



2016-2017
VPK PROVIDER GUIDE

Information in this guide is subject to change. Providers will be notified via email of changes that occur during the VPK program year. This guide will be updated annually.

Table of Contents

VPK Statewide Program Administration	3
VPK Program Requirements	3
Provider Eligibility	
Program Sessions	
VPK Staff Qualifications	4
Class Size and Staff to Child Ratios	
Background Screening	
Credentials and Required Training	
VPK Program Structure	8
Calendar	
VPK Instruction	9
Instructional Days	
Non-Instructional Days	
Curriculum	
Child Assessment	
VPK Provider Accountability	10
Maintaining Accurate Program Information	
Program Monitoring	
Readiness Rate	
VPK Child Enrollment	13
VPK Program Payment	13
VPK Resources	14
ELCFV VPK Provider Guide Acknowledgement / Affirmation	15

VPK Statewide Program Administration

The VPK program begins at the State level and is administered by local coalitions that contract with local providers to provide direct VPK services to children.

<u>Office of Early Learning (OEL)</u>	<u>Department of Education (DOE)</u>	<u>Department of Children and Families (DCF)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day-to-Day Operations • Accountability of Program Deliver (monitoring of Early Learning Coalitions) • Payment and Attendance System • Training and Technical Assistance to Local Coalitions • Early Learning Advisory Committee • Early Learning Coalitions • School Readiness Programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards, Assessment, and Curricula • Accountability (VPK Provider Readiness Rate Calculations) • Professional Development and Articulation • Technical Assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care Licensing • Child Care Training • Staff and Director Credentialing

VPK Program Requirements

Provider Eligibility

In order to be eligible for participation in the VPK program, providers must be one of the following:

- Licensed child care facility
- Licensed family home child care
- License Exempt Nonpublic school or faith based provider
- Public school district (for the school year program type, must have met the class size amendment).

Note: Registered family child care homes and informal child care providers are not eligible to participate in the VPK program.

Program Sessions

- **School Year Session:** must begin no sooner than 14 days before Labor Day, must end by June 30th and must deliver 540 VPK instructional hours.
- **Summer Session:** must begin no sooner than May 1st, must end before the start date of District School Kindergarten and must deliver 300 VPK instructional hours.

Any eligible provider may apply for either or both program types. Public Schools must provide the Summer Program.

VPK Staff Qualifications

Class Size and Staff to Child Ratios

School Year VPK Program

Class Size

- **At least** 4 children who have been issued VPK Certificates of Eligibility by ELCFV must be enrolled in order to begin the program.
- **No more** than 20 children who have been issued VPK Certificates of Eligibility by ELCFV may be enrolled in a VPK classroom. The number of children in a VPK class at any given time (including any non-VPK eligible children) may not exceed the maximum class size of 20.

Program Staff to Child Ratios

- Staff to child ratio is one (1) Lead Instructor for a class of 4 to 11 children.
- Staff to child ratio one (1) Lead Instructor and one (1) Secondary Instructor for a class of 12 to 20.

Summer VPK Program

Class Size

- **At least** 4 children who have been issued VPK Certificates of Eligibility by ELCFV must be enrolled in order to begin the program.
- **No more** than 12 children who have been issued VPK Certificates of Eligibility by ELCFV may be enrolled in a VPK classroom. The number of children in a VPK class at any given time (including any non-VPK eligible children) may not exceed the maximum class size of 12.

Program Staff to Child Ratios

- Staff to child ratio for a class of 4 to 12 children is one (1) Lead Instructor.

Multi-Class groups

Two or more VPK classes may occupy a single classroom space. VPK Instructors and Secondary Instructors must be assigned to a class and be responsible for the children enrolled in that class. Programs must follow staff-to-child ratio, square footage per child requirement or other state and local requirement.

Background Screening

All VPK directors, instructors, aide (secondary instructors), and substitutes must complete Level II background screenings and be cleared through DCF before they begin working in a VPK classroom. Private schools and religious exempt facilities must also meet this requirement.

The following documents must be submitted as proof that Level II DCF background screenings have been completed:

- Affidavit of Good Moral Character (DCF form) - this is notarized and does not expire unless there is more than a 90 day lapse in service or change of employment location.

