



Division of Early Learning

November 6, 2025

School Readiness (SR) Program

2025-26 SR Budget: \$1.12 billion

- Offers financial assistance to income-eligible families for child care so they can stay in the workforce and become economically self-sufficient.
- Serves children ages birth through 13, who are in economically disadvantaged working families, have special needs, are at risk or whose parents participate in Workforce/Education services.

Eligibility:

- Parents must work or participate in educational activities for at least 20 hours per week (40 hours per week for two-parent households) or be disabled.
- For entry, family gross income must be at or below 55% State Median Income (SMI); to remain, income must be at or below 85% SMI.

Purpose:

- Help working families afford high-quality early learning services.
- Help families become economically self-sufficient.
- Involve parents as their child's first teacher.
- Help young children enter kindergarten prepared to learn.

SR Provider Eligibility

Types of private providers eligible to offer SR:

- Licensed child care facilities
- Licensed or registered family day care homes
- Large family child care homes
- Public or non-public schools
- Faith-based providers
- Before-school or after-school programs

Program providers must meet specific requirements:

- Age-appropriate instruction and activities
- DEL-approved curriculum
- Program assessment: CLASS, with minimum score for contracting
- Child developmental screenings
- Required trainings

SR Screening, Assessments and Accountability

Developmental Screening

- Children 6 weeks to 5 years must receive an annual developmental screening.
 - Ages & Stages Questionnaires®, Third Edition (ASQ®-3) is required.

Program Assessment

- SR providers must have an annual CLASS program assessment and meet a minimum threshold of a 4.00 to contract with the ELC.
- 50% of classrooms at each care level (birth to age 5) must be assessed.
- SR providers who score below the contract minimum may pay for an additional assessment.
- ELCs are responsible for administration of CLASS by qualified individuals.

Child Assessment

- Providers may voluntarily implement child assessments (Teaching Strategies Gold) for children birth to 5 and are incentivized with a differential payment.

VPK

- **Purpose of VPK:** To prepare every four-year-old in Florida for kindergarten and build the foundation for their educational success.
- **For Whom?**
 - Florida children 4-years-old on or before Sept. 1.
 - Children born from Feb. 2 through Sept. 1 of a calendar year may enroll in VPK either the program year they turn 4 or the next.
- **Program Options:**
 - **School Year Program:** Up to 540 hours of instruction available between August through June.
 - **Summer Program:** Up to 300 hours of instruction available between May through August.
 - **Specialized Instructional Services (SIS):** Services available outside traditional VPK classroom setting for 4-year-olds with disabilities – child must have current individual educational plan (IEP) from local school district.
- **Budget:** \$434 Million; Base Student Allocation:
 - School-Year: \$3,029
 - Summer: \$2,586

VPK Provider Eligibility

- Both private providers and public schools that offer VPK must:
 - Employ qualified instructors
 - Teach Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for 4-Year-Olds
 - Maintain required class sizes:
 - Lead teacher/child ratio – 1:11
 - Lead teacher + assistant/child ratio 1+1:20
 - Participate in program assessment: Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
 - Administer FAST Star Early Literacy

DEL Goals

1

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.

2

Support families by providing high-quality child care as they work to become economically self-sufficient.

3

Build high-quality early learning programs to meet the individual needs of all children.

4

Increase the knowledge and skills of early learning professionals to provide high-quality care and education.

