Florida’s Voluntary Prekindergarten Program

Provider Orientation
March 23, 2011
VPK Program Overview

• The Voluntary Prekindergarten Education (VPK) program was created in 2005 to prepare every four-year-old for kindergarten and continued educational success.

• The VPK program helps each child build a strong foundation through the use of developmentally appropriate curricula with an emphasis on early literacy and mathematical thinking skills.

• Highlights of the VPK program include manageable class sizes, program accountability and increased instructor credentials.

• Data has consistently demonstrated that children who participated in the VPK program are better prepared for kindergarten compared to children who did not participate in VPK.

• VPK is FREE for all children four years old on or before September 1 of the program year.

• VPK Program Options
  Each child may enroll in one session of the VPK Program
  School-Year Session — 540 Instructional Hours  ~ OR ~  Summer Session — 300 instructional hours
VPK Requirements

- **Provider must be** either **accredited** by an approved accrediting association, hold a **Gold Seal** designation, or be licensed. Gold Seal sites must submit a copy of their Gold Seal accreditation.

- **Providers must be set up for reimbursement** with the Coalition’s Child Care Connection office
  - providers serving School Readiness scholarship children are already set up for reimbursement. Providers who are not set up need to complete the reimbursement paperwork.

- **VPK registration packets must be complete and accurate, and include the VPK Checklist as the cover page.**

- **Advance Payment waiver** must be signed

- **Coalition Child Care Provider Contract Agreement** must be on file, submitted annually

- **AWI VPK 20 Statewide VPK Provider Agreement**
  - Agreement must be **signed prior to the beginning** of the VPK program each year

- **AWI VPK 10 Site information**

- **AWI VPK 11A & 11B Classroom information**

- **VPK Calendar**
  - must equal 540 hours for school year programs, 300 hours for summer programs
  - VPK calendars and instructions are posted on the Coalition website, [www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org](http://www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org)
Additional Information

• School Year VPK class ratios are
  – 1 lead teacher to 10 children or
  – 1 lead teacher and 1 secondary teacher to 18 children
  – Maximum School Year VPK class size is 18 children

• Summer VPK class ratios are
  – 1 lead teacher to 12 children
  – Maximum Summer VPK class size is 12 children

• Temporary closures are reimbursed only if a state of emergency has been declared.

• Parents are allowed to change VPK providers only once.

• Providers are not permitted to charge a registration fee or require parents to agree to any additional services or care as a condition of enrollment in the VPK Program.
Additional Information continued

• For all classes:
  – Ratios must be maintained for VPK hours
  – Non-VPK children are included in the ratio
  – Mixed ages are permitted

• Must have minimum of 4 VPK children to start

• VPK Program cannot start more than 14 days before Labor Day or before first day of Public School.

• Summer Program cannot start before May 1 and must end before the start of the Public School in August or September.

• Call or email the Coalition to be added to the list of VPK providers that is available to parents on the Coalition website, www.earlylearningcoalitionssarasota.org
VPK Director Requirements

- **Must hold Director’s credential current within 5 years**

- **VPK Endorsement** is required if director credential was issued *after 12-31-06*. Child Care Transcript will indicate *VPK Exempt* or *VPK Endorsed*.

For VPK Endorsement information and forms visit [www.myflorida.com/childcare](http://www.myflorida.com/childcare), Forms and Applications, then go to Training.

- **VPK Standards Training 2008** is a requirement for the VPK Endorsement and must appear on the DCF transcript.

- Coalition requires directors to have education credentials on file and **Level 2** background screening *current within 5 years*
VPK School Year Teacher Education Requirements

LEAD Teacher Education Requirement for School Year Programs

• **Minimum of a current within 5 years FCCPC or NECC** (formerly known as CDA/ CDAE). Additional credential qualifications are posted on the Coalition’s website on the VPK page and are listed on Page 2 of the instructions for form VPK 11A.
  – All credentials must be posted on Instructor’s DCF Child Care Transcript. Staff Credential Applications are available online at www.myflorida.com/childcare under Forms and Applications, then Training.

• **Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors** required, unless Early Literacy for Children Age Birth to Three was awarded before 11-1-2005. Best practice is for all VPK instructors to take the Emergent Literacy course.
  – Emergent Literacy course is available online www.myflorida.com/childcare, Training Information, Online Courses.

• **VPK 2008 Standards Training** – certificate must be on transcript
  – Lead instructors and directors are required to take the VPK Standards 2008 training, secondary instructors are strongly encouraged to take the Standards training. Contact Dianne Lawrence at 954-4830 ext. 3 for training information.