AND

- “FINAL RESULTS” letter on DCF letterhead DCF. If the letter states “This documents the Final Results” it is inclusive of both the FDLE and FBI and no other documentation is required.

OR

- “THIS CLEARANCE IS FOR FBI RESULTS” letter on DCF letterhead **and** FDLE (State) background screening results.

The Volunteer and Employee Criminal History System (VECHS) MAY NOT be used as a background check for VPK purposes.

For more information on DCF background screening requirements visit:

www.dcfbackgroundscreening.com

Credentials and Required Training

While background screening requirements are the same for all VPK staff, credential and training requirements depend on the specific role of the staff member. Credentials and training must be documented on a DCF Child Care Training Transcript.

VPK Director Credential

Consistent with the requirements of section 1002.55(3)(f), FS., the VPK program must have a director whose DCF Child Care Training Transcript includes a VPK Endorsed Director Credential that meets the requirements of Rule 6A.6.040(2), FFAC.

Director Credentials issued before December 31, 2006 and listed on the DCF transcript must be listed as VPK Exempt in order to meet the requirement.

The Director Credential Application and Director Credential VPK Endorsement Application are available on the DCF website www.dcf.state.fl.us/childcare/forms.shtml. Use these forms as a guide for submitting the documentation to obtain the Director Credential and the VPK Endorsement.

VPK Lead Instructor Credentials/Training

- **School Year Staff Credential:**
A lead instructor must have one of the qualifying credentials listed on their transcript. For a listing of qualifying credentials visit http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/sites/www/Uploads/files/Providers/sy_vpk_instrct-credential.pdf
- **Summer Staff Credential:**
A lead instructor must have one of the qualifying credentials listed on their transcript. For a listing of qualifying credentials visit <http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/sites/www/Uploads/files/Providers/sumvpkinstrctcred.pdf>
- **Emergent Literacy:**
The Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors course is required for all Lead Instructors. Register for the course at www.myflorida.com/childcare, select training requirements and then on-line training courses.
- **Standards for Four Year Olds:**
The Standards for Four Year Olds training is required for all Lead Instructors. Register for the course at www.myflorida.com/childcare, select training requirements and then on-line training courses.

VPK Aide (Secondary Instructor) Credentials/Training

No additional credentials or training are required.

VPK Substitute Credentials/Training

- **School Year Substitute Instructor**
DCF 40-hour Introductory Child Care Training course if the VPK class is offered in a child care facility
OR
DCF 30-clock-hour Family Child Care Home Training if the VPK class is offered in a family or large family child care home
OR
Meet the local school district's requirements to be employed as a substitute teacher as adopted by each school district (verification on School District Letterhead required)
OR
Any of the credential requirements listed below for a summer substitute
- **Summer Substitute Instructor**
A summer substitute must have one of the qualifying credentials listed on their transcript. For a list of qualifying credentials visit http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/sites/www/Uploads/files/Providers/sy_vpk_instrct-credential.pdf

Use of Substitute Instructors

ELCFV strongly recommends that VPK Providers identify substitute VPK staff on the OEL-VPK 11A form at the time of application. If substitute staff is identified on this form, they can be assigned to the classroom for up to 30% of the VPK program hours (90 hours for the summer and 162 hours for the school year) with no additional notification of ELCFV required.

If no substitute has been identified and the assigned and approved VPK staff is absent from a VPK class, the provider must

- notify ELCFV immediately
- temporarily assign an individual who has the required credential and background screening to serve as the lead instructor or aide until the assigned lead instructor or aide returns
- submit for approval the credentials and background screening of the individual assigned to the VPK classroom
- If the individual does not meet the requirements, payment for instruction on that and any subsequent days the individual is assigned to the classroom will be withheld and the classroom calendar must be revised to make up those instructional hours.

Different substitute instructors may be assigned on different days, but the combined instructional hours of all substitutes cannot exceed 30 percent of the VPK program hours. A new credentialed instructor must be assigned to replace the absent instructor in the event the absence of the credentialed instructor will exceed 30 percent of the program hours.

