The Vision of the Early Learning Coalition of Seminole is for every Seminole County child to enter school ready and prepared to learn.

Our Mission is to be the recognized authority in Seminole County for information regarding high quality school readiness and child care services which allow parents to make informed choices when selecting childcare providers.

We carry out our mission through collaborative partnerships with parents, early education and care professionals and concerned community leaders to:

- enhance the quality of school readiness services in Seminole County
- promote community awareness of critical factors regarding early learning
- provide scholarships for eligible Seminole County children to attend child care centers with proven standards
- oversee the successful implementation of the Voluntary Prekindergarten program
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Provider:

On behalf of the Coalition Board of the Directors and staff, thank you for your involvement in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program in Seminole County. As an approved provider, you have the wonderful opportunity and the important responsibility to teach and nurture our community’s children.

Research clearly indicates that high-quality early learning experiences help children develop the basic knowledge, understanding, and interests necessary to be successful learners, readers and writers. As a Voluntary Prekindergarten provider, you have an important role in building a strong foundation for children’s future school success.

The staff of the Early Learning Coalition together with our service provider, Community Coordinated Care for Children, Inc. (4C), has prepared this manual to highlight basic information and resources that will help you implement the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program.

We are committed to your success. If you have ideas to improve our services, please share them with us.

Sincerely,

Jennifer L. Grant
Executive Director
ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This manual is intended as a guide to understand State and Coalition requirements relative to operating the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program in Seminole County.

While this manual was accurate at the time of publication, we acknowledge that policies and circumstances may change as the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program continues to evolve. For the most up-to-date information on topics covered here, or for clarification of VPK related matters, please contact the VPK Coordinator at 407-532-4332. This manual will also be revised and updated periodically.

Readers may make suggestions for revisions and improvements to this manual by contacting Coalition staff.

Early Learning Coalition of Seminole
239 Rinehart Road
Lake Mary, FL 32746-2550
407-871-1101

Effective Date: July 17, 2006
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Revised FY 09-10
Perhaps my most important goal as governor -- because it will be most meaningful to the future of Florida -- is making real progress toward all children in Florida being able to read and succeed. We are moving on many fronts to do this including Just Read Florida and the A+ plan for school accountability. Now we have a new opportunity to get children started on the path to educational success -- implementing the constitutional amendment passed overwhelmingly in November 2002 to create a voluntary universal prekindergarten program.

Parents care deeply for their children, and are, indeed, their child’s "first teacher." "Voluntary universal prekindergarten (VUPK)" will give parents of 4 year olds in Florida the choice of placing their children in a high-quality early learning program beginning in the 2005 school year.

Jeb Bush
Governor

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**Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Legislation**

In 2004, the Florida Legislature enacted legislation (House Bill 1A) to implement the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program, in accordance with the State Constitution. The VPK program is intended to prepare Florida’s young children for successful entry into kindergarten by focusing on early literacy.

**Purpose of VPK**

Florida’s VPK program successfully prepares children for school by providing an opportunity to develop school readiness skills in an environment that encourages children to have fun while learning. VPK Providers offer a preschool experience taught by certified instructors that have been cleared using a Level 2 background screening, offering low ratios in a developmentally appropriate setting.

This is an exciting opportunity for the four-year-olds of Florida to gain the skills, self-confidence, and the love of learning needed to be ready for school and ready for life.
PROVIDER QUALIFICATIONS

Sites
Each provider site must be a:

- Licensed child care facility;
- Licensed family child care home;
- Licensed large family child care home;
- Public school; or,
- Non-public school or child care provider that is exempt from licensure.

Providers are required to meet one of the following:

- Be licensed exempt and accredited by an accrediting association that is a member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation, the Commission on International and Transregional Accreditation, or the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic schools or hold a current Florida Gold Seal Quality Care designation;

- Licensed and demonstrate to the Early Learning Coalition of Seminole the VPK program requirements including, but not limited to credentials and background screening of instructors, minimum and maximum class sizes, director credentials, and developmentally appropriate curriculum.

DCF Approved Gold Seal Accrediting Agencies

- Association of Christian School International (ACSI)
- Association of Christian Teachers & Schools (ACTS)
- Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment (APPLE)
- Council on Accreditation (COA)
- Montessori School Accreditation Commission (MSAC)
- National Accreditation Commission (NAC)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- National After-School Association (NAA)
- National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)
- National Council for Private School Accreditation (NCPSA)
- National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA)
- National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA)
- Southern Association of Colleges & School (SACS)
- United Methodist Association of Preschools (UMAP)
- National Accreditation Council for Early Childhood Professional Personnel & Programs (NACECPP)
PROVIDER QUALIFICATIONS

Religious Exempt providers must hold a certificate from one of the approved accrediting agencies listed below. Membership in the accrediting agency does not meet the requirements.

