



Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Assessment



Frequently Asked Questions

Background

1. What was the 2009-10 VPK Assessment field test?

The 2009-10 VPK Assessment field test was a structured opportunity for researchers to conduct a “trial run” of the assessment measures they developed, by allowing participants to use the assessment materials under the conditions which they were designed to operate. The purpose of the field test was to determine the viability of the materials and to collect data to establish a sample that represented the state. In this case, the VPK assessment measures were administered by selected providers throughout Florida to gather and incorporate information about the materials into the development of the final product.

2. How were the participants chosen for the VPK Assessment field test?

A total of 451 VPK providers were identified through a random sampling process that pulled from the entire population of VPK providers throughout the state. These 451 VPK providers were invited to participate in the field test; however, the initial response rate was lower than anticipated. As a result, additional VPK providers (public and private) were invited, by geographic region, to participate in the field test.

3. How many public and private providers participated in the field test?

Approximately 102 public providers and 72 private providers participated in the VPK Assessment field test. These public and private providers included approximately 180 teachers and 1200 students.

4. How was the content of the VPK Assessment determined?

The content for the three early literacy measures was determined by identifying the best predictors of reading success. These measures are;

- Print Knowledge
- Phonological Awareness
- Oral Language/Vocabulary (For information on the 2008 National Early Literacy Panel (NELP) Report findings visit the following link:
<http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-5325/dps-2009-029.pdf>.)

The content for the early mathematics measure was also determined by identifying the strongest predictors of later mathematics: Number Sense. Number sense is one of the best known informal predictors of formal math ability. Research indicates that all four skill areas being assessed can benefit from targeted instruction during the preschool year.

5. Are the assessment measures aligned with the Standards for Four-Year-Olds?

Yes, the skill areas and the methods used for assessment align to the standards and benchmarks. The standards indicate what a child should know and be able to do at the end of their VPK year.

The measures are also aligned with the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) which is comprised of a subset the Early Childhood Observation System™ (ECHOS™) and the first measure of the Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading – Kindergarten (FAIR-K).

6. Will the VPK Assessment results be used for VPK accountability?

No, there is no provision in law to use the results of this assessment in the VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate calculation. The assessment measures provide feedback to teachers about children's progress in mastering these four specific skill sets (e.g., Print Knowledge, Phonological Awareness, Mathematics, and Oral Language/Vocabulary).

7. Will the VPK Assessment replace other assessments that we might be using?

This decision needs to be made locally and should be based on other assessments administered and the purposes of each of those assessments. Some early child care settings may require assessments specific to projects and initiatives separate from the VPK Assessment (e.g., Head Start, School Readiness, and Early Reading First).

Requirement

8. Do I have to use the VPK Assessment with the children in my center/school?

Yes. All private and public VPK providers are required by statute to use the Florida VPK Assessment as a pre- and post-assessment. It is the expectation of the legislature that each child in Florida attending a VPK program will be assessed using the VPK Assessment instrument.

9. Is a parental consent form required before children are administered the VPK Assessment?

Although the department does not provide a parental consent form with the VPK Assessment, it is best practice to notify parents prior to administering assessments to their children. It is the responsibility of the teacher/school giving the assessment to notify parents and/or require parental consent prior administering the VPK Assessment. A parent notification letter regarding the VPK Assessment is provided in the VPK Assessment Teacher's Manual.

10. Who should administer the assessment measures?

The assessment measures were designed to be administered by the VPK instructor.

11. How often am I required to administer the VPK Assessment?

All private and public VPK providers are required to administer the VPK Assessment to each child in the VPK program as a pre- and post-assessment during Assessment Period 1 and Assessment Period 3.

12. What are the dates for the Assessment Periods?

For VPK providers operating a 540 hour school-year program (e.g., August-April/May), the Assessment Period windows for the administration of the VPK Assessment are as follows: **(*required)**

- **Assessment Period 1 – the month of September***
- Assessment Period 2 – the month of January
- **Assessment Period 3 – the month of April/May (end of program year)***

We recommend administering the VPK Assessment items for AP1 and AP3 in semester/summer programs. It has not been our practice to assign dates for the semester/summer administration of the VPK Assessment, but AP1 is usually given at the beginning and AP3 is usually given at the end of the program.

Description of the Florida VPK Assessment

13. How long does it take to administer the VPK Assessment?

It takes approximately 12-15 minutes to administer the four VPK Assessment measures (e.g., Print Knowledge, Phonological Awareness, Mathematics, Oral Language/ Vocabulary) to each child.

14. Is there a prescribed order in which the assessment measures must be administered?

The VPK Assessment measures were developed by the Florida Center for Reading Research under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Chris Lonigan. It is suggested that teachers administer the assessment measures to each child in the following order;

- Print Knowledge
- Phonological Awareness
- Mathematics
- Oral Language/Vocabulary

This order was determined by the Florida Center for Reading Research based on insight that print knowledge is often an easier task for younger children to master.

15. Do the assessment measures become more challenging across the year?

No. The assessment measures are designed to be equal in terms of the skill level assessed; this is called “parallel or equal forms.” The outcomes will show the impact of effective instruction through child progress over time.

