



## Florida Department of Education Office of Early Learning

### Technical Assistance Paper: #07-01 Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Instructor Qualifications

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#### Background

Legislation (Chapter 1002, Florida Statutes (F.S.)) to implement the 2002 constitutional amendment to create "a high quality prekindergarten experience" that prepares every four-year-old in the state for kindergarten was signed into law on January 2, 2005. These laws specify the requirements for VPK instructors for the school-year and the summer programs. In addition, there are requirements related to successful completion of an emergent literacy training course and security background checks.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this technical assistance paper (TAP) is to offer guidance on the implementation of VPK instructor qualification requirements to private providers, school districts, and early learning coalitions. The information was developed in collaboration with the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF), as well as with input from the field. A summary of the requirements for each type of program (i.e., **school-year** and **summer**) and each type of provider (i.e., private provider and public school district) is included, followed by a section of frequently asked questions. In addition, checklists designed to assist in the review of VPK instructor credentials are also provided (see Appendix A for school-year; Appendix B for summer).

#### Requirements

##### ***School-Year Private Prekindergarten Providers***

The requirements for an instructor in a **school-year** VPK program implemented by a private provider are described in section (s.) [1002.55\(3\)-\(4\)](#), F.S. A private prekindergarten provider must have, for each prekindergarten class, at least one prekindergarten instructor who holds, at a minimum, one of the following credentials:

- a child development associate credential (CDA) issued by the National Credentialing Program of the Council for Professional Recognition and completion of an emergent literacy training course
- a credential approved by the Department of Children and Family Services as being equivalent to or greater than the CDA (i.e., a CDAE) and completion of an emergent literacy training course
- a bachelor's or higher degree in early childhood education, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer science
- a bachelor's or higher degree in elementary education, if the instructor has been certified to teach children any age from birth through sixth grade, regardless of whether the certificate is

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current, and if the instructor is not ineligible to teach in a public school because his or her educator certificate is suspended or revoked

- an associate's or higher degree in child development
- an associate's or higher degree in an unrelated field, at least six credit hours in early childhood education or child development, and at least 480 hours of experience in teaching or providing child care services for children any age from birth through eight years of age, or
- an educational credential approved by DOE as being equivalent to or greater than an educational credential described above.

On June 21, 2005, the State Board of Education adopted the following credentials as meeting the requirements for a **school-year** program:

- Bachelor's or higher degree in
  - Exceptional Student Education
  - Special Education
  - Mental Disabilities
  - Specific Learning Disabilities
  - Physically Impaired
  - Varying Exceptionalities
  - Emotional Disabilities
  - Visually Impaired
  - Hearing Impaired
  - Speech-Language Pathology
- Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education.

In addition, the VPK instructor

- must be of good moral character
- must be screened using the level 2 screening standards in s. [435.04](#), F.S., before employment
- must be rescreened at least once every five years, including fingerprinting
- must be denied employment or terminated if required under s. [435.06](#), F.S., and
- must not be ineligible to teach in a public school because his or her educator certificate is suspended or revoked.

A five-hour, on-line emergent literacy training course was developed by the DOE, Office of Early Learning, to meet the requirements of s. [1002.59](#), F.S.; this course became available in November 2005. In accordance with s. [1002.55\(3\)\(c\)](#), F.S., successful completion of this course is required for CDAs and CDAEs to be eligible as VPK instructors, unless the applicant successfully completed a DCF-approved training in early literacy and language development prior to November 28, 2005.

### ***School Year Public Prekindergarten Providers***

The requirements for an instructor in a **school-year** VPK program implemented by a public school district are described in s. [1002.63\(5\)-\(6\)](#), F.S. The requirements are the same as those noted in the previous section, *School-Year Private Prekindergarten Providers*, with the added provision under s. [1002.63\(6\)](#), F.S., that "[t]his subsection does not supersede employment requirements for instructional personnel in public schools which are more stringent than the requirements of this subsection."

