allow providers to create and submit child care agreement application(s) online. The Provider Portal allows childcare providers (with internet access) the ability to submit an application online for the Strong Minds Network, School Readiness, Children Services Council Scholarship, and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten agreements. It also allows the provider to upload documents required to support their agreement application(s). The information for each provider is secure and viewable only by entering a User ID and password.

Providers will be able to access, edit and submit a Strong Minds Network application, view program assessment results and receive important information and notifications through the Provider Portal. The Strong Minds Network Provider Manual, along with all updates, will also be accessible to providers via the portal.

3.1 Web-based Early Learning System [WELS]

Web-based Early Learning System [WELS] is a Quality Rating and Improvement System [QRIS] data network that addresses core early care and education quality issues for network administration. It is the nation’s most widely used data network for quality rating improvement systems and it has a proven track record of integrating data from diverse data networks, providing an easy to use system for providers, quality improvement specialists, and other stakeholders. WELS collects all essential data required to produce consistent and reliable site ratings. This information includes site and classroom information, professional staff profiles, checklists, assessments and quality improvement plans.
Eligibility

4.0 Pre-Entry Requirements

The Strong Minds Network was developed to serve children birth to five in Palm Beach County. As such, programs that apply to be a part of the network must serve children birth to five who reside in Palm Beach County. Additionally, each program that applies to be a part of the Strong Minds Network must also agree to serve children who receive School Readiness and/or Early Head Start/Head Start subsidies. Child care programs interested in becoming part of the Strong Minds Network must meet the following pre-entry requirements to participate:

- Currently hold a School Readiness Agreement with the Early Learning Coalition [ELC], or a contract with Head Start/Early Head Start [HS/EHS]

- Be in good standing with applicable School Readiness, and or Head Start/Early Head Start Agreements (In good standing is defined as no compliance/quality assurance plan within the last 12 months; Good standing within the statewide school readiness provider contract is defined as no:
  - Probation
  - Termination for cause
  - Emergency Termination
  - Revocation of eligibility and/or
  - Suspected Fraud
  within the last twelve months.)

- Currently have zero (0) class 1 licensing violations within the last 12 months and no more than two (2) of the same class 2 licensing violations within the last 12 months)

- Currently have 100% of all professional staff listed as active members in the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry

- Agree to become Gold Seal Accredited within three years of achieving In-Network Status

- Agree to use Teaching Strategies GOLD** Child Assessment System
Note: *A program does not have to hold contracts with all of the above mentioned agencies, however it must hold at least one of the above mentioned contracts/ agreements.*

**Alternative formative assessments, other than the Teaching Strategies GOLD Child Assessment, will be reviewed on a case by case basis for those programs that wish to continue use of an alternative assessment.**

4.1 Application Process

All programs seeking to participate in the Strong Minds Network will be required to submit an online application. The automated application can be found on the Provider Portal at www.earlylearningpbc.org. To access the application, the provider will need to log in using the same credentials used to access their Early Learning Coalition account. Programs should ensure that it meets all pre-entry criteria prior to completing a Strong Minds application.

4.2 Receiving an Application Status

After a program completes and submits an application, a Network Navigator verifies that all pre-entry requirements have been met. Within ten (10) business days of submission of a complete Strong Minds Network application, the program will receive notification of its application status via email.

There are two possible application statuses that a program may be eligible for at this point.

**Ineligible** – The Navigator will notify the program that does not meet pre-entry criteria, of its ineligible status. The Navigator will also identify the reason(s) and resources available to increase the program’s readiness.

**Assessment Pending** – The Navigator will notify the program that pre-entry criteria has been verified and assessment(s) will be scheduled. Programs that receive an assessment pending status will be contacted by the Children’s Forum within 45 days of receiving an assessment pending status to schedule an assessment.

Following is a step by step visual of what takes place once a program applies to the Strong Minds Network from application through to becoming a participating member of the Strong Minds Network.
Journey to Becoming a Strong Minds Participant

Child Care Programs go to the Provider Portal at www.earlylearningpbc.org to submit a Strong Minds application.

Program will be contacted by the Children's Forum to open up an assessment window. Programs will identify their atypical days during this time.

Child care program will receive notification of network status via email ten (10) business days from the date of receiving assessment results.

Within ten (10) business days, child care program will receive application status via email. The notification will inform program that it will be receiving a program assessment as the next step.

Once the assessment is complete, the child care program will receive the results within ten (10) business days. Results will be available in the portal also.

Child care program will complete and submit the Child Enrollment that is attached to the notification. Programs that receive Promising or Emerging Status will also receive an Acknowledgement to continue form to complete.

Child care program will receive a Strong Minds Agreement via email once the child enrollment form and all other applicable documents are received by a Strong Minds Navigator.

Program will complete and submit the Strong Minds Network Agreement. Once agreement is received, you're in!
4.3 Receiving a Network Status

Once a program receives its program assessment, it is then assigned one of three network statuses based upon its assessment scores:

- Emerging Status
- Promising Status
- In-Network Status

For more information on Network status and accompanying scores please see section 5.0 Threshold Scores and Network Status.

Programs will receive notification of its network status via email. The notification will include details of the supports and services that are available to the program based on its network status. If the program wishes to continue in the network, the director/owner will be required to complete a child enrollment form and return to a Strong Minds Navigator. The information provided in the Child Enrollment form will help the Network determine the number of children who are enrolled in programs participating in the Strong Minds Network. It will also be used to calculate the amount of the tiered reimbursement supplements for programs that achieve In-Network status. Programs that fall under the Emerging and Promising statuses will also be required to complete and submit an Acknowledgement of Participation form.

Once these documents are received by a Strong Minds Navigator, the program agreement will be drafted and emailed to the provider. Programs are only considered a part of the Network after they have completed and submitted their Strong Minds agreement.

Programs are strongly encouraged to review their assessment scores to determine the next steps in their Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) efforts. Program assessment results can guide programs in its planning and can shed valuable insight into what areas of TA would most benefit the program. While TA is not mandatory, programs are encouraged to take advantage of this resource. Once the program’s agreement is received by the Strong Minds Network, program may begin reaching out to the Strong Minds Network Navigators to schedule targeted technical assistance.
### Threshold Scores and Network Status

Child care providers that apply to the Strong Minds Network and meet pre-entry criteria are assessed using valid and reliable program assessment tools. Minimum assessment scores have been established as thresholds for achieving In-Network and Promising status. Programs that do not meet the minimum thresholds for In-Network or Promising are categorized as Emerging. Please see the table below for a list of assessment scores needed to meet each status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network Status</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Promising</th>
<th>In-Network Tier 1</th>
<th>In-Network Tier 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ITERS-R or FCCERS-R** Scores</td>
<td>Less than 3.5</td>
<td>3.5 – 3.99</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-K CLASS Scores by Domain</td>
<td>Less than 4.5 Emotional Support or 3.5 Classroom Organization or 1.0 Instructional Support</td>
<td>4.5 – 4.99 Emotional Support or 3.5 – 3.99 Classroom Organization or 1.0 – 1.49 Instructional Support</td>
<td>5.0 Emotional Support and 4.0 Classroom Organization and 1.5 Instructional Support</td>
<td>6.5 Emotional Support and 5.5 Classroom Organization and 3.0 Instructional Support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*PRE-ENTRY CRITERIA:*
1. School Readiness Agreement or Head Start/Early Head Start Contract
2. Be in good standing with SR Agreement and/or HS/EHS Contract
3. No Class 1 licensing violations; No more than two of the same Class 2 licensing violations in the past 12 months
4. All professional staff are active members of the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry
5. Agree to use Gold Child Assessment Network
6. Achieve Gold Seal Accreditation within three years of achieving In-Network status

**ITERS-R: Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale- Revised and FCCERS-R: Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale- Revised** - For eligibility, scores in the following areas will be used:
1. Indoor Space/Indoor Space Used for children
2. Furniture for Routine Care, Play and Learning
3. Provision for Relaxation and Comfort
4. Room Arrangement/Arrangement of Indoor Space for Child Care
5. Display for Children
6. Helping Children Understand Language
7. Helping Children Use Language
8. Using Books
9. Fine Motor
10. Promoting Acceptance of Diversity
11. Supervision of Play and Learning
12. Peer Interaction/Interaction among Children
13. Staff-Child Interaction/Provider-Child Interaction
14. Discipline
15. Schedule
16. Free Play
17. Provision for Children with Disabilities

