Provider Types
All VPK providers must be one of the following:

- Licensed child care facility
- Licensed family day care home,
- Licensed large family child care home,
- Nonpublic school or faith-based provider that is exempt from licensure,
- Public school districts

Each provider must also meet one of the following qualifications:

- Be accredited by a VPK approved accrediting association (Attachment 3);
  OR
- Hold a current Gold Seal Quality Care designation; OR
- Be a licensed child care provider.

Registered family child care homes, unlicensed family child care homes and informal child care providers are not eligible to participate in the VPK program.

Each school district is required by law to deliver the summer VPK program.

Director Credential
Consistent with the requirements of section 1002.55(3)(f), F.S., a private prekindergarten program delivering the VPK program must have a director who has a VPK Director Endorsement, issued by DCF, that meets the requirements of Rule 6A.6.040(2), FAC.

Exempt: Successful completion of the Director Credential prior to December 31, 2006, satisfies this requirement, although individuals are strongly encouraged to acquire the VPK Endorsement.

Endorsement: Effective January 1, 2007, to receive a VPK Director Endorsement Credential, applicants must complete the following:
• The Florida Director Credential Certificate program.
• The DOE-approved training on the Florida Standards for Four Year Olds adopted by the State Board of Education.
• The five hour online DOE-approved course Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors.
• The five hour online DOE-approved course VPK Director Credential.

Background Screening
A Level 2 background screening, as well as a signed and dated Affidavit of Good Moral Character, must be completed by each staff member before employment. In addition, he/she must be re-fingerprinted at least once every five (5) years. The Early Learning Coalition of Duval offers Live Scan electronic fingerprinting to Duval County VPK providers. Appointments are required; please contact the Live Scan Specialist at 208-2040 ext. 250.

Non-Instructional Days
Non-instructional days during your VPK year are days you do not offer VPK instruction (holidays, teacher planning days, etc). You do not receive VPK funding for non-instructional days, even though your center may remain open. For example, a private child care program could decide to follow the Public School schedule and thus their VPK program takes a Spring Break but the center itself is not closed that week. In this case, providers may charge parents the cost for that care, but they must inform parents ahead of time what the VPK schedule will be so parents can make alternate arrangements for non-instructional days if they choose not to attend on those days. If a provider serves children who receive a child care subsidy, they will be paid the full day regular rate for children on non-instructional days.

Instructional Hours
In order to count as instructional hours, mealtime and outdoor play time must provide activities that nurture and enhance children’s development. Children can attend chapel during VPK hours. Nap time CANNOT be counted as instructional time. Providers have flexibility in how they structure their instructional hours as long as they meet the required number of instructional hours during their calendar year. This schedule should not change except under extreme circumstances and prior approval from the Coalition.

• School Year Program
  o Providers must offer 540 instructional hours. School-year programs cannot begin before the school district’s first day and must end by June 30.
  o If providers offer a three-hour VPK day, they may choose to follow the Duval County Public School calendar - “Calendar Z” (Attachments 6 & 7). Also included is a Calendar Worksheet-Alternate Schedule (Attachment 8) for providers who choose to follow a different schedule.

• Summer Program
  o Providers must offer 300 instructional hours for Summer VPK. Summer programs cannot begin before May 1 and must end before the start of the school district’s first day of school for the new year.
Ratio
Each VPK class must have in attendance at least four (4) children with eligible VPK certificates in order to begin instruction for funding. Providers may organize their VPK classes to combine VPK and non-VPK children as a blended class, but cannot exceed the maximum class size, the teacher to child ratio, or the licensed room capacity.