5

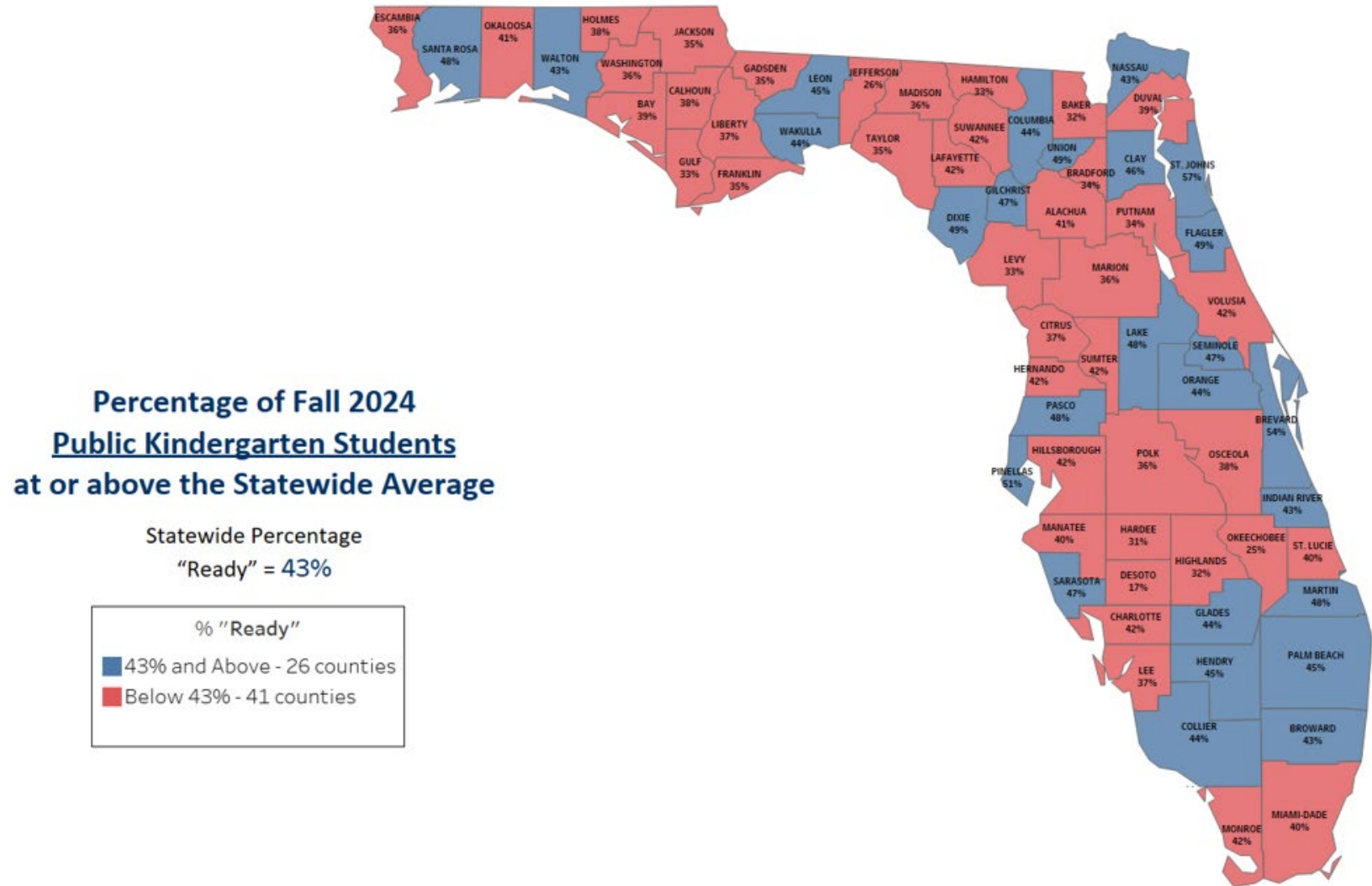
Increase Kindergarten readiness, setting children on a path to learn, graduate and succeed.

Importance of Kindergarten Readiness

- **90%** of a child's brain is fully developed by the age of 5.
- For children who enter kindergarten behind, **roughly 75%** will never catch up to their classmates.
- The **strongest predictors of later achievement** are school-entry math, reading and attention skills.
- State and local **prekindergarten programs**, almost without exception, **improve academic readiness for school**.
- Participants in Florida's VPK program **scored higher on third-grade language arts tests** than did nonparticipants.
- Participation in an **early childhood experience** (child care or preschool) **increases high school graduation rates**.