A VPK provider shall maintain a record of the number of hours a substitute instructor has been assigned to each VPK classroom. Records shall be maintained by the VPK provider for a minimum of 1 year and shall be made available for review by ELCFV during normal hours of operation, and shall submit a copy of the documentation to ELCFV upon request. If a provider does not submit the information requested regarding substitute tracking, ELCFV reserves the right to take corrective action to assure compliance with state policy.

VPK Program Structure

Calendar

VPK providers are required to submit their program calendar indicating the start and end dates of the program, instructional days and hours. **This calendar should not change except under emergency circumstances and with prior approval from the coalition.** The program calendar must be planned carefully as only two calendar changes per program session are allowed. Florida's Office of Early Learning has established policies for closures due to state declared emergencies*

*(a) Temporary Closures Caused by Emergency Circumstances.

1. A student is considered to have attended all VPK program hours offered during a temporary closure caused by emergency circumstances for a combined total of five (5) instructional days for each VPK class if the private provider or school district submits notification in writing to the coalition the dates which the provider was closed.
 - a. A closure is temporary if the provider resumes instruction following the closure.
 - b. A closure is caused by emergency circumstances when a state of emergency is declared by federal, state or local officials for the area in which the provider is located.
2. A temporary closure caused by emergency circumstances is not payable for any student who does not attend a VPK instructional day following the closure.
3. A private provider or school district shall revise its class schedule to restore VPK instructional days which are lost due to temporary closures caused by emergency circumstances in excess of a total of five (5) instructional days for a VPK class.
4. A private provider or school district may revise its class schedule to restore the instructional days lost as a result of a temporary closure caused by emergency circumstances instead of accepting payment for a temporary closure.

(b) Temporary Closures Caused by Other Circumstances.

A temporary closure is not payable unless it is caused by emergency circumstances (see subsection 1.b. for definition). A private provider or school district shall revise its VPK class schedule and receive payment for days it restores in accordance with subsection (4) following a closure.

School Year VPK Program - 540 hours

ELCFV suggests VPK providers choose from the following school year program structure options

VPK Hours Per Day	Days Per Week	Number of Instructional Days	Number of Instructional Hours
3	5	180	540
3.75	5	144	540
4	5	135	540
4.5	5	120	540
6	5	90	540
7.5	5	72	540

Summer Program – 300 hours

ELCFV suggests VPK providers choose from the following school year program structure options

VPK Hours Per Day	Days Per Week	Number of Instructional Days	Number of Instructional Hours
6	5	50	300
6.25	5	48	300
7.5	5	40	300

VPK Instruction

Instructional Days

During VPK instructional days instructors must be actively engaged with children to promote progress in the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four Year Olds during identified and approved instructional hours. Activities may include snack and meal times. Field trips may also be taken as long as an alternative activity is available for children whose families choose not to have their children participate. Providers cannot require VPK families to pay for field trips.

Nap/rest time cannot be scheduled during VPK instructional hours.

Non-Instructional Days

VPK non-instructional days are days that the provider chooses not to operate VPK classrooms. The program may remain open on non instructional days to serve children enrolled in other programs including but not limited to private or school readiness funded child care.

Curriculum

Each VPK provider must use curriculum that is developmentally appropriate, designed to prepare a student for early literacy, enhance the age-appropriate progress of students in attaining the state-adopted performance standards, and prepare students to be ready to learn based on the statewide kindergarten screening (Section 1002.67(2) (b), Florida Statutes). VPK providers may select or design the curriculum for their classrooms unless on probation for failure to meet kindergarten readiness rates.

Guided by the program curriculum, teachers must thoughtfully consider room arrangement, carefully plan a schedule that includes opportunities for child directed play, teacher directed activities and for children to choose activities for themselves.

It is NOT developmentally appropriate to use a kindergarten curriculum with children enrolled in Voluntary PRE Kindergarten.

Child Assessment

All VPK providers are required to administer and report the results of the VPK Assessment for all enrolled VPK children each session. Assessment Periods 1 and 3 must be completed with all VPK enrolled children. To learn more about the Florida VPK Assessment click the link below.

