



The logo for the Early Learning Coalition of Duval, featuring a blue silhouette of a person reading a book, with the text "Early Learning Coalition of Duval" to its right.	<h2>VPK PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS</h2>
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Provider Types

All VPK providers must be one of the following:

- Licensed child care facility
- Licensed family day care home,
- Licensed large family child care home,
- Nonpublic school or faith-based provider that is exempt from licensure,
- Public school districts

Each provider must also meet one of the following qualifications:

- Be **accredited** by a VPK approved accrediting association (Attachment 2);
OR
- Be a licensed child care provider.

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

Each school district is required by law to deliver the summer VPK program.

Director Credential

Consistent with the requirements of section 1002.55(3)(f), F.S., a private prekindergarten program delivering the VPK program must have a director who has a VPK Director Endorsement, issued by DCF, that meets the requirements of Rule 6A.6.040(2), FAC.

Exempt: Successful completion of the Director Credential prior to December 31, 2006, satisfies this requirement, although individuals are strongly encouraged to acquire the VPK Endorsement.

Endorsement: Effective November 1, 2017, to receive a VPK Director Endorsement Credential, applicants must complete the following, in addition to the Florida Director Credential:

- **Implementing the Standards in Preschool Classrooms-3 Year Old to Kindergarten** (online or instructor-led)
- **Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors** (online)
- **VPK Director Credential** (online)
- **Mathematical Thinking for Early Learners** (online)
- **Language and Vocabulary in the VPK Classroom** (online)

Background Screening

A Level 2 background screening, as well as a signed and dated Affidavit or Attestation of Good Moral Character, must be completed by each staff member before employment. In addition, he/she must be re-screened at least once every five (5) years. The Early Learning Coalition of Duval offers Live Scan electronic fingerprinting to Duval County VPK providers. Appointments are required; please contact the Live Scan Specialist at 208-2040 ext. 250.

Non-Instructional Days

Non-instructional days during your VPK year are days you do not offer VPK instruction (holidays, teacher planning days, etc). **You do not receive VPK funding for non-instructional days**, even though your center may remain open. For example, a private child care program could decide to follow the Public School schedule and thus their VPK program takes a Spring Break but the center itself is not closed that week. In this case, providers may charge parents the cost for that care, *but they **must** inform parents ahead of time what the VPK schedule will be so parents can make alternate arrangements for non-instructional days if they choose not to attend on those days.* If a provider serves children who receive a child care subsidy, they will be paid the full day regular rate for children on non-instructional days.

Instructional Hours

In order to count as instructional hours, mealtime and outdoor play time must provide activities that nurture and enhance children’s development. Children can attend chapel during VPK hours. Nap time CANNOT be counted as instructional time. Providers have flexibility in how they structure their instructional hours as long as they meet the required number of instructional hours during their calendar year. **This schedule should not change except under extreme circumstances and prior approval from the Coalition.**

- School Year Program
 - Providers must offer 540 instructional hours. School-year programs cannot begin before the school district’s first day and must end by June 30.
 - If providers offer a three-hour VPK day, they may choose to follow the Duval County Public School calendar - (Attachment 5).
- Summer Program
 - Providers must offer 300 instructional hours for Summer VPK. Summer programs cannot begin before May 1 and must end before the start of the school district’s first day of school for the new year.

Ratio

Each VPK class must have in attendance at least four (4) children with eligible VPK certificates in order to begin instruction for funding. Providers may organize their VPK classes to combine VPK and non-VPK children as a blended class, but cannot exceed the maximum class size, the teacher to child ratio, or the licensed room capacity.