2024 FAST PM 1 Kindergarten Readiness Results by County



- Kindergarten Readiness was redefined as scoring at or above 707 Unified Scale Score (USS) on FAST Star Early Literacy. Previous cut score for Kindergarten Readiness was scoring at or above 690 USS.
- The new cut score was applied for the first time for 2024 FAST PM1 Kindergarten Results. **Therefore, 2024 Kindergarten Readiness results serve as a baseline year.**
- **Results cannot be used for comparison to previous Kindergarten Readiness results.**

Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards (FELDS)



**Florida Early Learning and Developmental
Standards Birth to Kindergarten (2017)**

An Educator's Guide to Understanding
**THE FLORIDA EARLY LEARNING
AND DEVELOPMENTAL STANDARDS:
BIRTH TO KINDERGARTEN**



**Educator's Guide to Understanding the
Florida Early Learning and Developmental
Standards: Birth to Kindergarten**

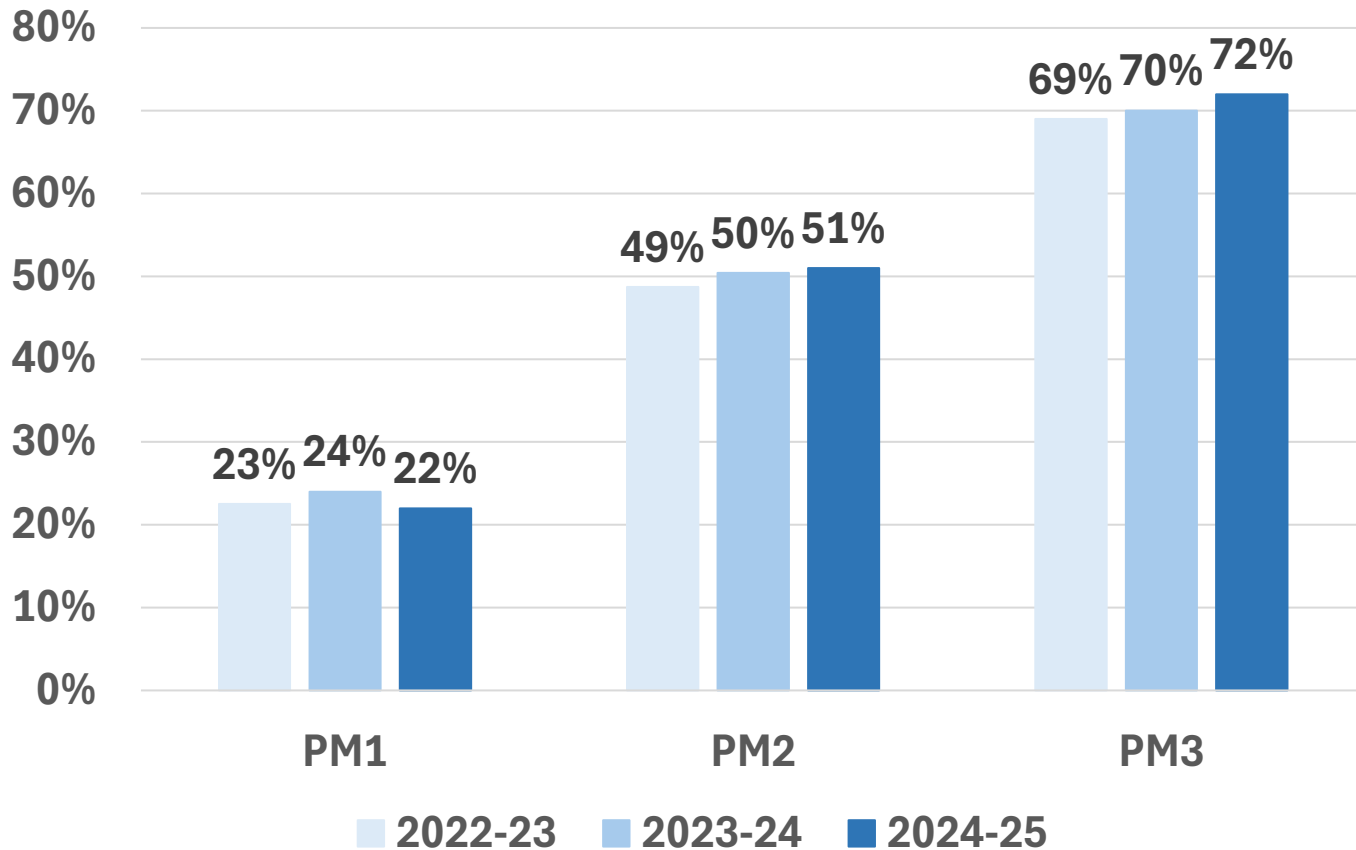
Program Assessment

- CLASS = **C**lassroom **A**ssessment **S**coring **S**ystem is a research-based method of measuring, evaluating and improving teacher-child interactions from infant care through Prekindergarten.
- Early Learning Coalitions (ELCs) are responsible for administration of CLASS, which must be conducted by qualified individuals.
- Providers of School Readiness (SR)/Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) must have a 4.00 composite score to contract in future years.
- Over 99% of SR and VPK providers scored 4.0 or higher.

Program	2019- 2020	2020- 2021	2021- 2022	2022- 2023	2023- 2024	2024- 2025
School Readiness (Fiscal Year)	4.43	4.78	4.85	4.95	5.11	5.23
VPK (School-Year)	-	-	-	5.08	5.21	5.31

2024-2025 VPK FAST Star Early Literacy Overall Results

All Tested VPK Completers (Combined) Percent Scoring “Kindergarten Ready” and Above



New VPK Accountability System