- School Year Program
  - 4 - 11 children requires 1 credentialed instructor
  - 12-20 children requires 1 credentialed instructor plus an assistant

- Summer Program
  - 4 - 12 children requires 1 credentialed instructor

Staff Qualifications
- School Year Program
  Each VPK classroom must have at least one instructor who holds at a minimum:
    - A Child Development Associate (NECC) issued by the National Credentialing Program; along with Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors and Standards for Four Year Olds
    - A credential approved by the Department of Children and Families as being equivalent to or greater than the national credential (FCCP); along with Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors and Standards for Four Year Olds
    - Bachelor’s Degree or higher in early childhood education, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer sciences (formerly known as home economics);
    - Bachelor’s Degree or higher in elementary education, with certification to teach any age birth through 6th grade. The certification does not need to be current, but cannot have been suspended or revoked;
    - An Associate’s Degree or higher in child development;
    - An Associate’s Degree or higher in an unrelated field, with at least six (6) hours in early childhood education or child development and at least 480 hours of experience teaching or providing care for children birth through 8 years of age;
    - An educational credential approved by the Department of Education as being equivalent to or greater than an educational credential described above.

- Summer Program
  Each VPK classroom must have an instructor who holds:
    - A valid Florida Educator’s Certificate (in any field); OR
    - Bachelor’s Degree or higher in early childhood education, prekindergarten or primary education, preschool education, or family and consumer sciences (formerly known as home economics); OR
    - Bachelor’s Degree or higher in elementary education, with certification to teach any age birth through 6th grade. The certification does not need to be current, but cannot have been suspended or revoked.
**Florida Standards for Four Year Olds**
The Florida Standards for Four Year Olds describe age-appropriate understandings related to the ways four-year-olds think, recreate, reason, and create as they engage in the learning process. Training has been developed to ensure all VPK teachers effectively design and implement suitable early learning environments. The participants will be introduced to the Standards for Four Year Olds, which are guidelines that describe what children should know and be able to do at the end of their VPK experience.
To register for the Florida Standards for Four Year Olds, log on to the DCF Website: http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/childcare/training.shtml, click on Course Registration on the left hand side.

**Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors**
VPK lead instructors with either a National CDA (NECC) or state approved CDA (FCCP) are required to complete the five hour online DOE-approved course Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors. This course is available on line at the DCF website at: (http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/childcare/training.shtml).

Additional professional development opportunities can be found at the Northeast Florida Master Training Calendar http://www.nefltraining.org/.

**Credential Renewal**
Individuals with a National CDA (NECC) or Birth through Five credential (FCCP) must complete the renewal process at least every five (5) years to maintain an active credential. For more information, please contact:

Child Care Training Information Center (CCTIC)
2807 Remington Green Circle, Tallahassee, FL 32308
1-888-352-2842

**Curriculum Requirements**
Curriculum must be developmentally appropriate, designed to prepare a student for early literacy, enhance the age-appropriate progress of students in attaining the state-adopted performance standards, and prepare students to be ready for kindergarten based on the statewide kindergarten screening. Providers may select or design their VPK curriculum unless they fail to meet kindergarten readiness rate (at that time, they must meet additional requirements).

**Maintenance of Records**
VPK child records are confidential and must be kept by the provider for at least five (5) years after the child’s last day of attendance. Records include Certificate of Eligibility, Parent Attendance Verification Forms (Attachments 14 & 15), and signed VPK Attendance Policy (sample-Attachment 4). The parent of a VPK child has the right to
inspect and review the individual records of his or her child and to obtain copies of the
records; original documents must remain in the child’s file.

Records of the VPK director and instructors must be kept for at least five (5) years after
the employee’s last day of employment.

**Compliance Verification**
The Early Learning Coalition of Duval (ELC) has an ongoing duty to verify a VPK
provider’s compliance with Florida Statutes, state policies, and ELC procedures. The
provider must allow the Coalition to enter the VPK site at any reasonable time for the
purpose of monitoring. The provider must also allow the Coalition to inspect and copy
the records maintained by the provider concerning the VPK program, VPK instructors,
VPK director, and VPK children. Please see the VPK Provider Self-Monitoring Checklist
for more details on what items will be reviewed. The provider’s non-compliance with
any terms of the VPK Provider Agreement may result in the Coalition withholding funds
and/or the termination of the VPK contract. The provider must submit for approval a
corrective action plan before returning to the VPK program. The Coalition will notify the
provider in writing of any contract/financial penalties.
Applications must now be completed on the Child Care Provider Portal: https://providers.elcduval.org/. You can find detailed instructions on the features and use of the portal in the Provider Portal User Guide found at the ELC website: http://www.elcduval.org/provider-portal/. Helpful video tutorials can also be accessed at that site.