5.1 In-Network Tier 2
To be considered as an In-Network Provider at Tier 2, programs must meet the following assessment scores and will benefit from the listed resources. Additionally, these programs will receive a higher reimbursement rate for each child enrolled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Scores</th>
<th>Available Supports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.5 on identified items on ITERS-R/FCCERS-R</td>
<td>Targeted Technical Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*CLASS Domains:</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 Emotional Support</td>
<td>Career Advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Classroom Organization</td>
<td>ACHIEVE Salary Supplement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Instructional Support</td>
<td>Full access to SEEK Scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Not applicable to FCCH</td>
<td>Tiered Reimbursement Supplement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 In-Network Status—Tier 1

Programs achieving In-Network Status have demonstrated a substantial level of quality and therefore receive full Network benefits. One of the major advantages of achieving In-Network status is that the program will receive Tiered Reimbursement Supplements to assist in offsetting the cost of quality. Tiered Reimbursement Supplements are to be used for the sole purpose of improving the quality of the childcare program. For more information on Tiered Reimbursement Supplements please see section 8.9 Tiered Reimbursement Supplements.

The In-Network Status is broken down into two tiers based on program assessment scores. The assessment scores required for each tier, along with the provided benefits, are listed in the charts below.

To be considered as an In-Network Provider at tier 1, programs must meet the following assessment scores and will benefit from the listed resources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Assessment Scores</th>
<th>Available Supports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.0 on identified items on ITERS-R/FCCERS-R</td>
<td>Targeted Technical Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*CLASS Domains:</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 Emotional Support</td>
<td>Career Advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 Classroom Organization</td>
<td>ACHIEVE Salary Supplement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Instructional Support</td>
<td>Full access to SEEK Scholarship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Not applicable to FCCH</td>
<td>Tiered Reimbursement Supplement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Promising Status

Programs that achieve Promising Status have attained program assessment scores which fall a little below In-Network Tier 1 scores. These programs will have access to all Network benefits with the exception of the tiered reimbursement payments.

Promising Providers will be given up to six (6) months to request a re-assessment with costs covered by the Strong Minds Network. If a program determines that it will need more time than the six month period to prepare for the reassessment, the program will be required to exit the system at the end of the six month period and re-apply when it feels it is ready to be reassessed. Programs may take as long as they need to prepare for reassessment, while keeping in mind some benefits may not be available during this extended period.

If a program is reassessed within the six (6) month window and does not meet the threshold scores for In-Network Status, the program will be required to exit the system and must wait one (1) year to re-apply to the system. If the program chooses to be re-assessed earlier than one (1) year, it can request assessments directly through the Children’s Forum at the provider’s expense.

If a program is reassessed within the six (6) month period and makes threshold scores for In-Network, its status will be changed in the system by a navigator and full benefits will be accessible. The program will need to sign and submit an addendum to their existing Strong Minds Agreement. This addendum will reflect the program’s new status.

Child care programs achieving the scores listed below will be considered Promising and will receive the following supports:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Scores</th>
<th>Available Supports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.5-3.99 on identified items of ITERS-R/FCCERS-R</td>
<td>Limited targeted technical assistance (up to 6 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*CLASS Domains:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5-4.99 Emotional Support</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5-3.99 Classroom Organization</td>
<td>Career Advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0-1.49 Instructional Support</td>
<td>ACHIEVE Salary Supplement (up to 6 months)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*not applicable to FCCH*
5.4 Emerging Status

Child Care programs in the Emerging Status have met all pre-entry qualifications but have not met threshold scores for the Promising or In-Network Status. Programs with an Emerging Status will be eligible for limited Technical Assistance for up to eighteen (18) months. Programs may take advantage of the Technical Assistance offered through the Strong Minds Network or they may decide to participate in other capacity building initiatives at their own expense. In any event, programs in this category are able to be reassessed one year after receiving Emerging Status with costs covered by the Strong Minds Network.

Emerging Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Scores</th>
<th>Available Supports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3.5 on identified items of ITERS-R/FCCERS-R</td>
<td>Limited targeted technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*CLASS Domains:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 4.5 on Emotional Support</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3.5 on Classroom Organization</td>
<td>Career Advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*not applicable to FCCH</td>
<td>SEEK Scholarship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emerging programs will be eligible for up to eighteen months of supports to prepare for reassessment. If the program is reassessed within the provided timeframe and achieves the minimum threshold scores for In-Network, its status will be updated within the portal and full benefits will be made available. The program will need to sign and submit an addendum to their existing Strong Minds Agreement. This addendum will reflect the program’s new status.

If a program determines that it will need more time than the eighteen month period to prepare for the reassessment, the program will be required to exit the system at the end of the eighteen month period and re-apply when it feels it is ready to be reassessed. Programs can take as much time as they need to prepare for reassessment, keeping in mind that certain Network benefits may not be available during this extended period. Whenever the program feels ready to be reassessed, it can reapply to the Network and receive a program assessment.
If an Emerging program is assessed at any time and does not meet the minimum threshold scores for In-Network, the program will be required to exit the system and wait one year from the most recent assessment to reapply to the Network. If the program chooses to be re-assessed earlier than one (1) year, it can request assessments directly through the Children’s Forum at the provider’s expense. For more information on off cycle assessments see section 7.0 Requesting an Off Cycle Assessment.
The Assessment Process

6.0 Introduction to the Assessment Tools Used

Programs that participate in the Strong Minds Network benefit from professional program assessments. The Strong Minds Network has selected valid and reliable program assessment tools that are widely used among QRIS nationwide. These tools were selected based upon research, which conclude that indicators found within the tools have connections with positive child outcomes.

The Environment Rating Scales [ERS] are observational assessment tools used to evaluate the quality of early childhood programs. There are four environment rating scales, each designed for different age groups/program type. There are two Environment Rating Scales used within the Network: The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised [ITERS-R], which is designed to assess center-based programs for children birth to 30 months of age and the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised [FCCERS-R], which is designed to assess family child care programs conducted in a provider's home.
Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale- Revised [ITERS-R]

The *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised Edition* [ITERS-R] is a thorough revision of the original *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale* [ITERS]. There are 39 items organized into seven subscales: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure, and Parents and Staff. This scale is designed to assess programs with children birth to 30 months of age.

Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale- Revised [FCCERS-R]

The *Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale–Revised Edition* (FCCERS–R) is a thorough revision of the original *Family Day Care Rating Scale* (FDCRS, 1989). The FCCERS–R retains the original broad definition of environment including: organization of space, interaction, activities, schedule, and provisions for parents and provider. The 38 items are organized into seven subscales: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Listening and Talking, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure, and Parents and Provider. Since family child care homes frequently enroll a wide age range of children, this scale is designed to assess programs serving children from birth through school-age, up to 12 years of age, including the provider’s own children if applicable.

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System [CLASS] is an observational tool that focuses on teacher-child interactions within classrooms and is designed to increase teacher effectiveness. There are two CLASS tools used within the Network—CLASS Pre-K and CLASS Toddler. Currently, the CLASS Toddler is optional and is used for informational purposes only.
Classroom Assessment Scoring System Toddler [CLASS Toddler]

The CLASS Toddler tool is designed to assess programs that serve children between the ages of 15-36 months old. For the purposes of the Strong Minds program, the CLASS Toddler tool will be used to assess programs that serve children between the ages of 30-35 months old. It measures 8 critical dimensions that fall under two domains—Emotional and Behavioral Support and Engaged Support for Learning.