An accountability system is a set of practices used to make progress toward VPK goals.

1. Provide high-quality care and education that meets the individual needs of all children.
2. Increase kindergarten readiness, setting children on a path to learn, graduate and succeed.

The VPK Provider Accountability system:

- Sets clear expectations that VPK providers must provide quality care and education to increase kindergarten readiness.
- Communicates to families and the public whether VPK providers are meeting those expectations.
- Celebrates providers that are meeting or exceeding expectations.
- Directs additional resources and supports to low-performing providers to help them improve.

New VPK Accountability System

A provider's performance metric is made up of three components:

- 50% Program Quality
- 20% Student Achievement
- 30% Student Learning Gains



Ranges	Designations
61 – 100 points	Excellent
46 – 60 points	Above Expectations
28 – 45 points	Meets Expectations
16 – 27 points	Below Expectations
0 – 15 points	Unsatisfactory

Component 1: Program Quality

Program Quality is measured by the annual CLASS program assessment. VPK providers can earn up to 50 points for Program Quality.

Composite Program Assessment Score	Percentage of Possible Points Earned	Number of Points Earned
Below 4.00	0%	0
4.00 – 4.49	10%	5
4.50 – 4.99	20%	10
5.00 – 5.49	40%	20
5.50 – 5.99	60%	30
6.00 – 6.49	80%	40
6.50 – 7.00	100%	50

Component 2: Student Achievement

- Student Achievement is measured by the FAST Star Early Literacy Assessment. The metric looks at what percentage of **eligible children** demonstrated **Kindergarten Readiness** during PM3.
- VPK providers can earn up to 20 points for Student Achievement.
- The number of points earned is based on the percentage of **eligible children** taking the assessment that demonstrated **Kindergarten Readiness** during VPK PM3.

