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July 18, 2005

**MEMORANDUM #05-02**

**TO:** District School Superintendents
Elementary School Principals

**FROM:** Shan Goff, Executive Director
Office of Early Learning

**SUBJECT:** First Day of the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program

With the first day of the 2005-06 school year just around the corner, many school districts, as well as private and public providers, will be offering the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program for Florida's four-year-olds. We are anticipating a smooth start and would like to share some ideas to assist your districts on this *First Day of VPK*.

Collaboration with Early Learning Coalitions

Districts are encouraged to continue working with their local Early Learning Coalitions to coordinate efforts to register and enroll children in VPK, whether for a public school program or one offered by a private provider. To assist you, enclosed are:

- a CD with the VPK Public Service Announcements in English and Spanish
- Early Learning Coalitions Contact Information
- a Fact Sheet on VPK from the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI)

Another valuable resource is the DOE/Office of Early Learning website at http://www.myfloridaeducation.com/earlylearning/.

**SHAN GOFF**
**Executive Director**
**Office of Early Learning**

Information to Parents Prior to the First Day

Each school's Open House and/or School Orientation prior to the first day of school is a great opportunity to provide information to parents about VPK. If a district has chosen not to offer VPK in the fall, it's advisable to provide parents and caregivers with this information and direct them to the local Early Learning Coalition for information on participating providers or have copies of the list of participating providers (obtained from the coalition) available at the school.

Other effective ways to disseminate VPK information to parents and caregivers would be to include VPK registration information on the school district's website as well as in the *Back-to-School* information section in your local newspaper.

Unexpected Children on the *First Day of VPK*

Elementary school principals will want to work out a plan with staff and the Early Learning Coalition for the possibility that, in the first few days of school, a four-year-old may show up for VPK who is either not properly registered for the school's VPK program or at a school that is not offering the program.

While bus drivers are routinely presented with the challenge of transporting children who may or may not be at the correct bus stop or previously registered at the designated school, districts should inform their bus drivers that there is the possibility that a four-year-old child may mistakenly arrive at a school bus stop with the intention of attending VPK in a school that is not participating. In these situations where the child is unaccompanied by an adult, the bus driver should transport the four-year-old to school and arrangements should be made to contact the parents or caregivers immediately.

We appreciate your support, collaboration, and ongoing commitment to the inauguration of Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program. Please feel free to contact the Office of Early Learning, at (850) 245-0445, SunCom 205-0445.

cc: District Prekindergarten Contacts
District Transportation Directors
Early Learning Coalition Executive Directors
Florida Association of District School Superintendents

Enclosures (3)

CD Rom (District Prekindergarten Contacts)
Early Learning Coalitions Contact Information (All)
AWI Fact Sheet (All)