### ***Summer Program Private and Public Prekindergarten Providers***

The requirements for an instructor in a **summer** VPK program implemented by either a private provider or a public school district are the same, and are described in s. [1002.61\(4\)](#), F.S.

A prekindergarten provider for a **summer** VPK program must have, for each prekindergarten class, at least one prekindergarten instructor who holds, at a minimum, one of the following credentials:

- a valid Florida educator certificate under s. [1012.56](#), F.S., and who has the qualifications required by the district school board to instruct students in the **summer** VPK program
- a bachelor's or higher degree in early childhood education, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer science, or
- a bachelor's or higher degree in elementary education, if the instructor has been certified to teach children any age from birth through sixth grade, regardless of whether the certificate is current, and if the instructor is not ineligible to teach in a public school because his or her educator certificate is suspended or revoked.

The law also requires that, in selecting instructional staff for the **summer** prekindergarten program, each school district shall give priority to instructors who have experience and coursework in early childhood education. Information on Florida educator certification is available through the website of the Bureau of Educator Certification at [www.fldoe.org/edcert/](http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/), or you may contact them at [www.fldoe.org/edcert/contact.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/contact.asp).

In addition, as with the **school-year** VPK program, the instructor

- must be of good moral character
- must be screened using the level 2 screening standards in s. [435.04](#), F.S., before employment
- must be rescreened at least once every five years, including fingerprinting
- must be denied employment or terminated if required under s. [435.06](#), F.S., and
- must not be ineligible to teach in a public school because his or her educator certificate is suspended or revoked.

### **Level 2 Screening**

Instructors in **school-year** and **summer** VPK programs implemented by private providers as well as public school districts must be screened using the level 2 screening standards in s. [435.04](#), F.S., *Level 2 screening standards*, and then must be rescreened at least every five years. Section [435.04](#), F.S. requires that “[a]ll employees in positions designated by law as positions of trust or responsibility shall be required to undergo security background investigations as a condition of employment and continued employment.” Security background investigations include, but are not limited to:

- fingerprinting for all purposes and checks under this law
- statewide criminal and juvenile records checks through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and
- federal criminal records checks through the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

They also may include local criminal records checks through local law enforcement agencies. Anyone who has been found guilty of, regardless of adjudication, or entered a plea of nolo contendere or guilty to, any offense prohibited under any of the provisions listed in s. [435.04](#), F.S. or under any similar statute of another jurisdiction, may not be employed.

Employees of Florida traditional and charter public schools have fingerprints taken through the school district's personnel office for employment and certification purposes; if the results are clear, an educator certificate is issued by the Bureau of Educator Certification. Information regarding the certification process, including fingerprinting, is available on the Bureau's website at [www.fldoe.org/edcert/faqs.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/faqs.asp), or you may contact them at [www.fldoe.org/edcert/contact.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/contact.asp).

Employees of nonpublic schools that have state-approved programs for demonstration of professional education competence and who are applying for a Florida Educator Certificate may have fingerprints taken through the private school for employment and certification purposes. Information regarding approved programs demonstrating professional education competence is available through the Department of Education, Bureau of Educator Recruitment, Development, and Retention at [www.firn.edu/doe/profdev/](http://www.firn.edu/doe/profdev/).

Level 2 screenings for VPK instructors who are not applying for teacher certification are conducted through DCF. Information regarding background screening for private providers may be obtained through your local Early Learning Coalition or via the web at [www.dcf.state.fl.us/childcare/docs/CriminalHistoryCheck.pdf](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/childcare/docs/CriminalHistoryCheck.pdf) or at [www.dcf.state.fl.us/childcare/docs/BackgroundScreening.pdf](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/childcare/docs/BackgroundScreening.pdf), or they may contact their licensing authority for further information.

In accordance with ss. [1002.55\(3\)\(d\)](#), [1002.61\(5\)](#), and [1002.63\(6\)](#), F.S., AWI has determined that this screening must occur, and the results of the screening must be received by the provider, prior to employment—that is, prior to the instructor being able to teach the VPK class.