Component 3: Student Learning Gains

- Student Learning Gains are measured by the FAST Star Early Literacy Assessment.
- VPK providers can earn up to 30 points for Learning Gains.
- The number of points earned is based on the percentage of **eligible children** who demonstrated **sufficient gains** between PM1 and PM3.
- A provider must have at least four eligible children with a PM1 and PM3 assessment to receive points for the student learning gains component.
- There are two ways a child can demonstrate sufficient gains:
 - Growth rate
 - Literacy classification

Component 3: Student Learning Gains

Sufficient gains by growth rate means students having:

- 12 or more Unified Scaled Score (USS) points per month of growth for school year, or
- 40 or more USS points per month of growth for summer.

Growth Rate is calculated by subtracting a student's PM1 score from the student's PM3 score, then dividing by the number of calendar days between PM1 and PM3 administration dates and multiplying by 30.

$$(\text{PM3 Points} - \text{PM1 Points}) \div (\# \text{ of Calendar Days Between PM1 and PM3}) \times 30 = \text{Points Per Month}$$

Component 3: Student Learning Gains

Students can also demonstrate sufficient gains by maintaining a USS within the highest **literacy classification** (Probable Reader) at PM1 and PM3.

In Star Early Literacy, **literacy classifications** are the stages of development students go through as they become more proficient in literacy skills. Each stage is tied to a USS range, though the range varies based on grade level.

Early Emergent Reader	Unified Scaled Score 200-682
Late Emergent Reader	Unified Scaled Score 683-785
Early Transitional Reader	Unified Scaled Score 786-815
Late Transitional Reader	Unified Scaled Score 816-851
Probable Reader	Unified Scaled Score 852-1100

2024-2025 VPK Provider Designations Final Results

6,240 providers earned a designation or an incomplete status for the 2024-2025 school year, with the following overall results:

- **88%** of providers met or exceeded expectations.
- **7%** of providers did not meet expectations and are placed on probation.
- **5%** of providers received an incomplete status.

Designation	Percent of Providers	Provider Count
Excellent	33%	2,066
Above Expectations	31%	1,941
Meets Expectations	24%	1,493
Below Expectations	6%	373
Unsatisfactory	1%	43
Incomplete	5%	324

Providers on Probation (POP)

VPK providers who earn a designation of Below Expectations or Unsatisfactory for a program type (school-year or summer) must be placed on probation. POPs must develop and complete a coalition-approved improvement plan each year they are on probation.



Approved
Curriculum



Staff
Development



Communication
Plan



Improvement Plan

Approved VPK Curriculum for POPs

Publisher	Curriculum Title	Edition/Year	Print/ Online
Benchmark Education	Ready to Achieve	©2022	Both
Frog Street Press	Frog Street Pre-K Dual 2020	2 nd Edition, ©2020	Print
Frog Street Press	Frog Street Pre-K English 2020	2 nd Edition, ©2020	Print
Robert-Leslie Publishing	InvestiGator Club	3 rd Edition, ©2025	Both
Scholastic Inc.	Scholastic PreK On My Way	1 st Edition, ©2021	Both
Teacher Created Materials	Explore and Learn	1 st Edition, ©2024	Both
TeachTown	Launch for PreK (Online)	1 st Edition, ©2024	Online
Teaching Strategies	The Creative Curriculum for PreK	©2024	Both

Staff Development

- Each VPK staff member at a provider on probation must complete 20 hours of approved staff development to strengthen instructional practices.
- VPK staff members include the VPK director, the lead instructor for a VPK class and the VPK aide or assistant.
- Approved staff development activities to strengthen instructional practices are posted on the DEL website.

Communication Plan

- A provider on probation must notify its VPK families of its performance metric designation and the requirement for the POP to implement an improvement plan.
- Notification must be in writing.
- Notification must be provided to families no later than 14 calendar days after the coalition has approved the improvement plan or the child's enrollment, whichever occurs later.

Incomplete Providers



Incomplete Provider means a VPK provider that does not have sufficient data to be assigned a performance metric designation.



An Incomplete Provider must complete a technical assistance plan to strengthen their administrative or instructional practices.

