

What Families of Preschool Children with Special Needs Should Know about the Summer Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program



The summer of 2006 will be the first year of implementation for the Summer Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program. This fact sheet has been written to provide information about the Summer VPK Program and to explain what you, as the family of a child with special needs, can expect.

Here are some important things you should know about the Summer VPK Program.

- Your child is eligible to attend the Summer VPK Program if you are a resident of Florida; your child was four years old as of September 1, 2005; and your child did not attend the VPK School Year Program.
- The Summer VPK Program must be offered by your local school district but may not necessarily be available in every elementary school.
- The program may be offered by private preschool programs in your community.
- The Summer VPK Program will be 300 hours in length. School districts and participating private preschool programs in your community will decide on the starting and ending dates and the length of the school day for the Summer VPK Program.
- The Summer VPK teachers will be certified teachers or have a Bachelor's degree in an approved area.
- One teacher is required for every 10 children. The classes may be organized so that two teachers will have a classroom for 20 children.



- The Summer VPK Program will be a developmentally appropriate program based on the VPK Education Standards. These standards provide guidance on ways classroom instruction and the classroom environment can promote learning. The program's instructional focus will address the following areas:

- Physical Health
- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Language and Communication
- Emergent Literacy
- Cognitive Development and General Knowledge
- Motor Development



- Both school district and private preschools in your community offering the Summer VPK Program will have policies related to attendance and discipline.

- There is no requirement for school districts and private preschool programs to transport children to Summer VPK. Families should anticipate that transportation will be their responsibility.

- The VPK program is not special education and does not provide for specially designed instruction or related services. If your child has an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) during the school year, those services will not be provided as a part of the Summer VPK Program.



- If your child does have an IEP or other special needs, the school district will make the program accessible to your child. For example, ramps must be available for a child in a wheelchair, large print or other special materials must be provided for a child with a visual impairment, or special supports that are listed on a health plan must be addressed.



- If your child does have special needs, please make sure you share this information when registering for the Summer VPK Program.

- You can learn more about the Summer VPK Program by contacting your local school district or the Early Learning Coalition in your area.

- Contact information for your local Early Learning Coalition can be found at <http://www.floridajobs.org/VPK/index.html>.