Accrediting Agencies for Religious Exempt Centers

- Association of Christian School International (ACSI)
- Association of Christian Teachers & Schools (National)
- Association of Christian Teachers & Schools
- Central Florida Christian Education Association
- Christian Schools of Florida
- Church Avenue Academy
- Church of God Association of Christian Schools
- Early Childhood Christian Education Association
- Florida Association of Christian Colleges & Schools, Inc
- Florida Coalition of Christian Private Schools Association (FCCPSA)
- Florida Kindergarten Council
- Florida League of Christian Schools
- Green Apple Association of Christian Schools
- Light of the World Christian School
- Miracle Faith Center
- Narrow Door Pentecostal
- National Association for Christian Education
- National Association for the Education of Young Children
- National Lutheran School Accreditation Florida-Georgia District
- New Beginnings Christian Center Accreditation (NBCCA)
- Nicene Schools International, Inc
- Papa Goose Network of Christian Nursery’s
- Sonshine Association of Christian Schools, Inc. Grace Bible Church
- The Florida CROSS, “Christian Recognition of Successful Schools”
VPK SITE DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS

All providers including licensed family child care homes, licensed large family child care homes, non-public schools and childcare providers exempt from licensure must have an individual on-site that holds a Director’s credential and has ultimate responsibility for the overall operation of the VPK program.

VPK Site Director Endorsement includes:

Effective January 1, 2007 all VPK Providers seeking a Director credential endorsement must meet the following requirements:

♦ Completion of the Florida Director Credential Certificate program approved by DCF and the DOE.

♦ Completion of the DOE-approved training on the VPK Education Standards adopted by the State Board of Education.

♦ Completion of the DOE-approved VPK emergent literacy course (a 5-hour online training course) at myflorida.com/childcare.

♦ Completion of the DOE-approved VPK Director endorsement course (an online training at www.myflorida.com/childcare).

What is the application process for the VPK Director Endorsement?

♦ Download and complete the application from the DCF website available January 1, 2007.

♦ Submit all required documents.

♦ Mail to the address shown on the application.

EXEMPTION

Providers who have been issued a DCF Director credential prior to December 31, 2006 are exempt from this requirement; but upon renewal are strongly encouraged to participate in the available training and apply for the VPK endorsement.
VPK PROVIDERS MAY OFFER A “SCHOOL-YEAR PROGRAM” AND/OR A “SUMMER PROGRAM”

SCHOOL YEAR INSTRUCTOR EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

Each VPK classroom must have at least one instructor who holds at a minimum:

1. A National Early Childhood Credential (NECC), formerly a Child Development Associate (CDA) issued by the National Credentialing Program;

2. A Birth Through Five Florida Childcare Professional Credential (FCCPC), formerly a Florida CDAE approved by the Department of Children and Families as being equivalent to or greater than the national credential; AND,

3. Have completed a five-hour emergent literacy training course or the Department of Children and Families’ five-hour early literacy and language development, if completed before July 1, 2006.

Starting July 1, 2006 all newly hired VPK staff must complete the five-hour VPK Emergent Literacy training offered by the Department of Education.

-OR-

Holds one of the following educational credentials:

- Bachelor or higher degree in early childhood education, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer sciences.

- Bachelor or higher degree in elementary education, with Florida teaching certificate to teach children any age from birth through grade six. The certification does not need to be current.

- Associate or higher degree in child development.

- Associate or higher degree in an unrelated field, with at least six (6) college credit hours in early childhood education or child development and at least 480 hours of experience teaching or providing care for children birth through eight years of age.

- Educational credential approved by the Department of Education as being equivalent or greater to than educational credential described above.

A certificate based on employment history is not acceptable for a VPK lead teacher.
SUMMER INSTRUCTOR EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

Each summer VPK classroom must have an instructor who:

♦ Is a certified teacher in any field (a teacher holding a valid Florida educator certificate); or,
♦ Holds one of the following:
  ♦ Bachelor or higher degree in early childhood education, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer science; or,
  ♦ Bachelor or higher degree in elementary education, if the prekindergarten instructor has been certified by the Department of Education and holds a Florida Teaching certificate 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 revoked.

When submitting Form VPK—11 for Summer Programs

The following documents are required:

**Lead Teacher**

♦ Proof of educational credential
♦ Level 2 Background Screenings (less than five years old):
  ♦ Letter of clearance from the FBI
  ♦ Computer print out stating clearance from FDLE
  ♦ Local clearance form
  ♦ Attestation of Good Moral Character

Note: A letter of Eligibility Status from the Department of Education does not qualify as an official Florida Teaching certificate for the summer VPK class. For further information, visit the Florida Education website at [http://www.fldoe.org/](http://www.fldoe.org/).

The requirement of the teacher does not change if an ESE student is in a summer VPK classroom.
Application Process

Provider Site

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

- One Form VPK-10 form per site
- One Form VPK-11 form per classroom

These forms are available electronically in both English and Spanish as an editable form in Adobe® Portable Document Format (PDF) at www.vpkflorida.org. Forms are also available by mail by calling 407-532-4332.

Mail or deliver the completed application to the VPK Coordinator. Submit this form with all required attachments (see side bar).

Once all information has been verified, providers will be sent the VPK Provider Contract (Form VPK-20).

Once the completed and signed contract has been received by the VPK Coordinator, the Executive Director, of the Coalition will countersign contract and return a copy to the provider site.

Direct Deposits

All VPK providers are paid using electronic funds transfer (direct deposits). A vendor account must be established with 4C’s Accounting Department prior to the receipt of payment. Contact the VPK Coordinator to obtain direct deposit forms and an IRS W-9.

You will be issued a vendor number that must be written on all certificates of eligibility for children to be enrolled in your VPK class.