VPK Accountability Resources



**VPK Metrics and Designations
Calculation Guide and FAQs**

**VPK Providers on Probation and
Incomplete Provider Guide and FAQs**



Approved VPK Curriculum List

Let's Reflect...



I learned. . .



I wonder. . .



I appreciate. . .





Summer Bridge

Summer Bridge is a FREE summer program offered by school districts to help eligible VPK students get ready for kindergarten.

- **Eligible VPK children are those who:**
 - Scored below the 10th percentile on progress monitoring three (PM3)
 - Could not complete the practice items on PM3
 - Could not complete PM3 because it was inappropriate for their needs (e.g., child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) requires paper-based testing, a non-English speaking child)
- **The district's Summer Bridge program includes:**
 - Qualified instructors
 - Four hours of instruction per day
 - Small class sizes (maximum 1:12 instructor-student ratio)
 - Developmentally appropriate instruction
 - Focus on emergent literacy

Quality & Literacy Initiatives

- **Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS™) Assessment Training**
 - Teachers, ELC staff and trainers can receive professional training in CLASS.
 - More than 1,800 participants statewide are trained to assess quality based on teacher-child interaction.
- **Emergent and Elementary Literacy Micro-Credentials**
 - 60-hour credential for child care and instructional personnel who work in a public or private early learning program/school.
 - \$1,000 stipend for completion.
 - Meet the VPK instructor emergent literacy course requirement.
- **VPK Regional Facilitators**
 - Provide professional learning and coaching support.
- **New Worlds Reading Initiative (NWRI)**
 - Eligible VPK-5 students (scoring below the 40th percentile) receive free books monthly until the students exit fifth grade.

