



Committee on K-12

Meeting
Tuesday, March 6, 2007
3:00 — 6:00 p.m.
212 Knott Building

Marco Rubio
Speaker

Anitere Flores
Chair



Florida House of Representatives

Marco Rubio

Speaker

Committee on K-12

Anitere Flores, Chair
Representative Gary Aubuchon
Representative Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall
Representative Will Kendrick

Marti Coley, Vice Chair
Representative Curtis Richardson
Representative Garrett Richter
Representative Shelley Vana

AGENDA

March 6, 2007

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Roll Call**
- III. Comments, Chair Flores**
- IV. Discussion of Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Education Program**
 - **Presentation by David Lawrence, Board Chair, Early Childhood Initiative Foundation**
 - **Presentation by Shan Goff, Executive Director, Office of Early Learning, DOE**
 - **Presentation by Gladys Wilson, Deputy Director, Office of Early Learning, AWI**
 - **Presentation by Susan Main, Executive Director, Early Learning Coalition of Duval**
 - **Presentation by Debby Russo, Director of Child Care, DCF**
 - **Presentation by Pamela Phelps, Ph.D., Owner/Operator, The Creative Pre-School, Tallahassee**
- V. Consideration of implementing concepts for Ideas 5, 6, 9, 19, and 22**
- VI. Adjournment**

**Presentation by
David Lawrence,
Board Chair
Early Childhood Initiative
Foundation**

**Presentation by
Shan Goff
Executive Director,
Office of Early Learning,
DOE**

Voluntary Prekindergarten
(VPK) Education Update
House Committee on K-12
March 6, 2007



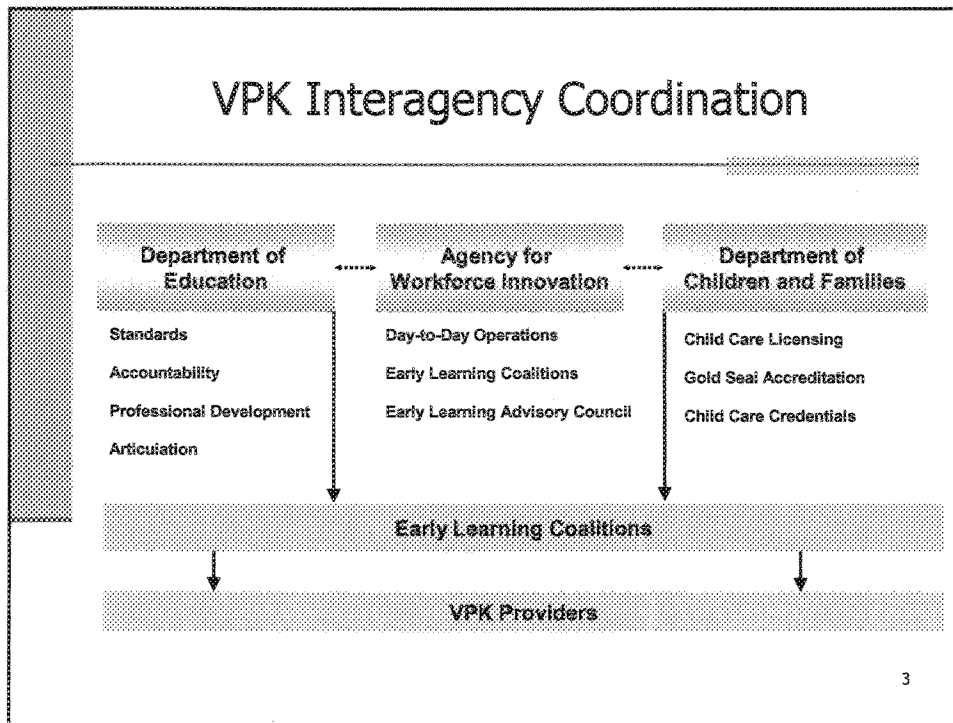
Shan Goff, Executive Director
Office of Early Learning
Florida Department of Education

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Topics

- Agency Functions and Accomplishments
- VPK Accountability
 - Kindergarten Screening Results
 - VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate
 - Evaluation/Research Activities
- VPK Participation
 - Identifying Communities in Need/High Risk Districts

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- ### Accomplishments
- VPK Standards adopted March 15, 2005 and over 14,150 prek teachers trained
 - Creation of on-line course on emergent literacy with over 31,100 participants
 - Adoption of VPK Director's Credential and development of on-line course
 - Creation and distribution of over 83,000 Parent Guide to VPK Standards
 - Administration and release of results for the 2006-07 Public School Kindergarten Screening
- 4

"Florida's VPK program can become a global model for school readiness."

1. Developing a data system for the program that is comparable to the current data system for our K-12 education system and stimulating careful research on the best ways to measure the program's educational impact.
 - SBOE Strategic Plan, Imperative #3 – Student Learning
 - Increase the number and percent of children who are "ready for kindergarten" upon completion of VPK.

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Kindergarten Screening...

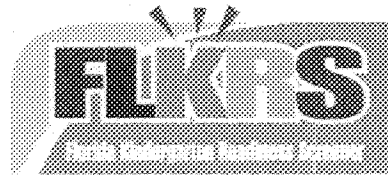
Section 1002.69(1), F.S., requires DOE to:

- Adopt a statewide kindergarten screening that assesses the readiness of each student for kindergarten **based upon the adopted Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) education program performance standards.**
- Direct each **school district** to administer the statewide screening **to each kindergarten student** in the school district **within the first 30 days of each school year.**

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Kindergarten Screening...

- Subset of the Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS)
- Two measures of Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) (Letter Naming Fluency and Initial Sound Fluency)



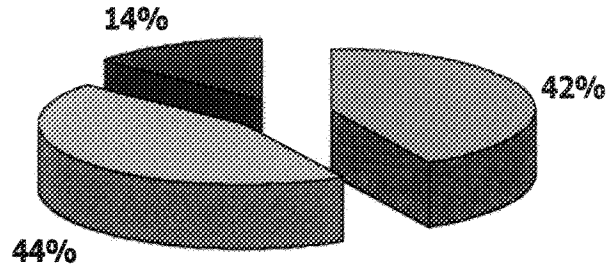
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Kindergarten Screening...

- To be considered "ready for kindergarten," a child will score:
 - Consistently Demonstrating or Emerging Progressing on the ECHOS measure
 - Above Average or Low Risk on both DIBELS measures.

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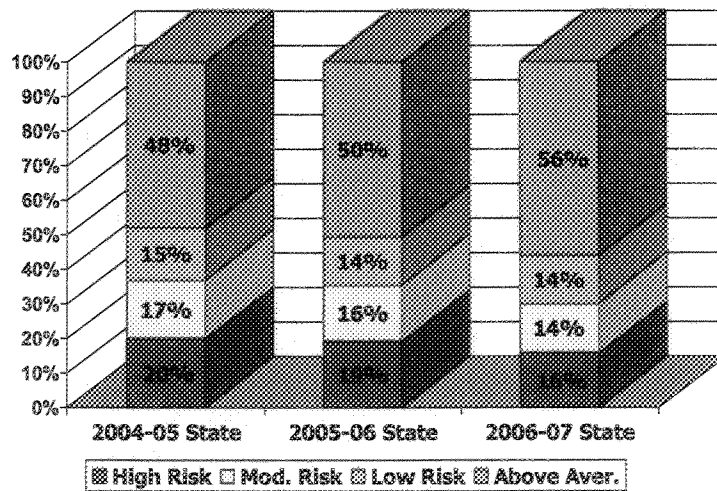
2006-07 ECHOS



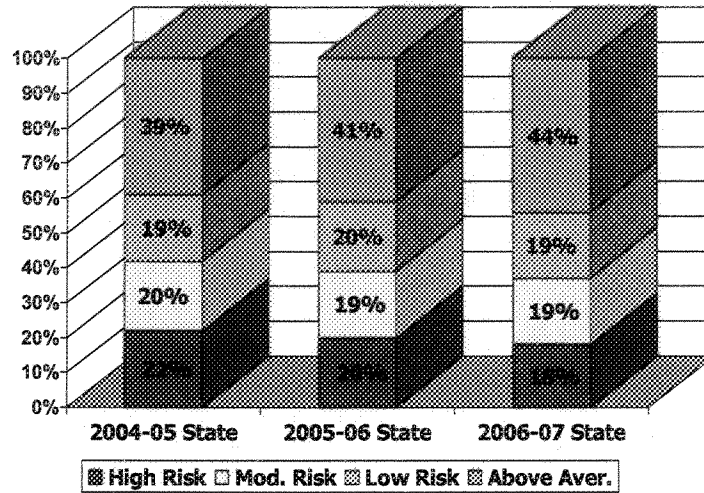
Consistently Demonstrating
 Emerging/Progressing
 Not Yet Demonstrating

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DIBELS/Letter Naming Fluency: State

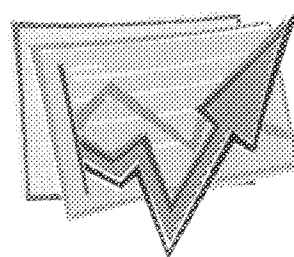


DIBELS/Initial Sound Fluency: State



VPK Accountability

- The main accountability indicator for the VPK Education program is the VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate.
- The Readiness Rate is calculated based on the performance of a provider's VPK graduates on the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener.



Kindergarten Readiness Rate...

- The kindergarten readiness rates must be based exclusively upon the results of the statewide kindergarten screening **for students completing the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program**, beginning with students completing the program during the 2005-06 school year who are administered the statewide kindergarten screening during the 2006-07 school year.

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Kindergarten Readiness Rate...

Section 1002.69(6), F.S., requires:

- State Board of Education adoption of a minimum kindergarten readiness rate that, **if achieved by a provider would demonstrate the provider's satisfactory delivery of the VPK program.**
- The minimum rate may not exceed the rate at which more that 15 percent of all providers would fall below the minimum rate.