SECONDARY Teacher Education Requirement for School Year Programs

• **Minimum DCF state mandated 40 hour training** completed, or in process of being completed

**Note:** Secondary instructor is required for VPK school year classes with over 10 children. Maximum school year class size is 18 children.
VPK Summer Teacher Education Requirements

SUMMER Teacher Education Requirements for VPK Summer Programs

• A bachelor’s or higher degree in early childhood education or related field

• A bachelor’s or higher degree in elementary education if the instructor has been certified to teach children any age from birth through 6th grade
  - certificate need not be current
  - certificate need not be from Florida, but may not be suspended or revoked

• A Temporary or Professional Florida Educator Certificate
  - certification may be in any area

VPK Substitute Teacher Education Requirements

SUBSTITUTE Teacher Education Requirements for SCHOOL YEAR Programs

- Minimum Education Requirements
  - Any of the requirements listed below for a summer program OR
  - A DCF 40-hour Introductory Child Care Training course if the VPK class is offered in a child care facility
  - A DCF 30-clock-hour Family Child Care Home training if the VPK class is offered in a large family child care home
  - A DCF 30-clock-hour Family Child Care Home training if the VPK class is offered in a family day care home
  - VPK Standards 2008 *(recommended as best practice)*

SUBSTITUTE Teacher Education Requirements for SUMMER Programs

- Minimum Education Requirements
  - An associate’s or higher degree of study in any field OR
  - A national Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or
  - A credential approved by DCF as being equivalent or greater than a national CDA credential (e.g. FCCPC)
  - VPK Standards 2008 *(recommended as best practice)*
Guidelines for Substitute Use

• A substitute instructor may not be used for more than 30 percent of a program’s hours.
  – School Year: 30% of 540 hours = 162 hours
  – Summer: 30% of 300 hours = 90 hours

• Providers may use different substitute instructors on different days, but the combined instructional hours of all substitutes cannot exceed 30 percent of the VPK program hours

• The Coalition must receive documentation of a level 2 background screening clearance and applicable credentials before a provider can assign a substitute instructor to a classroom.

• It is the providers responsibility to track substitute usage and submit documentation to the Coalition when requested.
Level 2 Background Screening Requirements for **ALL** VPK Directors, VPK Instructors, and VPK Substitutes

- **FBI Background Fingerprint Screen** *current within 5 years*

  Must submit new fingerprints via livescan (**cost $38.75**) every 5 years. Visit [http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/admin/backgroundscreening/](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/admin/backgroundscreening/) for more detailed information.

- **FDLE Background Screen** – must be *current within 5 years*

- **Local Background Screen** – must be *current within 5 years*

- **Affidavit of Good Moral Character** – *must be reviewed and notarized*

  The Affidavit of Good Moral Character **must be notarized before VPK program begins.** The Affidavit remains in effect as long as the employee remains at the same site, with no break in service more than 90 days – it does not have to be reissued every year.

- Keep track of expiration dates for Level 2 background screenings so there will be time to renew before the VPK start date, if necessary.

  **All directors, teachers and substitutes must have current credentials and Level 2 background clearance in place, current within 5 years, or the VPK program will not be approved.**
# VPK Application Deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Paperwork Received</th>
<th>VPK Start Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2011</td>
<td>April 15, 2011</td>
<td>May 2, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August 15, 2011</td>
<td>September 12, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 12, 2011</td>
<td>October 3, 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Mail complete VPK packet to:*
Early Learning Coalition  
1750 17th Street, Building L  
Sarasota 34234
Reporting VPK Changes

VPK Change Form

- Coalition must be notified of changes **immediately**

- Change Form must be submitted **prior** to any VPK teacher or child changes.

- Coalition must approve any **director**, **teacher** or **child** changes before change can go into effect.

---

**VPK PROGRAM CHANGES**
Revised 1/27/11

Provider name: ___________________  Contact person: ___________________
Street address: ___________________  City/Zip: ___________________
Phone: ___________________  Fax: ___________________  Email: ___________________

Note: Coalition must give **prior approval** before teachers start. Coalition must be informed when teachers leave.

Call Laura Woodson at 954-4330 ext. 116 and leave a detailed message. Then FAX this form to 954-4851 for email lwoodson@childcareconnectionscarolina.org.

