

Florida Department of Education
Office of Early Learning

**VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN EDUCATION PROGRAM (VPK)
SETTING AND ALIGNING STANDARDS**

CURRICULA STANDARDS: AN OVERVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

HB 1A Requirements

Section 1002.67(2)(a)-(c), Florida Statutes, *Performance standards; curricula and accountability.*—

(2)(a) Each private prekindergarten provider and public school may select or design the curriculum that the provider or school uses to implement the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, except as otherwise required for a provider or school that is placed on probation under paragraph (3)(c).

(b) Each private prekindergarten provider's and public school's curriculum must be developmentally appropriate and must:

1. Be designed to prepare a student for early literacy;
2. Enhance the age-appropriate progress of students in attaining the performance standards adopted by the department under subsection (1); and
3. Prepare students to be ready for kindergarten based upon the statewide kindergarten screening administered under s. 1002.69.

(c) **The department shall review and approve curricula for use by private prekindergarten providers and public schools that are placed on probation under paragraph (3)(c). The department shall maintain a list of curricula approved under this paragraph. Each approved curriculum must meet the requirements of paragraph (b).**

Current Status

The Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) currently reviews prekindergarten curricula. Their review process:

- determines alignment with current Scientifically-Based Reading Research (SBRR)
- uses a set of "general instructional" evaluation criteria that is derived from the literature on teaching and learning
- includes a review of age-appropriate instructional procedures and activities to support growth in the following areas:
 - ⇒ Oral Language- (vocabulary development, expressive language, and listening comprehension)
 - ⇒ Phonological Awareness – (awareness of words in sentences, awareness of syllables in words, rhyming, blending, segmenting)

Current Status (cont.)

- ⇒ Print Knowledge – (knowledge of the alphabet, knowledge of letters and their shapes, letter names and sounds)
- includes a review of all related teacher and student materials.

Staff from the FCRR also have reviewed prekindergarten curricula utilizing the *Curriculum Selection Guide* that was created in collaboration with the Leon-Gadsden School Readiness Coalition and that:

- is based upon the principle that curricula that have higher levels of research support are higher quality than those that currently do not have such research support
- requires training for the curricula reviews and a process for reconciliation of reviewer comments
- provides for a “self-evaluation” of curricula for local coalitions and/or providers using the following four steps:
 - ⇒ asking questions about the prekindergarten program and needs
 - ⇒ narrowing down the list of potential curricula
 - ⇒ potentially narrowing down the list further based on how well the curricula comply with Florida School Readiness Standards
 - ⇒ selecting a curriculum based on the level of research support currently available for each curriculum reviewed.

Relevant Materials

Guidelines to Review Prek-Kindergarten Literacy Programs, Florida Center for Reading Research, 2004,
<http://www.myfloridaeducation.com/earlylearning/doc/cprekgide.doc>.

Available reports of reviews of prekindergarten curricula by FCRR,
<http://www.fcrr.org/FCRRReports/reports.asp?rep=prek>.

Curriculum Selection Guide, FCRR, 2004,
<http://www.myfloridaeducation.com/earlylearning/doc/c-select.doc>.

Proceedings of Panel of Experts, February 17-18, 2004

See <http://www.myfloridaeducation.com/earlylearning/perform.htm>.

Recommendations – Definition of Curricula

1. Curricula, for the purposes of review and/or approval, will be defined as a set of written materials that:
 - is replicable
 - addresses the use of materials, scheduling, arranging the environment, and interaction between children and adults either separately or in combination
 - includes more than activity suggestions and more than theory and pedagogy
 - is aligned with the *Early Learning Standards for Four-Year-Olds*
 - is aligned with scientifically-based research.

Recommendations - Review of Curricula

1. The Department of Education shall work with FCRR and the Leon-Gadsden Coalition to make available information on 12 curricula reviewed and the standards used (see <http://www.myfloridaeducation.com/earlylearning/doc/c-select.doc>) to early learning coalitions, potential VPK providers, and other interested stakeholders.
2. The Department of Education shall work with the FCRR, early learning coalitions, and public and private providers to provide the review of additional prekindergarten curricula as a “service.” This review process shall not constitute an approval and shall include:
 - a re-review of the 12 curricula referenced above to incorporate the revisions to the *Early Learning Standards for Four-Year-Olds*
 - a process for the submission of additional curricula for review
 - appropriate training for reviewers
 - distribution of the results.

Recommendations – Approval of Curricula for Use by Providers Placed on Probation After Not Meeting Readiness Rates for Two Consecutive Years

1. The Department of Education shall create a process for approval of curricula for VPK providers placed on probation that includes a cycle for re-review/approval and the appropriate procedures for the submission of curricula by publishers.
2. The Department of Education’s approval process for curricula shall utilize the standards used by FCRR, including the incorporation of the Early Learning Standards for Four-Year-Old Children.
3. The Department of Education shall provide information on “approved” VPK curricula prior to the 2006-07 school year.