

# Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program

Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program or VPK is a free educational program that helps your 4-year-old be ready for success in kindergarten and beyond.



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If you have a child who will soon be 4 years old, you know how curious she is or how much he may already know. VPK is a free educational program that helps your child be ready for kindergarten.

Children must live in Florida and be 4 years old on or before Sept. 1 of the current year to be eligible.

The program helps build a strong foundation for school using educational materials appropriate for different stages in your child's development.

## Your choices

Private child care centers, private, public and charter schools, and specialized instructional services providers may offer VPK. As a parent, you can choose from one of the following programs:

- School-year program—540 instructional hours. Class sizes of 20 or fewer students. Instructors must hold a *Birth through Five Florida Child Care Professional Credential* and complete special training on early literacy and performance standards.
- Summer program—300 hours of instruction. Class sizes of 12 or less. Instructors must hold a bachelor's degree.
- Specialized Instructional Services program—hours vary based on services provided. For children with disabilities who have current individual educational plans (IEP) developed by local school districts.

## Providers

VPK providers who offer school-year or summer programs must meet these quality standards.

- Employ qualified instructors.
  - Use developmentally appropriate curriculum emphasizing early literacy skills.
  - Maintain required class sizes.
- Private VPK providers who offer school-year or summer programs must also have
- A director with a *Florida Department of Children and Families Director Credential* with a *VPK Director Endorsement*.
  - A valid child care license or recognition by an approved child care accrediting agency.

## Information for parents

Here is some information to help you choose a VPK provider to best suit your family.

- Your local early learning coalition can provide you with VPK Provider Profiles that show provider readiness rates and licensing reports.
- ***Kindergarten Readiness Rates*** show how well VPK providers prepare students for kindergarten using results from the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener.
- FLKRS is aligned with the *Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds (2011)* that describe what a 4-year-old should know and be able to do by the end of their prekindergarten year.

## Did you know that...

- ✓ 77 percent of Florida 4-year-olds were in VPK last year?
- ✓ 82 percent of children who completed VPK in 2013 were ready for kindergarten compared to 53 percent who did not attend?