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Kindergarten Readiness Rate...

- Provider Verification of AWI/coalition VPK Data
- Matching of AWI and DOE Data
- State Board Adopts Readiness Rate Calculation Rule
- Release of VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rates via Web Site (vpk.fldoe.org)
- Appeals Process
- State Board Sets Minimum Readiness Rate
- Improvement Process Begins

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Webpage Search Results View

Florida Department of Education

VPK Provider Readiness Rate Website
Initial Search Results

Search Criteria:
 Program Year: 2003-2009
 State Level Report: Not Selected
 Early Learning Coalition: Not Selected
 County: Hillsborough
 Provider Name: Not Selected
 City: Not Selected
 Zip Code: Not Selected

The search results page will display the criteria entered by the user and a grid displaying the records found. Clicking on the provider name hyperlink in the results grid will open a new window containing the 'VPK Provider Readiness Rate Report' for the associated record. The below columns are the default columns. They will always be displayed in the results grid and cannot be deleted by the user.

Modify Search | New Search | Export to Excel | Customize

Provider Name	Address	County	City	Readiness Rate	Low Performing Provider?	Appeal Filed?	Status of Appeal
VPK Provider	123 Main St, Tampa, FL 33602	Hillsborough	Tampa	85%	No	No	Submitted
VPK Provider	456 Main St, Tampa, FL 33602	Hillsborough	Tampa	80%	No	No	Submitted

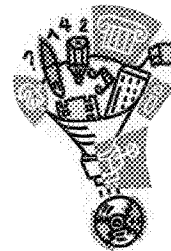
2 Records Found

VPK Provider Readiness Rate: Department of Education (DOE) | Agency for Technical Innovation (ATI) | Department of Children and Families (DCF)
 For questions & comments regarding education issues: Comments@fldoe.org
 For technical issues regarding this website: doe@fldoe.org
 Copyright Florida Department of Education © 2005. Privacy | Accessibility
 Free Downloadable Acrobat Reader | Download 10/2002 | Version 10.0.2 (2005) | Power2Go 10.0.2

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Evaluation/Research Activities...

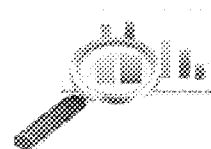
- Readiness rate data/reports will be displayed for every VPK provider and searchable by county and coalition
- Customized search results will be available by:
 - provider demographics
 - child demographics



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Evaluation/Research Activities

- DOE: Integrated Education Data Systems
 - Warehouse for VPK student/provider data
 - Repository for Kindergarten Screener data
 - Longitudinal analysis using Automated K-12 Student Database data
- FSU: Florida Center for Reading Research
 - Correlational Predictive data analysis



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"Florida's VPK program can become a global model for school readiness."

3. Removing any participation obstacles for those students in most need of these services.
 - SBOE Strategic Plan, Imperative #3 – Student Learning
 - Increase the VPK participation rates.
 - Results of 2006-07 Kindergarten Screening
 - Student Demographics (Free/Reduced Priced Lunch and English Language Learners)

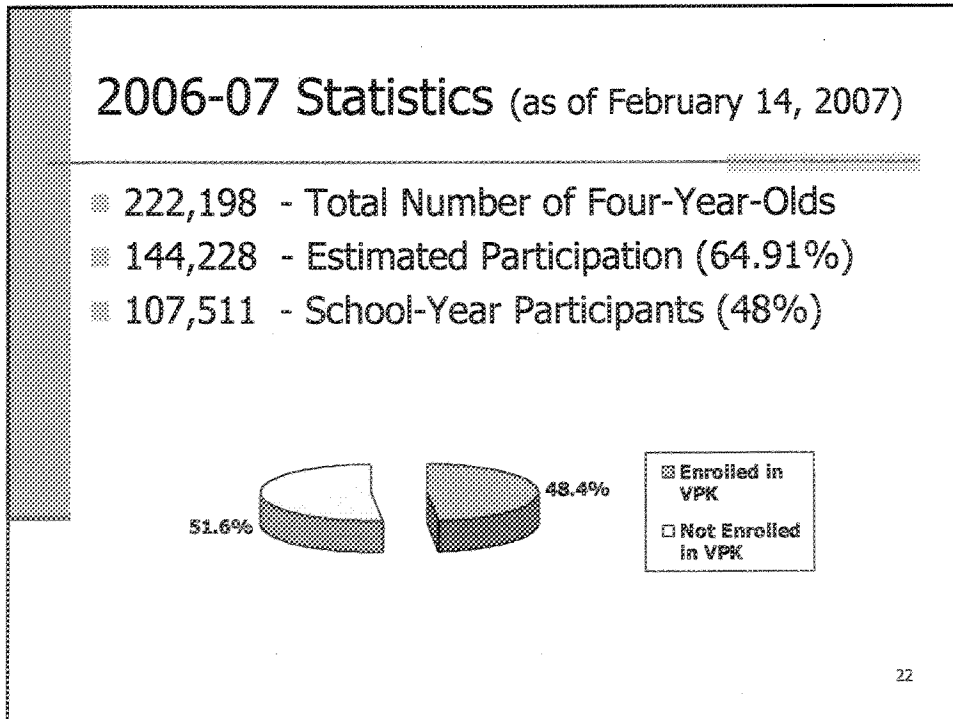
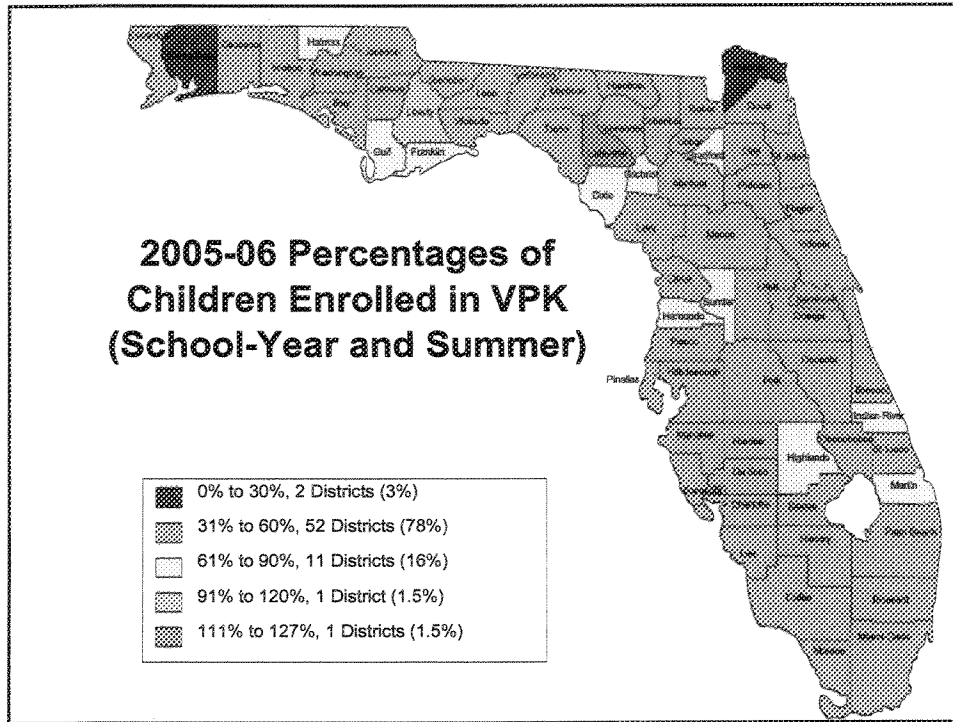
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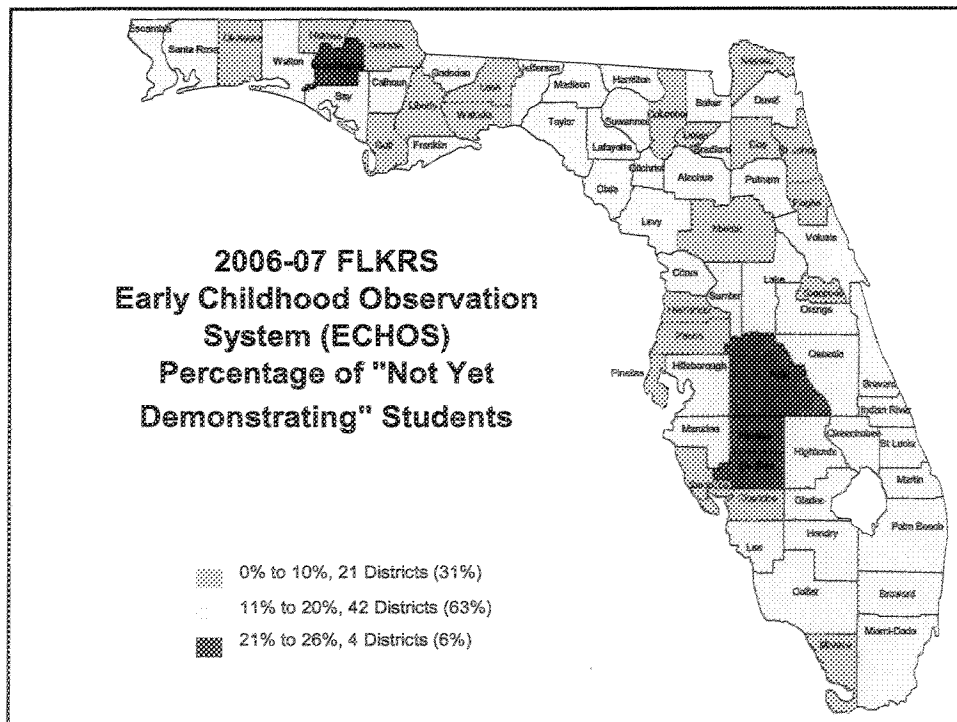
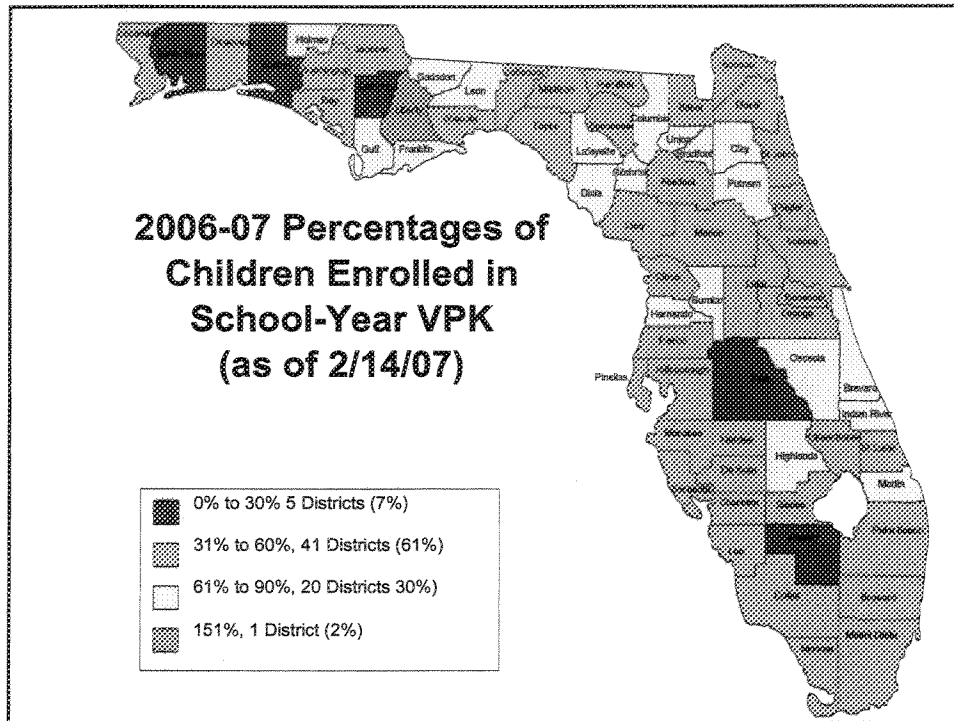
2005-06 Statistics (as of February 14, 2007)