Each private provider or public school interested in delivering the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK) must complete the following:

- Form OEL-VPK 10
- Form OEL-VPK 11A
- Form OEL-VPK 11B
- Form OEL-VPK 20 (Provider Agreement)
- Form OEL-VPK 20 PP (for private providers)

**Supporting Documentation** (uploaded to the Documents Library)
- A copy of DCF License, or official Gold Seal Certificate, or documentation of other approved accreditation (Attachment 3)
- General Liability Insurance
- Documentation of Director’s Credentials
- Documentation of staff credentials
- Director and Staff background screening, including:
  - DCF Clearance letter
  - Affidavit of Good Moral Character (Attachment 2)
- Advance Payment Option Form (Attachment 1)

ELC will notify the provider if any additional information is needed.

**Application Changes**
Providers must notify ELC of any application changes. Changes include:

- Director changes
- Owner changes/Name changes/Address changes
- Contact information changes (i.e. phone numbers, e-mail)
- Change of license (Probationary, Provisional, or other)
- Facility closure
- VPK instructor changes (lead teacher or assistant)
- Class curriculum changes
- VPK schedules or program hour changes (under extreme circumstances only)

The VPK Staff Change Form (Attachment 14) can be found on the portal Dashboard under Downloadable Documents and must be submitted to the Coalition via fax (483-3089) or by uploading to the Child Care Provider Portal under Additional Support Documentation.
Enrollment
VPK law allows a parent/legal guardian to enroll their child with any private prekindergarten provider or public school that is eligible to deliver the VPK program. Each VPK provider must comply with antidiscrimination requirements and may not discriminate against parents and/or children on the grounds of race, color or national origin.

Florida law specifies that a VPK provider may not require a parent to enroll their child in or require the payment of any fee or charge for ‘supplemental services’ (example: extended day, wrap around or full-day services) as a condition of admitting a child for enrollment in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program.

The Early Learning Coalition issues a Certificate of Eligibility to parents upon completion of the registration process.

Provider Attendance Policy
VPK Providers must provide parents/legal guardians with a copy of their written attendance policy upon enrollment of each child into the VPK program. Parents must sign signifying they agree to the provider’s attendance policy. Signed documentation must be kept in the child’s file for monitoring purposes. (See attendance policy sample - Attachment 4)

A provider’s attendance policy is not the same as the State’s VPK Funding Policy. Providers have the right to determine how many absences/tardies are allowable. Children who complete 70% (including paid absences) of a VPK program will be included in that program’s readiness rate.

Enrollment Procedures
1. Parent must submit the Certificate of Eligibility to provider to ensure funding.
2. Provider enters the child information to Roster on the portal.
3. If a child leaves the VPK program, either by parent choice or provider choice, the provider must complete a classroom disenrollee form (Attachment 9).
4. Provider faxes the disenrollee form to the reimbursement department at 394-1235.

Delayed Enrollment
A provider may enroll a child in a VPK classroom after the class has begun, if at least 10% of the instructional hours remain (54 hours for a school year program or 30 hours for a summer program). The parent/guardian must complete and sign the “Informed Parent Consent” form.
Transfer Procedure
A child may transfer only ONE TIME-if they have completed less than 70% of the VPK program hours- regardless of circumstances. Providers may accept children with approved transfers; however, the parent must submit the new Certificate of Eligibility prior to enrollment. Providers will not receive payment without a newly issued certificate. As a reminder, a provider should not return the Certificate of Eligibility to a parent if their child disenrolls. The provider is required to maintain the certificate in the child’s file for five years.