Note: In the event that the majority of children in the pre-selected class are between the ages of 30-36 months, the provider will be given the option of selecting the CLASS Toddler tool or selecting another class to be assessed. Assessment Scores for the CLASS Toddler tool will not count for or against the program’s overall scoring. These assessment will be used for informational purposes only.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System Pre-Kindergarten [CLASS Pre-K]

The CLASS Pre-K tool is designed to assess programs that serve children ages 3-5 years old. The CLASS Pre-K tool measures 10 critical dimensions that fall under three broad domains—Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support.
6.1 Opening Assessment Windows
Programs entering the Strong Minds Network will undergo professional program assessment, initially upon entering and every other fiscal year following. Programs will be notified by the Children’s Forum of their assessment window during the final two weeks of the preceding month of the assessment. During this call, an assessor will gather pertinent information about the program and will notify the director/owner that an assessment is scheduled to take place within the upcoming month. The assessors will ask for any atypical days during the assessment month. Atypical days include days where there are field trips, school picture days and holiday parties scheduled. Atypical days do not include days when the lead teacher/assistant teacher/director are out.

6.2 The Assessment Process (Centers & School Based)
Assessment processes vary depending upon the children’s ages, program type and hence the selected assessment tool. Fifty percent of all classrooms birth to 36 months and fifty percent of all classrooms 3-5 years old will be randomly assessed and every classroom assessed will need to achieve minimal threshold scores for the program to be considered for the applicable status in the Strong Minds Network. In cases where there are an odd number of classrooms, the total classrooms assessed will be rounded up.

On the day of the assessment, arrival to the site by the assessors will vary based on individual classroom schedules. Assessors may arrive at different times throughout the day. Upon arrival, the assessor will introduce him/herself and collect pertinent data.
The assessor will advise the director that she/he (the assessor) will not be able to talk to staff or children during the assessment. The assessor will also give the director an approximate time of how long the assessment should last.

Below is a description for each tool's assessment process.

**ITERS-R Assessment Process**

The ITERS-R is performed in a three-hour uninterrupted observation session. Classrooms that are scheduled to be assessed will need to have at least 50% of the children present. The assessor will note:

- Center's hours of operation
- Name of the classroom
- Names of classroom staff
- Staff's highest level of education
- How many years/months has the staff been at the center
- How many years/months has the staff been in childcare
- Curriculum used
- Number of children enrolled
- Maximum number of children the center is willing to put in the classroom being assessed
- Youngest child's birthdate
- Oldest child's birthdate
- Primary language spoken to children
- Secondary language spoken to children
- Number of children with diagnosed disabilities/types

At the conclusion of the observation, the assessor will conduct an interview with the lead teacher to obtain pertinent information that could not be observed. At the end of the interview, the assessor will thank the director and ask that an evaluation form be completed.

**CLASS (Toddler and Pre-K) Assessment Process**

CLASS assessments are performed within 20 minute observation segments (on rare occasions a cycle may last less than 20 minutes due to the classroom’s activities). Each observation segment is then followed by a period of scoring. This cycle repeats itself four times. At the conclusion of the assessment the assessor will thank the program
director and ask that he/she complete an evaluation form. In the event that a CLASS Toddler assessment is selected, providers are reminded that assessment scores for the CLASS Toddler tool will not count for or against the program’s overall scoring. These assessments will be used for informational purposes only.

6.3 The Assessment Process (Family Child Care Homes)

On the day of the assessment, at least 50% of children enrolled are required to be present for the assessment to take place. Upon arrival, the assessor will introduce him/herself and collect pertinent data. She will advise the provider that she (the assessor) will not be able to talk to staff (in the case of a large family child care) or children during the assessment. The assessor will also give the provider an approximate time of how long the assessment should last. The FCCERS-R tool is used to assess family child care homes.

FCCERS-R Assessment Process

The FCCERS-R is performed in a three hour uninterrupted observation session. The assessor initially notes:

- Provider's hours of operation
- Name of rooms (if applicable)
- Name of Provider (and employee if applicable)
- Provider's highest level of education (and employee if applicable)
- How many years/months has the provider been in operation (and employee if applicable)
- How many years/months has the provider been in child care (and employee if applicable)
- Curriculum used
- Number of children enrolled
- Number of infants/toddlers/preschool children
- Maximum number of children the FCCH is licensed for
- Youngest child's birthdate
- Oldest child's birthdate
- Primary language spoken to children
- Secondary language spoken to children
- Number of children with diagnosed disabilities/types
At the conclusion of the observation, the assessor will conduct an interview with the FCCH provider to obtain pertinent information that could not be observed. At the end of the interview, the assessor will thank the provider and ask that an evaluation form be completed.

6.4 Assessment Clarification

Any requests for assessment clarification must be filed within ten business days of the report being finalized on the Portal. Requests for clarification must be filed to the Children’s Forum website at www.forumpac.com. To submit a request for clarification simply click on the Clarifications, Videos and Webinar button, then click on the Have a Question-Ask an Expert button, next fill out the form in its entirety and lastly click Submit Form. Providers requesting an assessment clarification will receive an initial response within 24 hours.

6.5 Assessment Frequency

Programs that are a part of the Strong Minds Network will receive a valid and reliable program assessment every other fiscal year. Additionally, the Strong Minds Network reserves the right to conduct impromptu assessments at any time during a program’s participation in the Strong Minds Network.
Off Cycle Assessments

7.0 Requesting an Off Cycle Assessment

Programs are able to apply for off cycle assessments at any time for the purposes of evaluating or re-evaluating for entry into the Tier 1 or Tier 2 In-Network status.

To apply for an off cycle assessment, providers must complete an online application at the Children’s Forum Program Assessment Center website www.forumpac.com.

Assessments are $675.00 per classroom. It is important to note that 50% of the classrooms birth to 36 months and 50% of classrooms 3-5 years old will need to be assessed for consideration to the Strong Minds Network. Payments can also be made through the Children’s Forum Program Assessment Center website. Once the application and payment have been received by the Children’s Forum, the program will receive a call to open up an assessment window. Once the assessment window is established, the assessment procedure will occur in the typical manner.

For more information on off cycle assessments, contact the Children’s Forum directly at (561) 374-7650.
Network Resources

8.0 General and Network Specific Resources

Here is a vast amount of resources available to programs that are a part of the Strong Minds Network. These resources are intended to help programs improve their quality no matter where they find themselves within the Network. Some resources are specific to the Network itself—meaning that only programs participating in the Network are able to benefit from these resources. General resources are available to all early care and education programs. Strong Minds Network participants will be able to take advantage of both categories of resources (provided that it is a resource offered to their assigned status).

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<th>Strong Minds Resources</th>
<th>General Resources</th>
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<tr>
<td>Valid and Reliable Program Assessments</td>
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</table>

8.1 Navigation

The Strong Minds Navigator is responsible for coordinating work flow activities leading to entry and processing for the Strong Minds Network. The Network Navigator provides direction from application and selection, to access of supports/resources, through to annual renewal. The Navigator is responsible for facilitating membership of all child care programs that are a part of the Network. The Navigator processes all provider agreements, facilitates and coordinates requests for Technical Assistance, and coordinates tiered reimbursement supplements.
In addition, the Navigator serves as an ambassador for the Strong Minds Network, keeping providers informed and up-to-date on all policies, procedures and Strong Minds related news and events. The Navigator points child care providers in the right direction and assists them in navigating the vast system of supports and resources, ensuring that child care providers have access to the resources needed and simultaneously ensuring that resources are accessed judiciously and equitably across the Network. For navigation services, contact a Strong Minds Navigator at strongminds@cscpbc.org.

8.2 Professional Development

Professional Development is the ongoing process of gaining, updating, expanding and applying knowledge, skills, competencies and expertise in one's profession. It is a lifelong adult learning process and is equally important for all who work within the field of early childhood education.

Research links higher qualifications of early childhood teachers to better learning environments and outcomes for children. For this reason, early care and education practitioners are encouraged to obtain training and education in order to provide high-quality children's programs and to prepare for changing requirements in the field.

Teacher education, training, and professional development opportunities must be of high quality, valuable and relevant to the practitioner. Access to high quality professional development opportunities needs to be available to all teachers throughout their careers.

Center directors play a key role in motivating staff to pursue additional training and education. Directors can encourage staff to take responsibility for their professional development by providing information and resources about professional development opportunities. High quality centers belong to professional associations and have professional publications available for their staff. Participation and membership in professional organizations creates additional avenues for both teachers and directors to grow personally and professionally.

The Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education supports the practice of professional development for child care providers throughout Palm Beach County by providing a calendar of training opportunities, scholarships for early childhood courses, trainings, degrees, opportunities to join a Community of Practice, and career advising at all educational levels.

8.3 Career Advising

Career advisors, located at the Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education, are available to offer support and guidance to practitioners in Palm Beach County
who are interested in beginning or continuing their professional development in early childhood education.

Career advisors are individuals with the training and skill to assist the early childhood practitioner in navigating the pathways of professional development. Through advising sessions (either in person or by phone), career advisors can point the practitioner in the right direction. Based on a practitioner's professional goals, career advisors can provide information, identify and access resources, help set goals and priorities, select an appropriate path, and assist a practitioner in putting together a career plan that will lead to obtaining those goals.

Career advising is offered to Palm Beach County early childhood practitioners and directors who either have a service agreement with the Early Learning Coalition or who participate in the Strong Minds Network. Employed by the Palm Beach State College’s Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education, career advisors provide early childhood practitioners with encouragement, a sense of direction, and awareness of opportunities for professional development. During advising sessions, the career advisor can point the practitioner in the right direction and assist him/her in navigating the pathways of professional development. Career advising offers practitioners current career information and resources necessary to make informed decisions and choices about their career in early childhood education. The career advising process empowers practitioners and fosters their ability to advance along the career pathway step by step. In addition, career advisors offer support to practitioners on various scholarship and award opportunities, credential programs, academic programs, and training events.

8.4 Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry

Active membership in the Registry is a requirement for all professional staff working with programs that are part of the Strong Minds Network. Active Registry membership is achieved by completing a Registry Practitioner Membership application (available at www.pbcregistry.org) and submitting it along with applicable supporting documentation (transcripts, diplomas, credentials, etc.). Active membership is maintained by sending in all professional development updates (education/training completed) to the Registry annually, while maintaining employment in an early childhood setting.

Professional Staff refers to staff that hold the position of: Director, Assistant Director, Lead Teacher, Associate Teacher, Floater, and/or Education Coordinator/Curriculum Specialist in Centers/School-based sites and Owner, and employee in FCCH/ large FCCH. When a new professional staff member is hired and is not an active Registry member, the newly hired staff member must submit a Registry Practitioner application with applicable supporting documentation within 30 days of the hiring date.
The Registry provides specific data to the Strong Minds Network. To ensure that this data is accurate, it is imperative for members to continuously update the Registry as professional development accomplishments are achieved. It is important to have professional staff consistently monitor their data to ensure accuracy. Registry members are considered inactive if no professional development data is entered in over a year.

Access to a personalized report of professional development and employment information is available to Registry members through a secure personal login at http://www.pbcregistry.org/index.php/pbse/loginprac. To assist staff in accessing reports, visit http://www.pbcregistry.org/assets/doc/Login_Tutorial.pdf to view the tutorial.

8.5 The ACHIEVE Salary Supplement Program

ACHIEVE is a salary supplement award program for practitioners employed at participating In-Network and Promising Strong Minds early childhood programs in Palm Beach County. ACHIEVE awards are intended to encourage practitioners’ ongoing professional development and reduce turnover at their current center by providing monetary awards for completion of specific college credit coursework and/or non-college credit Registry-approved training. The program is funded by Children’s Services Council of Palm Beach County and is administered by Palm Beach State College’s Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education [IEECE].

ACHIEVE awards are granted after successful completion of specific coursework/training as outlined in the ACHIEVE Award Pathway (see Appendix C). The pathway provides a variety of award options based on the type of professional development completed, including Career Pathway Training, College Credit Coursework and a combination of both called the “Hybrid” option. All coursework/training must be documented in a practitioner’s Registry record.

Eligibility for the ACHIEVE Program is based on the following:

🔗 Applicant must have been employed at the same qualifying early childhood program in Palm Beach County for at least one consecutive year (12 months) at the time of application submission.

🔗 Applicant must work with children ages birth-5 years, for at least 20 hours per week on an annual basis.

🔗 Applicant must hold the position of: Director, Assistant Director, Curriculum Specialist, Lead Teacher, Associate Teacher, Floater, Family Child Care Home Provider, or Large Family Child Care Home Employee. (Ineligible Positions include: Non-Instructional Staff, Child Care Center substitutes, School District substitutes, and all employees working less than 20 hours per week)
Applicant must be an active member of the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry and all registry documentation, including transcripts, must be current.

Note: Participation in the Strong Minds Network is contingent upon available funding.

### 8.6 SEEK Scholarship

Seeking Excellence and Education through Knowledge, commonly referred to as SEEK, is a scholarship program dedicated to improving the quality of Palm Beach County’s early childhood education environments through staff development. SEEK Scholarships are funded by the Children's Services Council and administered by Palm Beach State College through the Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education.

SEEK Scholarships are available to family child care homes or large family childcare homes-- to include the provider and one designated substitute (one designated employee for large family childcare homes), child care centers-- to include all professional staff (director, assistant director, education coordinator/ curriculum specialist, lead teacher, associate teacher, and floater) and Palm Beach County School District programs-- to include instructional staff only.

Scholarships are available to assist with costs associated with a variety of professional development activities, including, but not limited to: translation of foreign higher education degrees, credit coursework for early childhood education degree programs, non-credit early childhood education courses and trainings, required books and materials for coursework.

Additional information regarding the SEEK Scholarship program can be found on the SEEK Scholarship website at [http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/ieece/financial-support/seek/default.aspx](http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/ieece/financial-support/seek/default.aspx)

Note: Participation in the Strong Minds Network is contingent upon available funding.

### 8.7 Technical Assistance

The Technical Assistance [TA] Specialists work with centers, school-based sites, and family child care programs to implement and maintain change by empowering the program leaders to drive their own continuous quality improvement. The aim is to promote effective strategies that lead to meaningful and sustainable quality improvements. The starting point is providing an effective model and set of tools for program leaders.
The TA specialist is available to provide support in the following content areas:

📍 **Teacher/Child Interactions**  
Focus will be on best practices in the field along with a focus on the CLASS assessment tools. Technical Assistance support will guide understanding and application of domains, dimensions, indicators, and behavioral markers through modeling and observation feedback.

📍 **Behavior Management & Special Needs**  
Focus will be on supporting staff in implementing strategies on both an individual child as well as classroom approach. Support may include modeling, observation feedback, and referral assistance. Staff will be guided through classroom environment modifications, classroom management strategies, social-emotional development, special needs, and in understanding and managing challenging behaviors.

📍 **Curriculum, Planning and Instruction**  
Focus will be on lesson planning, best practices, alignment to Teaching Strategies GOLD/ Florida Early Learning Standards, and CLASS behavioral markers. Support will be provided in the form of modeling, observation feedback and sharing of resources.

📍 **Accreditation**  
Support is available for Programs pursuing NAEYC, NAC, APPLE, FLOCS, NAFCC and several other accrediting bodies. The focus will be on the various accreditation components which typically include: developmentally appropriate practices, partnerships, administration and portfolios.

📍 **Assessment & Documentation**  
Focus will be on observation, documentation and the child assessment process which includes taking anecdotal notes, connecting notes to objectives, leveling and instruction.

📍 **Fundamentals**  
Focus will be on requiring a foundation of strong business practices, quality early learning environments and continuous quality improvement. Supports will be available in a range of areas that include administrative/business practices, developmentally appropriate learning environments and teacher/child interactions.

To receive Technical Assistance support, participating programs must contact a Network Navigator at (561) 374-7532 or (561) 374-7521.
8.8 Tiered Reimbursement Supplements

Tiered reimbursement supplements are reserved for programs that have achieved In-Network Status (both Tier 1 and Tier 2). The Tiered Reimbursement Supplements are provided to help offset the cost of quality and are to be used for the sole purpose of improving the quality of the early care and education program. Programs are encouraged to accomplish this through staff development, retention efforts, and programmatic enhancements that are tied to child outcomes. Programs are also advised to retain receipts for purchases made using Tier Reimbursement Supplements in the event of a random audit.