**Teacher Changes**
Desired Effective Date: ____________

- Teacher added – Coalition must give prior approval
  - Teacher’s name: ___________________
  - Teacher’s position: Lead  Assistant  Sub
  - VPK Class: ______
  - Documentation sent to ELC (required for approval): Yes  No

- Teacher left – Coalition must be informed
  - Teacher’s name: ___________________
  - VPK Class: ______

Note: Child Care Connection must give prior approval before children are switched from one class to another.

Call Laura Woodson at 954-4330 ext. 116 and leave a detailed message. Then FAX this form to 954-4851 for email lwoodson@childcareconnectionscarolina.org.

**Child Changes**
Desired Effective Date: ____________

- Classroom Change – Child Care Connection must give prior approval
  - Child’s name: ___________________
  - From VPK Class: ______
  - To VPK Class: ______
  - Reason for the change: ___________________

- Informed Parental Consent for Classroom Change

I have chosen to transfer my child to another VPK class at the same provider. I have been given information concerning the number of instructional hours remaining in the VPK class that I have selected for my child. I make this choice freely, knowing that once my child is transferred to the new program/class, he or she may not be eligible to complete the full instructional hours delivered by the provider’s class if the provider’s class exceeds beyond the remaining VPK instructional hours allowed for funding.

- Parent Name: ___________________  Parent Signature: ___________________  Date: ____________
- Provider signature: ___________________  Date: ____________

- Disenrolled – Child Care Connection must be informed
  - Child’s name: ___________________
  - VPK Class: ______
  - Last Day of Attendance: ____________

Go to [www.earlylearningcoalitionscarolina.org](http://www.earlylearningcoalitionscarolina.org) to download forms and get information
Attendance

• Review attendance sheets as soon as received. NON-VPK days are indicated as “shaded-in days” on the attendance sheet. Any discrepancies on attendance sheets should be reported to the Coalition’s Child Care Connection office immediately, at 556-1600 ext. 110. DO NOT wait until reimbursement to report discrepancies.

• Parents are required to sign children in and out each day. Parents must sign their full signature – no initial, first names, or “Mom” – and include time in and time out.

• Providers will not be reimbursed if there are discrepancies between attendance sheets and parent sign in/sign out sheets.

• Provider attendance sheets and sign in/sign out sheets will be randomly monitored at least once per year.
VPK Absences – 80/20 Rule

• **20% of VPK students’ absences will be paid. Absences exceeding 20% will not be paid** (20% of 540 = 108 hours or **36 days of a 3 hour VPK program**).

• **Each month** absences will be calculated for each VPK child enrolled and **20% of the absences that occurred for each child that month will be paid. Absences over 20% for each child each month will not be paid**.

• At the **end of the provider’s VPK program** the provider will receive a **reconciliation payment** for any absences that were unpaid **if the child’s overall absences did not exceed 20%**. As stated in the AWI summary, “In other words, if a child is absent for more than 20% in one month but is absent for less than 20% of the entire program, the provider will receive a reconciliation payment at the end of the program.”

• Providers **may not charge parents for any unpaid absences over the 20%** that will be paid.
Student Attendance and Parental Choice Certification (SAPCC)

- Parents need to sign the Student Attendance and Parental Choice Certificate sheet each month certifying that the attendance the provider reported for their child is correct.

- SAPCC forms must be submitted when providers are randomly monitored (at least once a year).

- Parents **may not sign the SAPCC before the last day of the month their child attended** (ex: attendance roster shows child present on October 30, parent signed SPACC on October 29).

- Providers will not be reimbursed if there are discrepancies or incorrect dates on the SAPCCs.
VPK Return to Service Form

- Providers must submit ‘Return to Service Form’ when a child is absent on the last day of service each month.

- Absence is not payable for child’s first day of attendance or after the child’s last day of attendance.

- If the child does not return to the VPK Program the absences are not payable.
VPK Reimbursement

• The 2010 – 2011 VPK School Year payment rate for Sarasota County is $2,585.31, which comes to $4.78 an hour.

  \textit{Note:} VPK reimbursement rates have not been released for 2011 – 2012 school year. Providers will be notified as soon as information is available.

• The VPK Summer payment rate for Sarasota County is $2,198.83, which comes to $7.32 an hour.