Payment Options

VPK Providers have the option to select either VPK Monthly Reimbursements or VPK Advance Payment. Providers should indicate their choice on the selection of payment option form. If no form is submitted the provider will automatically be placed on the prepayment option.

Calendars

Providers must submit along with the Form VPK-11, a VPK Scheduled Calendar indicating the number of instructional and non-instructional VPK days for each class. Hours for the school must not exceed 540 and must be evenly divisible by 540 hours for school year or 300 hours for summer.
STAFF AND SITE CHANGES

SUBSTITUTE

Substitutes for a VPK teacher or assistant are allowed during the VPK program. When the credentialed instructor is absent the provider may temporarily assign a substitute instructor who must have the required credentials (Level 2 background screening clearances). All substitutes for the secondary VPK instructor must have current Level 2 background screening clearance only, and be at least 18 years of age. A staff credential is not required for the second instructor substitute. If, however, a provider cannot find a credentialed substitute you may utilize a non-credential instructor who has met all background requirements of the VPK program and attended the state mandated 40 hours introductory child care courses. If, after ten (10) consecutive instructional days, a provider does not assign a substitute instructor who has the required credentials, providers are required to send the Coalition a written description of efforts made to find an instructor who has the credential. The Coalition will take enforcement action on a provider if, after 20 consecutive instructional days, the provider does not assign a substitute instructor need all substitute requirements who has the required credentials.

REPLACEMENT TEACHERS/DIRECTOR

A Provider having to replace a VPK teacher/assistant or Director must notify the Seminole County VPK Coordinator within three (3) business days and submit a new VPK—11 (see appendix). Clearance documents of Level 2 background screenings for any staff changes and credentials for teacher or director must be included.

VPK SITE OWNERS

When change in ownership occurs, notify the VPK Coordinator as soon as the buyer is identified. The transfer of VPK paperwork must begin at least 45 days in advance to avoid disenrollment of children and loss of VPK funding. A complete VPK Packet will need to be submitted that include the following:

- New License
- VPK Application 10 & 11
- New Contract
- W-9, Direct Deposit form and proof of your EIN number
- New Directors Credentials & Staff Requirements (see pg 6 & 7)

Submit changes to:

Seminole County VPK Coordinator
3500 West Colonial Dr.
Orlando, FL 32808
407-532-4332

REMINDER!

Remember to submit the following information and documentation, along with the VPK10 and VPK 11 forms:

- Official Gold Seal Certificate or documentation of accreditation, if applicable. A copy of license, a copy of Director Credential, documentation of staff credentials, background screening, and Attestation of Good Moral Character.
Additional Changes

Transfers

Transferring a child from one class to another requires the completion of the Informed Parental Consent for Provider Transfers and Class Transfers form AWI - VPK 6. This must be submitted to the VPK office for processing to ensure accurate payment.

Transfers from one VPK Provider to another

See page 26

Change in Class Schedule

Once a Provider’s VPK class calendar is submitted and accepted by the Coalition, any changes must be sent to the Executive Director and explained in writing with a new Form VPK – 11 and VPK Scheduled Calendar completed. Requests for calendar changes will be limited to those events listed under “Temporary Closures” (see page 17) that require make-up days. The request must be sent within three (3) days of the occurrence.

Providers may offer more instructional hours than required; however, the Coalition will only accept calendars that contain exactly 540 hours for school-year and 300 hours for summer.
**School Year Instructional Services/ Curriculum**

**Instructional Hours**

The program must:

- Be comprised of at least 540 instructional hours. While the provider may offer more than the required hours, the Coalition will only accept a VPK Calendar with exactly 540 hours. In order to count as instructional hours, mealtime and outdoor play time must provide activities to nurture and enhance children’s development and be directly supervised by the assigned VPK instructor. **Nap time CANNOT be counted as instructional time.**
- Not begin prior to the start of the public school year.
- End on or before June 30th of the following calendar year.

**Group Size**

VPK classes must serve at least four (4) children, but no more than eighteen (18) children. Providers may organize their VPK classes as a blended class, but cannot exceed the maximum class size. A provider may host two or more VPK classes in a single classroom; however, the provider may not exceed any staff-to-child ratio, square footage per child, or other state or local requirements.

**Ratio**

A second adult is required for the classroom once the eleventh child is added. This adult is generally called the assistant. Assistants are not required to have a CDA or CDAE but must have a cleared Level 2 background screening.

**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 as evidenced by the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS). Providers may select or design their VPK curriculum, unless on probation for continuing failure to meet kindergarten readiness rates. The Florida Department of Education will review and approve curricula for use by providers who are placed on probation.

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**What is the Department of Education’s (DOE) definition of curriculum?**

DOE has defined curricula as follows:

Curricula is **written** materials that:

- Can be reproduced
- Addresses the use of materials, scheduling, arranging the environment, and interaction between children and adults
- Includes more than activity suggestions and more than theory and pedagogy
- Is aligned with Florida’s Early Learning Standards for Four-Year-olds
- Is aligned with scientifically-based research

Additional information regarding the performance standards and curricula can be found on the Department of Education Website:

www.myfloridaeducation.com
**Summer Program Instructional Services/Curriculum**

**Instructional Hours**
The program must:

♦ Be comprised of at least 300 instructional hours.
♦ Start on or after May 1st.
♦ End before the first day of the public school year.
♦ In order to count as instructional hours, mealtime and outdoor play time must provide activities that nurture and enhance children’s development. **Nap time CANNOT be counted as instructional time.**

**Group Size**
Summer VPK classes must serve at least four (4) children, **but not to exceed twelve (12) children.** Seminole County Public Schools are mandated providers and are exempt from the minimum of four (4) children requirement. A provider may host two or more VPK classes as one group in a single classroom: however, the provider may not exceed any staff-to-child ratio, square footage per child, or other state or local requirements.

