



Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program

Overview

Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program or VPK is a free educational program that prepares 4-year-olds for success in kindergarten and beyond. Children must live in Florida and be 4 years old on or before September 1 of the current year to be eligible.

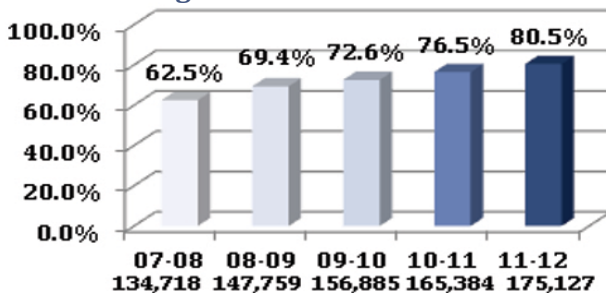
The program helps children build a strong foundation using educational materials that fit their developmental needs.

Choices

Private childcare centers, public schools and specialized instructional service providers may offer VPK. Parents can choose from one of the following programs:

- School-year program—540 instructional hours. Class sizes of 20 or fewer students. Instructors must hold a Birth through Five Florida Child Care Professional Credential.
- Summer program—300 instructional hours. Class sizes of 12 or fewer students. Instructors must hold a bachelor's degree.
- Specialized Instructional Services program—Hours vary by instructional services provided. For children with disabilities who have current individual educational plans developed by local school districts.

Percentage of 4-Year-Olds in VPK



Providers

VPK providers who offer school-year or summer programs must meet the program's quality standards.

- Employ qualified instructors.
- Use age-appropriate curricula, emphasizing early literacy skills.
- Maintain required class sizes.
- Private VPK providers who offer school-year or summer programs must also
- Have a director with a Florida Department of Children and Families Director Credential with a VPK Director Endorsement.
- Hold a valid childcare license or be recognized by an approved childcare accrediting agency.

Provider Readiness Rate

All school-year and summer VPK providers get [Kindergarten Readiness Rates](#) that show how well their programs have prepared students for kindergarten using results of the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS).

- FLKRS is based on the *2011 Florida Early Learning and VPK Standards for Four-Year-Olds* that describe what four-year-old children should know and be able to do by the end of the VPK program.
- Early learning coalitions provide parents with local VPK Provider Profiles that show provider readiness rates and licensing reports.
- Parents may use this information to choose a VPK provider that best suits their family.

Parent Resources

- [Early Learning Coalitions Map](#)
- [More about VPK Specialized Instructional Services](#)



Florida School Readiness Program

Overview

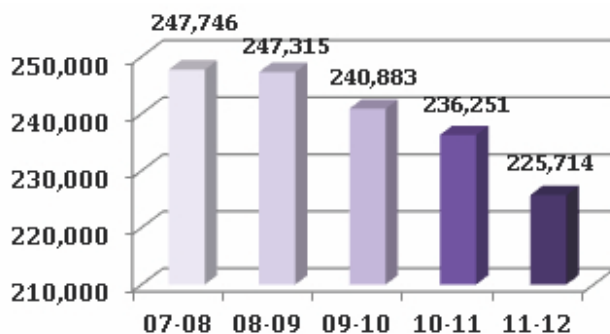
The Florida School Readiness Program offers financial assistance to low-income families for early education and care so they can become financially self-sufficient and their young children can be successful in school in the future.

Investing one dollar in an early education program for children from low-income families generates from \$4 to \$11 of economic benefits over a child's lifetime according to a cost-benefit analysis by the National Institutes of Health.

Benefits

- Prepares young children to start kindergarten ready to learn.
- Helps working families afford quality early learning services.
- Keeps parents in the workforce and/or participating in educational activities.
- Helps families become financially independent.
- Recognizes parents as their child's first teacher.
- Provides parents information about child development and family well-being.

Children in School Readiness



Decline reflects decreases in federal and state funding.

Families

A family with two young children earning \$19,891 a year will spend about 50 percent of their income on child care without school readiness help. With help, the family would only spend about seven percent on child care.

School readiness funds are intended to help income-eligible families with children at risk of future school failure and may include

- Recipients of temporary cash assistance who meet federal work requirements.
- Families with children at risk of abuse, neglect or abandonment.
- Parents who are verified to be homeless.
- Parents who are victims of domestic violence.
- Working families with low incomes.
- Teenage parents.
- Low-income migrant families and farm workers.
- Families of children with disabilities and special healthcare needs.

Eligibility

The School Readiness Program has three specific eligibility requirements:

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) must be working or participating in an educational activity such as attending college or trade school at least 20 hours per week.
- Gross income must be at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level for family size.
- Families must pay a copayment for child care based on income and family size.

Parent Resources

Contact your [early learning coalition](#) to find out more.