

Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County



Voluntary Prekindergarten 2023/2024 Contract Briefing

EFS Modernization

Provider Portal – Contracting Prerequisites

- **To be eligible for a School Readiness or VPK contract for the 2023-24 contract year, all applicants must be registered in the Provider Portal, and must complete a provider profile.**
- **A contract cannot be granted to any provider who has not completed their provider profile.**
- **Payments are calculated from EFS MOD.**
 - **However, paper copies of attendance verification (daily sign-in/sign-out or equivalent) are still required.**

Statutory/Rule Changes

- ✓ **2022: Starting July 1, 2022, all VPK providers must have a Program Assessment completed annually during the contract year.**
- ✓ **2022: VPK Providers will begin using the STAR Early Literacy Assessment as part of the new VPK Progress Monitoring Implementation for 22/23 contract year.**
- ✓ **HB 7039 Requires any private prekindergarten provider or public school that fails to meet the minimum learning gains to use state approved curricula.**
- ✓ **HB 7039 also states that any VPK student who exhibits a substantial deficiency in early math skills, based upon the results of the administration of the final coordinated screening and progress monitoring, must be referred to the local school district and may be eligible to receive intensive interventions before entering Kindergarten.**

Statutory/Rule Changes Cont.

- ❖ **VPK rates for FY 2023-2024:**
 - School-Year increased to \$2,941 = \$5.32 per hour
 - Summer increased to \$2,511.00 = \$8.18 per hour
- ❖ **\$15/hour incentive:**
 - The funding incentive for paying teachers \$15/hour was not written into the budget for this fiscal year. The legislature compensated in part by increasing the BSA (base student allocation) again this year.
- ❖ **Overall gain in funding from 2021-22 and prior of \$2486 to 2023-24 level of \$2941. Net increase of \$455 per year per child**

VPK Enrollments

- **Online mandatory for all VPK enrollments**
- **All Parents must register at**
<https://familyservices2.floridaearlylearning.com>
- **Must upload two documents or cannot submit:**
 - **Proof of residence, bills, leases, etc.**
 - **Birth certificate, shot record, passport, etc.**
- **Parents print COE once approved**
- **Can be done anywhere: home, library, Provider, Coalition**

VPK Enrollments cont.

- **No pre-pay program participants**
- **During August phone calls will only be returned once daily**
- **Child transfers: only one allowed even if child attends only one day.**
- **COE/Enrollment must be entered into EFS MOD prior to ANY payment for attendance. No back dating allowed.**
- **Providers must retain copy of signed COE in child file.**
- **Hope Wilson: 850-607-8556, hwilson@elcescambia.org**

Child Assessments – Coordinated Screening & Progress Monitoring STAR Early Literacy

- ✓ **Mandatory Progress Monitoring (PM 1, 2, 3) will be completed 3 times annually, for all VPK children. This takes the place of what we of old Assessment Program (AP 1, 2, 3).**
 - ✓ **Progress Monitoring is now an online only assessment therefore it is automatically input into the system. There is no paper copy of this assessment.**
 - ✓ **Must make due dates, or noncompliance notification will be issued**

School Year VPK Program Assessment Periods are as follows:

- ✓ **PM1 administered the first 30 instructional days of your VPK class beginning**
- ✓ **PM2 administered after 40% of the instructional hours have been completed**
- ✓ **PM3 administered during the last 30 instructional days of your VPK class ending**

Note: New Rule 6M-8.620 governs this program.



Child Assessments – Coordinated Screening & Progress Monitoring STAR Early Literacy

Summer VPK Program Assessment Periods are as follows:

- ✓ **PM1 administered the first 10 instructional days of your VPK class beginning**
- ✓ **PM2 administered after 40% of the instructional hours have been completed and no more than 60% of the instructional hours have been completed.**
- ✓ **PM3 administered during the last 10 instructional days of your VPK class ending**
- ✓ **ELC offers technical assistance on assessment administration and entering data to the DOE website.**

Note: New Rule 6M-8.620 governs this program.