- School Year Program
 - 4 - 11 children requires 1 credentialed instructor
 - 12-20 children requires 1 credentialed instructor plus an assistant
- Summer Program
 - 4 - 12 children requires 1 credentialed instructor

Staff Qualifications

- School Year Program
 - Each VPK classroom must have at least one instructor who holds at a minimum:
 - A Child Development Associate (NECC) issued by the National Credentialing Program; along with **Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors** and **Implementing the Standards in Preschool Classrooms-3 Year Old to Kindergarten**
 - A credential approved by the Department of Children and Families as being equivalent to or greater than the national credential (FCCP); along with **Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors** and **Implementing the Standards in Preschool Classrooms-3 Year Old to Kindergarten**
 - Bachelor's Degree or higher in early childhood education, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer sciences (formerly known as home economics);
 - Bachelor's Degree or higher in elementary education, with certification to teach any age birth through 6th grade. The certification does not need to be current, but cannot have been suspended or revoked;
 - An Associate's Degree or higher in child development;
 - An Associate's Degree or higher in an unrelated field, with at least six (6) hours in early childhood education or child development and at least 480 hours of experience teaching or providing care for children 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.
- Summer Program
 - Each VPK classroom must have an instructor who holds:
 - A valid Florida Educator's Certificate (in any field); OR
 - Bachelor's Degree or higher in early childhood education, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer sciences (formerly known as home economics); OR

- Bachelor's Degree or higher in elementary education, with certification to teach any age birth through 6th grade. The certification does not need to be current, but cannot have been suspended or revoked.

Implementing the Standards in Preschool Classrooms-3 Year Old to Kindergarten

Implementing the Standards in Preschool Classrooms-3 Year Old to Kindergarten describes age-appropriate understandings related to the ways four-year-olds think, recreate, reason, and create as they engage in the learning process. Training has been developed to ensure all VPK teachers effectively design and implement suitable early learning environments. The participants will be introduced to the standards, which are guidelines that describe what children should know and be able to do at the end of their VPK experience.

To register for the **Implementing the Standards in Preschool Classrooms-3 Year Old to Kindergarten**, log on to the DCF Website: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/childcare/training.shtml>, click on Course Registration on the left hand side.

Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors

VPK lead instructors with either a National CDA (NECC) or state approved CDA (FCCP) are required to complete the five hour online DOE-approved course **Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors**. This course is available on line at the DCF website at: (<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/childcare/training.shtml>).

Additional professional development opportunities can be found at the Northeast Florida Master Training Calendar <http://www.nefltraining.org/>.

Credential Renewal

Individuals with a National CDA (NECC) or Birth through Five credential (FCCP) must complete the renewal process at least every five (5) years to maintain an active credential. For more information, please contact:

Child Care Training Information Center (CCTIC)
2807 Remington Green Circle, Tallahassee, FL 32308
1-888-352-2842

Curriculum Requirements

Curriculum must be 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 for kindergarten based on the statewide kindergarten screening. Providers may select or design their VPK curriculum unless they fail to meet kindergarten readiness rate (at that time, they must meet additional requirements).

Maintenance of Records

VPK child records are confidential and must be kept by the provider for at least five (5) years after the child's last day of attendance. Records include Certificate of Eligibility, Parent Attendance Verification Forms (Attachments 14 & 15), and signed VPK Attendance Policy (sample-Attachment 4). The parent of a VPK child has the right to inspect and review the individual records of his or her child and to obtain copies of the records; original documents must remain in the child's file.

Records of the VPK director and instructors must be kept for at least five (5) years after the employee's last day of employment.

Compliance Verification

The Early Learning Coalition of Duval (ELC) has an ongoing duty to verify a VPK provider's compliance with Florida Statutes, state policies, and ELC procedures. The provider must allow the Coalition to enter the VPK site at any reasonable time for the purpose of monitoring. The provider must also allow the Coalition to inspect and copy the records maintained by the provider concerning the VPK program, VPK instructors, VPK director, and VPK children. Please see the VPK Provider Self-Monitoring Checklist for more details on what items will be reviewed. The provider's non-compliance with any terms of the VPK Provider Agreement may result in the Coalition withholding funds and/or the termination of the VPK contract. The provider must submit for approval a corrective action plan before returning to the VPK program. The Coalition will notify the provider in writing of any contract/financial penalties.



PROVIDER APPLICATION PROCESS

2018-2019 VPK applications must be completed on the OEL Provider Portal:
<https://providers.elcduval.org/>.