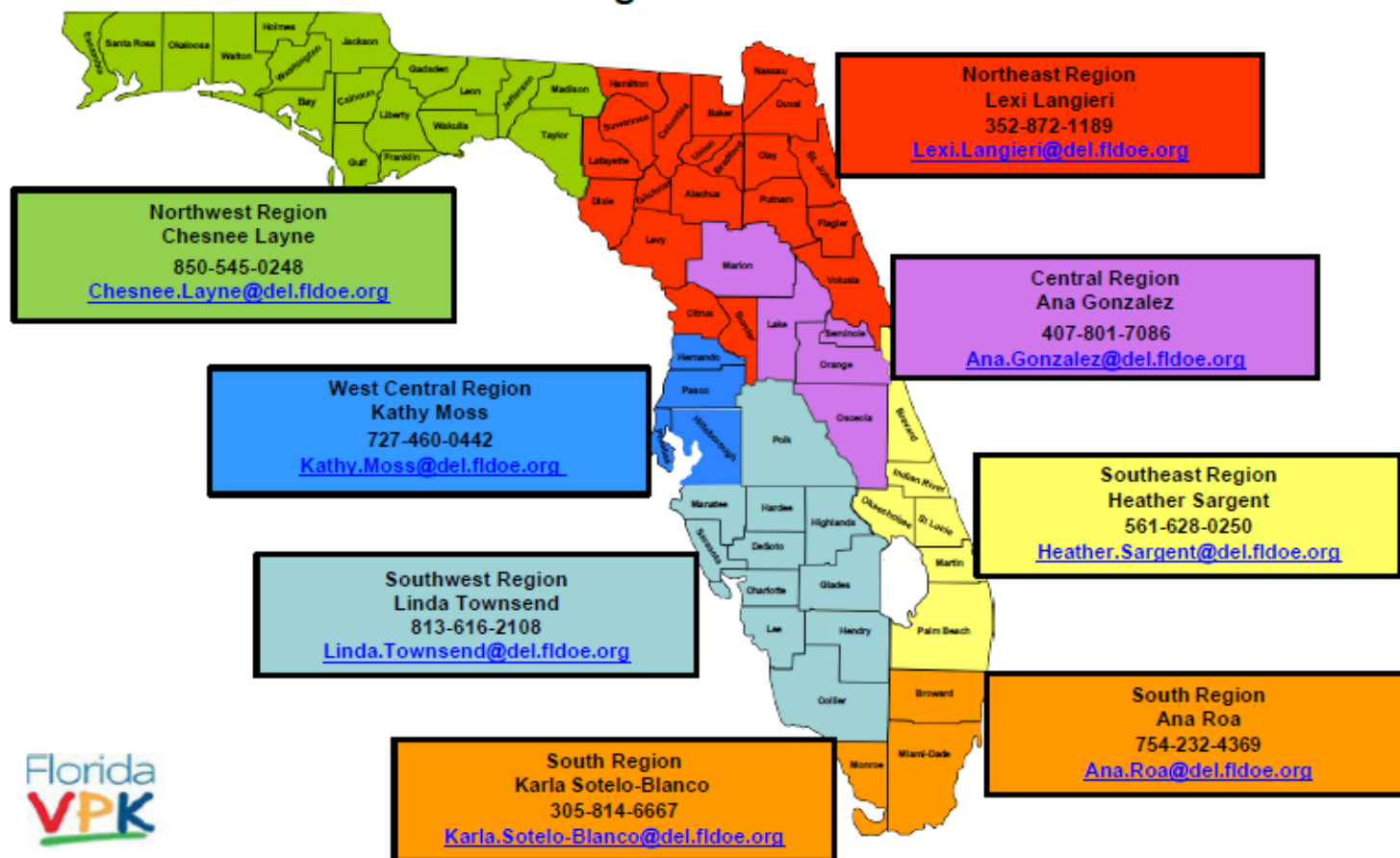


New VPK Training Opportunities

- The Language of CLASS®: Promoting Instructional Support in the Preschool Classroom
- Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Accountability: VPK Provider Performance Metric and Designations
- Reaching for the Stars: Using FAST Star Early Literacy Data
- 2 Modules of: Let's Take it Outside: Overview of Learning Through Nature and Outdoor Play
- Building Resiliency in Young Children
- Growing Florida Strong: Exploring FELDS Through State-Related Activities
- Scribbles Matter
- What's Your Point: Navigating Your Way Within a Group
- From Sounds to Sentences
- Let's Give Them Something to Talk About
- All She "ROTE"



Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program VPK Regional Facilitators



Contact the VPK Team at vpkquestions@oel.myflorida.com

Effective April 28, 2025

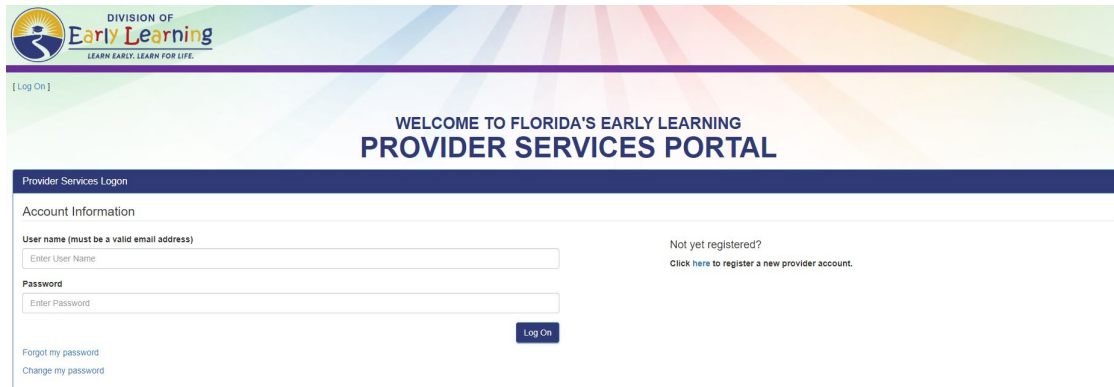
Expand VPK

- DEL partnered with the University of Florida Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies to examine families' choices related to enrollment in VPK.
- This examination described factors, as indicated by families, that influenced their enrollment decisions for the 2022-2023 VPK program year.
- Of those who enrolled, 75% preferred a private provider.
- **One Major Finding:**

Of families who did not enroll, 46% preferred a public school setting.