Child Assessments – Continued

Coordinated Screening & Progress Monitoring

STAR Early Literacy

- ✓ New assessments are being referred to as Florida's Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) using Star Early Literacy.
- ✓ You are required to complete these assessments on a touchscreen device.
- ✓ The Coalition issues this device to every VPK Classroom, along with a headset for each device.
- ✓ Each teacher/assessor will be required **annually** to complete training tailored to the administration of the assessment in order to sign a VPK contract.
- ✓ The Coalition will monitor to ensure the training has been completed.
- ✓ Note: New Rule 6M-8.620 governs this program.



Program Assessments

- ✓ **Every VPK class will have a program assessment annually (VPKPA).**
- ✓ **Program Assessments will not begin until after the 15th day of class beginning.**
- ✓ **The Contract Minimum Threshold to be eligible to participate in the VPK program is 4.00.**
- ✓ **If a provider falls below a 4.00, they may request a second observation at their expense.**
- ✓ **If a second assessment is not requested, the provider will be allowed to complete the VPK school year, however, they will not be eligible to contract the following year.**
- ✓ **Provider may request an assessment the following year for contract eligibility in the next fiscal year contract.**
- ✓ **Providers receive one free assessment annually for contracting.**

- ✓ **Note: New Rule 6M-8.621 governs this program.**

VPK Program Requirements

- **Provider must have an Attendance Policy**
 - **Must provide parents copy of policy**
 - **Must require parents to verify attendance**
- **Cannot charge anything for VPK.**
 - **No school Enrollments Fees**
 - **No supplemental services as a condition of enrollment**
 - **No breaks in class, with mandatory fees, no field trip charges**
- **Parents are not responsible for financial consequences**



VPK Program Requirements

- **For a VPK Director endorsement must have:**
 - (a) **Implementing the Florida Standards in Preschool Classrooms: 3 Years Old to Kindergarten (instructor-led or online);**
 - (b) **Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors (online);**
 - (c) **Mathematical Thinking for Early Learners (online);**
 - (d) **Language and Vocabulary in the VPK Classroom (online);**
 - (e) **VPK Director Credential course (online);**
- **Lead Instructors must have the 5-hour Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors – 2021 Course**
- **Lead instructors must complete a 5-hour emergent literacy training every 5 years.**
- **Directors and lead instructors must complete “Implementing the Florida Standards in Preschool Classrooms: 3 Years Old to Kindergarten (instructor-led or online)”**
- **Keep qualifications, including background screenings, current. Put on DOE website whenever possible.**



VPK Program Requirements

- Rosters need to be submitted as soon as possible. Please update regularly.
- **Maintain your declared hours**
- Lesson plans are mandatory
- Lead teacher must be in class, including outdoors
- Outdoor activities are allowed but must be productive. Activities must be planned and on your Lesson Plans.



Information Changes

- Coalition must receive updates on all changes in business information, such as changes in owner, director, teachers, business name, banking info, or phone number, within 14 calendar days.

NOTE: If you change your FEIN number, this will require a whole new profile and a new contract. Please consult with the Contracts Administrator before make this change.

- Temporary emergency closings reported by the close of business the first day that the closing occurs.
- Closing permanently, changing location or ownership must be reported at least 30 days prior to changes.



VPK Monitoring

- The Provider agrees the Coalition has the right to monitor the Provider's compliance with the contract, statutes and regulations and Coalition policies.
- Provider agrees to allow open access to its' facilities and records upon request, and cooperation with the Coalition for all monitoring's or audits.
- ALL VPK Providers shall be monitored EVERY year.
- Daily sign-in/out is critical for payment verification. No sign-in/out sheet, = no payment.
- Every child required to have a Certificate of Eligibility prior to any payment authorization. Back dating is not allowed.
- Monitoring may result in less disallowed payments, but more CAPs. However, multiple CAPs may result in contract termination.
- Use PIU@elcescambia.org for CAP responses, incident reporting, parent and provider complaints, and dispute resolution correspondence.
 - Dispute requests must be by letter, but can attach to an email.

