

Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program

Fact Sheet for Families

Overview

If you have a child who will soon be 4 years old, then you know how curious she is or how much he may already know. Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) is a free high-quality education program for 4-year-olds living in Florida – to prepare them for success in school and in life. VPK helps build a strong foundation for school using educational materials appropriate for different stages in your child's development.



What are the eligibility requirements for VPK?

Children must live in Florida and be 4 years old on or before September 1 of the current year to be eligible. Families with children born between February 2 and September 1 have the option to postpone enrolling their 4-year-old until the following year when their child is 5.

How do I apply for VPK?

You can apply online from a computer, mobile phone or other digital device by visiting www.familyservices.floridaearlylearning.com. You will need an email address, proof of Florida residency and proof of your child's age to apply.

Your local early learning coalition will review your application and email you with further instructions. Once your application is approved, the coalition will provide you with a Certificate of Eligibility you can take to any VPK provider.

VPK Program Options

Private, public and charter schools, private childcare centers and specialized instructional services providers may offer VPK. Parents can select from one of several program options available from private and public providers.

VPK School-Year Program: 540 instructional hours

Class sizes are not to exceed 11 students with a single lead instructor or up to 20 students with a lead instructor and an assistant. Instructors must have a minimum of a Florida Child Care Professional Credential.

Specialized Instructional Services Program: Hours vary based on services provided

VPK Specialized Instructional Services (SIS) is a program option available for VPK-age children with current individualized educational plans (IEPs). This option allows parents of a VPK-age child to choose additional therapy services consistent with the child's IEP in lieu of attending VPK in a traditional classroom setting.

VPK Summer Program: 300 Instructional Hours

Classes are not to exceed 12 students with a single lead instructor. Instructors must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree.



How do I find a VPK provider for my child?

Contact your local early learning coalition. You will find a map of the 30 coalitions in Florida on the [Office of Early Learning](#) website.

Visit the [Department of Children and Families](#) website to view various provider profiles.

Call your local Child Care Resources and Referral office to receive a customized list of VPK providers. For the number of your local office, you may call the Office of Early Learning toll-free at 1-866-357-3239 (TTY:711).



Kindergarten screenings show that children who complete VPK are more prepared for Kindergarten than those who do not.

Prekindergarten Matters

Research shows children who participate in high-quality prekindergarten programs:

- Perform better on standardized tests.
- Have better school attendance rates.
- Develop lifelong social and emotional skills.
- Are less likely to drop out of school.

Source: *The Center for Public Education*



VPK emphasizes quality learning from qualified instructors using developmentally appropriate materials.



Florida is a national leader in prekindergarten access.