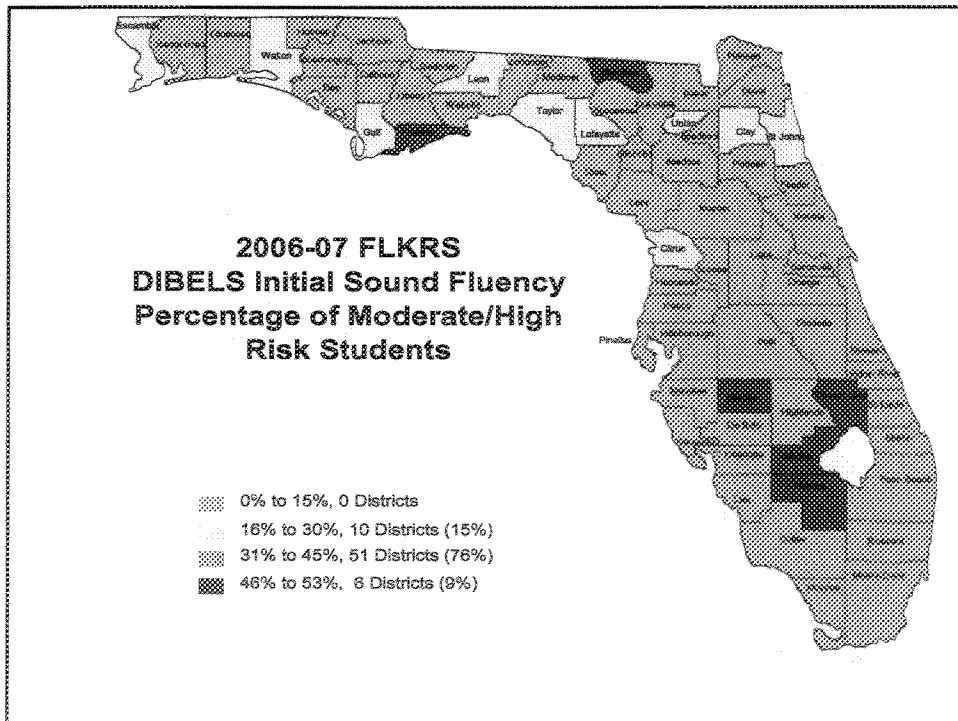
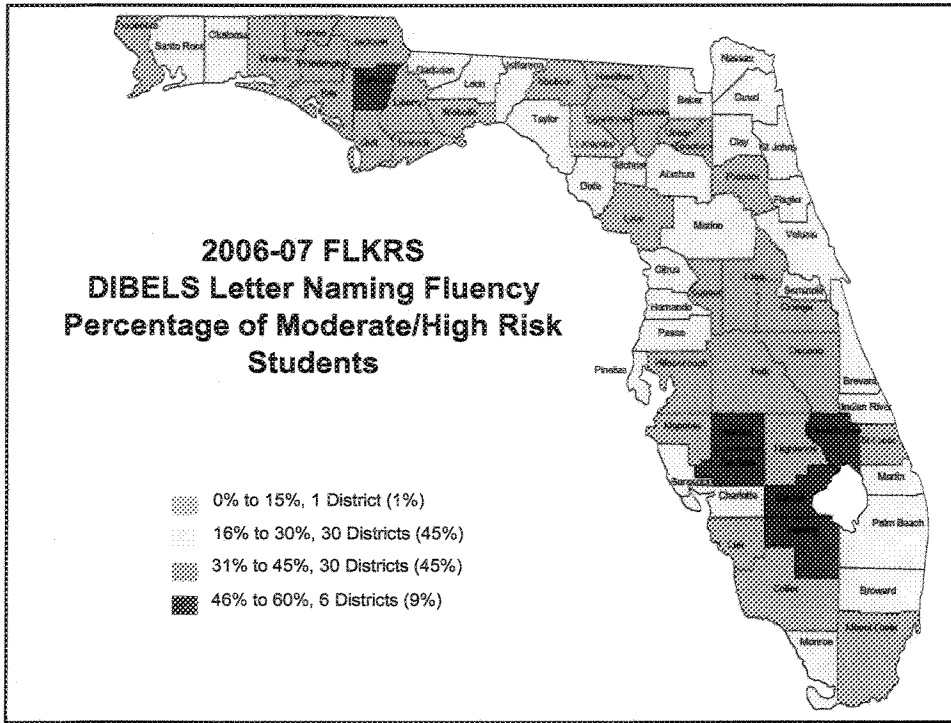
220,857 - Total Number of Four-Year-Olds
93,574 - School-Year Participants
12,322 - Summer Program Participants
105,896 (48% of Total Four-Year-Olds)

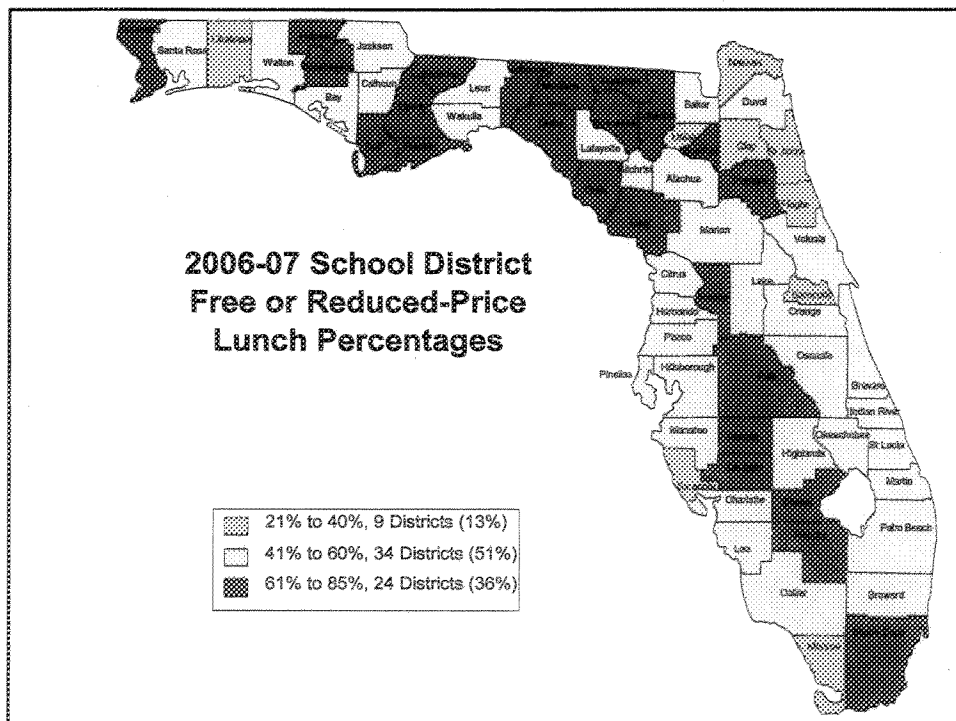
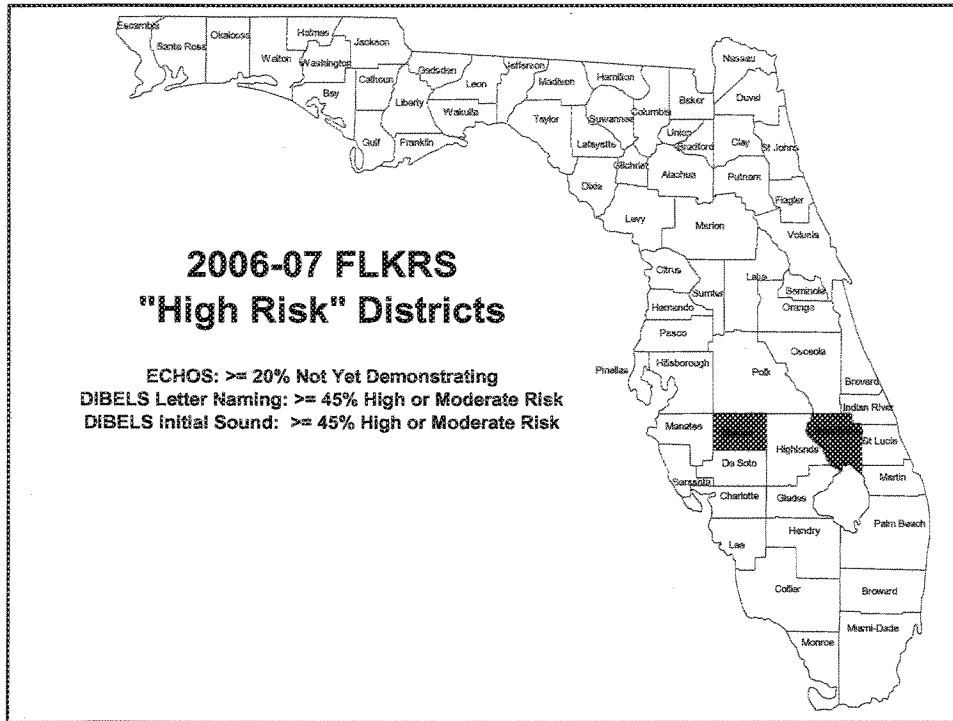