Below is a list of items that is not permissible for purchase with the use of Strong Minds funds:

- The purchase of real property
- Medical equipment, services or treatment
- Mortgage payments, interest payments, financing agreements, or long term vehicle leases
- Staff entertainment expenses
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Late fees/Financing fees
- Florida state sales tax on purchases made

Tiered Reimbursement Supplements will be calculated at initial entry into the Strong Minds Network and then again at two points throughout the year in the months of April and October. Tiered reimbursements will be based upon the number of children enrolled as reported on child enrollment forms submitted. The daily reimbursement rate ranges from ($1.16) per day per child to ($2.32) per day per child depending on tier level and the program’s geographic area. Programs that are not in a high needs area and have attained In-Network Status on a Tier 1 level will receive $1.16 reimbursement for each private pay child enrolled and $1.74 reimbursement for each child that receives public funding. Programs that are not in a high needs area and have attained In-Network Status on a Tier 2 level will receive a $1.74 reimbursement for each private pay child enrolled and will receive a $2.32 reimbursement for each child that receives public funding. Programs located in high need areas (for a list of high needs area zip codes please see Appendix B) will automatically receive the higher rate within their specific tier level for each child enrolled regardless of the child’s funding source. The Strong Minds Network reimburses programs monthly based on 20 days per month.

The supplements are based on an average daily reimbursement rate of several funding sources such as school readiness, Gold Seal, VPK, etc. The average daily reimbursement
rate was calculated at $29.00 per child per day. The Strong Minds tiered reimbursement supplement is 4-8% of the calculated daily reimbursement rate. Please see the following Tiered Reimbursement Chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tier 1 (Daily reimbursement Rate)</th>
<th>Tier 2 (Daily reimbursement Rate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Needs Area</td>
<td>$1.74 (6%)</td>
<td>$2.32 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in High Needs Area (Publicly Funded)</td>
<td>$1.74 (6%)</td>
<td>$2.32 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in High Needs Area (Private Pay)</td>
<td>$1.16 (4%)</td>
<td>$1.74 (6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Participation in the Strong Minds Network is contingent upon available funding.

Misuse of tiered reimbursement funds may result in a program’s termination from the Network and reimbursement of the misused funds to the Strong Minds Network.

### 8.9 Suspension of Tiered Reimbursement Supplements

Tiered Reimbursement Supplements will be suspended for programs that are cited for any Class One licensing violation or have received a third citing for the same Class Two violation. These suspensions will last until final agency action has taken place by the child care licensing/environmental control hearing board.

Tiered reimbursements will be reinstated if the citation is dismissed/reduced. Reimbursement supplements will be paid retroactively providing that final agency action occurs by September 30th of the current fiscal year. If final agency action does not occur by September 30th of the current fiscal year, reimbursements will be reinstated, however they will be paid retroactively only to the start of the new fiscal year.

Tiered Reimbursement Supplements also will be suspended for programs that have less than two children enrolled consecutively for 60 operational days.
Participation Requirements and Expectations

9.0 Record Keeping and Reporting

All child care programs that elect to participate in the Strong Minds Network are required to report child enrollments upon initial entry into the network and twice a year thereafter during the months of April and October. Enrollment numbers are used to calculate the tiered reimbursement amount for the program. Failure to submit enrollment numbers in a timely manner will result in delayed processing and payment. The Strong Minds Network reserves the right to suspend reimbursement payments for programs that have less than two children enrolled for 60 calendar days.

9.1 Gold Seal Accreditation

Each program that receives In-Network status agrees to become accredited by a Gold Seal approved accrediting agency within three years of achieving In-Network Status. The Gold Seal Quality Care Program, created by the Florida Legislature in 1996, acknowledges child care facilities and family child care homes that are accredited by nationally recognized associations whose standards reflect quality child care. Section 402.281, Florida Statutes, stipulates that child care programs that are accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting association whose standards substantially meet or exceed the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC), and the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation Commission (NECPA) shall receive a separate “Gold Seal Quality Care” designation to operate as a gold seal child care facility, large family child care home, or family day care home. For more information regarding the Gold Seal Accreditation, please visit: http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/childcare/goldseal.shtml

9.2 Teaching Strategies GOLD Child Assessment

Programs that achieve In-Network status are required to apply for and participate in Teaching Strategies GOLD Child Assessment Program through the Early Learning
Coalition of Palm Beach County. The GOLD formative child assessment is an observation and documentation tool that enables practitioners to assess each child’s development. Its design encompasses a cycle of ongoing observation, documentation, planning, portfolio-building, and reporting.

The GOLD formative child assessment program can be used with any approved early childhood curriculum and is based on 38 research-based objectives, including predictors of school success. The GOLD is aligned with Florida Early Learning Standards (Birth-3 and Pre-K), Head Start Standards and the Common Core State Standards. At a minimum, 75% of all children enrolled will have to be assessed using the GOLD Child Assessment.


### 9.3 Notification Requirements

All child care programs that elect to participate in the Strong Minds Network are required to notify Strong Minds Network Navigators, in writing, of significant changes that affect participation within ten business days. These changes include but are not limited to:

- Change in Address
- Facility closure (temporary/permanent)
- Change in licensing status: suspension or revocation
- Voluntary withdrawal from Strong Minds Network
- Change in ownership

### 9.4 How Change in Address Affects Participation

Programs that move during any stage of Strong Minds participation must re-apply to participate in the Strong Minds Network after the program becomes re-licensed at its new address. Because a portion of the Strong Minds rating is based on the environment, programs that re-apply to participate after moving will be required to be re-assessed.

### 9.5 Information Sharing

Programs applying to the Strong Minds Network agree to preserve and permit public access to all records, papers, letters, or other documents made or received in conjunction with the Strong Minds Network Agreement and the provision of services pursuant to the Agreement pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 119, Florida Statutes. Public records that are confidential by law or otherwise restricted from disclosure by law, including as required pursuant to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), 45 CFR, Parts 160 and 164, must be protected from disclosure.
The Strong Minds Network does not offer referrals, endorsements, or make recommendations in regards to outside consulting entities providing services to participating Strong Minds child care programs. If you are interested in hiring an outside consultant, we strongly encourage researching each entity to make sure that the offered services and supports meet your program’s needs.

9.6 Internet Usage and Security
Participation in the Strong Minds Network requires use of the Provider Portal and WELS. These web-based data networks are secure and require user logins to access information. All data entered in the Provider Portal and WELS can be accessed by the Children’s Services Council of Palm Beach County, the Children’s Forum, the Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education, and Palm Beach County’s School District for the purpose of supporting quality improvement work and for the long-term evaluation of the Strong Minds program. Additionally, all information entered into the data networks are subject to public disclosure requests as described above in section 9.5 Information Sharing.
Exiting the Network

10.0 Grounds for Termination

The Strong Minds Network reserves the right to take any action necessary in the best interest of the children served and for the betterment of the Network. The Network can initiate termination based upon recommendations of its System Partners at any time. The following are circumstances under which a program can be immediately terminated from the Network:

- Provider receives a formal class 1 licensing violation
- Provider receives more than two of the same formal class 2 licensing violations within 12 consecutive months
- Change in ownership
- Change in Address
- Failure to maintain an active license
- Failure to maintain good standing with School Readiness agreement and/or Head Start/Early Head Start contract (In good standing is defined as no compliance/quality assurance plan within the last 12 months; Good standing within the statewide school readiness provider contract is defined as no:
  - Probation
  - Termination for cause
  - Emergency Termination
  - Revocation of eligibility and/or
  - Suspected Fraud
  Within the last twelve months.)
- Falsification of information or documentation
- Failure to become accredited by a Gold Seal Approved accrediting agency within three years of In-Network acceptance
- Prohibited use of Tiered-Reimbursement Supplement funds
Promising or Emerging program’s failure to meet In-Network scores within the given timeframes

Failure to meet eligibility at Annual Renewal

10.1 Procedure for Exiting the Network

In addition to the Network’s initiation of termination, we also acknowledge the program’s right to exit the Network at any time for any reason. If a program wishes to exit the Network, the program must submit notification in writing to a Strong Minds Network Navigator. The program will receive a letter stating the effective date of termination/withdrawal, reason for exiting and a list of benefits that will be forfeited.

Note: Exiting the Strong Minds Network will result in the termination of all Network specific resources.