16. Can teachers decide if it is “reasonable” to administer the VPK Assessment to children with disabilities and children who are English Language Learners?

Yes. See the VPK Assessment Teacher’s Manual for the list of acceptable accommodations allowed for each assessment measure. When deciding whether not to assess a child with a disability or a child who is an English language learner, teachers should ask themselves the question, “Is it reasonable to administer these measures to this child?”

The Florida VPK Assessment Kit

17. What is in the Florida VPK Assessment Kit?

The **complete Florida VPK Assessment Kit** (AP 1, 2, and 3) – **Second Edition** consists of the following;

- VPK Assessment Teacher’s Manual – **Fourth Edition**
- VPK Assessment – Assessment Booklet (AP 1, 2, and 3) – **Second Edition**
- VPK Assessment - AP1 Response Booklets (20) – **Second Edition**
- VPK Assessment - AP2 Response Booklets (20) – **Second Edition**
- VPK Assessment - AP3 Response Booklets (20) – **Second Edition**
- VPK Assessment Administration DVD – **April 2013**
- Accurate Sound Productions for Teachers to Model DVD
- VPK Assessment Online Reporting System flyer

18. Who received the complete Florida VPK Assessment Kit?

All providers who were approved to provide the VPK Education Program for the 2012-13 program year and all new providers for the 2013-14 should have received one **Florida VPK Assessment Kit** (AP 1, 2 and 3) – **Second Edition** for each of their VPK classrooms.

19. What is in the Florida VPK Assessment Kit - 2013-14 Replacement Materials?

The **Florida VPK Assessment Kit - 2013-14 Replacement Materials** consists of the following;

- VPK Assessment Teacher’s Manual – **Fourth Edition**
- VPK Assessment - AP1 Response Booklets (20) – **Second Edition**
- VPK Assessment - AP2 Response Booklets (20) – **Second Edition**
- VPK Assessment - AP3 Response Booklets (20) – **Second Edition**
- VPK Assessment Administration DVD – **April 2013**
- Letter regarding the **Florida VPK Assessment Kit - 2013-14 Replacement Materials**

20. Who received the Florida VPK Assessment Kit - 2013-14 Replacement Materials?

The department provided the **Florida VPK Assessment Kit - 2013-14 Replacement Materials** to VPK providers who already have a complete VPK Assessment Kits to ensure these providers are equipped with the tools necessary to administer the Florida VPK Assessment, as a pre-and post-assessment for Assessment Periods one and three (AP1 and AP3).

21. I offered the VPK program last year, but I haven’t received my VPK Assessment materials for this school year. What should I do?

If VPK providers (who offered VPK last year) have not received their assessment materials or need additional copies of the **Florida VPK Assessment Kit - 2013-14 Replacement Materials** or the complete **Florida VPK Assessment Kit** (AP 1, 2, and 3) – **Second Edition** for new VPK classrooms, they should go to

<https://www.brightbeginningsfl.org/RequestAssistance/RequestAssistance.aspx>

Enter the required information and include the following in the Description section:

- Total number of VPK classrooms (not children)
- Total number of **2013-14 Replacement Materials** needed (for the VPK classrooms that received a complete assessment kit last year) or
- Total number of complete **Florida VPK Assessment Kits** needed (for any new VPK classrooms)

For more information regarding the status of your VPK Assessment Kit(s) shipment, **contact Drummond Press at 904-354-2818.**

22. This is my first year offering the VPK program and I haven't received my VPK Assessment kit (s). What should I do?

If new VPK providers have not received a complete **Florida VPK Assessment Kit** (AP 1, 2, and 3) – **Second** Edition for each VPK classroom, they should go to <https://www.brightbeginningsfl.org/RequestAssistance/RequestAssistance.aspx>

Enter the required information and include the following in the Description section:

- Total number of VPK classrooms (not children)
- Total number of complete **Florida VPK Assessment Kits** needed (for each VPK classroom)

For more information regarding the status of your VPK Assessment Kit(s) shipment, **contact Drummond Press at 904-354-2818.**

23. My teachers already have a VPK Assessment kit from last year. Should they continue using the kits we have or the new kit we will receive in the mail?

Only the Florida VPK Assessment – Assessment Booklet (AP 1, 2 and 3) – Second Edition and the VPK Assessment – AP1, AP2 and AP3 Response Booklets (20 each package) – Second Edition should be used to administer the assessment to children.

All other versions of the VPK Assessment Booklet and response booklets should be properly discarded (shredded).

24. Can teachers make copies of the Response Booklets?

Response Booklets may only be copied for the purpose of assessment.

25. How long should providers retain the Response Booklets completed for each child after the program year is complete?

If providers wish to use VPK Assessment data for a Good Cause Exemption, then they must have at least **three years** of data to show learning gains or growth.

26. Are VPK providers allowed to add or delete words in the parent letter provided in the VPK Assessment Teacher's Manual?

No. The DOE-Approved parent letter announcing the use of the VPK Assessment should not be edited by VPK providers. If VPK providers choose to create their own letter to parents, then it should be clear that the department in no way endorses the provider's letter and assumes no responsibility for the content thereof.

