

# Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program



## Overview

Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) is a free education program that prepares four-year-olds for kindergarten and educational success. Eligible children must live in Florida and be four years old on or before September 1 of the current year to participate.

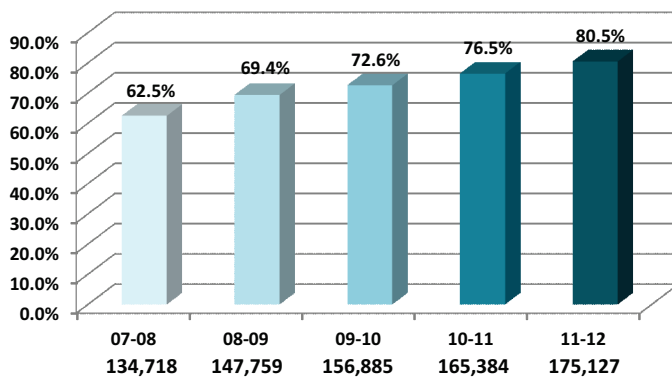
The VPK program helps each child build a strong foundation through the use of developmentally appropriate curricula that meet the standards set by the Florida Department of Education.

## Choices

Private child care centers, public schools, and specialized instructional services can participate in the VPK program. VPK offer parents the choice of one of the following programs:

- School-year program—540 instructional hours. Class sizes of 20 or fewer students. Instructors must hold a minimum of a Birth-to-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 (SIS) program—Serves children with disabilities who have current individual educational plans (IEP) developed by local school boards.

Percentage of Children Participating in VPK



## Providers

VPK providers that provide the school-year or summer programs must meet the program's quality standards:

- Employ qualified instructors
- Use age-appropriate curricula, emphasizing early literacy skills
- Maintain manageable class sizes

Additionally, private VPK providers that provide the school-year or summer programs must:

- Have a director who possesses the Florida Department of Children and Families Director Credential with the VPK Director Endorsement,
- Hold a valid child care license or be recognized by an approved child care accrediting agency.

## Provider Readiness Rates

All VPK providers, with the exception of providers offering the SIS program, receive Kindergarten Readiness Rates which show how well their program has prepared students for kindergarten based on the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS).

- The FLKRS is based on the *Florida Early Learning and VPK Standards for Four-Year-Olds (2011)* which describes 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, which reflect the providers' readiness rates, with access to licensing reports.
- The rates are a tool parents may use to select a VPK provider best suited for their family.

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