## Questions and Answers

### ***Basic Credentials: School Year vs. Summer Programs***

#### **1. Are the requirements to teach VPK the same during the school year and the summer?**

No. The instructional time allotted to cover the VPK Education Performance Standards is 540 hours during the **school-year** program compared to 300 hours during the **summer** program. This time difference requires a more intensive and concentrated instructional program during the **summer**. As a result, the requirements for instructor credentials differ for the two programs. Most notably, instructors in a **summer** VPK program must be certified teachers or must hold a minimum of a bachelor's degree in a specified subject area, while instructors in a **school-year** program may hold a CDA, CDAE, or an associate's or higher degree in a specified area or with specific course credits. Because of these differences in credentialing requirements, it is imperative that prospective VPK instructors review the information relating to the program for which they plan to teach.

### ***Relevant Credentials and Degrees***

#### **2. What is the difference between a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and a CDA Equivalency credential?**

A Child Development Associate (CDA) credential is a national credential awarded to an individual who has successfully completed a CDA assessment and demonstrates competence in his/her ability to meet the CDA Competency Goals. It is designed to prepare a child care professional to meet the specific needs of children and to work with parents and other adults to nurture children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth in a child development framework. The CDA is awarded for three child care settings: 1) center-based, for which a candidate receives an endorsement to work with infants and toddlers or preschool children; 2) family child care; and 3) home visitor. The CDA is recognized in all 50 states as a child care credential. The CDA has a five year renewal process.

In addition, Florida offers a Child Development Associate Equivalent (CDAE) Credential. The CDAE is a Child Development Associate Equivalency Certification that is recognized in Florida as being equivalent to the National CDA. However, the certificate may not be recognized in other states. The Florida CDAE was developed to allow more accessibility to training programs in order to meet the diverse needs of child care providers around the state of Florida. The Florida CDAE is obtained by attending and graduating from an approved program listed on the Department of Children and Families (DCF) website. The Florida CDAE has a five year renewal process.

**3. When can a Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate or a Child Development Associate Equivalency (CDAE) certificate be used to meet the qualifications to be a VPK instructor?**

An individual with a CDA or CDAE credential may be a VPK instructor during the **school-year** program only. Section [1002.55\(3\)\(c\)1](#), F.S., provides for a CDA or a credential approved by the Department of Children and Family Services as being equivalent to or greater than a CDA to meet the qualifications to be a **school-year** VPK instructor. The CDAE is recognized as equivalent to the National CDA. It is important to note, however, that the CDA or CDAE alone is not sufficient; the law requires that an instructor qualified for a VPK program by his or her CDA or CDAE also must successfully complete an emergent literacy course.

**4. Where may information be found regarding the requirements of the CDA and the CDAE?**

CDA information can be obtained from the Council for Professional Recognition via its website at [www.cdacouncil.org](http://www.cdacouncil.org); by writing the Council at 2460 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Washington DC, 20009-3575; or by calling 202-255-9090, or toll free at 800-424-4310.

CDAE information can be obtained through the DCF website at <https://training01-dcf.myflorida.gov/dcf/cct/cdaecred.html>, by calling 888-352-2842, or via email at [CCTIC@thechildrensforum.com](mailto:CCTIC@thechildrensforum.com).

**5. Is a Completion of Apprenticeship: Child Care Development Specialist certificate recognized as a CDAE?**

Yes. A Child Care Development Specialist certificate is issued by the Florida Department of Education, Office of Workforce Education, to individuals upon successful completion of an approved apprenticeship program. This is recognized as an approved CDA equivalency training program listed on the Department of Children and Families website at <https://training01-dcf.myflorida.gov/dcf/cct/cdaecred.html>.

