



Office of Early Learning

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Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Assessment  
And VPK Assessment Online Reporting System

VPK Assessment Update

# PROCEEDINGS

February 18, 2010 • Webinar

Florida Department of Education

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

On February 18, 2010, the Department of Education, Office of Early Learning held a Webinar to provide an update on the status of the Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Assessment.

Previously, (July 2008), a [VPK Assessment Workgroup](#), comprised of representations from coalitions, school districts, and private VPK providers, was created by the Office of Early Learning. The VPK Assessment Workgroup first convened in Tallahassee, FL, on August 7, 2008, and was provided information related to Florida's reading goals and the development of the new VPK Assessment and K-12 Reading Assessments. Presenters included Dr. Evan Lefsky, Executive Director of *Just Read, Florida!*, Dr. Barbara Foorman, Director of the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR), Dr. Chris Lonigan, Associate Director, FCRR, and Dr. Beth Phillips, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Psychology and Learning Systems, College of Education, Florida State University.

This Workgroup again convened via a webinar on [January 28, 2009](#), and was provided an update on the development of the VPK Assessment and a review of the results on the new kindergarten assessment in pilot districts and discussed its impact on the calculation of the 2008-09 VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rates.

### **1.1 WEBINAR PARTICIPANTS**

A total of 79 individuals representing early learning coalitions, school districts, and state agencies participated in the VPK Assessment Webinar as follows:

- Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) – 11
- Department of Children and Families (DCF) – 1
- Department of Education (DOE) – 9
- Early Learning Coalitions – 20
- School Districts – 34
- Other Participants – 4

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## 2.0 VPK ASSESSMENT UPDATE WEBINAR

### I. Overview

Shan Goff, Executive Director, Office of Early Learning, Department of Education, opened the Webinar by reviewing the purpose and historical background of the VPK Assessment. She also shared the current research (e.g., *2008 National Early Literacy Panel (NELP) Findings*) related to the VPK Assessment.

Denise Bishop, Administrator, Office of Early Learning, Department of Education, gave a description of the VPK Assessment which included an overview of each of the four assessment measures (e.g., Print Knowledge, Phonological Awareness, Mathematics, Oral Language/Vocabulary). Ms. Bishop also shared the purpose and functionality of the VPK Assessment Online Reporting.

All questions posed during the Webinar can be found in section 3.0 of these proceedings.

### II. Webinar PowerPoint

The following information is the text from the PowerPoint that was presented during the Webinar. The actual PowerPoint (which includes graphics) is also available in a separate document on the Department of Education, Office of Early Learning's Web site at <http://www.fldoe.org/earlylearning/assessments.asp>.

#### Title Slide - Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Assessment and VPK Assessment Online Reporting System

##### Slide 2 - Purpose

The purpose of the Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Assessment is to provide teachers with valid and reliable feedback regarding children's progress in attaining the skills in the VPK Education Standards, so that teachers may use this information to inform instructional decisions in the VPK classroom.

##### Slide 3 - Current Research

Predictors of Early Literacy ([2008 National Early Literacy Panel \(NELP\) Findings](#))

- Alphabet knowledge
- Phonological Processing
- Writing/writing name
- Phonological short term memory
- Rapid naming tasks (letters/digits)
- Rapid naming tasks (objects/colors)

##### Slide 4 - Historical Background

It was determined by the Department that the Florida VPK Assessment would be designed to:

- reflect current research on emergent literacy and numeracy
- align with the VPK Education Standards
- predict student performance on the Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading for Kindergarten and
- provide teacher's with valid and reliable feedback regarding children's progress in attaining these specific skills so that teachers may use this information to customize instruction to meet the needs of each child.

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## Slides 5 – 6 - Description of the VPK Assessment

The content for the three early literacy measures was decided by identifying the best predictors of later reading success. Print knowledge, phonological awareness, and oral language/vocabulary are the best predictors for conventional early reading ability.

The content for the early mathematics measure was decided by identifying the best predictors of later mathematics success. Number sense is one of the best known informal predictors of formal mathematics ability.

### Slide 7- Assessment Measures

1. Print Knowledge
2. Phonological Awareness
3. Mathematics
4. Oral Language/Vocabulary

### Slide 8 - General Administration Procedures

Assessment measures must be administered in this order:

- Print Knowledge
- Phonological Awareness
- Mathematics
- Oral Language/Vocabulary

All items in each assessment measure are administered.

### Slide 9 - Types of Assessment Items

- Multiple choice items
- Free response items

### Slide 10 - Description of Multiple Choice Items

- The child is asked a question and shown four choices on the appropriate page in the assessment binder.
- Then the child is required to point to the choice (e.g., picture, letter, word) he/she thinks is correct.

### Slide 11 - Example of Multiple Choice Item

(Teacher) **Script:** Look at these pictures. Shoe. Goat. Pig. Apple. Point to the picture of the pig. The child would see a page with a picture of a shoe, goat, pig, and an apple.

### Slide 12 - Description of Free Response Items

- The child is asked a question and required to give a verbal response.
- The only way to receive an answer on the free response items is for the child to respond verbally.

### Slide 13 - Example of Free Response Item

(Teacher) **Script:** What letter makes the /m/ sound?

The child would see a blank page.

### Slide 14 - Print Knowledge (PK) Measure

Assesses the child's ability to:

- recognize letters or words
- demonstrate knowledge of letter names (both upper and lower case)
- recognize sounds letters make

There are a total of 12 assessment items plus two practice items.