<https://www.brightbeginningsfl.org/Assessment/VPKAssessments.aspx>

VPK Provider Accountability

Maintaining Accurate Program Information

Any changes to the VPK program must be reported to ELCFV. Legislation requires notification to occur within 14 days of any change taking effect and accompanying documentation to be valid on or before the effective date.

When changes are submitted in advance, continued compliance and uninterrupted payment can be ensured. Forms to be used when submitting changes can be found at

<https://www.elcfv.org/providers/vpk/forms/> .

The following forms are available:

- **VPK Provider Name Change** Use when owner, director and location remain unchanged and Department of Children and Families (DCF) has issued a new license under the new name.
[Click Here to download this document](#)
- **VPK Provider Change of Ownership** Use when a child care facility providing VPK services changes ownership and the new owner chooses to continue the VPK session in progress. A complete VPK application packet must be submitted to ELCFV by the new owner. If a lapse occurs between the ending of one agreement and the execution of the next the VPK program is considered not to be operating during that time and no VPK payments will be made to either owner. The calendar in the new owner's application packet must include the balance of required hours of instruction. VPK families must be made aware of the change in ownership and how any lapse in VPK services will be handled.
[Click Here to download this document](#)
- **VPK Provider Change of Address** Use when the program name, owner and director are remaining the same and the physical location (address) of the facility changes. DCF will visit and license the new location. ELCFV must be notified prior to the move.

Parents must complete a [VPK Parent and Provider Authorization to Transfer](#) form to acknowledge that their children will be attending VPK in a different location.

If provider changes location before the change is approved by ELCFV, any days of instruction that occur before the change is approved will be non-reimbursable and Provider's VPK calendar must be adjusted so that the total amount of required hours of instruction are included.

[Click Here to download this document](#)

- **VPK Provider Change in Director** Use this form when the owner, location and name are remaining the same and the director leaves the program. The new VPK director must be the same director as approved and listed through DCF.

If the program needs time to search for and hire a new director, a provisional license, valid for up to six months, will be issued by DCF.

If the new director meets the DCF licensing requirements but not the VPK requirements, the program will be placed in a provisionally approved VPK status for up to three months so that the director can earn the VPK Endorsement. The purpose of this procedure is to maintain continuity of instruction for the children enrolled in the program.

[Click Here to download this document](#)

Changes to Classroom Capacity, Curriculum, or to Dissolve a Classroom

The capacity of a classroom is automatically identified in accordance with the staff assigned to the VPK class, indicated on the OEL-VPK 11A. During the school year, when an assistant is added, the capacity of a classroom is adjusted automatically to 20. When an assistant is removed, the enrolled capacity must be 11 or less, or a new assistant must be added to keep the original capacity of 20.

Changes in curriculum information should be submitted to ELCFV using the OEL-VPK 11A.

The dissolving of a classroom may occur when a Provider received approval to operate multiple classrooms. During the course of the VPK Program, the provider may realize that enrollment does not justify the number of classrooms approved. A Provider can transfer children to another class and dissolve the now empty class by submitting this to ELCFV in writing. Please see the section on Transferring Children to classrooms within your VPK Program for instruction on moving the children.

Permanent Change in Staffing

Use the OEL-VPK 11A and submit the required documentation. If an on-site monitoring occurs and information observed is different than what is shown in your approved VPK file, funding may be recouped for each day of the non-compliance. The VPK calendar may need to be extended as well to administer the full 540 or 300 instructional hours.

The program may not receive reimbursement until new staff has been approved in writing by the ELCFV.

Program Monitoring

VPK providers are monitored for compliance with the VPK 20 Statewide Provider Agreement, OEL-VPK Form 10, OEL-VPK Form 11A, and OEL-VPK Form 11B, including details as outlined in Florida Statute 1002.55 and 1002.61 as appropriate. The monitoring procedure includes a review of documentation and on-site visits. **VPK onsite monitoring is unannounced.**

During monitoring, ELCFV staff will verify:

- Daily sign in/out sheets contain the parent's full first and last name
- Child Attendance and Parental Choice Certificate forms are on-site and signed on the last VPK instructional day of every month by the parent.
- Director identified on-site is the director listed on the approved OEL-VPK 10.
- Staff identified in the VPK classroom(s) is the staff listed on the approved OEL-VPK 11A.
- Number of children in the VPK classroom(s) does not exceed the teacher child ratio based on staff identified as responsible for the class on the approved OEL-VPK 11A.
- Curriculum being used matches the one(s) listed on the approved OEL-VPK 11A.
- Operating hours of the VPK classroom(s) identified match the hours listed on the approved OEL-VPK 11B.