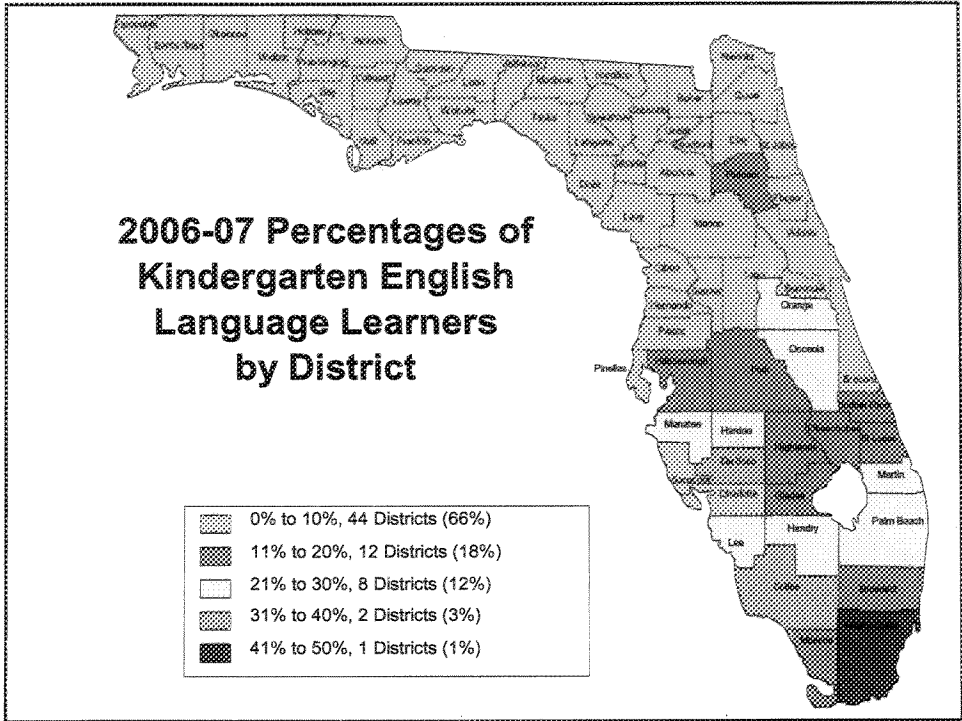
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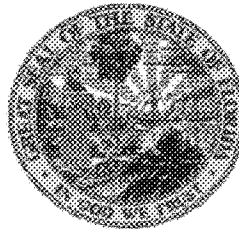
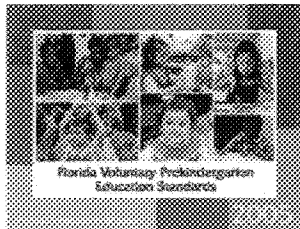






Contact Information

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earlylearning@fldoe.org



Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program: Summary of Legislative Budget Request

Department of Education Functions

- Interagency Collaboration and Administration
- Standards
- Provider Services
- Accountability



Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) for VPK (Transfer to Agency for Workforce Innovation) 2006-07 Appropriation = \$388,100,000

- 144,228 (64.91% of 222,198 total four-year-olds) x \$2,560 BSA x District Cost Differential + 5% administrative costs for early learning coalitions

2007-08 Legislative Budget Request = \$441,640,814

- 158,078 (70% of 225,831 total four-year-olds) x \$2,657 BSA (increase of 3.79%) x District Cost Differential + 5% administrative costs for early learning coalitions

Early Learning Standards and Accountability

2006-07 Appropriation = \$2,000,000

- VPK standards distribution, seven VPK regional facilitators, curriculum review and research supports, parent materials, professional development for providers in the areas of special needs, English language learners, and vocabulary and language development, and improvement process for low performing providers

2007-08 Legislative Budget Request = \$2,975,000

- VPK standards distribution, eight VPK regional facilitators, professional development in the areas of cognitive development and general knowledge, assessment of vocabulary and language development in selected kindergarten classrooms, VPK director's Walk-Through, and improvement process for low performing providers
- \$675,000 for recognition of 10% top-performing VPK providers (\$50 per FTE x 30 (average number of children) x 450 providers)

NEW - Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener -- Paperwork Reduction Act

2007-08 Legislative Budget Request = \$1,633,624

- Funding for hardware (personal digital assistants (PDA's)) and software for teachers administering the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener

NEW - Access to English Literacy for VPK Providers

2007-08 Legislative Budget Request = \$1,031,400

- Support enrollment of VPK teachers and directors in adult education English language courses (2,290 instructors and VPK private center directors (1,336 VPK instructors = 25% of approximately 5,344 instructors) + 954 VPK private center directors = 25% of 3,816 VPK private centers)) @ .25 FTE (1 FTE = \$1,800))

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September 19, 2006

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



The Department of Education/Office of Early Learning (DOE/OEL) works in collaboration with the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to implement the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education program, with specific responsibilities for the following:

- Certification of school district eligibility to deliver the school-year VPK program
- Administration of accountability requirements at the state-level
- Provision of professional development including emergent literacy course(s)
- Approval of VPK director endorsement requirements
- Adoption/administration of a statewide kindergarten screening
- Review and approval of curricula for providers on probation for failure to meet readiness rate
- Calculation of kindergarten readiness rate
- Articulation of the Child Development Associate (CDA) or CDA-Equivalency (CDA-E) credential toward a post secondary degree.

VPK Accomplishments

- Approval of Florida State Board of Education child performance, curricula, and emergent literacy training standards
- Development and distribution of VPK Performance Standards and training to over 14,150 participants
- Development of the online Emergent Literacy Course for VPK Teachers with over 31,100 participants
- Approval and training on the use of the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) for 2006-07 School Year (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS))
- Approval of the VPK Director Endorsement rule by State Board of Education
- Development of the online VPK Director Endorsement course, available beginning February 13, 2007
- Presentation of Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) and VPK Provider Accountability information to over 800 providers at 15 forums
- Administration of Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) to 98% of kindergarteners for 2006-07 School Year
- Release of 2006-07 Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) results to school districts and early learning coalitions on December 8, 2006
- Enrollment of 107,261 children (48% of all four-year-olds) in 2006-07 School-Year in VPK programs as of January 24, 2007



February 2007

DOE/OEL provides training and technical assistance through regularly-scheduled telephone conference calls with school districts and coalitions, product distribution, video teleconferences, other meeting and conference presentations, and its website.

DOE/OEL provides a network of seven (7) VPK Regional Facilitators working with early learning coalitions and public and private providers throughout the state. Facilitators conduct training on various topics to include the VPK Education Standards. A training calendar can be found on the DOE/OEL website.

Related VPK Products

Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Standards 2005
Available in English and Spanish
www.unf.edu/dept/fie

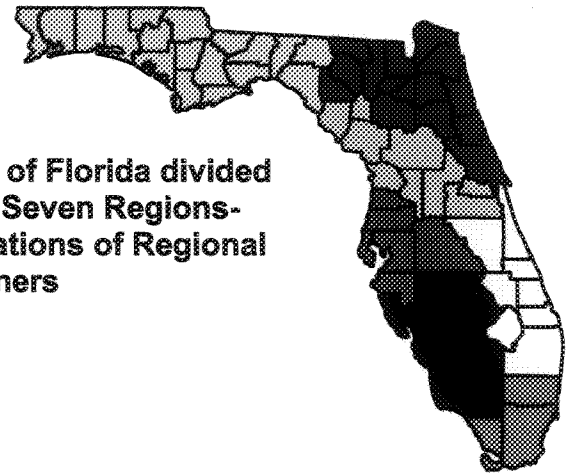
VPK Professional Development Initiatives:
An Introduction to Emergent Literacy
<http://www.flvpkonline.org/ellinfo.htm>

For further information on DOE VPK initiatives or any of these materials, please contact