Each private provider or public school interested in delivering the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK) must complete the following:

- Provider Profile for current year, along with supporting documents
- VPK Contract: OEL-VPK 20
- VPK-APP: VPK 10,11A,11B, along with supporting documents

Supporting Documentation

Provider Profile:

- A copy of DCF License or documentation of other VPK approved accreditation (Attachment 2) along with Letter of Exemption
- IRS Form W-9 (Attachment 11)
- General Liability Insurance
- Sunbiz Documentation (if applicable)

VPK-APP:

- VPK Attendance Policy
- Documentation of Director's Credentials, DCF clearance letter, Good Moral Character
- Documentation of staff credentials, DCF clearance letter, Good Moral Character

ELC will notify the provider if any additional information is needed.

Application Changes

Providers must notify ELC of any application changes. Changes include:

- Director changes
- Owner changes/Name changes/Address changes
- Contact information changes (i.e. phone numbers, e-mail)
- Change of license (Probationary, Provisional, or other)
- Facility closure
- VPK instructor changes (lead teacher or assistant)
- Class curriculum changes
- VPK schedules or program hour changes (under extreme circumstances only)

The VPK Staff Change Form (Attachment 10) must be submitted to the Coalition via main Provider Services fax (483-3089) or to the fax of your Provider Services Representative.



ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Enrollment

VPK law allows a parent/legal guardian to enroll their child with any private prekindergarten provider or public school that is eligible to deliver the VPK program. Each VPK provider must comply with antidiscrimination requirements and may not discriminate against parents and/or children on the grounds of race, color or national origin.

Florida law specifies that a VPK provider **may not** require a parent to enroll their child in or require the payment of any fee or charge for 'supplemental services' (example: extended day, wrap around or full-day services) as a condition of admitting a child for enrollment in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program.

The Early Learning Coalition issues a Certificate of Eligibility to parents upon completion of the registration process.

Provider Attendance Policy

VPK Providers must provide parents/legal guardians with a copy of their written attendance policy upon enrollment of each child into the VPK program. Parents must sign signifying they agree to the provider's attendance policy. Signed documentation must be kept in the child's file for monitoring purposes. (See attendance policy-sample - Attachment 3)

A provider's **attendance policy** is not the same as the State's **VPK Funding Policy**. Providers have the right to determine how many absences/tardies are allowable. Children who complete 70% (including paid absences) of a VPK program will be included in that program's readiness rate.

Enrollment Procedures

1. Parent must submit the Certificate of Eligibility to provider to ensure funding.
2. Provider enters the child information to Roster on the OEL portal.
3. If a child leaves the VPK program, either by parent choice or provider choice, the provider must terminate the child's enrollment on the OEL Portal.

Delayed Enrollment

A provider may enroll a child in a VPK classroom after the class has begun, if at least 10% of the instructional hours remain (54 hours for a school year program or 30 hours for a summer program). The parent/guardian must complete and sign the "Informed Parent Consent" form.

Transfer Procedure

A child may transfer only ONE TIME-**if they have completed less than 70% of the VPK program hours**- regardless of circumstances. Providers may accept children with approved transfers; however, the parent must submit the new Certificate of Eligibility prior to enrollment. Providers will not receive payment without a newly issued certificate. ***As a reminder, a provider should not return the Certificate of Eligibility to a parent if their child disenrolls. The provider is required to maintain the certificate in the child's file for five years.***

Program Fees

VPK provider **may not** require a parent/legal guardian to pay fees or charges for any part of the VPK program, including, but not limited to registration fees. However, a provider may **request** that a parent voluntarily purchase or bring in personal items such as: instructional materials or supplies, lunch, snacks, or hygiene products (e.g. tissues, soap).

Late Fees

A provider must notify the parent/legal guardian in writing of scheduled pick-up periods for the VPK program and the fees or charges for late pick up. This notification must be reviewed and signed by the parent/guardian. If a parent fails to pick up his/her child from the VPK program by the designated time, the provider may require payment of late pick-up charge.