**Ratio**
A summer VPK classroom must provide one (1) teacher for every twelve (12) children.

**Curriculum Requirements**
The curriculum requirements are the same as school year.
**Blended Classes**

A VPK provider or public school may organize its VPK classes as blended classes, teaching students enrolled in the VPK program together with children who are not enrolled in the VPK program. A blended class may include children of any age; however, these multi-age arrangements must not interfere with the provider’s obligation to deliver 540 hours (school year program) or 300 hours (summer program) of developmentally appropriate instruction for students in the VPK program.

All blended classes must maintain the minimum requirement of four (4) VPK students (except as previously stated) and cannot exceed the total number of students authorized by provider type. Although non-VPK students are not counted towards this four-student (4) minimum they are included in the VPK teacher/student ratio.

**Screening and Assessments**

The Early Learning Coalition of Seminole highly recommends VPK providers conduct screening and/or assessments on all VPK children. In addition, requirements for screening and assessments are mandated for all four-year-old co-enrolled in School Readiness funding.

Information gathered from these assessments will help to inform teachers to plan developmentally appropriate activities, class schedules and routines.

**Remember:** Providers must have the parent’s permission to screen or assess VPK children who are not receiving subsidized funding.
**VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate**

The Florida Department of Education/State Board of Education is required by law (Section 1002.69(5), Florida Statutes (F.S.) to calculate a kindergarten readiness rate every year for each private or public School VPK Provider of either the School-Year (540-hour) or Summer (300-hour) program.

The VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate measures how well a VPK Provider prepares four-year-olds for kindergarten based upon Florida’s VPK Education Standards. The VPK Standards describe what a four-year-old child should know and be able to do by the end of the VPK experience.

The VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate is based on the scores of the children who attended VPK and who are screened upon entry into kindergarten. The screening is administered by the district public school for all public school kindergarten students. Children who participated in VPK and attended a non-public school for kindergarten are also provided the opportunity to participate in the screening.

**Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS)**

The Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) is made up of a subset of the Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS), an observational instrument that is used to monitor the skills, knowledge and behaviors a student demonstrates or needs to develop; and the first two (2) measures of the Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading-K (FAIR-K), that includes Letter naming, phonemic awareness, listening comprehension and vocabulary. Future screening measures will include MATH. The key to good instruction is alignment with the VPK education standards delivered in a developmentally appropriate manner. One way to prepare for the changes in the assessment is to review your lesson plans and activities to make sure they align with the VPK Standards. Visit the Department of Education website for further information: http://www.fldoe.org/earlylearning/FLKRS2009.asp

**Low Performing Providers**

After the readiness rate has been calculated for all providers, the State Board of Education will set the minimum readiness rate so that no more than 15 percent of all VPK providers would fall below the minimum rate (see Section 1002.69(6), F.S.).

A Low Performing Provider is a VPK provider serving at least four children who substantially completed either the School-Year or Summer program whose readiness rate is at or below the bottom 15 percent of all providers’ readiness rates. Low Performing Providers will be notified by mail and will be required to acknowledge receipt of the designation online. Low Performing Providers are required to submit and implement an improvement plan (see Section 1002.67(3)(c), F.S.).

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**For Website Access please contact:**
Shan Goff - AWI
1-850-245-0445
earlylearning@fldoe.org

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Revised FY 09-10
VPK Improvement Process

The purpose of the VPK Improvement Process rule is to establish procedures for coalitions or school districts to approve an improvement plan for a VPK provider with a low kindergarten readiness rate. VPK law requires the State Board of Education to adopt a minimum readiness rate that demonstrates satisfactory delivery of the VPK program. Providers who have a score below the minimum rate are required to submit an improvement plan.

Step by Step Web Guidance to Assist Providers is available at [www.ImproveVPK.org](http://www.ImproveVPK.org)

Low performing providers are required to do the following:

- **Year 1** - submit an improvement plan for approval by the coalition or school district and implement the plan.

- **Year 2** - use a DOE-approved curriculum, along with other corrective actions, as conditions of probation.

- **Year 3** - remain on probation and continue to use DOE-approved curriculum.

- **Year 4** - be removed from the VPK program after two consecutive years on probation.

All steps of the improvement process must be completed electronically on the web site ([www.ImproveVPK.org](http://www.ImproveVPK.org)). A template is available to create a customized improvement plan.

A provider not able to submit the improvement plan electronically may, upon request, submit the information through an alternative method approved by the Agency for Workforce Innovation; however, the provider acknowledgement must be completed online. A request must be submitted to the Agency for Workforce Innovation, Office of Early Learning, at the following address: Caldwell Building, Suite 100, 107 East Madison Street, MSC 140, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-4128, (866)357-3239, TTY/TDD (800)955-8771, Voice (800)955-8770

What is the Readiness Rate Dispute Process?