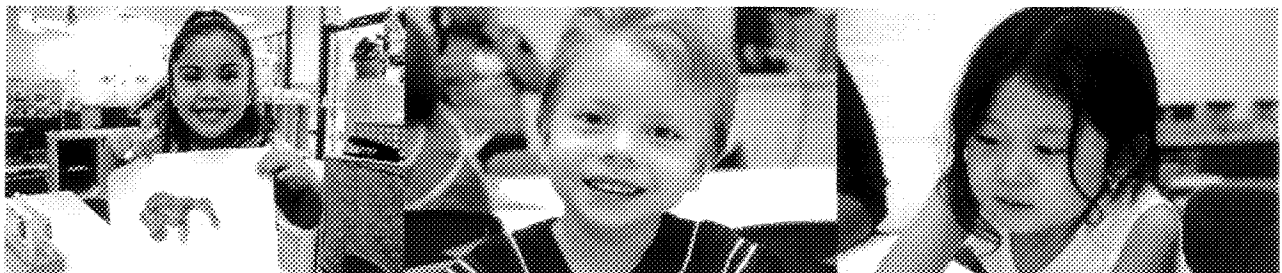
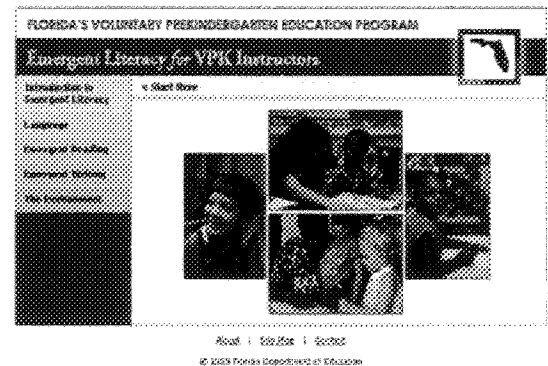
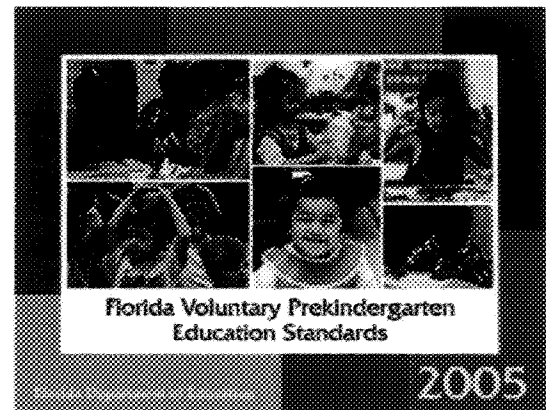
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www.myfloridaeducation.com/earlylearning



Map of Florida divided into Seven Regions- Locations of Regional Trainers



**Presentation by
Gladys Wilson
Deputy Director
Office of Early Learning,
AWI**



Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program

House Committee on K-12
March 6, 2007



VPK Overview



Early Success

- Began in July 2005 & provides every four year old child in Florida with a high quality program to prepare for kindergarten
- Served 106,000 four-year olds in the first year, approximately 49% of eligible four-year olds
- Program has exceeded FY 05-06 total enrollment through February 2007 and estimate at least 123,913 of eligible four-year olds will be served this year
- Florida has the second largest state sponsored VPK program in the nation



VPK Customer Satisfaction



- 92% of parents surveyed responded that they were satisfied with the VPK program overall in the first year (78% very satisfied and 14% satisfied)
- Parents reported that the number one reason that they did not enroll their child last year in Voluntary Prekindergarten was because their child care center was not a VPK provider



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Agency for Workforce Innovation Office of Early Learning



Roles & Responsibilities

- Day to Day Operations
- Early Learning Coalitions
- Payment to Coalitions
- Monitoring of Coalitions
- Creation of Policies, Procedures, and Rules
- Early Learning Advisory Council



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Early Learning Coalitions



- Provide an orientation and overview of the program
- Verify age and address, determine eligibility & issue certificates so children can register at their VPK child care provider of choice
- Program monitoring, technical assistance & quality activities



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100 Innovative Ideas



Chapter 1, Number 5

Make Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program a global model for school readiness



6

How to achieve this



1. Developing a data system for the program that is comparable to the current data system for our K-12 education system and stimulating careful research on the best ways to measure the program's educational impact
2. Reevaluating the governance structure to ensure efficiency and accountability
3. Removing any participation obstacles for those students in most need of these services



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Data System - ELIS



Early Learning Information System

- Modern replacement for the 15+ year old distributed and limited data system currently used to support early learning programs



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ELIS Project Objectives



- Establish a centralized & consolidated information system to provide consistent, uniform information across the state for early learning programs
- Automate cumbersome manual processes to improve efficiency
- Ensure critical VPK information & outcome data is readily accessible to state and local administrators and policymakers
- Create important data security and user safeguards against fraudulent actions in all early learning programs



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Preparing for ELIS



The Data Quality Initiative (DQI) was established

- To identify and eliminate bad data in the current system
- Focus on improving data reporting and analysis
- Consolidate key information into a centralized database to build better access to the current system and explore the data for ways to improve performance
- Search for better and more consistent business processes



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VPK Governance

Agency for Workforce Innovation --Office of Early Learning -- created by statute to oversee early learning programs including VPK

Early Learning Coalitions -- receive funds and contract with child care providers for service

Department of Education -- Voluntary Prekindergarten performance and accountability

Department of Children & Families -- child care licensing, regulation and provider training



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VPK Efficiency & Accountability

- Working with our early learning coalitions and DOE on the VPK readiness rate which will determine participating children's readiness for kindergarten rate -- April 2007



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VPK Efficiency & Accountability



- Coalitions limited to 5% administrative costs in Voluntary Prekindergarten by statute
- Monitoring of VPK programs including teacher credentials, educational standards and health & safety could be increased with additional resources
- In School Readiness programs coalitions are allowed 5% administration and up to 14% for value-added activities including program monitoring



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Overcoming VPK Obstacles



- Increasing child registration locations
- Outreach and awareness to educate and enroll more children
- Recruitment of additional providers to increase parental options



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Overcoming VPK Obstacles



- A pilot registration program will be initiated in eight coalitions (21-counties) in May
- Allows designated child care providers to provide orientation, issue eligibility certificates and register children
- Streamlines the process for families



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Overcoming VPK Obstacles



- Statewide contract for TV & radio ads, editorial boards & other media
- Funds allocated to coalitions for local outreach and grassroots initiatives to increase awareness and enrollment
- Direct mail to every child care provider in the state to become VPK provider in March



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Contact Information

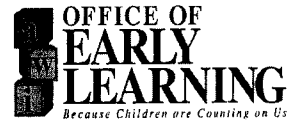


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Charlie Crist
Governor



Monesia T. Brown
Director

VPK

VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

(1) What is Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)?

A constitutional amendment passed by Florida's voters in Nov. 2002 required a voluntary prekindergarten 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.

(2) When does the VPK program begin and who is eligible to deliver the program?

The VPK program began in the 2005-2006 school year. Public, private, and faith-based providers may be eligible to deliver the program depending on whether they meet the minimum standards required in law.

The first summer VPK program was offered in 2006. Children may participate in the summer VPK program the summer immediately before the school year for which the child is eligible for kindergarten.

The school-year program cannot begin before the first day of a county's public school system. The summer program cannot begin before May 1st. However, providers have flexibility in meeting the required number of instructional hours and may have different start and end dates. Contact your Early Learning Coalition to request copies of the VPK Provider Profiles in your county.

(3) Is my child eligible for the VPK program?

A child must be 4 years of age before September 1, and reside in Florida to participate in the VPK program.

(4) How do I enroll my child in Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Program?

You may apply for the VPK program at <http://www.vpkflorida.org>. Parents are encouraged to check the website periodically for updates. Once you complete the application, your local early learning coalition will contact you for further information and to assist you in completing the application process. If you have any questions, you can find the contact information for your local coalition by clicking on the link "Where do I go for VPK information in my area?" and selecting the county in which you live.

(5) What options for VPK will be available for families?

The Legislature created two different options for parents:

- (a) A school-year program consisting of 540 instructional hours; and
- (b) A summer program consisting of 300 instructional hours.

VPK providers have flexibility in structuring the hours per day and days per week to meet the required instructional hours. For example, if a program is 180 days (similar to a school-year calendar), it would offer 3 hours of instruction each day to meet the 540-hour requirement. A provider could also choose to offer a 6 hour-per-day program for 90 days. Providers may consider other options, including offering a morning or afternoon program or having a program for 2 or 3 days a week instead of every day.

(6) Which private providers are eligible to offer 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 (<http://www.ncpsa.org>), the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (<http://www.citaschools.org>), or the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools (<http://www.faans.org>);
- 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.

(7) Which public providers are eligible to offer the VPK program?

To deliver the school-year VPK program, a school district must be approved by the Department of Education as reducing the district's average class sizes and having sufficient educational facilities and capital outlay funds. The Department of Education verifies which school districts have met these requirements. Once approved, each eligible school district shall choose which public schools may offer the program, and those schools are required to register with the local early learning coalition.

Every school district is required by law to deliver the summer VPK program for every eligible child wanting to participate.

(8) When will I be able to select a provider?

You may choose a provider through the early learning coalition. By completing the application form at www.vpkflorida.org, you have submitted your contact information to your local coalition so they may contact you regarding the full application process at the appropriate time.

(9) How many children may each private provider serve in the VPK program?

The VPK program places no limit on the number of children served by each provider. It is each provider's decision of how many children to serve.

(10) Will providers be able to turn away children requesting to enroll in the VPK program?

A private prekindergarten provider may establish and use criteria to determine whether to admit a child for services in the school-year or summer programs. It is recommended that these criteria be objective and apply uniformly for all children. State and federal law prohibits certain discriminatory admissions. These admissions criteria may include, but are not limited to, the objective standards and methods described below. The following standards and methods are examples of objective criteria:

- (a) Random selection (*e.g.*, lottery);
- (b) Geography (*e.g.*, children who reside within a certain school zone or children who reside within a county served by the provider or school);
- (c) First come, first served;
- (d) Previous service (*i.e.*, children previously served by the provider or school); or
- (e) Targeted populations (*e.g.*, children at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation; children whose family income does not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty level; or children who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch meals under the National School Lunch Program).

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

(11) How much does it cost to enroll in a VPK program?

The VPK program is FREE for 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 for programs or care that are not part of the VPK program.

(12) Will the VPK program provide transportation?

No. Florida law specifies that each parent is responsible for the transportation of his or her child to and from the VPK program. Some VPK providers may offer transportation services, and families are encouraged to explore these options before choosing a VPK provider.