10.2 Grievance Procedure

The grievance procedure is designed to provide prompt and orderly resolution of complaints and/or disputes arising in the course of conducting business with, receiving services from, and/or providing services to the Strong Minds Network funded by the Children’s Services Council. Any party has the right to submit its grievance to the Leadership of the Strong Minds Network within 30 days of an occurrence, or within 30 days of a party having reasonable knowledge of said occurrence. The Strong Minds Network will respond to the grievance within 45 days. Grievance(s) must be submitted in written form (electronic or mail) to the following address:

Strong Minds Network Grievance Hearing Committee
2300 High Ridge Road
Boynton Beach, FL 33426
strongminds@cscpbc.org

10.3 Reapplication to the Network

Programs in the following scenarios may reapply to the Strong Minds Network at any time providing that funding is available and they meet all of the eligibility criteria outlined in section 4 Eligibility.
Voluntary withdrawal from Strong Minds Network

Failure to submit participation agreement by designated deadline

Termination due to address change

Termination due to facility closure—(non-licensing reasons)

New ownership

In order to reapply, programs will complete and submit an online application via the Provider Portal.

**When must a facility wait one year to reapply to the Strong Minds Network?**

In the case that a program is terminated from the Strong Minds Network for any of the following reasons, the program must wait one year to reapply and follow specific procedures for re-application.

- Provider receives a formal class 1 licensing violation
- Provider receives two of the same formal class 2 licensing violations within 12 consecutive months
- Failure to maintain an active license
- Failure to maintain good standing with School Readiness agreement and/or Head Start/Early Head Start contract.
- Falsification of information and/or documentation
- Failure to become accredited by a Gold Seal Approved accrediting agency within the allowed timeframe
- Prohibited use of Tiered-Reimbursement Supplement Funds
- Promising or Emerging program’s failure to meet In-Network scores within the given timeframes

**Process to reapply to the Strong Minds Network after one year:**

1. Programs must wait 12 months from date of termination from the Strong Minds Network to reapply.

2. After 12 months, programs interested in reapplication are required to submit written documentation to the leadership of the Strong Minds Network stating how issues that resulted in termination or withdrawal have been resolved and how the program is prepared for successful future participation. Programs that have been terminated from the Network three times are no longer able to apply.

3. The leadership of Strong Minds will convene to review the cause of program’s termination or withdrawal, documentation submitted by facility, and information from partners to make a final decision about the program’s eligibility for participation. Strong Minds may request additional information from the facility during the review process.
4. Strong Minds will notify the program of the final decision in writing at which time the program is able to reapply if the decision has been made to allow the program to do so.

5. The Strong Minds Network reserves the right to make the final decision about reapplication after termination or voluntary withdrawal.
Renewal Criteria and Process for In-Network Providers

11.0 Annual Participation Requirements

Annual participation requirements must be met by all programs that have made it into In-Network Status. In order for programs to maintain In-Network status, there are several standards that must be met. These standards will be reviewed on an annual basis and formal program assessments will be conducted every other fiscal year.

To maintain In-Network status, programs must continuously meet all Pre-Entry Requirements:

- Currently hold a School Readiness Agreement with the Early Learning Coalition [ELC], or a contract with Head Start/ Early Head Start [HS/EHS]

- Be in good standing with applicable School Readiness, and or Head Start/ Early Head Start Agreements* (In good standing is defined as no compliance/quality assurance plan within the last 12 months; Good standing within the statewide school readiness provider contract is defined as no:
  - Probation
  - Termination for cause
  - Emergency Termination
  - Revocation of eligibility and/or
  - Suspected Fraud within the last twelve months.)

- Have zero (0) class 1 violations within the last 12 months and no more than two (2) of the same class 2 violations within the last 12 months)

- Currently have 100% of all professional staff listed as active members in the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry
Agree to become Gold Seal Accredited within three years of achieving In-Network Status

Agree to use Teaching Strategies GOLD** Child Assessment within your program

* A program does not have to hold contracts with all of the above mentioned agencies, however it must hold at least one contract/agreement.

** Alternative formative assessments, other than the Teaching Strategies GOLD Child Assessment, will be reviewed on a case by case basis for those programs who wish to continue use of an alternative assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1 Programs must maintain:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Score of 4.0 on identified items of ITERS-R (center-based &amp; school-based)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Score of 4.0 on identified items of FCCERS-R (FCCH)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Pre-K CLASS domain scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 Emotional Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 Classroom Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Instructional Support</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 2 Programs must maintain:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Average Score of 5.5 on identified items of ITERS-R (center-based &amp; school-based)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Score of 5.5 on identified items of FCCERS-R (FCCH)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum Pre-K CLASS domain scores</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.5 Emotional Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Classroom Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Instructional Support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***Note: Research shows that a 3.0 in Instructional Support is an indicator of beginning levels of quality. The Strong Minds Network will periodically analyze local and national CLASS scores and increase the threshold score for instructional support accordingly.
Glossary of Terms

**ACHIEVE Program.** A salary supplement program administered by Palm Beach State College’s Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education. ACHIEVE awards are granted after successful completion of specific coursework/training.

**Career Advisor.** Career Advisors are available to support the professional development of individuals that are employed in Early Care and Education programs. Career Advisors, employed by Palm Beach State College’s Institute of Excellence, offer guidance in selecting high quality early childhood training and education to broaden career pathway options. They provide guidance in a variety of areas and assist with developing professional goals and objectives.

**Career lattice.** Framework outlining multiple pathways for professional growth and development. It shows how practitioners can move vertically, horizontally, or diagonally across different occupational settings in the child care and early education network to advance their careers.

**Center-based child care.** Programs that are licensed or otherwise authorized to provide child care services in a nonresidential setting.

**Child care provider.** An institution or person who provides child care services.

**Classroom Assessment Scoring System [CLASS].** An observational tool that focuses on teacher-child interactions within classrooms and is designed to increase teacher effectiveness.

**Continuous Quality Improvement [CQI].** A continuous process of quality improvement focused on improving outcomes for children and families.

**Environment Rating Scale [ERS].** The Environment Rating Scales [ERS] are observational assessment tools used to evaluate the quality of early childhood programs. There are four environment rating scales, each designed for different age groups/program type.

- **ECERS-R--** Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised: designed to assess center-based programs serving children ages 2 ½ through 5 years old.
- **ITERS-R--** Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised: designed to assess center-based programs for children birth to 2 ½ years of age.
- **FCCERS-R--** Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised: designed to assess family child care programs conducted in a provider’s home.
SACERS-- School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale: Designed to assess before and after school group programs for school-age children, 5 to 12 years of age.

**Family Child Care Homes [FCCH].** Child care provided for a group of children in a home setting.

**Fiscal Year.** The Strong Minds Network fiscal year runs from October 1st-September 30th. All reassessments are based on the Strong Minds fiscal year calendar.

**Florida Kindergarten Readiness Scale [FLKRS].** The Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) gathers information about a child’s overall development and addresses each student’s readiness for kindergarten based on the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds. The FLKRS is also used to calculate VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate, which measures how well a VPK provider prepares a 4-year-olds for kindergarten based on the standards.

**GOLD Child Assessment.** A user-friendly child assessment tool that enables teachers to assess each child’s development and create individualized learning plans based on the child’s capabilities.

**Gold Seal.** In 1996, the Florida Legislature established the Gold Seal Quality Care program to acknowledge child care facilities and family child care homes that are accredited by nationally recognized agencies whose standards reflect quality in the level of care and supervision provided to children. For a current list of approved agencies participating in the Gold Seal Quality Care Program, visit: [http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/childcare/goldseal.shtml](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/childcare/goldseal.shtml)

**Licensing.** Requirement necessary for a provider to legally operate child care services in a state or locality, including registration requirements established under state, local, or Tribal law.

**Monitoring.** Oversight of provider and caregiver performance and compliance with quality.

**Off cycle assessments.** Program assessments that are not performed within the typical timeframes of the Strong Minds Network. Programs are able to apply for off cycle assessments at any point for the purposes of evaluating or re-evaluating for entry into the Tier 1 or Tier 2 In-Network status at their own expense.