- If a provider disputes the accuracy of their Preliminary VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate, the provider must complete and submit an on-line dispute form and send supporting documentation to the DOE for review.

- Disputes may address issues in one or more of the following calculations or areas as displayed on the VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate Report:
  - The number of children served
  - The number of children meeting substantial completion
  - The number of children screened on any measure
  - The number of children in readiness rate calculation
  - Change of ownership

- Supporting documentation accompanying the VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate Dispute Form may be sent by fax to 1-850-245-5105 or by mail to the address below:

  Florida Department of Education Office of Early Learning
  ATTN: VPK Provider Disputes
  325 W. Gaines Street, Ste. 1524
  Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

- The form must be submitted electronically and signed by the child care center director, private school principal, or public school principal and the district school superintendent (or designee).

- DOE will review the documentation and either accept or reject the information within 28 days after the publication of the preliminary readiness rate.

- You may check the status of your Dispute by logging on to your provider secure home page.
**Payment Information**

Payment for the VPK program is based on the District Cost Differential Rate (DCD) and will be paid on an hourly basis for each VPK student enrolled. Monthly payments are calculated based on the information contained in the provider calendar regarding the number of service hours per day. The Coalition will not accept a calendar nor a calendar change that results in less or more than 540 hours for a school year program or 300 hours for a summer program. Prepayments will be made to providers based on the number of certificates of eligibility received and processed. Payments for certificates received after the 3rd day of the month will be made the following month. At least four (4) children must be enrolled at the start of your program to begin receiving payments. An example chart below shows a daily rate per child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours per</th>
<th>Daily Rate</th>
<th>Program Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 hours</td>
<td>$14.28</td>
<td>180 day program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 hours</td>
<td>$19.04</td>
<td>135 day program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 hours</td>
<td>$23.80</td>
<td>108 day program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 hours</td>
<td>$28.56</td>
<td>90 day program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** This rate is subject to change based on annual revision to the State’s DCD rate.

**Special Note:**

If a child’s name does not appear on the attendance sheet, simply write the child’s name and mark the number of days in attendance. If a child’s name appears on your attendance sheet and does not attend your program, cross out child’s name. Every effort will be made to process all changes to prior month attendance sheets with supporting documentation. Providers may contact the VPK Accountant with any questions. Changes written on attendance sheets only change the reconciliation payment. **It does not change the class roster listed in the computer system.** To Add/Dismiss/Terminate a child contact the VPK Enrollment Specialist at 321-832-6407.

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**Processing Payments**

**Class Roster**

Class Roster forms are required along with the Certificate of Eligibility for every child registered for each class. Vendor numbers must be included on each certificate. Class rosters and certificates received after the 3rd day of the month will be processed for payment the following month. At least four children must be enrolled at the start of your program to begin receiving payment. A certificate must be completed entirely, including vendor numbers, in order to be processed for payment.

**Add Child to Class**

Children enrolling in your VPK program after the start date can be added to your class using the “VPK Child Enrollment Addition” form. Submit the original certificate of eligibility signed by the parent/guardian to the VPK Enrollment Specialist. Do not fax original Certificates of Eligibility. Mail or drop off certificates to:

**Enrollment Specialist**

307 W. First Street
Sanford, FL 32771
321-832-6407

**ATTENDANCE FORMS**

Attendance verification forms must be submitted by noon on the 3rd day of each month.

Mail completed attendance forms to:

4C VPK Accounts Payable/Seminole
3500 West Colonial Drive
Orlando, FL 32808

For questions regarding payments call:

Accounts Payable
VPK Accountant
(407) 532-4174
Or
(407) 532-4179

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**Revised FY 09-10**
School Readiness Payment for children concurrently enrolled in the VPK program

A number of children enrolled in VPK may also be receiving Coalition-funded subsidized child care. The VPK law neither prohibits concurrent enrollments, nor prohibits a private provider or school from delivering both programs for a child as long as the time the child spends in each program is billed separately. Providers are encouraged to inform parents that enrollment in VPK does not make them ineligible for subsidized care through the Coalition.

Important instructions and special items to note when completing monthly School Readiness attendance sheets:

Children are grouped by their age within their specific funding contract (BG8, BG1, BG3R). The funding contract code is on the top left of each page of the attendance sheet, and will be on each application you receive from each parent. In addition, children will be listed under their funding contract on the monthly reimbursement printout.

The legend at the bottom left of the attendance sheet shows the proper codes for marking each day (X=Present, E=Excused Absence, A=Coalition authorized absence beyond three days). As a reminder, subsidized children are eligible for three paid absences (mark with an “E”) a month.

The “Re-determination Date” is the last day of care that is authorized for that child. Unless a parent has an application with a new “Re-determination date,” no subsidized payments will be made past that date.

Please leave “Days Attended” column blank.

If you have specific questions, please call the Records Department at:

407-532-4296 or 407-532-4528

Definitions

“VPK hours per day” -
Means the average number of daily VPK instructional hours for the child’s VPK class, which is calculated by dividing the number of instructional hours by the number of VPK instructional days scheduled for the class.

“Wrap-around Subsidized Child Care Services” -
Means services provided for a child who is concurrently enrolled in the Coalition-funded school readiness services.

Enrollments

Providers will be paid for children enrolled in concurrent programs at the “wrap-around” rate. Rates paid are calculated on hours attended as follows:

Part Time (PT) wrap-around for VPK program = (three or more hours, but fewer than six).