(13) Do I have to enroll my eligible child in the VPK program?

No. The VPK program is voluntary and your child does not have to participate.

(14) Is the VPK program only for 4 year olds? If yes, where can I send my 2 year old?

Yes the Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Program is only open to children who turn four-years of age by September 1st and reside in the State of Florida. However, there are other options available to you for a two year old child. In each county there is a Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency that maintains a database of all legally operating early learning providers for that county. A trained CCR&R specialist will be able to provide you with a customized listing of referrals that match the needs of you and your child.

If you have questions that have not been answered in this FAQ sheet, please call our Toll-Free hotline @ 1-866-357-3239 or 850-921-3180. You may also submit your question on the website <http://www.floridajobs.org/VPK/questions.asp> by clicking "send us your thoughts and questions" under "Have a Question?"



Charlie Crist
Governor



Monesia T. Brown
Director

VPK

VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN

Frequently Asked Questions for Providers

(1) What is Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)?

A constitutional amendment passed by Florida's voters in Nov. 2002 required a voluntary prekindergarten 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.

(2) What options for VPK will be available to families?

The Legislature created two different options for parents:

- (a) A school-year program consisting of 540 instructional hours; and
- (b) A summer program consisting of 300 instructional hours.

VPK providers have flexibility in structuring the hours per day and days per week to meet the required instructional hours. For example, if a program is 180 days (similar to a school-year calendar), it would offer 3 hours of instruction each day to meet the 540-hour requirement. A provider could also choose to offer a 6 hour-per-day program for 90 days. Keep in mind, programs must be developmentally appropriate and the state will only pay for instructional hours - activities such as napping do not qualify for funding. Providers may consider other options, including offering a morning or afternoon program or having a program for 2 or 3 days a week instead of every day.

(3) When did the VPK program begin and who is eligible to deliver the program?

The VPK program began in the 2005-2006 school year. Public, private, and faith-based providers may be eligible to deliver the program depending on whether they meet the minimum standards required in law.

The first summer VPK program was offered in 2006. Children may participate in the summer VPK program the summer immediately before the school year for which the child is eligible for kindergarten.

The school-year program cannot begin before the first day of a county's public school system. The summer program cannot begin before May 1st. However, providers have flexibility in meeting the required number of instructional hours and may have different start and end dates.

(4) How do I apply to be a VPK provider?

You may apply to be a VPK provider at <http://www.vpkflorida.org>. Providers are encouraged to check the website periodically for updates. Once you complete the application, your local early learning coalition will contact you for further information and to assist you in completing the application process. If you have any questions, you can find the contact information for your local coalition by clicking on the link "Where do I go for VPK information in my area?" and selecting the county in which you live.

(5) Which private providers are eligible to offer 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 (<http://www.ncpsa.org>), the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (<http://www.citaschools.org>), or the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools (<http://www.faans.org>);
- 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.

(6) Which public providers are eligible to offer the VPK program?

To deliver the school-year VPK program, a school district must be approved by the Department of Education as reducing the district's average class sizes and having sufficient educational facilities and capital outlay funds. The Department of Education verifies which school districts have met these requirements. Once approved, each eligible district shall choose which public schools may offer the program, and those schools are required to register with the local early learning coalition.

Every school district is required by law to deliver the summer VPK program for every eligible child wanting to participate.

(7) 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 prekindergarten director credential (or a child care director credential, if completed before December 31, 2006)
- 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, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer science.
 - A bachelor's or higher degree in elementary education, if the prekindergarten 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

(8) 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, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education or family and consumer science; or
 - A bachelor's or higher degree in elementary education, if the prekindergarten instructor has been certified to teach children any age from birth through 6th grade, regardless of whether the instructor's educator certificate is current.

(9) How many children may each private provider serve in the VPK program?

The VPK program places no limit on the number of children served by each provider. It is each provider's decision of how many children to serve.

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

A private prekindergarten provider may establish and use criteria to determine whether to admit a child for services in the school-year or summer programs. It is recommended that these criteria be objective and apply uniformly for all children. State and federal law prohibits certain discriminatory admissions. These admissions criteria may include, but are not limited to, the objective standards and methods described below

The following standards and methods are examples of objective criteria:

- (a) Random selection (*e.g.*, lottery);
- (b) Geography (*e.g.*, children who reside within a certain school zone or children who reside within a county served by the provider or school);
- (c) First come, first served;
- (d) Previous service (*i.e.*, children previously served by the provider or school); or
- (e) Targeted populations (*e.g.*, children at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation; children whose family income does not exceed 150 percent of the federal poverty level; or children who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch meals under the National School Lunch Program).

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

11) How much funding will be provided per child?

Legislators approved a base student allocation of \$2,560 per child.

(12) Will there be parent fees associated with the VPK program?

The VPK program is FREE for 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 for programs or care that are not part of the VPK program.

(13) 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. Additional details regarding the payment process are being designed and will be available at a later date.

(14) 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.

(15) What credentials must a VPK instructor have?

The prekindergarten instructor for the school-year program must hold, at a minimum, one of the following credentials:

1. A child development associate credential issued by the National Credentialing Program of the Council for professional Recognition (CDA); or
2. A credential approved by the Department of Children and Family Services as being equivalent to or greater than the credential described in subparagraph A. (CDAE) (s. 1002.55(3)(c)1.a., F.S.)

The prekindergarten instructor for the summer program must hold, at a minimum, one of the following credentials (s. 1002.61(4)):

1. Be a certified teacher; or
2. Hold one the following educational credentials:
 1. A bachelor's or higher degree in early childhood education, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer science;
 2. A bachelor's or higher degree in elementary education, if the prekindergarten instructor has been certified to teach children any age from birth through 6th grade, regardless of whether the instructor's educator 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 revoke

The term "certified teacher" means a teacher holding a valid Florida educator certificate under s. 1012.56 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 teachers who have experience or coursework in early childhood education.

(16) Where can I find more information regarding the CDAE program?

You can find more information at the Department of Children and Families website.
<https://training01-dcf.myflorida.gov/dcf/cct/cdaecred.html>

(17) 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:

1. A Florida CDAE (see <https://training01-dcf.myflorida.gov/dcf/cct/staffcred.html> for a list of approved CDAE programs. You may obtain an eligibility certificate from the Department of Children and Families.
2. Formal Education Qualifications

(18) 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 purposes of VPK.

(19) I am a family day care home provider. Can my child attend the VPK program I provide?

The adult to 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 calculating 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.

(20) 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 on <http://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.

If you have questions that have not been answered in this FAQ sheet, please call our Toll-Free hotline @ 1-866-357-3239 or 850-921-3180. You may also submit your question on the website <http://www.floridajobs.org/VPK/questions.asp> by clicking "send us your thoughts and questions" under "Have a Question?"

**Presentation by
Susan Main
Executive Director
Early Learning Coalition of Duval**



Voluntary Pre-K Presentation House of Representatives Committee on K-12

March 6, 2007

Presentation Outline- 100 ideas #5

Materials in your packets:

- Association of Early Learning Coalitions “Power of Positive Practices” Brochure
- Additional Funding to Enhance the Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (VPK) Program paper
- Voluntary Pre-K Presentation “Presentation Outline-100 ideas #5”

Birth to age 5 Data System:

- Early Learning Information System (ELIS) in the planning stages – need comprehensive data system for birth to age 5
- Support Screening and Assessment data included – VPK readiness assessment issue
- Connecting the VPK teachers with the Kindergarten teachers – sharing information
- Coalitions developed supplemental data systems to track program and progress
- Strongly support a State-wide Quality Rating System (QRS) – track provider quality
- Duval example of success of a Quality Rating System Pilot (3rd year) initiative

Possible Solutions:

Pilot a Statewide Quality Rating System (QRS) in several coalitions to obtain data re implementation costs; provider participation; provider reimbursement tied to QRS system to promote participation; provider incentives; assess child outcomes tied to higher quality star ratings.

To ensure VPK effective child outcomes, assess VPK children at the end of the providers VPK program in addition to the first 30 days of Kindergarten. This will track absolute performance of the VPK provider in the setting where the child is familiar instead of waiting until Kindergarten with a new teacher and perhaps 3 months or more without being involved in readiness activities. Share VPK assessment w/Kindergarten Teacher so they will have a snapshot of the individual child and can design instruction based on the aptitude of the child.

VPK Governance

- Purpose of the Association of Early Learning Coalition

- Coalition 5 % Administrative Funding Challenge
- Three State Agencies VPK Administration Responsibilities

Possible Solutions:

To ensure Florida maintains a quality Pre-K program, necessary services must be administered. Providers who utilized State funding must be accountable for those dollars and readiness of children. Allow Coalitions to utilize 10% to 14% for non-direct services similar to what is allowable in the School Readiness Program.

At a minimum, provide 5% administrative funding for ALL children who are determined eligible for VPK regardless of whether or not they enroll with a provider.

Participation Obstacles:

- Root causes for VPK low child participation
- Provider Recruitment challenges
 - Government Program/paperwork issue/parent monthly roster signing*
 - Background screening difficulty*
 - Costs of Quality*
- Growing Parental Demand for VPK Program
 - Face to Face Sign-up*
 - OEL pilot program*
- Outreach and Public Relations
 - Local and State efforts*

Possible Solutions:

Realign current State outreach funding to increase funding for local coalition outreach efforts to ensure local decision making on how best to reach families in their communities.

Change VPK legislation to permit Level 2 Background Screening to be done electronically using technology to receive results in a 24 to 48 hour time frame currently available with background screening companies and school systems.

Align Background Screening requirements with the current Department of Children and Families (DCF) child care licensed programs or change child care licensing screening requirements to be the same as VPK requirements.

If the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) Provider Face-to-Face Pilot is successful, implement the process statewide.

Fund VPK providers with an FTE type funding formula instead of monthly parent verification forms or use the Summer VPK funding allocation method voted on at the end of last year's session for the public school system's summer program.