In addition to this monitoring, Attendance Certification forms will be monitored monthly to ensure the provider is following the approved program calendar.

Readiness Rate

The VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate was established in legislation to measure how well a VPK provider prepares four-year-olds to be ready to learn in kindergarten. A child's readiness rate is based on their performance on the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS).

Florida law requires that the FLKRS be administered to children within the first 30 days of kindergarten and for the FLKRS to be aligned with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four Year Olds. Readiness rates are calculated each year as a method of measuring how well VPK providers have prepared four-year-olds who substantially completed their program to be ready to learn in Kindergarten.

Providers will be notified by Florida's Department of Education if they do not meet the minimum readiness rate.

For more information about VPK Readiness Rates visit www.vpk.fldoe.org

VPK Child Enrollment

All children who turn 4 years old by September 1 are eligible for the school year or summer program that is offered during the year before they start Kindergarten.

For more information about the VPK Eligibility process visit <https://www.elcfv.org/families/vpk/>

ELCFV staff gives the parent a Certificate of Eligibility (COE). The parent is instructed to give the COE to the provider upon enrolling their child in an approved VPK program.

Providers may not ask for or accept a COE from a parent or enroll children into a VPK program until they have been approved by ELCFV to operate a VPK program and have signed a VPK 20 Statewide Provider Agreement.

The provider will use the VPK Classroom Enrollment/Disenrollment form to enroll children into the classroom and submit this form to ELCFV. The provider can use this form to change the enrollment of children within classrooms before the session begins. Parent consent is needed to transfer a child between VPK classrooms once the session has started and the provider will submit this consent by use of the Informed Parental Consent for Provider Transfers and Class Transfer form.

For specific information about enrolling children in your VPK program including the payment process please view the VPK Payment Process Orientation at www.elcfv.org.

All VPK records including COEs must be retained by the provider for 5 years. This rule applies even if the child transfers or withdraws from your program.

VPK Program Payment

For specific information about enrolling children in your VPK program including the payment process please view the VPK Payment Process Orientation at www.elcfv.org.

VPK Resources

Early Learning Coalition of Flagler and Volusia: www.elcfv.org

Office of Early Learning: <http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/>

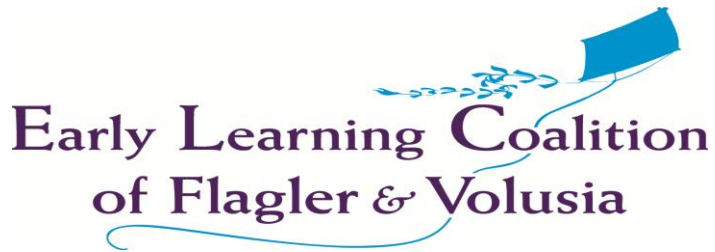
Department of Children and Families: <http://www.211live.org/index.cfm://www.dcf.state.fl.us/childcare/>

Flagler County Health Department: <http://health.flaglercounty.org/>

Volusia County Health Department:
<http://www.floridahealth.gov/chd/volusia/index.html>

Flagler County School Board (calendar information):
<http://flaglerschools.com/district/calendars>

Volusia County School Board (calendar information):
<http://myvolusiaschools.org/Community-Information-Services/Pages/Calendars.aspx>



**2016-2017 ELCFV VPK Provider Guide
Acknowledgement / Affirmation**

My signature below acknowledges my receipt of the 2016 – 2017 ELCFV VPK Provider Guide and affirms my understanding of the contents.

Print Name

Signature

Position

Date

Submit this completed page with the forms and documents.