

# Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County



## VPK 2022/2023 Contract Briefing

# **EFS Modernization**

## **Provider Portal – Contracting Prerequisites**

- **To be eligible for a School Readiness or VPK contract for the 2022-23 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

- ✓ **All VPK Directors must be VPK Endorsed. VPK Exemptions no longer accepted**
- ✓ **All VPK Instructors including directors, must have the 5-hour Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors – 2021 Course**
- ✓ **2021: FL Statutes 1002.55 and 1002.63 require lead instructors to complete 15-hours of emergent literacy training no later than June 30, 2022.**
  - Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors must have been completed after July 1, 2018.
  - Language & Vocabulary in the VPK Classroom must have been completed after July 1, 2020.
- ✓ **2021: Lead instructors must complete a 5-hour emergent literacy training every 5 years.**
- ✓ **2021: Directors and lead instructors must complete “Implementing the Florida Standards in Preschool Classrooms: 3 Years Old to Kindergarten (instructor-led or online)”**
  - This is a new course, there are no acceptations, this course must be on your transcript.
- ✓ **2022: Starting July 1, 2022, all VPK providers must have a Program Assessment completed during the 22/23 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.**

# Statutory/Rule Changes Cont.

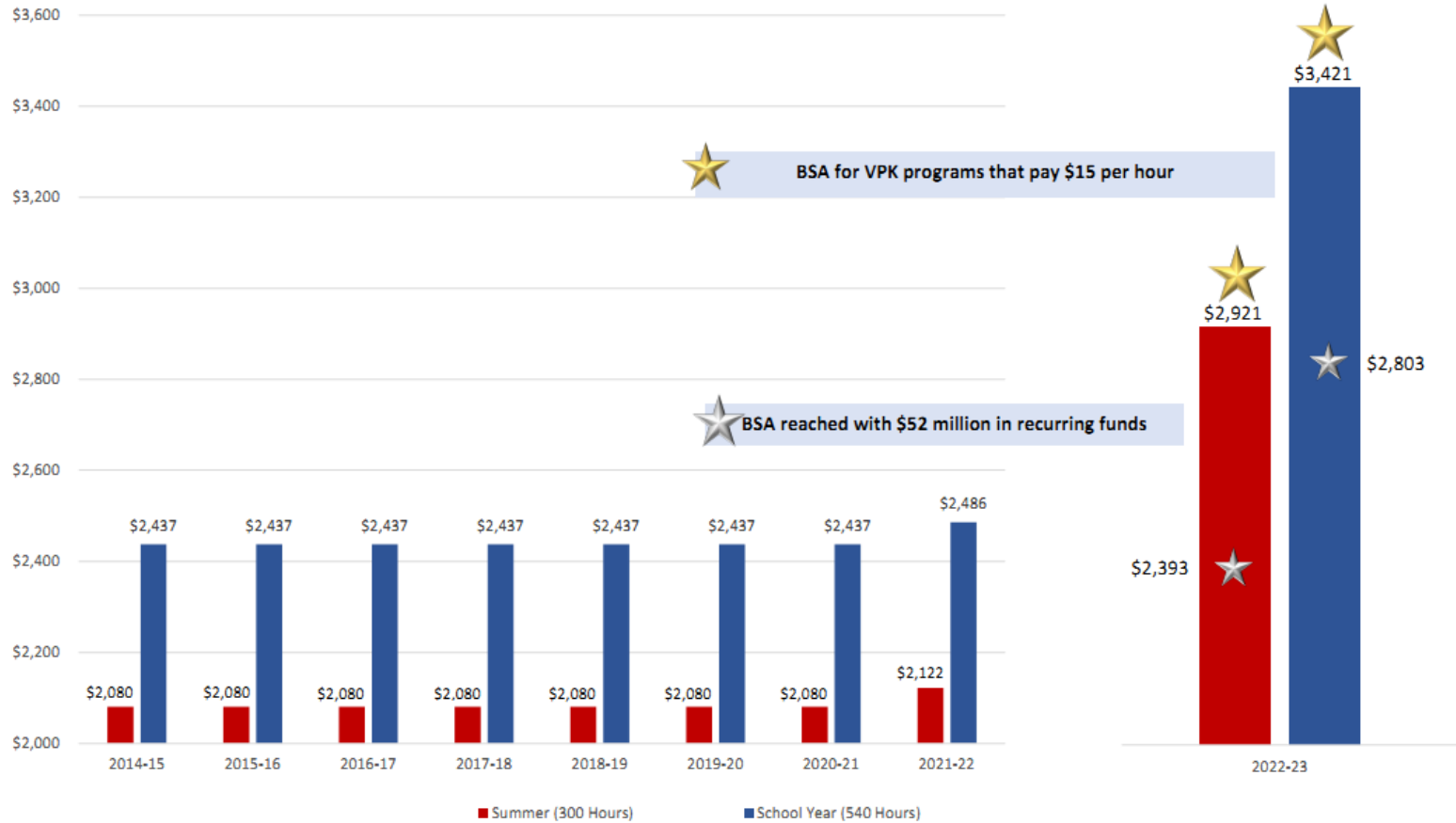
- ✓ **VPK rates for FY 2022-2023:**
  - School-Year increased to \$2,803 = \$5.19 per hour
  - Summer increased to \$2,393.00 = \$7.98 per hour
- ✓ **Additional rate increase:**
  - Rate increase for any provider who is already paying their VPK staff \$15/hour OR for those who agree to increase their VPK staff wages up to \$15/hour within 30 days of receiving additional funding.
  - It is estimated that this additional increase would be about \$650 per child enrolled, making the across the board increase approximately \$967 total.
    - (This increase is only an estimation AND is available ONLY IF you agree to pay your VPK staff \$15/hour)