Professional Development

27. Do I have to attend training on the VPK Assessment?

Providers should participate in professional development on *How to Administer the Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Assessment* to ensure the proper administration of the VPK Assessment measures. **Providers on Probation who chose the DOE-Approved Staff Development Plan must participate in instructor-led professional development to receive credit on their DCF transcript.** This instructor-led professional development includes information on the development of the VPK Assessment and how to administer, record, and score each of the VPK Assessment measures. **VPK providers who are not on probation** may choose to use the **VPK Assessment Administration DVD** (which contains the same information provided in the instructor-led training) and **read the VPK Assessment Teacher's Manual**, included in each assessment kit.

28. How do I sign-up for instructor-led training on the VPK Assessment?

To register for instructor-led training opportunities in your area, visit the Florida Department of Children and Families' website at <https://training01-dcf.myflorida.com/studentsite/admin/login.jsf>

Instructional Implications

29. The mathematics measure includes some “number sentences” or equations. How does this relate to the Standards for Four-Year-Olds?

The Standards for Four-Year-Olds outline the knowledge and skills that children should have by the end of their VPK experience. There may be some children that don't master all of these standards by the end of VPK, but there may also be children that master some standards during the VPK program and are ready for additional challenges. This is in line with **developmentally appropriate practice**, which outlines that activities should be appropriately challenging for the group (**age-appropriate**). Additionally, teachers must modify their curriculum/activities for children who have skills at either end of a developmental continuum (**individually appropriate**), and take into account a child's personal knowledge (**culturally appropriate**).

The number sentences that are a part of the mathematics measure are ceiling items, meaning that they are to test the highest skills of children in this particular area. Certainly, at AP1 (Fall), this may not be a familiar concept to children. However, teachers should be introducing mathematic concepts daily and in meaningful ways. Children should have opportunity to practice and play with these skills in centers. This is in line with all VPK-related professional development that the Department of Education has produced. A brief two-page document, *Learning Activities and Choosing Curricula for Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Programs*, outlines the importance of providing appropriate experiences for children to further their understanding in many developmental areas, including emergent literacy and mathematics. It can be accessed here:

<http://www.fldoe.org/earlylearning/pdf/chooscurricvpk.pdf>

The number sentences in the assessment (e.g., $1+1= \underline{\quad}$) are related to benchmarks **A.b.1.** Shows understanding of how to combine sets and remove from a concrete set of objects (receptive knowledge) and **A.b.2.** Shows understanding of addition and subtraction using a concrete set of objects (expressive knowledge) or story problems found in everyday classroom activities.

In the field test, many children from varying backgrounds were able respond correctly to this type of question over the course of the year. Often, children could be seen working through this problem “in their head” or using fingers to represent the numerals. **Children exhibiting these characteristics while solving a problem are likely to have had many rich experiences putting sets together, first using objects (manipulatives) and then by talking through story problems** (e.g., the book, *Mouse Count*, combines mice to an ever-growing set of mice in a jar. Then, as the mice escape, sets of mice are taken away from the original set of ten, until no mice are left.). The teacher could easily introduce number sentences while reading a book such as *Mouse Count*, by making sets and using numerals to write the number sentences on a dry-erase or chalk board.

The Mathematical Thinking folder of the VPK Teacher Toolkit is a free, teacher-friendly resource that includes numerous examples of hands-on learning in mathematical areas. It can be accessed at:

<http://www.flvpkonline.org/teachertoolkit/mathThink/index.htm>

For instructional purposes, the VPK teacher must focus on hands-on learning and problem-solving in all areas of the curriculum, including mathematical thinking. It is only by providing this strong foundation of true learning and understanding that a child is then able to apply this learning. As stated in the *Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Standards* since 2005, **“Work sheets, drills, or simply allowing children to play without teacher planning and reflection will not facilitate optimal progress for children”** (2008, p. 13)

30. How is the Florida VPK Assessment different from the Florida Assessment for Instruction in Reading - Kindergarten (FAIR-K)?

	Florida VPK Assessment	Florida Assessment for Instruction in Reading – Kindergarten (FAIR-K)
Who is it for?	Four-year-olds enrolled in the VPK program	Kindergarten children
Is it required?	Yes. VPK providers are required to administer the VPK Assessment to all VPK funded children as a pre- and post-assessment.	Yes. It is required for all students attending public kindergarten and students who attended VPK but are attending a private kindergarten.
Who gives the assessment?	The child’s teacher.	The child’s teacher or other staff who have been trained in the administration of the FAIR-K.
What is the purpose?	To provide VPK teachers with information about the skill level of each child in their classroom, at specific time periods during the year.	To provide kindergarten teachers with information about the skill level of each child in their classroom, at specific time periods during the year.
What areas does the assessment look at?	Print (alphabet) knowledge, phonological awareness, mathematics (number sense), and oral language/ vocabulary	The following tasks of the Broad Screen/ Progress Monitoring Tool: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter Naming • Phonemic Awareness
What are the results used for?	To guide the teacher’s planning and instruction, as well as to inform parents about the child’s progress.	To guide the teacher’s planning and instruction, as well as to inform parents about the child’s progress.