**6. If an applicant for a VPK teaching position doesn't have a CDA or CDAE, but has a college degree, can the applicant be a VPK instructor for a school-year program?**

In lieu of the minimum credentials outlined in s. [1002.55\(3\)\(c\)](#), F.S., an instructor for a **school-year** VPK program may hold one of the following educational credentials:

- A bachelor's or higher degree in
  - Early Childhood Education
  - Prekindergarten or Primary Education
  - Preschool Education

- Family and Consumer Science
- Elementary Education (if the instructor has been certified to teach any age birth through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, regardless of whether the instructor's educator certificate is current, and if the instructor is not ineligible to teach in a public school)
- An associate's or higher degree in Child Development
- An associate's or higher degree in an unrelated field, with at least six credit hours in early childhood education or child development, and at least 480 hours experience in teaching or providing child care services for children any age from birth through 8 years of age.

In addition to the degrees specifically identified in the law, the Department of Education was given the authority to identify additional educational credentials that would meet the requirements for a **school-year** program. On June 21, 2005, the State Board of Education approved the following degrees:

- Bachelor's or higher degree in
  - Exceptional Student Education
  - Special Education
  - Mental Disabilities
  - Specific Learning Disabilities
  - Physically Impaired
  - Varying Exceptionalities
  - Emotional Disabilities
  - Visually Impaired
  - Hearing Impaired
  - Speech-Language Pathology
- Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education.

**7. If a potential VPK instructor has an associate's or higher degree in an unrelated field, what courses can be used to meet the additional requirement of six credit hours in early childhood education or child development?**

Courses which clearly designate that the majority of the course content addresses early childhood/child development may be used to meet the 6 credit hour requirement noted above. In Florida, public colleges and universities use "EEC" as the prefix for early childhood education courses and "CHD" as the prefix for child development courses. The Department of Education Statewide Course Numbering System (SCNS) website may be used to help determine if a course listed on a transcript from a **public** institution in Florida is within the prefixes provided above. For a list of courses which fall under the EEC and CHD prefixes within the SCNS, access the website <http://scns.fldoe.org>. Note that EEC courses are listed under "education systems" while CHD courses are listed under "family and consumer sciences."

This site is only one mechanism used to check course information. Courses from private colleges or universities or from out-of-state institutions will not be on the SCNS. A prospective teacher may also be asked to provide a course description and course syllabi if necessary.

There may be courses in other disciplines (e.g., psychology) that meet the content requirement. A review of the course description and/or syllabus would be needed to determine this.

**8. Does a VPK instructor have to hold a Florida teaching certificate in certain areas in order to be qualified to work in a summer VPK program?**

No. A Florida Department of Education teaching certificate is only one of the options to be qualified as an instructor for a **summer** VPK program.

Section [1002.61\(4\)\(b\)](#) F.S., provides for a bachelor's or higher degree in the following areas to qualify an individual to be an instructor in a **summer** VPK program:

- early childhood education
- prekindergarten education
- primary education
- preschool education
- family and consumer science.

An individual who holds a bachelor's or higher degree in elementary education, and who has been certified to teach children any age from birth through 6th grade, also is eligible to be a **summer** VPK instructor. Note that this option applies regardless of whether the instructor's educator certificate is current, but **only if** the instructor is not ineligible to teach in a public school because his or her educator certificate is suspended or revoked.

Section [1002.61\(4\)](#), F.S., provides for an instructor holding a valid Florida educator certificate under s. [1012.56](#), F.S., who has the qualifications required by the district school board, to instruct children in the **summer** prekindergarten program. In selecting instructional staff for the **summer** VPK program, each school district shall give priority to instructors who have experience or coursework in early childhood education.

**9. Is an applicant who has a degree which is not listed as an equivalent degree, but who has taken electives in child development or early childhood education, eligible as a VPK instructor?**

Perhaps. If an applicant has an associates degree or higher in an unrelated field, at least 6 credits in early childhood education or child development, and 480 hours of experience in teaching or providing child care services for children any age from birth through 8 years of age, that individual is qualified as an instructor for a **school year** VPK program..

**10. If an applicant has a degree that is not on the approved list of equivalent credentials, is there a way for their file to be reviewed to determine eligibility?**

The Department of Education has a process in place to review additional degrees for eligibility as a VPK instructor. Note that this applies to actual degree requirements only, (i.e., what is commonly required in order for a graduate to earn that particular degree) and not to reviews of individual transcripts. Information on this process is described in Appendix C.

