

Florida Department of Education  
Office of Early Learning

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**VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN EDUCATION PROGRAM (VPK)  
SETTING AND ALIGNING STANDARDS**

**EMERGENT LITERACY COURSE STANDARDS: AN OVERVIEW  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Background - HB 1A Requirements**

Section 1002.59, Florida Statutes, *Emergent literacy training courses.*—

By April 1, 2005, the department shall adopt minimum standards for one or more training courses in emergent literacy for prekindergarten instructors. Each course must comprise 5 clock hours and provide instruction in strategies and techniques to address the age-appropriate progress of prekindergarten students in developing emergent literacy skills, including oral communication, knowledge of print and letters, phonemic and phonological awareness, and vocabulary and comprehension development. Each course must also provide resources containing strategies that allow students with disabilities and other special needs to derive maximum benefit from the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program. Successful completion of an emergent literacy training course approved under this section satisfies requirements for approved training in early literacy and language development under ss. 402.305(2)(d)5., 402.313(6), and 402.3131(5).

(See the following links for references to Florida Statutes:  
[http://www.flsenate.gov/Statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&Search\\_String=&URL=Ch0402/SEC305.HTM&Title=->2004->Ch0402->Section%20305#0402.305](http://www.flsenate.gov/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=Ch0402/SEC305.HTM&Title=->2004->Ch0402->Section%20305#0402.305) for s. 402.305, Florida Statutes;  
[http://www.flsenate.gov/Statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&Search\\_String=&URL=Ch0402/SEC313.HTM&Title=->2004->Ch0402->Section%20313#0402.313](http://www.flsenate.gov/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=Ch0402/SEC313.HTM&Title=->2004->Ch0402->Section%20313#0402.313) for s. 402.313, Florida Statutes; and  
[http://www.flsenate.gov/Statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&Search\\_String=&URL=Ch0402/SEC3131.HTM&Title=->2004->Ch0402->Section%203131#0402.3131](http://www.flsenate.gov/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=&URL=Ch0402/SEC3131.HTM&Title=->2004->Ch0402->Section%203131#0402.3131) for s. 402.3131, Florida Statutes.)

Section 1002.55(3)(c), Florida Statutes, *School-year prekindergarten program delivered by private prekindergarten providers.*—

(3) To be eligible to deliver the prekindergarten program, a private prekindergarten provider must meet each of the following requirements:

**HB 1A Requirements (cont).**

Section 1002.55(3)(c), Florida Statutes, *School-year prekindergarten program delivered by private prekindergarten providers.— (cont.)*

(c) The private prekindergarten provider must have, for each prekindergarten class, at least one prekindergarten instructor who meets each of the following requirements:

1. The prekindergarten instructor must hold, at a minimum, one of the following credentials:
  - a. A child development associate credential issued by the national Credentialing Program of the Council for Professional Recognition; or
  - b. A credential approved by the Department of Children and Family Services as being equivalent to or greater than the credential described in sub-subparagraph a.
2. The prekindergarten instructor must successfully complete an emergent literacy training course approved by the department as meeting or exceeding the minimum standards adopted under s. 1002.59. This subparagraph does not apply to a prekindergarten instructor who successfully completes approved training in early literacy and language development under s. 402.305(2)(d)5., s. 402.313(6), or s. 402.3131(5) before the establishment of one or more emergent literacy training courses under s. 1002.59 or April 1, 2005, whichever occurs later.

Section 1002.73(2)(b) Florida Statutes, *Department of Education; powers and duties; accountability requirements.—*

- (2) The department shall adopt procedures for the department's:
  - (b) Approval of emergent literacy training courses under ss. 1002.55 and 1002.59.

**Current Status**

As noted above, Chapter 402, Florida Statutes, requires 5-clock-hours or .5 continuing education units of training in early literacy and language development of children from birth-five years of age. The Department of Children and Families:

- approves alternate courses for the above required literacy component (there are approximately 70 approved courses) (Go to [http://199.250.30.124/pdf/dfs/dfsweb/Approved\\_Early\\_Literacy\\_Training\\_Programs.pdf](http://199.250.30.124/pdf/dfs/dfsweb/Approved_Early_Literacy_Training_Programs.pdf) for a list of approved courses.)
- has created a new course which is under review by the Florida Center for Reading Research.
- offers current training on-line or through a network of 15 training coordinating areas throughout the state.

**Current Status (cont.)**

- has an electronic training database to capture completion of mandated training requirements.

The Department of Education has identified competencies for teachers in the area of reading. (Go to [http://info.fldoe.org/dscgi/ds.py/Get/File-1004/ReadingEndorsement\\_Competerencies.pdf](http://info.fldoe.org/dscgi/ds.py/Get/File-1004/ReadingEndorsement_Competerencies.pdf).)