Additional Funding to Enhance the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program

VPK Funding in the FY 2005-06 General Appropriations Act (GAA):

- In the FY 2005-06 GAA, \$2,500 is the “base student allocation per full-time equivalent (FTE) student” in the VPK program – this amount must be paid directly to child care providers and public schools for direct program services (regardless of whether the VPK program is the 540 instructional hour school-year or the 300 instructional hour summer program).
- Proviso language also indicates that the earmarked line-item Early Learning Coalition allocations “include 5 percent in addition to the base student allocation to fund ‘administrative and other program costs’ of the Early Learning Coalitions relating to the voluntary prekindergarten education program.”

Statutory Caps on “Administrative Expenditures”

- Section 1002.71(7), F.S., allows each early learning coalition to **retain and expend no more than 5 percent of the funds paid by the coalition to private prekindergarten providers and public schools for “administrative expenditures”** associated with the VPK program.
- The School Readiness Act (s. 411.01(9) (d), F.S.) allows each early learning coalition to expend **up to 5 percent of its school readiness allocation for “total administrative expenditures.”** In the School Readiness Program, these administrative expenditures only fund the coalition’s headquarters, board staff, staff travel, and contract management functions. Currently, school readiness allocations are not FTE based.
- School readiness administrative expenditures do not include “nondirect services” or what is commonly referred to as “programmatic costs.” Nondirect services include: eligibility determination, child care resource and referral, health screening, developmental screening, issuing checks to providers, monitoring attendance of children in school readiness programs, monitoring providers to ensure compliance with school readiness program requirements, and technical assistance and training for providers. These nondirect services are funded separately from administrative expenditures and are often contracted out (often to entities commonly known as “central agencies”).

Funding Needed for Nondirect Services Associated with VPK Program:

- Although the VPK program will require fewer nondirect services than the school readiness program, there are activities that still must be performed, including: eligibility determination, child care resource and referral, payment of providers for VPK services, monitoring of child attendance in VPK program, and monitoring of providers for compliance with VPK program requirements.
- VPK administrative expenditures (including coalition staff time) and VPK nondirect services **may not be charged to school readiness funds due to limitations on the use of federal funding streams.** Cost allocating VPK expenditures to these federal funding streams could result in millions of dollars of disallowed costs in a future federal audit and cannot be permitted.

- Recently, the Early Learning Coalitions responded to a survey conducted by AWI's Office of Early Learning to determine what activities are being charged against the additional 5% that was provided in the FY 2005-06 GAA for administrative and other program costs in the VPK program. ELCs indicated that they are covering both administrative and nondirect (program) activities with the funds provided as follows:

Administrative Activities:

- VPK Program Management
- Legal Services (complaint resolution)
- Fiscal and Budget Activities
- Human Resources
- Contract Management
- General Services (rent, utilities, etc.)
- Program Compliance Monitoring
- Report Preparation (financial reports, budget reports, etc.)

NonDirect (Program) Activities:

- Eligibility Determinations
 - ✓ VPK Eligibility Determinations and Child Placement
 - ✓ Completion of Child Enrollment Forms (enrolling, re-enrolling and transferring children)
 - ✓ Establishing and Maintaining Child and Provider Records
 - ✓ Data Analysis and Reporting
 - ✓ Information Technology Infrastructure Development
- Resource and Referral
 - ✓ Developing and Maintaining Provider Profiles
 - ✓ Provider Recruitment
 - ✓ Data Analysis and Reporting
 - ✓ Information Technology Infrastructure Development
- Provider Services
 - ✓ Program Development and Training
 - ✓ Provider Application Review
 - ✓ Processing and Verifying Provider Applications
 - ✓ Verifying Teacher Credentials
 - ✓ Data Analysis and Reporting
 - ✓ Information Technology Infrastructure Development
- Provider Payment
 - ✓ Processing Provider Payments
 - ✓ Reconciling Child's Attendance with Advance Payments
 - ✓ Data Analysis and Reporting
 - ✓ Information Technology Infrastructure Development
- Attendance Monitoring
 - ✓ Verifying Child's Attendance
 - ✓ Reconciling Child's Attendance with Advance Payments
 - ✓ Data Analysis and Reporting
 - ✓ Information Technology Infrastructure Development

Specific types of expenditures associated with all of the activities above include: salaries and benefits; legal fees; IT & HR support services; accounting services (payroll, accounts receivable/payable, auditing, purchasing, travel); rent; utilities; insurance, janitorial and sanitation services; alarm systems; phone and internet services; office supplies; printing and postage.

- During the spring of 2005, Early Learning Coalitions indicated that they would not be able to fund both VPK administrative costs and costs for nondirect services with the 5 percent funding provided above the base student allocation to cover these expenditures. At that time,

the coalitions indicated that certain activities may not be provided at necessary levels for both administration and nondirect (program) services, including:

- Monitoring and Accountability Activities (all activities)
- Provider Recruitment (Resource & Referral)
- Program Development & Training (Provider Services)
- Verifying Teacher Credentials (Provider Services)
- Data Analysis and Reporting (all activities)

In response to the recent survey, ELCs indicated that the following activities are being provided at minimal levels, or not at all in some cases, due to the funding limitations:

Registration

- Need additional enrollment sites and faster, more thorough customer service for both parents and providers for VPK sign-up
- Lack of funding prohibits providing needed documents in various languages to serve Florida's diverse population (Spanish, Haitian-Creole, etc.)

Enhanced Field System (EFS)

- Due to system limitations of EFS, coalitions continue to spend considerable time doing data entry in separate spreadsheets to track VPK activity – such as child absences, staff requirements, VPK provider profiles, etc.

Program Monitoring

- Program monitoring, mentoring, follow-up and administrative work
- Monitoring to verify/determination of providers and removing providers due to non-compliance
- Internal monitoring of contractor operations
- Attendance monitoring
- Complete monitoring or evaluation of program

Professional Development Training

- Training on new performance standards approved by the State Board of Education
- Reproduction of VPK standards for training purposes
- Emergent literacy training in a group format versus on-line training
- Training to providers on screening and assessment tools

Outreach/Recruitment

- Recruiting VPK providers
- Community awareness materials particularly hands-on outreach for at risk population
- Outreach to encourage sign-up for future school year programs
- Parent education

Technical Assistance

- Limited programmatic technical assistance and in-service training for VPK providers
- On-going curriculum assistance


Staffing

- Adequate staffing for coalitions
- Travel, monitoring, training and support to the VPK providers
- Problems associated with management of summer program due to not having administrative funding in place until after enrollments occur
- Provider relation strategy

*All of the funding challenges described above are especially challenging for small rural coalitions.

- **In addition to the current funding challenges in efficiently and effectively administering the VPK program, ELCs anticipate that *additional* activities will be required to assist VPK providers in meeting readiness rates:**
 - On-site technical assistance
 - On-site mentoring to VPK programs needing help implementing the standards
 - Copies of each curriculum and training materials for each VPK provider
 - Stipends for curriculum and support materials for learning how to use curricula
 - Contracted vendors for curriculum training
 - Assessment tools (DIBELS, etc)
 - Approving, monitoring and enforcing corrective action plans
 - Educational materials
 - Developing intense data analysis to ensure tracking & accountability
 - Purchasing learning materials for VPK classrooms to meet educational standards
 - Staff development for providers, coalition and service providers on such things as:
 - Lesson plan development
 - Behavioral management
 - Instructional strategies
 - Using curricula and learning materials
 - Classroom management
 - Developing performance incentive plans for providers to meet readiness rates
 - Training seminars
 - Administrative hearings
 - Parent education
 - Community outreach

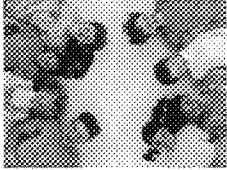
**Presentation by
Debby Russo
Director of Child Care
DCF**



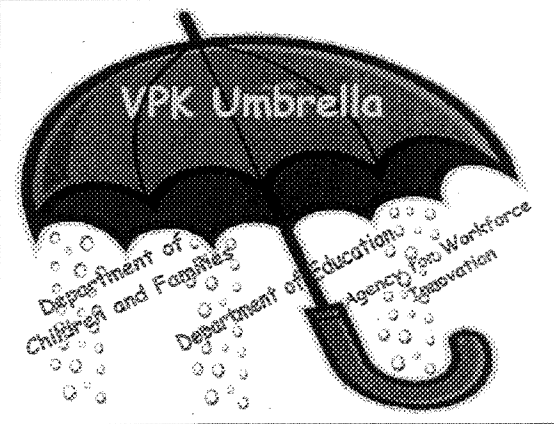
Chris Cich
Director


Robert A.
Schwarz
Secretary

Child Care Licensing Under the VPK Umbrella



Deborah Russo, Director
Child Care Licensing





Chris Cich
Director


Robert A.
Schwarz
Secretary

Child Care Licensing

Regulation or oversight of:

- Child Care facilities
- Large Family Child Care Homes
- Family Day Care Homes
- Registered Family Day Care Homes
- Specialized Facilities for the care of the Mildly-Ill
- Religiously-exempted Programs
- Gold Seal Quality Care Program

Total # of child care arrangements as of 3/1/07 13,858



Child Care Licensing



Christa O'Neil
Director

Robert A.
Bidenwirth
Secretary

Child Care Licensing

Programs and Services:

- Health and Safety compliance
- Database of providers
- Accreditation for religious exemption and gold seal
- Regulatory training for compliance
- Competency exams
- Training transcript
- Credential and renewal process to meet licensing standards
- Public Awareness

Total # of visits to our web site since 7/1/06	658,353
Total # of students served in FY 05-06	144,321
Total # of credentials issued in FY 05-06	10,892

Child Care Licensing



Christa O'Neil
Director

Robert A.
Bidenwirth
Secretary

Child Care Licensing

Collaboration:

- VPK Provider Profile (for AWI - coalitions)
- VPK Emergent Literacy Course (for DOE)
- VPK Director Credential Endorsement (for DOE)
- Birth - 5 and School-age Credential program (with DOE)
- VPK and School Readiness Statistical Reports
- Information dissemination to all providers (for DCF, AWI, DOE, DOH)

Total # of Emergent Literacy courses through 3/1/07	9,330
Total # of active VPK provider profiles	4,061

Child Care Licensing



Christa O'Neil
Director


Robert A.
Bidenwirth
Secretary

Child Care Licensing

Governance:

- Allows each agency to focus on statutory mandates
- Allows each agency to excel at what they do best
- Ability to capitalize on each other's agency resources
- Provides checks and balances by eliminating conflicts of interest, real or perceived

Child Care Licensing




Child Care Licensing

Data Systems:

- Child Care Information System of providers and compliance history
- Host DOE courses
- House VPK provider profiles
- Contains all three agency identifiers for cross referencing
- Produces statistical reports and direct access for Early Learning Coalitions for regulatory training and credential verification, background screening, enrollment
- Real-time data

Child Care Licensing




Child Care Licensing

Barriers to participation:

- Difference in background screening requirements for VPK teacher and all other child care personnel in program
- Difference in immunization requirements for VPK 4-year olds and all other children enrolled
- Multiple paperwork for tracking attendance - school readiness, VPK, USDA food program, licensing, fire Marshall
- Inability to register directly with child care program


Child Care Licensing



Program Contact Information

Web site: www.myflorida.com/childcare

Deborah Russo, Director
 1317 Winewood Blvd
 Building 6 Room 382
 Tallahassee, FL 32309-0700
 Tel: 850-488-4900
 Fax: 850-488-8584



Thank you for the opportunity to share this information.

Child Care Licensing

**Presentation by
Pamela Phelps, Ph.D.
Owner/Operator
The Creative Pre-School,
Tallahassee**

Idea No. 5: Make Florida's Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Program a global model for school readiness.

A. Develop a data system for the program that is comparable to the current data system for our K-12 education system and stimulate careful research on the best ways to measure the program's educational impact.

1. Require the Agency for Workforce Innovation to replace its legacy Enhanced Field System (EFS) with a new data system for early learning programs which has strong interconnectivity with the child care provider and personnel databases maintained by the Department of Children and Family Services and the student databases maintained by the Department of Education.
2. Specify that the new early learning data system must include a longitudinal tracking system that charts the progress of students participating in early learning programs through the third grade (comparable design to the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program or "FETPIP").
3. Require the new data system to include the results of developmental screenings and child assessments administered to a student while participating in early learning programs and establish a process for the transfer of the assessment data to the student's kindergarten teacher to help guide classroom instruction based on the student's individual needs.
4. Establish a system for measuring the educational impact and overall quality of early learning programs offered by child care providers, tracking this information through the new data system, and making the information available for parents.

B. Reevaluate the governance structure to ensure efficiency and accountability.

5. Create a Chancellor of Early Learning within the Executive Office of the Governor, who would be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate. The Chancellor of Early Learning would coordinate the state's child care and early learning programs administered by the Department of Children and Family Services, Department of Education, and Agency for Workforce Innovation.
6. Require the Agency for Workforce Innovation to coordinate the early learning coalitions in aligning their business processes to provide greater efficiency in supporting the coalitions through the new early learning data system.

7. Establish procedures to ensure that early learning coalitions do not expend federal grant funds reserved for school readiness programs to implement the voluntary prekindergarten program.
8. Reevaluate the methodology for funding nondirect services for the voluntary prekindergarten program, including eligibility determinations, onsite monitoring of programs, and parent outreach and support.

C. Remove any participation obstacles for those students in most need of these services

9. Prohibit a private provider from limiting its enrollment for the part-day voluntary prekindergarten program to students whose parents pay for full-day services.
10. Reevaluate the processes used by the early learning coalitions to register students for the voluntary prekindergarten program to increase convenience for parents and increase efficiency, while minimizing the potential for fraud.
11. Review transportation barriers in sparsely populated rural areas and heavily impoverished urban areas.
12. Require the Agency for Workforce Innovation and the early learning coalitions to target advertising and other parent outreach efforts for the voluntary prekindergarten program to communities who predominately speak a language other than English.
13. Consider the need for dual-language instruction in areas with high populations of migrant or other non-English-speaking families.

Idea No. 6: Encourage Trained and Certified Curriculum Leaders in Reading, Math, and Science, and in the New Curricular Standards in Every School.

1. Require each public school to designate a lead teacher in the subject areas of reading, mathematics, and science. The lead teacher would attend periodic training provided by the Department of Education on the latest research, advancements in curricula, and skills necessary to prepare students to compete in the global economy. The lead teacher would be responsible for training and mentoring teachers at the school in the subject area.
2. Require each school district to appoint master trainers, who would be specialists in the subject area and in techniques for using information technology to teach the subject area. The master trainers would provide the school district's training for the lead teachers and would provide onsite training for schools needing additional assistance, with an emphasis on "D" and "F" schools.
3. Establish a three-day summer academy for district master trainers to receive professional development, by subject area, provided by the Department of Education on the latest research, advancements in curricula, and skills necessary to prepare students to compete in the global economy.

Idea No. 9: Encourage the Establishment of Certified Ninth Grade Success Centers as ‘School Within a School.’

The concept of a Ninth Grade Success Center is to organize a school-within-a-school for ninth grade students to ease the transition from middle school to high school and reduce dropout rates caused by the difficulty of transition. A center may be organized to have small teams of interdisciplinary teachers (e.g., 4 to 5 teachers) who share the same group of students (e.g., 150 to 180 students) and a block schedule with common planning time. A center may have a separate administrative team and may even share part of a school’s facility set aside for the center.

A. Establish Ninth Grade Success Centers

1. Revise provisions of law authorizing the establishment of a school-within-a-school to expressly authorize the creation of a Ninth Grade Success Center in a public high school.
2. Allow public high schools and school districts flexibility to organize their Ninth Grade Success Centers.
3. Require Ninth Grade Success Centers to provide students with extensive self-awareness opportunities concerning career goals and interests and detailed information on high school choices, opportunities to attend a technical college, and other college alternatives.
4. Provide students with articulated opportunities to attend a technical college through dual enrollment or after graduation.
5. Require Ninth Grade Success Centers to closely monitor student attendance and behavior and provide early intervention and support for students at risk of dropping out.
6. Direct the Department of Education to establish criteria for the establishment of Ninth Grade Success Centers.

B. Encourage Ninth Grade Success Centers

7. Direct the Department of Education to promote the establishment of Ninth Grade Success Centers, to design model programs and adopt minimum standards for Ninth Grade Success Centers, and to provide training and technical assistance for school districts and public high schools establishing Ninth Grade Success Centers.
8. Establish a grant program administered by the Department of Education to fund startup costs for Ninth Grade Success Centers.
9. Allow a Ninth Grade Success Center, as a school-within-a-school, to receive an award under the Florida School Recognition Program even if the school does not otherwise qualify for an award, if the student achievement scores of students in the Ninth Grade Success Center would qualify for an award if the center was a stand-alone school.

Idea No. 19: Create Statewide Competency Tests Based on New Curricular Standards for Both New and Veteran Teachers at Each Grade Level and Subject Area.

1. Require the Department of Education, through the school districts, to provide training on the revised standards for all teachers for the grade level and subject area taught. Training should include face-to-face and online training opportunities. Require the school districts to certify that all teachers are trained.
2. Require teacher professional development programs to align their training curriculum to the revised standards and to provide face-to-face classroom and online training opportunities for teachers. Professional development programs must be coordinated through one or more of the following organizations:
 - Florida Department of Education;
 - Regional consortium service organizations (Panhandle Area Educational Consortium, North East Florida Educational Consortium, or Heartland Educational Consortium); or
 - Schultz Center for Teaching and Leadership.
3. Require the Department of Education to timely align the Florida Teacher Certification Examinations (FTCE) to the new Sunshine State Standards, as they are revised.
4. As the Sunshine State Standards or successor standards are revised, by grade level and subject, and after the district certifies that all affected teachers have been trained within the time parameters established by the department, teachers are to be given competency tests in their subject areas.
5. The Department of Education, by rule, shall develop training certification requirements and non-redundant testing timetables and protocols that prevent a teacher from teaching in a subject area that he or she has failed the competency test, which shall include the following:
 - A teacher shall be tested in each subject area he or she teaches before his or her professional certificate is renewed, as well as prior to adding subject area coverage to a professional certificate.
 - A teacher is not required to retake a FTCE subject area examination if the teacher passed the competency examination, and the standards did not substantially change, within the previous 12 months.
 - A probationary teacher who fails to pass a subject area test may not be rehired for the next school year, and should be terminated, if a more qualified teacher is available. If, however, a probationary teacher can be moved to a subject area where he or she has passed the subject area examination, and the school determines that the probationary teacher is otherwise an asset to the school's teaching team, the probationary teacher may be reassigned.

Idea 22: Protect our teachers by insulating them from liability

1. Require all school districts to publish and provide its teachers with a simple statement about the liability insurance coverage that the district provides.
 - This statement must be written in lay language, short and to the point, easily read, and provided to teachers separate from any other information they may receive from the district.
 - This statement must include a reference to and discussion of the existing law that protects teachers and principals from liability, that is section 1012.75 (1), Florida Statutes.¹

2. Require all school districts to provide and discuss this insurance coverage statement during annual orientations provided by the school districts.

¹ “Except in the case of excessive force or cruel and unusual punishment, a teacher or other member of the instructional staff, a principal or the principal’s designated representative, or a bus driver shall not be civilly or criminally liable for any action carried out in conformity with State Board of Education and district school board rules regarding the control, discipline, suspension, and expulsion of students, including but not limited to, any exercise of authority under s. 1003.32 [Authority of teacher; responsibility for control of students; district school board and principal duties] or s. 1006.09 [Duties of school principal relating to student discipline and school safety].”