PAYMENT INFORMATION

Funding

Funding for the VPK program is adjusted annually. For the 2018-2019 VPK school year, the Base Student Allocation (BSA) for Duval County is \$2462.40 per child. Please contact the Early Learning Coalition for the funding amount for the current year. Payment for services is received monthly and can be:

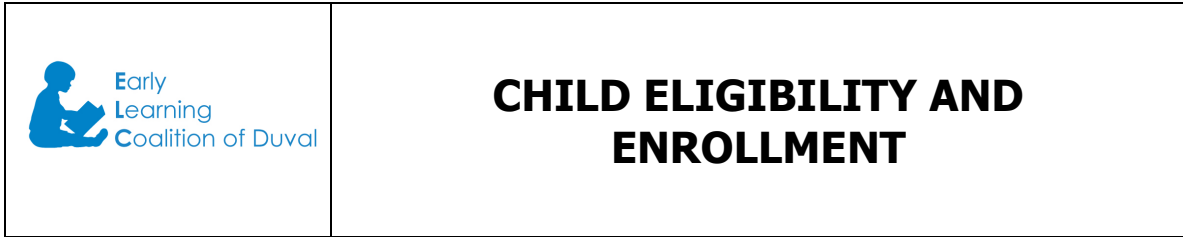
1. paid in advance based on projected enrollment, and adjusted monthly to reflect current enrollment, or
2. paid post monthly, based on child enrollment.

****Providers who wish to receive advance payment must click the "YES" button at question 3.1 on the General Tab of the Provider Profile. This must be completed prior to ELC initiating the VPK Contract.**

Child Attendance

Providers must document the daily attendance of each child enrolled in the VPK program. Each month, the provider must have the parent/legal guardian verify their child's attendance in the VPK program on a Parent Attendance Verification form (short or long form (Attachments 8 and 9))--**full signatures are required**. Proper use of the long or short forms, along with verification of the child's attendance, will be monitored by an ELC attendance monitor. If a provider dismisses a child from the VPK program, the provider is responsible for submitting the reason for removal when the complete the termination online.

Each month, VPK providers will record children's VPK attendance on the Attendance Sheet. Once the attendance has been completed for the month and document signed, provider must "save" and "Close Attendance Sheet". Completed Attendance Sheet is due by **the third business day of the month** in order to receive payment.



Child Eligibility

A child must be 4 years old on or before September 1st of the school year to be eligible to participate in the VPK program.

To be eligible to participate in the VPK program, a child must be:

- 4 years old on or before September 1st of the school year –OR–
- If the child’s birthdate is from February 2 through September 1, the parent can choose to have the child wait until the following year when their child is 5

Parent Enrollment Process

Parents /legal guardians must register their child using the VPK Parent Portal at www.VPKDuval.org to complete a VPK Child Application.

In order to register, parents/guardians must scan and upload **proof of residency** and **proof of child’s age**.

A parent may verify their child’s age by providing any one of the following:

- Birth Certificate
- Immunization record indicating date of birth, signed by physician
- Passport
- Valid Military Dependent Identification card

A parent may verify residency (MUST be current address) by providing any one of the following:

- Florida Driver’s License
- Utility Bill
- Pay Stub
- Lease agreement

Parents/legal guardians will complete the child application online and their proof of residency and child’s proof of age must be scanned and uploaded. ELC will determine child eligibility within 10 days. Once approved, the parent will receive an email notification that the Certificate of Eligibility is available to print. The parent will then take the Certificate of Eligibility to the provider of their choice. Parents will be warned that it is fraudulent to submit more than one certificate. If they print and submit multiple copies to multiple providers, their VPK eligibility may be in jeopardy.

Transfers

Parents should make an informed decision when choosing a VPK program. Continuity throughout the program year is important to a child, but there may be times when a parent may wish to transfer to another child care center. A child is allowed only ONE VPK TRANSFER and parents must contact ELC to receive a transfer certificate.



PROVIDER RESOURCES

Early Learning Coalition of Duval: 208-2040

www.elcduval.org

Bright Beginnings Website

www.brightbeginningsfl.org

VPK Teacher Toolkits

www.flvpkonline.org/teachertoolkit

Department of Children and Families: 723-2064

www.myflorida.com/childcare/training

Jacksonville Children's Commission: 630-3647

www.jaxkids.org

Child Find: 348-7784

www.fdlrscrown.org/childfind.asp

Hope Haven: 346-5100

www.hope-haven.org

Nemours Bright Start: 697-3118

<http://www.nemours.org/service/health/brightstart.html>

Duval County Public Schools: 390-2123

www.duvalschools.org

Florida Office of Early Learning: (850) 245-0445

<http://www.floridaearlyLearning.com>