Readiness Rate

- **Progress Monitoring began FY22/23**
- **Readiness Rate scores will be determined by a combination of the Program Assessment score, child assessment score and ...? (pending Rule development)**
- **New rates for 2022/2023 will not have consequences.**
- **There will be no new providers on probation this year.**
 - **Rates for the prior year will remain published on ELC website**
 - **Those currently on Probation will remain on probation until a new rating system has been established and put in place.**

Staying Funded and Contracted

- **Provider Year-End Reimbursement Reconciliation Verification Letter must be done.**
- **VPK contracts for the new VPK year will be issued but they can be terminated for failure to submit the Reconciliation letter before classes start.**
- **Coalition Contracting Eligibility Policy addresses statutory changes regarding Class 1 DCF violations.**



Compliance – Failure to Comply

- **Provider agrees the Coalition may require corrective action, withhold funds, or terminate this Contract if the Provider fails to comply with the requirements of federal, state, and local laws, federal regulations, Agency rules, regulations and policies, or this Contract.**
- **“If a private prekindergarten provider or public school fails or refuses to comply with this part, or if a provider or school engages in misconduct, the office shall require the early learning coalition to remove the provider and require the school district to remove the school from eligibility to deliver the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program and receive state funds under this part for a period of 5 years.” s. 1002.67.(4)(b)**
- **Corrective Action Plans (CAPs)**
 - **Fewer disallowed payments, more probation and rechecks.**
 - **Two CAP limit. Third non-compliance expect contract termination.**
- **Suspected of fraud or being under governmental investigation may be cause for termination.**



Due Process

- **The Provider may request a review of determinations made by the Coalition using procedures detailed in Exhibit 2.**
- **While a review for termination is being examined a Provider may not offer services.**
- **Exhibit 2 has detailed steps to follow and starts with a request in writing for a review hearing.**
 - Request must be within 5 business days of receipt of notice.
 - Name and contact information individual authorized by Provider.
 - Specific action by Coalition that Provider disputes and specific reasons.
 - Whether Provider will be represented by an attorney.
 - Include supporting documentation.
- **Dispute requests must be by signed letter but can attach to email. Use PIU@elcescambia.org for dispute resolution correspondence.**
- **Decision of Review Hearing Committee is final.**



Unusual Incidents

- **All** unusual incidents are to be reported to the Coalition by close of business next business day and a written report is to be submitted within 3 business days.
- Anything COVID related is considered a reportable incident.
- Use PIU@elcescambia.org or call 850-595-5400 for incident reporting.

Child Abuse Hotline

Comply with state child abuse and neglect reporting requirements.

All employees are required to call

1-800-962-2873

if child Abuse is suspected.

(F.S.S. section 39.201)



Closures for COVID Incidents

- **COVID Closures are case by case as no two closures recommendations from DOH are the same.**
 - DOH is no longer recommending closures.
 - Quarantine varies by child/teacher.
- **A variety of options in response to closures.**
 - **Currently no provision for an 80/20 waiver.**
 - **Calendar changes always an option.**
- **Child absence days for COVID will be counted toward a child's absences just like all other absences.**
- **80/20 Rule a concern for all closures and absences**
- **Use Covid@elcescambia.org or call 850-595-5400 for incident reporting.**

Coalition VPK Support Contacts

- **Theresa Hoang:** VPK Contracts Administrator 850-741-8390
- **Millie Fre:** VPK Reimbursement Specialist 850-741-8354
- **Hope Wilson:** VPK Eligibility Specialist 850-607-8556
- **Joyce Griffin and Stephanie Richardson:** VPK Provider Support Specialists 850-741-8416 and 850-755-7177
- **Roxanne Daley:** VPK Program Assessment Observer
850-741-8426
- **Christy Zukowski:** TS GOLD Administrator 850-741-8368
 - For Providers who use TS GOLD
 - Coalition committed to funding all participants in TS GOLD



Coalition Email Contacts

To ensure your email reaches the correct department for immediate assistance, please refer to the email list below. These go directly to staff working in these areas.

Absence Reporting: absent@elcescambia.org

Ask a general question: askelc@elcescambia.org

Program Assessment questions: classhelp@elcescambia.org

Child Care Resource & Referral: crr@elcescambia.org

Closure reporting: thoang@elcescambia.org

Contract questions: contracts@elcescambia.org

COVID reporting: covid@elcescambia.org

Inclusion/Behavior questions: inclusion@elcescambia.org

Incident reporting: piu@elcescambia.org

Submit Corrective Action Plans: piu@elcescambia.org

VPK Child Eligibility questions: VPKeligibility@elcescambia.org

VPK Attendance questions: VPKAttendance@elcescambia.org

VPK Program Question: VPKhelp@elcescambia.org



Questions

AskELC@elcescambia.org



Contact

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