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### Slide 15 - Phonological Awareness (PA) Measure

- Awareness of the different sounds in a word.
- Assesses the child's ability to:
  - blend (put together) a word if it is broken up into smaller sounds or syllables
  - to blend a compound word
  - recognize the remaining word when part of the original/stimulus word is taken away.

There are a total of 14 assessment items plus two practice items.

### Slide 16 - Mathematics Measure

Assesses early numeracy skills across three different areas:

- counting
- numerical relations
- arithmetic reasoning

There are no practice items and a total of 13 assessment items.

### Slide 17 - Oral Language/Vocabulary (OL/V) Measure

Assesses the child's:

- **receptive language** and **expressive language**
- targets the child's knowledge of **adjectives**, **verb tenses**, **prepositions**, and **nouns** and their functions

There are a total of 22 assessment items in AP1, 23 assessment items in AP2 and AP3 and **NO** practice items.

### Slides 18 – 24 - VPK Assessment Online Reporting System

Each of the slide includes a screenshot from the VPK Assessment Online Reporting System

- Provider Profile Tab
- Assessment Measures Tab
- Assessment Data Tab
- Assessment Reports Tab
- Sample Report
- Customizing VPK Instruction Tab

### Slides 25 – 26 - VPK Assessment Timeline

Timeline

- A total of 180 public and non-public school VPK teachers from across the state, administered the VPK Assessment for AP1: October 3 – November 4, 2009
- Public and non-public school VPK teachers engaged in the field test, were trained to administer the VPK Assessment for AP2: January 7 – 28, 2010
- Assessment Period 2 (AP2): February 8-19, 2010
- Assessment Period 3 (AP3): End of April, 2010
- Preliminary Report of Field Test – Summer 2010
- Finalize Assessment Items and Administration – Summer/Fall 2010
- Statewide Implementation – Fall 2010
- Continue Technical Analyses Related to Alignment with the Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR-K)

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**Slide 27 - VPK Assessment Next Steps**

## Statewide Implementation Plan

- Production and Availability of VPK Assessment
- Review and Revise Online Reporting System
- Decision Rules Regarding Access to Child/Class/Provider/School District/Coalition-level Data
- Development and Delivery of Training

**Slide 28 – Contact Information**

Florida Department of Education

Office of Early Learning

1-866-447-1159

[earlylearning@fldoe.org](mailto:earlylearning@fldoe.org)

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### 3.0 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The following is a summary of the questions and answers provided during the Webinar.

#### **VPK Assessment**

- 1. Can you give an example of an item that assesses prepositions?**  
Yes. One example is the use of term “both” in a grammatical sentence (e.g., “Point to the picture in which both balloons are red.”)
- 2. Two of the assessment items use symbols and a mathematics number sentence and there is a slide that tells teachers not to use symbols. It seems that you are sending mixed messages. How do you plan to address this?**  
This was discussed with the developers at Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR). The item with a number sentence was included as a ceiling item and not all children are expected to respond to the item correctly. Final decisions related to the inclusion of assessment items will be based on data gather via the current field-test.
- 3. For the Phonological Awareness measure not all items have practice items and the questions change in format part way through the measure. Can practice items be added?**  
We will raise this issue with FCRR.
- 4. Do you think there will be errors if the children aren’t given practice items before they are administered the actual assessment items?**  
We understand that children may not always know the context of the assessment items if they are not given practice items first. We will discuss this scenario with FCRR as well.
- 5. Will the VPK Assessment be free or at a cost to providers?**  
It doesn’t look like there will be funding to provide the VPK Assessment free to providers. The cost to providers will likely be a minimal amount and was projected at approximately \$30 per class.
- 6. Will the cost of the VPK Assessment include materials for all three assessment periods?**  
Yes. All four measures for the three assessment periods will be included.
- 7. How can we get a copy of the VPK Assessment?**  
The VPK Assessment will be available to all providers during the Fall 2010 statewide implementation.
- 8. Are there any accommodations for children who are non-verbal?**  
We have not addressed this yet but will discuss explore options and feasibility when assessment items are determined.
- 9. Can we give suggestions to be shared with the vendor who will produce the VPK Assessment about art work and the design of the assessment binder?**  
Yes. Feel free to give us your input on the design of the VPK Assessment materials and we will consider the feedback when negotiating with vendors.

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**10. How long does it take to administer the VPK Assessment?**

It takes approximately 20 minutes to complete all four assessment measures.

**11. Will the VPK Assessment be streamlined for summer programs?**

This is a topic that needs to be explored further. We will keep everyone posted as information becomes available.

**VPK Assessment Online Reporting System**

**12. When the VPK Assessment is available to all providers, will data be collected by DOE?**

It is planned that the assessment data will be entered into an online reporting system. Decisions related to access to the student, class, provider, coalition, district and state-level data have not been made.

**13. Who will see the assessment data?**

The VPK teacher will have access to child – level data to inform instruction. Provider administrators/directors will likely have access to all classroom data within a program.

**14. Will there be a way for school districts to upload assessment data?**

There is currently a feature that allows users to upload child data (e.g., name, date of birth) via an EXCEL spreadsheet.

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#### **4.0 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS**

The following additional comments/suggestions were provided during the Webinar.

- Coordinate with the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) to clearly inform the public about the various assessments that are being implemented between the two agencies.
- Suggest the creation of a matrix to map out the AWI and DOE initiatives related to assessment.
- Include the Assessment staff from school districts in the planning activities for statewide implementation and training.
- Agreed with suggestion to use the existing VPK Assessment Workgroup to guide implementation in the following areas:
  1. Awareness
  2. Production of assessment materials
  3. Online reporting system
  4. Data access decision rules
  5. Developing of professional development