**Florida Teaching Certificates**

*This section applies to an individual who meets the VPK instructor credentialing qualifications via a Florida teaching certificate. The FAQs section of the website for the Bureau of Educator Certification ([www.fldoe.org/edcert/faqs.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/faqs.asp)) is an additional resource for this topic.*

**11. How does an applicant apply for a teaching certificate in the state of Florida?**

Information regarding the application process for a Florida teaching certificate may be viewed on the Bureau of Educator Certification website at [www.fldoe.org/edcert/step1.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/step1.asp).

Select the "Apply Here" button to submit the online application; this is the quickest way to apply. If necessary, a hardcopy application may be requested by calling the Bureau's toll-free number, 800-445-6739.

## 12. What types of teaching certificates are issued by the State of Florida?

Florida offers two types of teaching certificates, a Temporary Certificate and a Professional Certificate.

## 13. What are the requirements for a Temporary Certificate?

To hold a three-year non-renewable temporary certificate the applicant must:

- hold a bachelor's or higher degree
- meet the subject content and GPA requirements for a requested subject,
- obtain instructional employment in Florida, and
- obtain fingerprint clearance.

## 14. What are the requirements for a Professional Certificate?

To hold a five-year renewable professional certificate the applicant must:

- hold a bachelor's or higher degree
- demonstrate mastery of general knowledge
- demonstrate mastery of subject knowledge for a requested subject
- demonstrate mastery of professional preparation and education competence
- obtain instructional employment in Florida
- obtain fingerprint clearance.

## 15. Can either type of teaching certificate be used to teach VPK?

Providing all of the requirements are met by the applicant for either type of certificate, the certificate may be used as a valid Florida teaching certificate for the VPK program.

## 16. In Florida, a teaching certificate is not issued until instructional employment is obtained. How can an applicant demonstrate to a VPK provider that he or she is an eligible certified instructor?

When an applicant sends a complete application package to the Department of Education, Bureau of Educator Certification, requesting a Florida teaching certificate, the application is evaluated to determine eligibility for a Florida certificate. The result of that determination is mailed to the applicant as an *Official Statement of Status of Eligibility* (Statement of Eligibility). This Statement of Eligibility is valid for three years and has the following two functions:

- to officially state whether or not the applicant "is eligible" for a temporary certificate or a professional certificate in the subject area requested
- to provide the applicant with a customized list of the requirements which must be completed to be issued full state certification in Florida.

Once the applicant is employed by a public school district or by a nonpublic school that has a state-approved program for demonstration of professional education competence, the employing district or school submits a request for the certificate to the DOE. Several of the

Florida nonpublic school associations have state-approved programs which are implemented in each of their member schools. It is important to note that this option is not available to nonpublic schools that do not have state-approved programs for the demonstration of education competence. For additional information on nonpublic schools that meet state-approved professional education competence programs, contact the Bureau of Educator Certification at [www.fldoe.org/edcert/contact.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/contact.asp).

**17. How long does it take for DOE to process the information, and issue the Statement of Eligibility? Can an applicant receive a Temporary Certificate at the same time?**

A Statement of Eligibility is provided within thirty days of receipt of a **completed** instructor certification application package. A Florida Temporary Certificate is issued when

- the Statement of Eligibility states that the applicant "is eligible" for at least a Temporary Certificate, and
- instructional employment in Florida is obtained and the applicant's fingerprints are processed before your Official Statement expires.

**18. If a prospective instructor has not taught for several years and his or her teaching certificate has expired, can that individual teach in the school year or summer VPK program?**

Yes, but only if the applicant has a degree in elementary education and was certified to teach children any age from birth through 6th grade.

**19. Will a teaching certificate from another country allow a prospective VPK instructor to teach in the summer VPK program?**

No. An Instructor with a degree major and/or a teaching certificate from a foreign country should follow the guidelines for obtaining a Florida teaching certificate found on the web at [www.fldoe.org/edcert/foreign.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/foreign.asp).