How Do I Become a VPK Provider?

- Contact your [early learning coalition](#) to learn about requirements and supports.
- Create account and profile in [Florida's Early Learning Provider Services Portal](#) (Provider Portal).
- Complete VPK application in Provider Portal and upload required documentation.
- Upon coalition approval, complete VPK contract in Provider Portal.

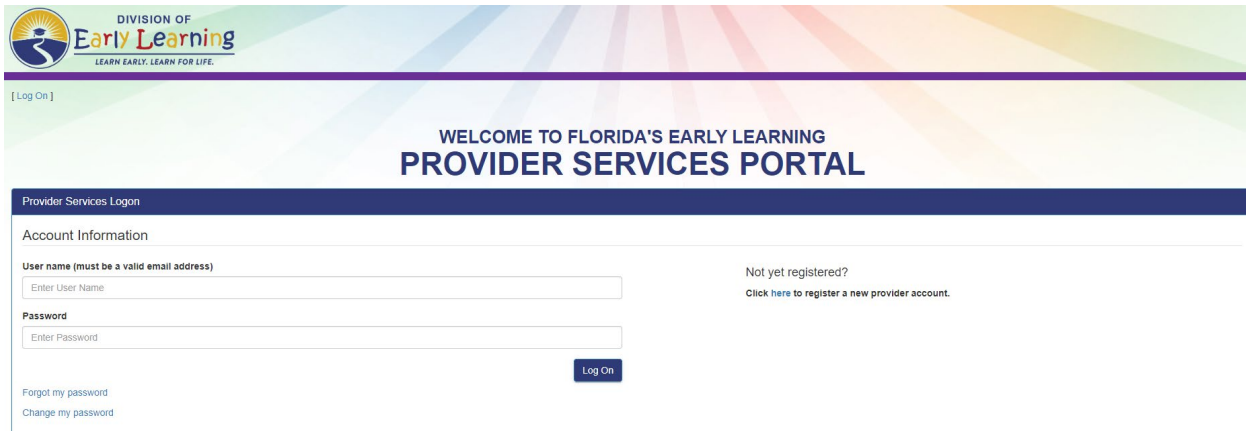


The screenshot shows the login page for the Florida's Early Learning Provider Services Portal. At the top left is the 'DIVISION OF Early Learning' logo with the tagline 'LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.' Below the logo is a '[Log On]' link. The main heading reads 'WELCOME TO FLORIDA'S EARLY LEARNING PROVIDER SERVICES PORTAL'. Underneath is a 'Provider Services Login' section. It contains an 'Account Information' box with fields for 'User name (must be a valid email address)' and 'Password', each with a placeholder 'Enter User Name' and 'Enter Password' respectively. To the right of these fields is a link for 'Not yet registered? Click here to register a new provider account.' Below the password field is a 'Log On' button. At the bottom left of the login section are links for 'Forgot my password' and 'Change my password'.

Please contact your early learning coalition for immediate assistance.
This site is best viewed with Microsoft Edge. Download the latest version of Microsoft Edge.
If you are using an Apple device (iPad, iPhone, Mac computer, MacBook), while we encourage Microsoft Edge, you may also download and use Google Chrome.

How Do I Become a SR Provider?

- Providers who want to participate in the **School Readiness Program** must execute a **Statewide School Readiness Provider Contract** with their local **ELCs**.
- Following contract execution, SR providers must submit child attendance for enrolled children monthly through the Provider Portal to receive reimbursement.



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This site is best viewed with Microsoft Edge. Download the latest version of Microsoft Edge.
If you are using an Apple device (iPad, iPhone, Mac computer, MacBook), while we encourage Microsoft Edge, you may also download and use Google Chrome.



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