The Department of Education conducts annual regional summer academies for all K-3 teachers in Reading First schools.

The Department of Education developed the *Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol, Protocol System – 2004* in response to legislative requirements affecting professional development in public schools. (Go to <http://www.firn.edu/doe/profdev/pdf/pdsprotocol.pdf>.)

**Proceedings of Panel of Experts, February 17-18, 2005**

See <http://myfloridaeducation.com/earlylearning/pdf/proceedings.pdf>.

**Recommendation – Approval of Emergent Literacy Courses**

The Department of Education shall develop the five-hour course(s) on emergent literacy to be available statewide and free to all participants by October 1, 2005. Until the Department of Education’s course(s) are available, courses currently approved by the Department of Children and Families will meet the statutory requirements for VPK instructors. However, VPK providers will be encouraged to complete the Department of Education’s emergent literacy course once it is available as part of their required annual in-service training to fully understand the importance of literacy in VPK.

**Recommendation – Standards for the Department of Education’s Emergent Literacy Courses** (adopted from the developed *Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol – 2004*)

The Department’s Emergent Literacy Courses for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK) instructors shall meet the following standards:

**1. Planning**

- 1.1. Individual Needs: The training shall build upon the skill-level of VPK instructors who have a Child Development Associate or Child Development Associate – Equivalent credential.

**Recommendation – Standards for the Department of Education’s Emergent Literacy Courses** (adopted from the developed *Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol – 2004*) **(continued)**

**1. Planning (continued)**

1.2. Content: The training shall:

- focus on appropriate emergent literacy skills in the areas of oral communication, knowledge of print and letters, phonemic and phonological awareness, and vocabulary and comprehension development, consistent with the revised *Early Learning Standards for Four-Year-Old Children*, as adopted by the State Board of Education
- include information on age-appropriate progress of prekindergarten children in developing emergent literacy skills
- promote understanding of children’s emergent literacy skills as the foundation for performance expectations in the area of reading in grades K-3.

**2. Delivery**

2.1. Learning Strategies: The training shall include strategies and techniques to assist children, including children with disabilities and other special needs, and those with limited English proficiency, to derive maximum benefit from the VPK program.

2.2. Sustained Training: The training shall be sufficient in intensity to promote mastery of needed skills.

2.3. Use of Technology: The training shall utilize alternative delivery models and shall be delivered through a variety of technologies that support individual learning and builds upon existing systems.

2.4. Time Resources: The training shall be offered in a manner that provides maximum benefit from the required five hours of training.

**3. Follow-up**

3.1. Transfer to Children: The training shall provide opportunities for the VPK instructor to demonstrate competency by applying the knowledge and skills learned.

3.2. Coaching and Mentoring: To the extent possible, the training shall be delivered in collaboration with the early learning coalitions and existing networks to encourage support and assistance through coaching and mentoring of the VPK instructor in order to promote appropriate application of the learned knowledge and skills.

3.3. Ongoing Resources and Assistance: Resources and assistance, including web-based materials, shall be made available to the VPK instructor.

**4. Evaluation**

4.1. Evaluation Methods: Participant feedback and evaluation will be utilized in the ongoing review and improvement of the training. Early learning

**Recommendation – Standards for the Department of Education’s Emergent Literacy Courses** (adopted from the developed *Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol – 2004*) **(continued)**

**4. Evaluation (continued)**

coalitions and VPK providers will be encouraged to evaluate the effectiveness of the training in improving instructor’s emergent literacy skills via local evaluation methodologies. An independent study shall be conducted on the outcomes of the training in terms of instructor and child performance outcomes.

**5. Participation and Completion**

- 5.1 The Department of Education’s Emergent Literacy Course shall be required for any VPK instructor whose highest educational credential is a Child Development Associate or Child Development Associate Equivalent, and who has not previously completed training in early literacy and language development as approved by the Department of Children and Families, or as part of their educational coursework for attaining a Bachelor’s or Associate’s degree.
- 5.2 VPK instructors who are required to complete the Department of Education’s Emergent Literacy Course shall do so within one calendar year of the date of their initial employment in the VPK program.
- 5.3 The Department of Education shall issue a certificate verifying completion to all individuals who successfully complete the emergent literacy course, and maintain a database of all personnel who have met this qualification. The database shall be accessible to VPK providers, early learning coalitions, and other agencies as necessary to the performance of their responsibilities for the VPK program. The Department of Education will build upon existing systems/databases and those familiar to the child care industry to the greatest extent possible.