**20. Do teaching certificates issued by local school districts meet the requirement to qualify for the summer VPK program?**

No. Teaching certificates issued by a local school district are classified as local district certificates not Florida educator certificates.

Section [1002.61\(4\)](#), F.S., states "As used in this subsection, the term "certified instructor" means an instructor holding a valid Florida educator certificate under s. 1012.56, F.S., who has the qualifications required by the district school board to instruct students in the **summer** prekindergarten program. In selecting instructional staff for the **summer** prekindergarten program, each school district shall give priority to instructors who have experience or coursework in early childhood education."

**21. Are there any waivers to allow teaching experience to substitute for a teaching certificate (e.g., an applicant who has taught for several years in a private school that did not require certification)?**

No. There is no authority for such waivers.

## Coalition Verification of Instructor Credentials

### 22. How can an Early Learning Coalition (ELC) verify that an applicant for a VPK instructor position has a current Florida teaching certificate?

An applicant for a position as a VPK instructor should provide the ELC with a copy of his/her Florida teaching certificate, if available, or of the Statement of Eligibility if this is the applicant's first instructional position. If the applicant does not have access to a copy of the certificate, or if the ELC wishes to verify that the certificate has not been revoked for any reason, current teaching certificates may be verified via the Florida Department of Education Bureau of Educator Certification website at [www.fldoe.org/edcert/public.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/public.asp). Given an applicant's last name and first initial, the "Educator Certification Lookup" section provides the certification status of all individuals with that name, including: the educator's full name; district of current employment, if any; certification coverage(s); type of certificate; and, validity period of the certificate.

### 23. Do expired certificates show up on the website noted above? If not, how can an ELC verify that a VPK instructor's expired certificate has not been revoked?

No, expired certificates are not included on the website. An Early Learning Coalition may request verification that an expired certificate has not been revoked by calling the Department of Education Professional Practices Office at 850-245-0438 or the Education Practices Commission at 850-245-0441.

### 24. What other way can VPK instructor eligibility be determined or documented?

An individual may demonstrate their eligibility as a VPK instructor by submitting a copy of their active Staff Credential Confirmation form (CF-FSP 5206) from the Department of Children and Families, identifying one of the approved categories of eligibility. An individual may apply for a Staff Credential, by submitting the Staff Credential Verification Application (CF-FSP 5211). The application may be downloaded by visiting <https://training01-dcf.myflorida.gov/dcf/cct/staffcred.html>. The Staff Credential Confirmation form should contain the "Active until" date for a National Child Development Associate or its equivalency. For individuals who have earned a Staff Credential through Formal Education Qualifications, the degree should be listed on the form. If you have a Staff Credential Confirmation form without an "Active until" date or a degree listed, please contact the Department of Children and Families' Child Care Training Information Center at 1-888-352-2842 to have your form updated.

## Background Screening

### 25. Are the background screening requirements the same for public and private providers?

The screening requirements for the **school year** and **summer** VPK programs and for **public** and **private** programs are the same, although applicants for public school programs may be held to additional standards as set by the local school board.

### 26. How does a prospective VPK instructor obtain a level 2 screening to teach in a VPK program?

Each employee of Florida traditional and charter public schools has fingerprints taken through the school district's personnel office for employment and certification purposes. Some nonpublic schools have state-approved programs for demonstration of professional education competence; employees of those schools who are applying for a Florida Temporary Certificate may have fingerprints taken through the private school. Level 2 screenings for VPK instructors who are not applying for teacher certification are conducted through DCF. Information regarding background screening for private providers may be obtained through your local Early Learning Coalition or via the web at [www.dcf.state.fl.us/childcare/docs/CriminalHistoryCheck.pdf](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/childcare/docs/CriminalHistoryCheck.pdf) or at [www.dcf.state.fl.us/childcare/docs/BackgroundScreening.pdf](http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/childcare/docs/BackgroundScreening.pdf), or they may contact their licensing authority for further information.