Program Fees
VPK provider may not require a parent/legal guardian to pay fees or charges for any part of the VPK program, including, but not limited to registration fees. However, a provider may request that a parent voluntarily purchase or bring in personal items such as: instructional materials or supplies, lunch, snacks, or hygiene products (e.g. tissues, soap).

Late Fees
A provider must notify the parent/legal guardian in writing of scheduled pick-up periods for the VPK program and the fees or charges for late pick up. This notification must be reviewed and signed by the parent/guardian. If a parent fails to pick up his/her child from the VPK program by the designated time, the provider may require payment of late pick-up charge.
PAYMENT INFORMATION

**Funding**
Funding for the VPK program is adjusted annually. For the 2016-2017 VPK school year, the Base Student Allocation (BSA) for Duval County is $2465.27 per child. Please contact the Early Learning Coalition for the funding amount for the current year. Payment for services is received monthly and can be:

1. paid in advance based on projected enrollment, and adjusted monthly to reflect current enrollment, or
2. paid post monthly, based on child enrollment.

Please complete an Advance Payment Option form to select advance or post-payment (Attachment 1).

**Child Attendance**
Providers must document the daily attendance of each child enrolled in the VPK program. Each month, the provider must have the parent/legal guardian of each child verify that child’s attendance in the VPK program on a Parent Attendance Verification form (short or long form (Attachments 12 and 13)—**full signatures are required**. Proper use of the long or short forms, along with verification of the child’s attendance, will be monitored by an ELC attendance monitor. If a provider dismisses a child from the VPK program, the provider is responsible for submitting a disenrollee form specifying the reason for removal.

Each month, VPK providers will record children’s VPK attendance on the Attendance Sheet. Once the attendance has been completed for the month and document signed, provider must “save” and “Close Attendance Sheet”. Completed Attendance Sheet is due by **the third business day of the month** in order to receive payment.
Child Eligibility
A child must be 4 years old on or before September 1st of the school year to be eligible to participate in the VPK program.

Parent Enrollment Process
Parents/legal guardians must register their child using the VPK Parent Portal at www.VPKDuval.org to complete a VPK Child Application.

In order to register, parents/guardians must scan and upload proof of residency and proof of child’s age.

A parent may verify their child’s age by providing any one of the following:

- Birth Certificate
- Passport
- Valid Military Dependent Identification card

A parent may verify residency (MUST be current address) by providing any one of the following:

- Florida Driver’s License
- Utility Bill
- Pay Stub
- Lease agreement

Parents/legal guardians will complete the child application online and their proof of residency and child’s proof of age will be scanned and uploaded. ELC will determine child eligibility within 10 days. Once approved, the parent will receive an email notification that the Certificate of Eligibility is available to print. The parent will then take the Certificate of Eligibility to the provider of their choice. Parents will be warned that it is fraudulent to submit more than one certificate. If they print and submit multiple copies to multiple providers, their VPK eligibility may be in jeopardy.

Transfers
Parents should make an informed decision when choosing a VPK program. Continuity throughout the program year is important to a child, but there may be times when a parent may wish to transfer to another child care center. A child is allowed only ONE VPK TRANSFER and parents must contact ELC to receive a transfer certificate.
Early Learning Coalition of Duval: 208-2040
www.elcduval.org

Bright Beginnings Website
www.brightbeginningsfl.org

VPK Teacher Toolkits
www.flvpkonline.org/teachertoolkit

Department of Children and Families: 723-2064
www.myflorida.com/childcare/training

Jacksonville Children’s Commission: 630-3647
www.jaxkids.org

Child Find: 348-7784
www.fdlrscrown.org/childfind.asp

Hope Haven: 346-5100
www.hope-haven.org

Nemours Bright Start: 697-3118
http://www.nemours.org/service/health/brightstart.html

Duval County Public Schools: 390-2123
www.duvalschools.org

Florida Office of Early Learning: (850) 245-0445
http://www.floridaearlyLearning.com