

FLORIDA'S VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM



Provider information

I am interested in becoming a VPK Provider!

What is VPK?

A constitutional amendment passed by Florida's voters in November 2002 required a voluntary pre kindergarten program for all four-year-old children by fall 2005. House Bill 1-A was signed into law by Governor Bush on January 2, 2005, creating a program designed to prepare four-year-olds for kindergarten and build the foundation for their educational success. The program allows a parent to enroll his or her eligible child (four years old by September 1 and residing in Florida) in a free VPK program. The program is voluntary for children and providers.

What private providers are eligible to deliver the VPK Program?

Each private provider must be a licensed child care facility, a licensed family day care home (registered homes are not eligible), a licensed large family child care home, or a nonpublic school or faith-based child care provider that is exempt from licensure. Each private provider must also:

- OPTION 1: Be accredited by an accrediting association that is a member of the [National Council for Private School Accreditation](#), the [Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation](#), or the [Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools](#);
- OPTION 2: Hold a current Gold Seal Quality Care designation; or
- OPTION 3: Be a licensed child care provider and demonstrate to the early learning coalition that the provider meets the VPK program requirements, including but not limited to, credentials and background screenings of instructors, minimum and maximum class sizes, director credentials, and developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Unlicensed family day care homes and informal child care providers are not eligible to participate in the program.

What are the standards or requirements for the school-year VPK Program?

A provider delivering the school-year program must:

- Offer at least 540 instructional hours.
- Maintain VPK classes with at least 4 children and no more than 18 children (however, providers may not exceed their licensed capacity).
- Have a VPK director's credential. Directors who received the DCF Director's Credential prior to December 31, 2006 are exempt from obtaining the VPK director's endorsement (but are strongly encouraged to participate in the training).
- Have a developmentally appropriate curriculum.

- Have, for each VPK class, at least one VPK instructor who:
 - (a) Holds, at a minimum, a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential issued by the National Credentialing Program or a credential approved by the Department of Children and Families as being equivalent to or greater than the national credential

AND

who completes a 5-hour emergent literacy training course (or the Department of Children and Families' 5-hour training in early literacy and language development, if completed *before* April 1, 2005);

-OR-

(b) Holds one of the following educational credentials:

- A bachelor's or higher degree in early childhood education, pre-kindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer science.
- A bachelor's or higher degree in elementary education, if the pre-kindergarten instructor has been certified to teach children any age from birth through 6th grade, regardless of whether the instructor's educator certificate is current.
- An Associate's or higher degree in child development.
- An Associate's or higher degree in an unrelated field, at least 6 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 8 years of age.
- An educational credential approved by the Department of Education as being equivalent to or greater than an educational credential described above.
- Have, for each VPK class of 11 or more children, at least one additional instructor who is not required to have a CDA credential or complete an emergent literacy training course.
- Employ instructors of good moral character.
- Complete background screening (Level 2 screening in s.435.04, F.S.) for all instructors.

What are the standards or requirements for the Summer VPK Program?

A provider delivering the VPK Summer Program must:

- Offer at least 300 instructional hours.
- Offer the program between May 1 and the start of the school year in August or September.
- Deliver the program to children no earlier than the summer before the school year for which the children are eligible to enter kindergarten.
- Maintain VPK classes with at least 4 children and no more than 10 children (however, providers may not exceed their licensed capacity).
- Have a developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- Have for each VPK class, an instructor who holds a valid Florida Educator Certificate or has one of the following credentials:
 - A Bachelor's or higher degree in early childhood education, pre-kindergarten or primary education, preschool education or family and consumer science; or
 - A Bachelor's or higher degree in elementary education, if the pre-kindergarten instructor has been certified to teach children any age from birth through 6th grade, regardless of whether the instructor's educator certificate is current

Frequently Asked Questions

Will providers be able to turn away children requesting to enroll in their VPK program?

Florida Law prohibits VPK providers from discriminating against children or their parents on the basis of race, color, or national origin, including the refusal to admit a child to the VPK program.

How much funding will be provided per child?

These are the 2007-8 VPK School Year allocations effective 08/01/07. The allocations are set by the State of Florida and will be updated for the next VPK year as the information becomes available.

County Name	Rate Based on FTE	Program Hours	Hourly Rate
Baker	2624.40	540	4.86
Bradford	2608.20	540	4.83
Clay	2667.60	540	4.94
Nassau	2656.80	540	4.92
Putnam	2586.60	540	4.79
St Johns	2646.00	540	4.90

Will there be parent fees associated with the VPK Program?

The VPK program is FREE for all eligible children, regardless of family income. Providers are not permitted to charge a registration fee or require parents to agree to any additional services. State law does not, however, prohibit a provider from charging registration fees, tuition, etc. for programs or care that are not part of the VPK program hours.

How will VPK providers get paid?

VPK providers will be paid in advance with a reconciliation of attendance conducted at the end of each month.

Will the VPK program provide funding for transportation?

No. Florida Law specifies that each parent is responsible for the transportation of his or her child to and from the VPK program. VPK providers may offer transportation services for families.

Where can I find more information regarding the CDAE Program?

You can find more information at the [Department of Children and Families](#) website.

What credentials have been determined to be equivalent to the National CDA for purposes of VPK?

The credentials that have been determined to be equivalent to or greater than the National CDA for purposes of VPK participation are:

3. A Florida CDAE
4. Formal Education Qualifications.

Is the Employment History Recognition Exemption the same as being granted a CDAE?

The Employment History Recognition Exemption is *not the same* as a Florida CDAE, which is an approved course of study. The Employment History Recognition Exemption is an alternative to the Florida CDAE that meets the staff credential requirement for purposes of licensing, but *does not qualify* as a credential for the purpose of VPK.

I am a family day care home provider. Can my child attend the VPK Program I provide?

The adult:child ratios for family day care homes are established by s.402.302(7), Florida Statutes. According to CF-FSP Pamphlet 175-2 (the Child Care Desk Reference) children under the age of 13 who are cared for in the provider's home are to be included when calculation the ratio. There is nothing in child care statute or rule that prohibits a family day care home provider from caring for his or her own children in the home. In fact, this is quite often the reason that a person becomes a family day care home provider. There is nothing in VPK law that prohibits this action.

I want to work in a VPK program, what do I need to do?

Training varies depending on which program you want to work in. Requirements for working in an early learning program can be found at www.myflorida.com/childcare/training. Course schedules and fees can be obtained by selecting your county at the top of the page. For more information, please contact the Child Care Training Information Call Center at 1-888-352-2842.

How do I apply to be a VPK Provider?

To sign up to provide the Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Program, visit our website at www.ecs4kids.org