Full Time (FT) wrap-around for VPK program = (six or more hours, but fewer than 11 hours).

Special Note

When a child’s care level changes due to a birthday (e.g. from PR3 to PR4) the payment rate for the child’s wrap-around readiness services will be automatically
VPK Attendance Policy/Absences
Providers are required to provide a copy of their attendance policy in writing to the parents or guardian of each child enrolled in the VPK Program.

Payment for Absences
A. A child is allowed up to three (3) unexcused (requiring no documentation) absences and up to seven (7) excused (requiring documentation by parent or legal guardian) per calendar month. In order for a VPK Provider to be paid for absences beyond seven (7) excused absences, a third party (a person other than the child’s parent or guardian, and not related to the child), must provide documentation of the excused absences (e.g., letter from physician, religious leader, military superior).
B. A child’s excused absence is only payable if the absence is documented in writing by the parent or legal guardian and is submitted to the VPK provider. The provider must then submit documentation along with your attendance sheet to the 4C VPK Accounting Department.

Documentation for a child’s excused absence must refer to one of the following reasons:
- Illness or injury of the child or the child’s family member which requires hospitalization or bed rest;
- Physician or dentist appointment;
- Infectious disease or parasitic infestation;
- Funeral services, memorial services, or bereavement upon the death of the child’s family member;
- Life-threatening illness or injury of the child’s family member;
- Compliance with a court order (e.g. visitation, subpoena);
- Special education or related services as identified in 20 U.S.C. 1401 (2004) for the child’s disability;
- Observance of a religious holiday or service, or because the child’s or parent’s religion forbids secular activity on the instructional day;
- Family vacation, not to exceed five (5) excused absences per program year (please note that a parent can claim only a total of five (5) family vacation days over the entire course of the VPK program);
- Extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of the child and the child’s parent.

INFORM YOUR PARENTS!
Handbook Policy: Every parent should have read a Policy Handbook created by you that includes a VPK Attendance Policy.

Provide a copy and have parents sign a statement acknowledging your attendance policy.

A copy of the signed statement must be kept on site in the child’s file.

Tardiness
Providers will be paid the daily VPK rate for children who arrive late and/or leave early.
Parent Withdrawal from the VPK Program

If a parent withdraws their child from the VPK program or is dismissed by a provider due to excess absences, the provider will not receive payment for any days after the last instructional day that the child attended the program.

Provider Dismissal from the VPK Program

A dismissal form must be submitted to the VPK Enrollment Specialist indicating the reason and the last date of the child’s attendance. Not submitting a dismissal form to terminate a child on time will result in payments made to your program for which you will be responsible for paying back.

VPK Attendance Policy/Absences Continued from previous page...

Extended Absences

Payment for a child will be suspended if the child does not attend at least one (1) instructional day during a calendar month. Payment for the child, including absences accrued, will resume when the child subsequently attends the program. If the child does not resume attendance, an absence is not payable for an instructional day after the child’s last day of attendance.

Remember, although the state policy is generous, all VPK providers are still evaluated based on the number of children who are ready for school. Providers should update their own attendance policies with this fact in mind.

Submitting Documentation

Please attach documentation for all excused absences to the monthly attendance forms.

PLEASE REMEMBER!

Payments will not be made in excess of allowable hours by program type, for holidays, staff in-service days or any other days not included on provider site calendar. Providers are fully responsible for ensuring the calendar submitted is accurate and does not exceed allowable hours.
**Temporary Closures**

1. **Temporary closures that require Changes in Class Schedule and Make-Up Days**
   - Temporary closures on a scheduled instructional day within the Provider’s control (such as attendance at non-family member funerals) must be made up. These days shall not be recorded as absences for the students. In an effort to maintain a structured program for the children, providers are discouraged from making changes to the VPK calendar other than the aforementioned.
   - Temporary closures extending beyond ten cumulative instructional days, and within the Provider’s control, must be rescheduled and made up.

2. **Temporary closures that DO NOT require Make-Up Days**
   - Closures on a scheduled instructional day, due to circumstances beyond the Provider’s control, require submission of written documentation which demonstrates the uncontrollable circumstance and temporary nature of the closure.
   - For closures on a scheduled instructional day, when the Provider is located within a county for which the county government, the Governor, or the President of the United States declares a state of emergency, or if county, state, or local governments close offices for other than essential services, documentation is not necessary.

**Permanent Closures**

Providers must abide by their VPK contract obligations during an event that causes permanent closure of a VPK site. Written notice must be given to the Coalition and alternate arrangements for uninterrupted services for each VPK student must be made at least 30 days in advance.

In the event of a disaster in which the provider is unable to re-open the VPK classroom, contact the Coalition immediately to make alternate arrangements for VPK children.

**Make-up Days**

Providers who must make up days for unforeseen closures are required to contact the VPK Coordinator for instructions on submitting revised calendar.
Provider Record Keeping Requirements

All VPK public and private providers must:

- Maintain attendance of students participating in the VPK program.
- Secure verification from the parent of each student in the VPK program that the child participated in accordance with the attendance reported for payment.

Two options are acceptable:

1. If the provider or school uses a daily sign-in record, the parent must certify:
   
   - The student’s attendance using the “short” form of the Student Attendance and Parental Choice Certificate (Form AWI VPK 03S).
   