**27. How can an instructor who has obtained a level 2 screening through a public school district and is then hired by a private provider to teach VPK during the summer provide evidence that he/she has cleared the required level 2 screening?**

The school district may provide affirmation that the instructor has met the requirements to teach in that district via a letter or other written documentation. However, in the event that this does not occur, the private provider must arrange for a screening to be conducted prior to the first day of employment.

**28. If an applicant previously obtained a level 2 screening through employment by a school district, but that applicant is no longer employed by the district, is the applicant's level 2 screening still valid?**

No. Once an employee has broken service with a school district, background screenings are no longer valid. However, note that an instructor returning to the same school district the following year did not break service, even if he or she is teaching in a different program during the **summer**.

**29. Are the Early Learning Coalitions required to verify level 2 screenings for instructors employed by the school district for VPK?**

No. Early Learning Coalitions are not responsible for verifying the screening or certification of instructors, in accordance with s. [1002.67 \(3\)\(a\)](#), F.S. The district school board is responsible for oversight of the VPK programs in the district.

**30. Is the possession of a current teaching certificate evidence that the required background screening has been completed?**

No. An instructor may possess a current Florida teaching certificate; however, they may or may not be employed in a position for which the background screening is required pursuant to Section [1012.32](#), F. S., Qualifications of personnel. Therefore, evidence of a current teaching certificate is not sufficient to indicate the level 2 screening is clear.

Appendix A: School-Year VPK Instructor Credential Qualifications: Public and Private Providers  
Appendix B: Summer VPK Instructor Credential Qualifications: Public and Private Providers  
Appendix C: Equivalent Educational Credentials for VPK Instructors: Review Process

**Florida Department of Education  
Office of Early Learning  
TAP #07-01: Appendix A**

**School-Year VPK Instructor Credential Qualifications: Public and Private Providers**

**Applicant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Review:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reviewer Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Eligible/Not Eligible:** \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: An applicant must meet at least one of the following options. For option 1, 2, or 3, the applicant must have “yes” checked in both or all components. For options 5 and 7, the applicant must have “yes” checked in one option. Note: The term “degree” means an educational credential awarded by an institution of higher education, not an educator certificate or other professional license.

Option	Florida Statutes	Requirements	Y	N	Comments
1	s.1002.55(3)(c)1a	CDA issued by the Council for Professional Recognition <b>and</b>			
		Completion of the DOE Emergent Literacy Course			
2	s.1002.55(3)(c)1b	CDAE issued by a DCF-approved program <b>and</b>			
		Completion of the DOE Emergent Literacy Course			
3	s.1002.55(4)(d)	An associate’s or higher degree in an unrelated field <b>and</b>			
		At least 6 credit hours in early childhood education or child development <b>and</b>			
		At least 480 hours of experience in teaching or providing child care services for children any age from birth through 8 years of age			
4	s.1002.55(4)(c)	An associate’s or higher degree in child development			
5	s.1002.55(4)(a)	A bachelor’s or higher degree in early childhood education <b>or</b>			
		A bachelor’s or higher degree in prekindergarten or primary education <b>or</b>			
		A bachelor’s or higher degree in preschool education <b>or</b>			
		A bachelor’s or higher degree in family and consumer science			
6	s.1002.55(4)(b)	A bachelor’s or higher degree in elementary education <b>if the prekindergarten instructor has been certified to teach children any age from birth through 6<sup>th</sup> grade</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• certificate need not be current</li> <li>• certificate need not be from Florida, but may not be suspended or revoked</li> </ul>			
7	s.1002.55(4)(e) (Equivalent degrees approved by the State Board of Education, June 21, 2005)	An associate’s degree in early childhood education <b>or</b>			
		A bachelor’s or higher degree in exceptional student education <b>or</b>			
		A bachelor’s or higher degree in special education <b>or</b>			
		A bachelor’s or higher degree in mental disabilities <b>or</b>			
		A bachelor’s or higher degree in specific learning disabilities <b>or</b>			
		A bachelor’s or higher degree in physically impaired <b>or</b>			
		A bachelor’s or higher degree in varying exceptionalities <b>or</b>			
		A bachelor’s or higher degree in emotional disabilities <b>or</b>			
		A bachelor’s or higher degree in hearing impaired <b>or</b>			
A bachelor’s or higher degree in speech-language pathology					