• VPK reimbursement is calculated by the hour; providers are reimbursed by the day.
Parent Registration information

VPK Registration location and schedules
Coalition’s Child Care Connection
2886-C Ringling Blvd
Sarasota, FL 34237
941- 556-1600

Registration hours:
Tuesdays 7:30am-6:30pm
Thursdays 7:30am-5:00pm

VPK Registration is also available in North Port on specified days.
Call Lauren Karabatsos 556-1600 ext 108

Additional information on VPK registration can be found on Coalition’s website
www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org
Certificate of Eligibility

- All students must obtain a Certificate of Eligibility before starting in a VPK class.

- All transferring students must fill out Re-Enrollment form and obtain a new Certificate of Eligibility before starting in another VPK class.

- Payment for a child cannot start before the issue date on the Certificate of Eligibility.

- All original Certificates of Eligibility must be mailed to Child Care Connection office at 2886-C Ringling Blvd, Sarasota, 34237.

- Child Care Connection must have minimum of 4 certificates before VPK program starts.
VPK Program Requirements

- **VPK Curriculum**
  Programs must offer a developmentally appropriate curriculum that meets all domains in the VPK Education Standards adopted by the State Board of Education.

- **VPK Education Standards**
  The VPK Standards describe what four-year-old children should know and be able to do by the end of their VPK experience. All VPK programs should use the VPK standards as a resource and guide in program planning.

- **VPK Pre/Post Assessment**
  It is a VPK requirement to conduct pre/post assessments on all VPK children. An assessment tool to be used in VPK classrooms has been developed this year. Use of the VPK Assessment tool is optional.

- **VPK Resources**
  The Department of Education has many online resources for VPK providers. Sample lesson plans can be found at [http://www.fldoe.org/earlylearning/plans.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/earlylearning/plans.asp).

  Instructional strategies that are linked to specific standards are available on the Bright Beginnings website at [http://www.brightbeginningsfl.org/](http://www.brightbeginningsfl.org/).


  The State website has information at [http://www.floridajobs.org/earlylearning/](http://www.floridajobs.org/earlylearning/), click on the VPK link on the left.
VPK Program Readiness Rates

• **VPK Provider Readiness Rates**
  The State Board of Education is required by law to calculate a VPK Provider’s Kindergarten Readiness Rate every year for each private or public school VPK provider that offers either the school year or summer program.

  The VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate measures how well students performed in three key early learning areas: alphabet recognition, phonological awareness and classroom readiness. Reports of specific VPK providers' performance can be found online at [www.vpk.fldoe.org](http://www.vpk.fldoe.org).

  The minimum readiness rate has continued to increase since it was first established in 2005-2006. In previous years the maximum score was 300. In 2008-09 a new assessment instrument was implemented and the maximum score was changed to 200. The minimum readiness rate for the 2009-2010 was set at 140 out of 200.

  Not all providers received rates. Readiness rates were only calculated for providers with a minimum of four children who were enrolled in the VPK program for 70 percent or more of the total instructional hours and participated in each of the three kindergarten screening measures.

• **VPK Low Performing Providers**
  Providers whose readiness rate is below the minimum set by the state are considered low performing and must implement an improvement plan. Visit [www.improvevpk.org](http://www.improvevpk.org) for more information.
VPK Program Monitoring

• **Monitoring**
  Dianne Lawrence monitors VPK programs. Dianne is available to provide information and support in setting up appropriate VPK classroom and offers additional resources and one-on-one assistance through the Resource Room.

  Monitoring ensures that VPK classrooms meet all VPK program requirements as well as offer a *developmentally appropriate curriculum* that includes an early *literacy* component.

• **VPK Learning Environment Packet**
  The Coalition has prepared a VPK Learning Environment Packet that VPK providers should use as a guide in setting up and equipping their classroom.

  The packet includes information on schedules, room arrangement, charts and displays, learning centers, and appropriate materials.

  The VPK Learning Environment Packet is posted on the Coalition website, [www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org](http://www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org).
Contact Information

• **Reimbursement questions:**
  – Joyce Miller Porter
    556-1600 ext. 110  jmiller@childcareconnectionsarasota.org

• **Provider application and approval and child enrollment questions:**
  – Laura Woodson
    556-1600 ext. 116  lwoodson@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org
  – Lisa Ellis
    954-4830 ext. 4  lellis@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org

• **VPK program monitoring, mentoring, curriculum, assessment and quality:**
  – Dianne Lawrence
    954-4830 ext. 3  dlawrence@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org

Early Learning Coalition Fax: 954-4831
Child Care Connection Fax: 556-1606
The Early Learning Coalition is looking forward to working with you to ensure that four year old children in Sarasota County receive the high quality early learning experiences they need to be ready for learning and ready for life.

We value your participation!