   - To meet this requirement, a provider must maintain a daily sign-in record that documents the date, the child’s name and the parent’s signature. Providers may use an electronic system or a paper sign-in record, except that the system must record electronic signature, card swipe, entry of a personal identification number (PIN), or similar daily action by the parent/guardian.

2. If the provider uses a method to document attendance other than a daily sign-in record, the parent must certify the student’s attendance using the long form of the Student Attendance and Parental Choice Certificate (Form AWI VPK 03L). Before a parent signs the long form, the provider or school must either enter the student’s attendance on the form or attach documentation to the form which includes the student’s reported attendance.

File Maintenance

Records of the daily and monthly attendance forms must be readily available during monitoring and site visits. Records must be kept in the VPK center for a period of three (3) years.

Special Note

If a provider or school delivers both the VPK and School Readiness programs, the Provider must submit separate attendance sheets for each program.
MONITORING

♦ Unannounced site monitoring visits will be conducted annually during the VPK program year. If necessary, additional visits may be scheduled.
♦ Refer to Appendix forms for a copy of the Monitoring Tool used.
♦ During the monitoring process, monitors will be looking for evidence of the items which are in your contract with the Coalition, as well as looking for best practices.

Monitoring items include:

1. Ensuring the VPK instructor(s) and Assistants are the same as listed on your Application VPK 11.
2. Verification that the VPK instructor(s) are using developmentally appropriate curricula.
3. Ensuring that the VPK classrooms reflect correct teacher-to-student ratios.
4. Student records include a copy of a Certificate of Eligibility, signed parent attendance verification forms and a signed policy handbook.
5. After a monitoring visit is done, if necessary, a Corrective Action Plan (Appendix forms), will be completed to correct any non-compliance.
6. Documentation should be maintained that a Provider Attendance Policy has been distributed to parents of VPK participants and that it is included with the Provider Handbook Policy.

Corrective Action Plan

Providers found out of compliance with the VPK Statewide Provider Agreement will receive a Corrective Action Plan after non-compliance is identified. The period of time to correct non-compliance will be based on the severity of the incident, except that no non-compliance remedy may exceed thirty (30) calendar days. The Coalition maintains total authority to establish maximum timeframes. A Provider failing to correct any items noted in the plan will be at risk of losing VPK Provider status, and will forfeit all payments beyond the established compliance timeframe.
Families have two options for VPK enrollment:
1. A school year program consisting of 540 instructional hours, or
2. A summer program consisting of 300 instructional hours, but not both.

Parents have the following options to obtain a VPK Certificate of Eligibility:
- Attend a registration Round Up in the community,
- Schedule an appointment with 4C Seminole by calling 321-832-6407,
- Walk in at the 4C Seminole Office at:
  307 W. First Street
  Sanford, FL 32771
  (Mondays, Wednesdays & Thursdays from 8:30-3:30. Office is closed between 12:00-1:00pm for lunch)

To receive a VPK Certificate of Eligibility, the parent must:
- Complete a VPK Application (Form VPK 01) to enroll their child(ren)
- Present required documentation
- Read and sign a Parent Responsibility Form/Parent Handbook
- Receive a Provider Listing.

Public registration events may periodically take place throughout the county during the year and will be publicized as they are established. For updated information providers and parents can contact the VPK office or go to: www.seminoleearlylearning.org

Child Eligibility
While VPK services are free of charge, all participating children must:
1. Be four years old on or before September 1 of the current year. A parent may verify their child’s age by providing any one of the following:
   - Birth record or certificate
   - A passport
   - A certificate of arrival in the United States showing age
   - A valid military dependent identification card
   - An immunization record indicating the date of birth signed by a public health officer or licensed practicing physician
   - A copy of the baptismal record showing age
2. Reside in the State of Florida. A parent may verify residency by providing any one of the following:
   - Florida drivers license
   - Utility bill
   - Bank statement
   - Insurance policies
   - Pay stubs
   - Government documents

Parents can only enroll their child in either a School Year Program or Summer Program, but not both. The child remains eligible for VPK until he/she becomes eligible to enter Kindergarten.

The Parent Enrollment Process
The first step in the enrollment process is to obtain the VPK Certificate of Eligibility. Certificates may not be obtained at the child care center; the family child care home; or on-line. Relatives and family friends may not obtain a certificate on behalf of the parent or legal guardian. Parents/legal guardians should bring proof of residency and proof of their child’s age to the round-up location or 4C office. It is not required to bring the child to obtain a certificate.

The second step in enrolling in the VPK Program is to select a VPK provider. The parent/legal guardian will then take their Certificate of Eligibility to their chosen approved VPK provider. The provider’s submission of the Certificate of Eligibility to the 4C Seminole Office will complete the enrollment process.
**Parent Responsibility**

**The Coalitions Parent Rights and Responsibilities form includes acknowledgment of a parent’s obligations:**

- Verify each month the student’s attendance using the VPK Student Attendance and Parental Choice certificate (Forms VPK-03S or VPK-03L).
- Comply with the attendance policy of the provider at which the child is enrolled.
- Provide transportation of the child to and from the VPK program.
- Present the child for the statewide kindergarten screening, regardless of whether the child is admitted to a kindergarten in a public or non-public school.