**Outcome evaluations.** Examine overall program effects. This type of evaluation focuses on objectives and standards and provides useful information about program results and outcome achievement.
Palm Beach Provider Portal. An online web-based application designed for providers to create and submit child care application(s) online.

Performance Measurement. Assesses a program’s progress towards its stated goals. The data collected measures specific outputs and outcomes a program is designed to achieve. It is the ongoing monitoring and reporting of program accomplishments and progress toward pre-established goals. For many programs, requirements can be met through performance measurement, which includes collecting data on the level and type of activities (inputs) and the direct products and services delivered by the program (outputs).

Process Evaluations. Assess the extent to which the program is functioning as planned.

Professional Development. Opportunities for child care providers to receive ongoing training to increase their preparation for, and skill in, caring for children. These opportunities include mentoring programs, credentialing programs, in-service training, and degree programs.

Professional Staff. For family child care homes or large family child care homes, professional staff refers to the provider and one designated employee (designated employee for large family childcare home only). For child care centers, professional staff refers to the director, assistant director, education coordinator/curriculum specialist, lead teacher, associate teacher, and floater. For school based sites, professional staff refers to instructional staff.

Program Evaluation. A systematic process of obtaining information to be used to determine the merit, worth, value or significance of a program. In general, organizations use program evaluations to distinguish successful program efforts from ineffective program activities and services and to revise existing programs to achieve successful results.

Quality Assurance Plans. Plans created by providers that are not in compliance with their School Readiness Agreement held with the Early Learning Coalition.

Quality Improvement Plans. Initiatives designed to increase the quality or availability of child care programs or to provide parents with information and support to enhance their ability to select child care arrangements most suited to their family and child’s needs. Common quality initiatives include child care resource and referral services for parents, training and professional development and wage enhancement for staff, and facility improvement and accreditation for child care programs.
**Quality Rating and Improvement System [QRIS].** Quality Rating and Improvement Systems are multicomponent assessments with public ratings of child care quality. QRISs were designed to make child care quality transparent and easily understood. Some QRISs explicitly include feedback and technical assistance and provide incentives to motivate and support quality improvement. A QRIS rates providers by levels of quality according to established criteria to encourage high-quality service delivery. Other elements of a QRIS include financial incentives, monitoring, and dissemination of the ratings to the public.

**Registry.** A database that stores and tracks a variety of professional development information. Personnel and training registries track practitioners’ completed education, training, and other experience and professional activities. A registry can also produce records that validate qualifications or ongoing professional development for accreditation, a QRIS, wage incentives, and credentials. In some states, the registry is the network used to verify provider qualifications to meet state licensing requirements.

**Reliability.** Refers to the degree to which a measure (or set of measures) is consistent in measuring what it is supposed to measure.

**SEEK Scholarship.** Seeking Excellence and Education through Knowledge, commonly referred to as SEEK, is a scholarship program dedicated to improving the quality of Palm Beach County’s early childhood education environments through staff development.

**School-Based Childcare Centers.** Programs that are licensed or otherwise authorized to provide child care services in a school setting.

**Standards.** The components of child care services upon which quality ratings are based. The standards establish the criteria or requirements for being awarded a level of quality. The standards used in a QRIS can vary widely from state to state.

**Technical Assistance.** Support or training provided to child care providers and staff by experts in relevant areas of programmatic, quality improvement, or professional development topics.

**Tiered Reimbursement Supplement.** A subsidy payment system that offers higher payments for child care programs that meet higher-quality standards or for child care that is in short supply.

**Validity of Ratings.** The degree to which ratings are accurate reflections of the relative quality of child care services.

**Web-based Early Learning System [WELS].** Web-based Early Learning System is a Quality Rating and Improvement System [QRIS] data network that addresses core early care and education quality issues for network administration.
Appendix A: Strong Minds Organizational Chart and Partner Agencies

Strong Minds Network Organizational Chart

**Strong Minds Network Providers**
Child Care Centers ~ Family Child Care Homes ~ School Based Sites
- Provide Quality Care
- Provide Quality Environments
- Provide Quality Interactions
- Provide Quality Instruction

**Strong Minds Network Partners**
- Early Learning Coalition
- Children's Forum
- Palm Beach State College
- PBC School District
- Provide Quality Supports & Resources
- Provide Valid and Reliable Program Assessments
- Provide Scholarships

**Children's Services Council**
- Provides Funding, Research, and Leadership
- Administers and Manages the Strong Minds Network
- Provides Navigation
- Provides Tiered Reimbursement Supplements
### Strong Minds Network Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong Minds Network Partners</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Children’s Services Council of Palm Beach County** | The Children’s Services Council of Palm Beach County is an independent special district established by Palm Beach County voters. The mission of CSC is to enhance the lives of children and their families and enable them to attain their full potential by providing a unified context within which children’s needs can be identified and resolved by all members of the community. To achieve this, the Council plans, develops, funds, and evaluates programs and promotes public policies which benefit Palm Beach County’s children and families.  

The work of Children’s Services Council has been a vital part of Palm Beach County for nearly three decades. The Children’s Services Council provides leadership, funding, services, and research on behalf of the county’s children, so they grow up healthy, safe and strong. To make the biggest impact, the Council focuses on prenatal health and early childhood development so more Palm Beach County children are born healthy, are safe from abuse and neglect, are ready to learn when they enter school, and have access to quality afterschool and summer programming. By giving children the fundamental tools for success early in life, they are more likely to reach vital growth and developmental milestones, graduate from high school and become productive members of society.  

The Council accomplishes its goals by funding local nonprofit and community agencies to provide proven, high-quality services to the county’s children and families. In 2013, the Council reached more than 400,000 children and families through more than 50 programs and initiatives. The Strong Minds Network is funded by the Children’s Services Council. The Council also provides centralized administration and management of the Network. For more information on the Strong Minds Network, contact a Strong Minds Navigator at (561) 374-7532 or (561) 374-7521 or email us at strongminds@cscpbc.org |

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**Note:** This content is a portion of Appendix A: Strong Minds Organizational Chart and Partner Agencies (cont.).
Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education

Palm Beach State College’s Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education operates to create and support a qualified, well-trained childcare workforce in Palm Beach County through an effective, comprehensive professional development network that makes education and training opportunities available to all home, center and school-based school readiness providers in order that they are able to positively impact children and families through quality learning environments.

The Institute works closely with many agencies and organizations to promote education and training opportunities for teachers of young children that will advance high quality early education programs for young children.

The Institute oversees several resources and supports available through the Strong Minds Network:

- Professional Development
- Leadership Development
- Training Opportunities
- Career Advising
- Tutoring for Academic Success
- SEEK Scholarship Program
- ACHIEVE Salary Supplement

Contact Palm Beach State College’s Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education at (561) 868-3660 or visit their website at http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE.

School District of Palm Beach County

The School District of Palm Beach County manages the Technical Assistance Program, a component of the countywide Strong Minds Network, for private childcare centers and public school classroom practitioners and management.

The Technical Assistance Specialists [TAS] are experienced, highly-trained teachers certified in early childhood education. These Specialists provide training and on-site technical assistance to help improve program quality to increase positive child outcomes. The services are based on nationally accepted best practices in early education, and on-site assistance is based on an assessment of current practices and goals set jointly by the participants and TA Specialists.

The Technical Assistance Specialists have specialized training and experience in the following areas: infant and toddler care-giving, developmentally appropriate practice, children with special needs, accreditation, curriculum, behavior management, and the Solution Focused approach.

To request Technical Assistance, please contact a Strong Minds Navigator at (561) 374-7532 or (561) 374-7521 or email us at strongminds@escpbc.org.
Children’s Forum

The Children's Forum is a statewide, not-for-profit organization with a mission to improve the quality and accessibility of child care and education for pre-kindergarten and school-age children. The Forum recognizes that one of the most important ways to advance services for children is through the ongoing training and education of the child care workforce and has been providing professional development opportunities and initiatives for practitioners for more than 25 years. The Children’s Forum is the Florida licensee for the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood scholarship program and the Child Care WAGE$ FLORIDA wage supplement project. The Forum is also the contractor for the statewide Gold Seal program, Florida’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers [21st CCLC] Administrative Project, the Florida Directory for Early Childhood Services (serving families of children with disabilities), the Strong Minds Network of Palm Beach County, the Quality Counts Career Center in Miami-Dade County, and the Program Assessment Center. The Forum provides services in the areas of advocacy, training, and research.