CDA-Child Development Associate  
DCF-Department of Children and Families

CDAE-Child Development Associate Equivalent  
DOE-Department of Education

**Florida Department of Education  
Office of Early Learning**

**TAP #07-01: Appendix B**

**Summer VPK Instructor Credential Qualifications: Public and Private Providers**

**Applicant Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of Review:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reviewer Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Eligible/Not Eligible:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** An applicant must meet at least one of the following options (1-6) in order to be eligible. For option 6, the applicant must have “yes” checked in both components.

Note: The term “degree” means an educational credential awarded by an institution of higher education, not an educator certificate or other professional license.

Options	Florida Statutes	Requirement(s)	Y	N	Comments
1	s. 1002.61(4)(a)	A Temporary or Professional Florida Educator Certificate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• certification may be in any area</li> <li>• school district shall give priority to teachers who have experience or coursework in early childhood education</li> </ul>			
2	s. 1002.61(4)(b) s. 1002.55(4)(a)	A bachelor’s or higher degree in early childhood education			
3	s. 1002.61(4)(b) s. 1002.55(4)(a)	A bachelor’s or higher degree in prekindergarten or primary education			
4	s. 1002.61(4)(b) s. 1002.55(4)(a)	A bachelor’s or higher degree in preschool education			
5	s. 1002.61(4)(b) s. 1002.55(4)(a)	A bachelor’s or higher degree in family and consumer science			
6	s. 1002.61(4)(b) s. 1002.55(4)(b)	A bachelor’s or higher degree in elementary education <b>if the prekindergarten instructor has been certified to teach children any age from birth through 6<sup>th</sup> grade</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• certificate need not be current</li> <li>• certificate need not be from Florida, but may not be suspended or revoked</li> </ul>			

**Florida Department of Education  
Office of Early Learning**

**TAP #07-01: Appendix C**

**Equivalent Educational Credentials for VPK Instructors: Review Process**

**Background**

Section 1002.55(4)(e), Florida Statutes, School-year prekindergarten program delivered by private prekindergarten providers, includes among the allowable qualifications “[a]n educational credential approved by the department as being equivalent to or greater than an educational credential described in this subsection. The department may adopt criteria and procedures for approving equivalent educational credentials under this paragraph.”

**Application**

A written request which includes the following must be submitted:

- 1) Requestor’s Name
- 2) Contact information including street address, phone number, and e-mail address (if available)
- 3) Correct and complete title of the associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree or certification coverage for which review is requested.
- 4) Documentation of the specific credential under review, including: university program website link, when available; program requirements; and/or a letter on institution letterhead verifying specific course requirements for the degree under consideration.

The above information should be sent to the following address:

Equivalent Educational Credential Review  
Office of Early Learning  
Florida Department of Education  
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1524  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

**Review Process**

Upon receipt of the applicant’s documentation, an internal review team will assess the information provided based upon:

- Florida Certification Coverages as defined at <http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/subjlist.asp>
- Competencies and Skills as outlined on <http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/ftce/ftcecomp.htm>
- Curriculum frameworks as outlined on <http://www.firn.edu/doe/dwdframe/>
- College/University program/course descriptions

The review team will consist of at least one representative from each of the following:

- Office of Early Learning, Florida Department of Education
- Bureau of Educator Certification, Florida Department of Education
- Appropriate institution of higher education (e.g., community college; university).

**Report of Findings**

Written documentation of the group’s findings will be provided to the applicant within 30 days of the receipt of the complete application packet by the Department of Education’s Office of Early Learning. If the review team determines that the credential/certification request meets the criteria for addition to the list of equivalent credentials, upon approval the Department of Education will place the degree/certification on the equivalent credential list where appropriate.