## 2022 Florida Legislature's Historic VPK Funding Sets New Course for Early Learning



The 2022 Florida Legislature set a new trajectory for Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program, infusing an \$52 million in recurring state funds raise the base student allocation (BSA) by \$317 per child. In addition, the Legislature appropriated an additional \$100 million for VPK programs that agree to raise VPK teacher pay to a minimum \$15 an hour, lifting the BSA an additional \$618 per child. Thus, VPK programs that agree to the \$15 an hour pay will receive a BSA increase of \$935 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.

- **COE's must be submitted to Millie Fre by:**
  - **July 18, 2022 for pre-pay only**
- **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 Phone: 850-607-8556**

# Child Assessments – Coordinated Screening & Progress Monitoring STAR Early Literacy

- ✓ **Mandatory Progress Monitoring will be completed 3 times annually, for all VPK children. This takes the place of what we currently call AP's.**
  - ✓ **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 contract shall terminate**
- ✓ **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**
- ✓ **ELC offers technical assistance on assessment administration and entering data to the DOE website.**
- ✓ **Note: The Rule for this program is still being developed. Information is subject to change.**





# Child Assessments – Continued

## Coordinated Screening & Progress Monitoring

### STAR Early Literacy

- ✓ **After this fiscal year Bright Beginnings will no longer be used.**
- ✓ **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 will issue this device to every VPK Classroom, along with a headset for each device.**
- ✓ **Each teacher/assessor will be required to complete training tailored to the administration of the assessment.**
- ✓ **The Coalition will monitor to ensure the training has been completed.**
  
- ✓ **Note: The Rule for this program is still being developed. Information is subject to change.**



# Program Assessments

- ✓ **Program Assessments begin FY22/23.**
- ✓ **Every VPK class will have a program assessment annually.**
- ✓ **Program Assessments will not begin until after the 15<sup>th</sup> day of class beginning.**
- ✓ **The Contract Minimum Threshold to be eligible to participate in the VPK program is 4.**
- ✓ **If a provider falls below a 4, they may request a 2<sup>nd</sup> observation at their expense.**
- ✓ **If a second assessment is not requested, the provider will be allowed to complete the VPK school year, however, 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: The Rule for this program is still being developed. Information is subject to change.**

# 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);
- **Keep qualifications, including background screenings, current. Put on DOE website whenever possible.**
- **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 OKAY, but must be productive**



# 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](mailto: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 will begin 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 will not be published for 2021/2022 VPK Year and 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:**
    - **Come off if rate 60 or higher**
    - **Stay on if rate below 60**

# 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)**
- **More 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](mailto: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](mailto: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

- **Anything COVID related is considered a reportable incident.**
- **COVID Closures are case by case as no two closures recommendations from DOH are the same.**
  - **No set number of days to be closed. (Not always 14 days)**
  - **May be closed by facility, classroom and/or teachers/students.**
  - **It all DEPENDS!**
- **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 also an issue as it may impact 80/20**
- **80/20 Rule a concern for all closures and absences**
- **Use [Covid@elcescambia.org](mailto: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 850-741-8209
- **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](mailto:absent@elcescambia.org)

Ask a general question: [askelc@elcescambia.org](mailto:askelc@elcescambia.org)

Program Assessment questions: [classhelp@elcescambia.org](mailto:classhelp@elcescambia.org)

Child Care Resource & Referral: [crr@elcescambia.org](mailto:crr@elcescambia.org)

Closure reporting: [thoang@elcescambia.org](mailto:thoang@elcescambia.org)

Contract questions: [contracts@elcescambia.org](mailto:contracts@elcescambia.org)

COVID reporting: [covid@elcescambia.org](mailto:covid@elcescambia.org)

Inclusion/Behavior questions: [inclusion@elcescambia.org](mailto:inclusion@elcescambia.org)

Incident reporting: [piu@elcescambia.org](mailto:piu@elcescambia.org)

Submit Corrective Action Plans: [piu@elcescambia.org](mailto:piu@elcescambia.org)

VPK Child Eligibility questions: [VPKeligibility@elcescambia.org](mailto:VPKeligibility@elcescambia.org)

VPK Attendance questions: [VPKAttendance@elcescambia.org](mailto:VPKAttendance@elcescambia.org)



# Questions

[AskELC@elcescambia.org](mailto:AskELC@elcescambia.org)



# Contact

Walter Bruce Watson, Jr.  
Executive Director

[bwatson@elcescambia.org](mailto:bwatson@elcescambia.org)

850-595-5400

New Location Starting January 2022:

1720 West Fairfield Dr.

Suite 100/400

Pensacola, FL 32501