The Forum operates the Program Assessment Center [PAC] for Palm Beach County’s Strong Minds Network, providing cycled and off cycle assessment services for child care centers and family child care homes. The Forum also oversees Palm Beach County’s Early Childhood Registry.

The PAC employs a staff of early childhood specialists who have been trained to reliability on the Environment Rating Scales (ITERS-R and FCCERS-R) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (Pre-K and Toddler CLASS) assessment tools. PAC services are designed to increase the environmental quality of programs for young children and ensure that appropriate services are available to promote their optimal development and prepare them for school success. On the PAC website (www.forumpac.com), child care practitioners can access video trainings, post questions about the assessment process and tools, and request additional assessment services.

Contact the Children’s Forum at (561) 374-7650 or visit their website at http://www.forumpac.com

Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County

The Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring early care and education for children in Palm Beach County. Through a variety of affordable and innovative early education and voluntary pre-kindergarten programs, the Coalition has served more than 33,000 children and their families.

Founded in 2000, the Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County is among 31 similar organizations in the State of Florida established following the enactment of the School Readiness Act. The Coalition supports the Strong Minds Network by overseeing the:

- School Readiness Agreements
- VPK Agreements
- Developmental Screening Program
- GOLD Child Assessment
- Provider Portal
- Program Assurance Monitoring

Contact the Early Learning Coalition at (561) 214-8000 or visit their website at http://www.elcpalmbeach.org
## Appendix B: Zip Code Report

### ZIP CODE REPORT (2012)

| Indicator | 33401 | 33403 | 33405 | 33407 | 33409 | 33411 | 33415 | 33417 | 33418 | 33420 | 33425 | 33431 | 33433 | 33435 | 33437 | 33443 | 33446 | 33447 | 33450 | 33453 | 33454 | 33455 | 33460 | 33461 | 33462 | 33463 | 33465 | 33467 | 33468 | 33470 | 33474 | 33479 | 33480 | 33484 | 33486 | 33492 |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Most Children on Free or Reduced Lunch (2012) |   ✔️  |   ✔️  |       |   ✔️  |   ✔️  |   ✔️  |   ✔️  |   ✔️  |   ✔️  |   ✔️  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Most Children on Child Care Waitlist (2012) |   ✔️  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Highest % of Low Birthweight Babies (2012 provisional) |   ✔️  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Highest % of Women With Inadequate Prenatal Care (2012 provisional) |   ✔️  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Highest % of Premature Babies (2012 provisional) |   ✔️  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Highest Teen Birth Rate (2012 provisional) |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Highest % Repeat Teen Birth (2012 provisional) |   ✔️  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Children Scoring Not Ready for School (K 2012) |   ✔️  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Children Scoring Not on Grade Level on FSA 3rd Grade Reading (Spring 2012) |   ✔️  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Children Scoring Not on Grade Level on FSA 3rd Grade Math (Spring 2012) |   ✔️  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Children Scoring Not on Grade Level on FSA 10th Grade Reading (Spring 2012) |   ✔️  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| High School Graduation Rate (2012) |   ✔️  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Juveniles Arrested (2012) |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |

| Number of indicators falling in worst zip codes | 5     | 6     | 2     | 11    | 4     | 2     | 4     | 8     | 10    | 11    | 10    | 2     | 2     | 9     | 6     | 9     | 9     | 2     | 6     | 2     | 2     |

Legend: 2-4 | 5-7 | 8+
## Appendix C: ACHIEVE Award Pathway

### ACHIEVE
Salary Supplement Awards for Strong Minds In-Network and Promising Practitioners

This program is dedicated to practitioners employed at Strong Minds In-Network or Promising sites in Palm Beach County who work directly with children from birth to age five.

### ACHIEVE Award Pathway

#### Career Pathway Training
Non-Credit, Registry Approved Training Events (CPT)

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<tr>
<th>Pathway Options</th>
<th>Achieve Award</th>
<th>Award Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>180 CPT Hours</td>
<td>$300.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>135 CPT Hours</td>
<td>$225.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>90 CPT Hours</td>
<td>$150.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>45 CPT Hours</td>
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#### Hybrid Pathway
Combination of Non-Credit, Registry Approved Training Events (CPT) and EC/CD College Credit Coursework

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<th>Award Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12 EC/CD Credits and 135 CPT Hours</td>
<td>$825.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9 EC/CD Credits and 90 CPT Hours</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6 EC/CD Credits and 45 CPT Hours</td>
<td>$375.00</td>
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#### College Credit Pathway
College Credit Coursework (Specific to EC/CD)

<table>
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<th>Award Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>*Bachelor Degree or higher with at least 24 EC/CD Credits</td>
<td>$3000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>*Bachelor Degree or higher in related field</td>
<td>$2750.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>*Associate Degree with at least 24 EC/CD Credits</td>
<td>$2500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>45 College Credits including 24 EC/CD Credits</td>
<td>$2000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>30 College Credits including 24 EC/CD Credits</td>
<td>$1500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>24 EC/CD Credits</td>
<td>$1200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18 EC/CD Credits</td>
<td>$900.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12 EC/CD Credits</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* *Career Pathway Training - Option 4* - 180 CPT Hours (Completion Point) - To retain annual eligibility, complete at least 24 CPT hours in one 3 credit EC/CD class or one 3 credit class toward an EC/CD degree in the 12 months prior to the submission of the renewal application.

* *College Credit Pathway - Option 6 - Associate Degree with at least 24 EC/CD Credits* (Completion Point) - To retain annual eligibility, complete at least 24 CPT hours in one 3 credit EC/CD class or one 3 credit class toward an EC/CD degree in the 12 months prior to the submission of the renewal application.

* *College Credit Pathway - Option 8 - Bachelor Degree or higher in related field* (Completion Point) - To retain annual eligibility, complete at least 24 CPT hours in one 3 credit EC/CD class or one 3 credit class toward an EC/CD degree in the 12 months prior to the submission of the renewal application.

* *College Credit Pathway - Option 8 - Bachelor Degree or higher with at least 24 EC/CD Credits (Completion Point)* - To retain annual eligibility, complete at least 24 CPT hours in one 3 credit EC/CD class or one 3 credit class toward an EC/CD degree in the 12 months prior to the submission of the renewal application.

Awards marked with [*] are provided annually, as long as retention eligibility requirements are met. All other awards are provided one-time only.

**The mission of the Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education is to provide the child care workforce of Palm Beach County with a comprehensive approach to career development in the field of early childhood education.**
Appendix D: Strong Minds Network Logic Model

Logic Model for Strong Minds Network

RESOURCES/INPUTS
- High-quality environments
- Quality staff (e.g., YMCA, YMCA, Children’s Museum, etc.)
- Funding
  - Federal and private
- Technology
- Specialists

STRATEGIES/ACTIVITIES
1. Provide Supports to Childcare Providers
   - Additional support to Childcare Providers
   - Childcare providers receive additional training and support
   - Support for Childcare Providers
   - Childcare providers receive additional training and support

2. Provide Support to Child Care Practitioners
   - Support for Childcare Practitioners
   - Support for Childcare Practitioners
   - Support for Childcare Practitioners
   - Support for Childcare Practitioners

3. Support to Children & Families
   - Support to children & families
   - Support to children & families
   - Support to children & families
   - Support to children & families

OUTPUTS
- Increased participation in the Strong Minds Network
- Increased learning and development
- Increased learning and development
- Increased learning and development

SHOR TERM
- Improved provider supports
- Improved short-term
- Improved short-term
- Improved short-term

INTERMEDIATE
- Improved support
- Improved support
- Improved support
- Improved support

LONG-TERM
- Increased participation
- Increased participation
- Increased participation
- Increased participation

OUTCOME/GOAL
- Improved child care provider/staff learning environment
- Increased learning and development
- Increased learning and development
- Increased learning and development

Children are ready for school
- Increased participation
- Increased participation
- Increased participation
- Increased participation