A child can only participate once in the VPK Program either during the school year OR summer, but not both.

**Certificate of Eligibility**

Once a child has met the age requirements and presents proof of residency for the VPK program he/she will receive a “Certificate of Eligibility” along with a Provider Profile. The family is now ready to select a Provider that has a current contract with the Early Learning Coalition of Seminole.

**Reminder!**

Parents must sign the VPK Certificate of Eligibility as proof of choosing your program to deliver the VPK services.
VPK POLICIES

Non-Discrimination

A VPK provider is prohibited from discriminating against a parent or child, including the refusal to admit a child for enrollment in the VPK program, by violating federal civil rights requirements on the grounds of race, color, or national origin. The provider does have the right to prioritize services and enroll children based on those priorities. Providers may not refuse continued service if a child no longer falls into the provider’s priority unless the provider has a wait list of children within their priority.

No-Fee

A private VPK provider or public school is prohibited from requiring a child to enroll for, or requiring the payment of any fee or charge for, registration or supplemental services as a condition of admitting the child in the VPK program. Providers may not request the parent to pay for a membership or purchase supplies as a condition of admitting a child in the VPK program group.

Program Fees

A provider may request that a parent voluntarily purchase or bring personal items such as instructional materials or supplies; food products (e.g. lunch and snacks), hygiene products (e.g. tissues & soap), or sporting equipment.

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. If a parent fails to pick up his/her child from the VPK program at the designated pick-up time, the provider may require payment of fees or charges for late pick up.

Delayed Enrollment

After the VPK program has begun, a child holding a Certificate of Eligibility may be enrolled in the VPK program and begin instruction in a VPK class. This is called a delayed enrollment. There must be at least ten percent of the instructional hours remaining (54 hours for a school-year program or 30 hours for a summer program). At which time the parent must acknowledge and complete the delayed enrollment form (AWI-VPK-04) along with the VPK parent/child application.

Helpful Hint ...

Providers are encouraged to develop creative ways to partner with parents during special events and/or VPK activities as a way to build better relationships. Remember, parents can not be charged a fee to participate in activities that are part of the VPK program hours.
Child Re-Enrollments/Transfers

Re-Enrollment in the VPK Program
Parents may re-enroll a child in the VPK program if the Coalition determines the reason meets one of the following state requirements

- **Good Cause**—Within the first 54 hours for a school year program and 30 hours for a summer program (10% of the program time); OR,
- **Extreme Hardship**—After the 55th hour (school year program) or 31st hour (summer program) but before completing 70% of the program.

Transferring from one VPK Provider to another
Families wishing to transfer a child must complete an AWI VPK 06 form (see Appendix ??) during a 4C office visit, prior to transferring the child. At that point, a new Certificate of Eligibility will be issued. The new Provider will not receive VPK funding without sending in the new Certificate of Eligibility to 4C. Mail forms (do not fax) to the VPK Enrollment Specialist within ten days of admitting the child to the VPK classroom.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT—BEST PRACTICE**
Children do best when their environment, daily routines, goals and outcomes are uninterrupted. While transfers are allowed, providers should work with parents to minimize transferring the child.

**Good Cause**
*(does not require documentation)*
- Extended illness of the child or immediate family
- Conflict between parents and provider
- Change in residence
- Change in work schedule or location
- Transportation problems
- Other emergency circumstances or extraordinary situation

**Extreme Hardship**
*(requires documentation)*
- Extended illness of child or immediate family member
- Provider dismissed the child due to child’s behavior
- Provider is not able to meet the basic program requirements
- Change in child’s residence
- Change in employment schedule or location
- Inability to meet the basic needs for the child or child’s immediate family
- Other emergency circumstances or extraordinary situation

*A new Certificate of Eligibility must be obtained by the parent for all transfers to another program.*
**Contact the VPK Enrollment Specialist at 321-832-6407**

Revised FY 09-10
RESOURCES

CDA

4C  www.4cflorida.org  407-522-2252
Orlando Tech  www.orlandotech.ocps.net  407-246-7060
Seminole Community College  www.seminole.cc.fl.us  407-328-4722

DCF Licensing  407-245-0470
DCF Credentialing  888-352-2842
Fax  850-414-7974

DOE/Office of Early Learning

Early Learning Coalition of Seminole  239 Rinehart Road
Lake Mary, FL 32746  407-871-1101
www.seminoleearlylearning.org
Fax  407-871-1100

Inclusion Warm Line  407-833-4432
Toll Free Number  1-877-322-8040

Child Care Resource and Referral Office

4C Sanford Office  Sanford, FL 32771
307 West First Street  407-532-4292
321-832-6400

VPK Enrollment Specialist

4C VPK Sanford Office  Sanford Fax
Sanford Office  321-832-6407
321-832-6431
Orlando Office  407-532-4273
Fax  407-522-2180

VPK Coordinator

4C Orlando Office  407-532-4332
3500 W. Colonial Drive
Orlando, FL 32808

VPK Attendance Sheets

4C Orlando Office  407-522-2252
3500 W. Colonial Drive
Orlando, FL 32808

VPK Accountants Payable

4C Orlando Office  407-532-4331 or
3500 W. Colonial Drive
Orlando, FL 32808  407-532-4174

For all other VPK-related questions, contact the Seminole County VPK Coordinator at Community Coordinated Care for Children - 407-532-4332