

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)

20 Years of Preparing Children for Kindergarten and Life!



Florida was one of the first states in the country to offer free prekindergarten for all 4-year-olds regardless of family income. Since the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program's launch in 2005, the Florida Department of Education's Division of Early Learning (DEL) has partnered with 30 early learning coalitions around the state and Redlands Christian Migrant Association to serve more than 3.1 million children and their families.

SETTING A PATH FOR SUCCESS IN SCHOOL AND LIFE

DEL is committed to the following goals:

- Engage families as their child's first teacher and support them in making informed decisions on high-quality child care that best meets their family needs.
- Support families by providing high-quality child care as they work to become economically self-sufficient.
- Build high-quality early learning programs to meet the individual needs of all children.
- Increase the knowledge and skills of early learning professionals to provide high-quality care and education.
- Increase Kindergarten readiness, setting children on a path to learn, graduate and succeed.

WHY IT MATTERS

90% Of a child's brain is fully developed by the age of 5.

75% Of children who enter kindergarten behind struggle significantly to catch up to their classmates.

VPK MAKES A DIFFERENCE

State and local prekindergarten programs, almost without exception, improve academic readiness for school.

- The strongest predictors of later achievement are school-entry math, reading and attention skills.
- Children who complete VPK are significantly more likely to enter kindergarten ready for school.
- Children who participated in Florida's VPK program scored higher on the third-grade English Language Arts test than did nonparticipants.
- Participation in an early childhood experience (child care or preschool) increases high school graduation rates.

HOW TO APPLY FOR VPK?

Apply for services in the Family Portal (<https://familyservices.floridaeearlylearning.com/>)

To learn more about eligibility criteria, [contact your county's early learning coalition](#).