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# Early Learning Parents' Pages

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DIVISION OF EARLY LEARNING

## Make Summer a Time to Learn and Transition

As a parent and your child's first teacher, you want your child to continue learning all year long, and summer provides many opportunities for families to spend quality time together and experience new things. If your child is heading to Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) or kindergarten, look for ways to help your child enhance their math and literacy skills. Opportunities are everywhere, from counting clouds in the sky to reading books together relating to the season or nature. You can also support your child's learning by contacting your local museum or parks and recreation department to learn about educational programs and activities you can explore together on a warm summer day.

Many libraries offer literacy activities, like Storytime, where you and your child can enjoy listening to the reading of a favorite book. This is a great way for your child to learn new vocabulary words. Ask your child questions before and after listening to the story to help them understand what the book is about. Sign up your child for a new library card and then browse together for books. Look for books on what to expect when going to school, starting school jitters or another subject they find interesting. Reading to your child for at least 15 minutes every day builds strong early literacy skills.

- **Help your child learn new skills and words through experiences and exploration.**

If you can take a walk in a butterfly garden, count the butterflies you see together. If travelling, create a journal and fill it with pictures of the places, family and friends you visit to capture the memories. Ask your child to write or help your child write one word to describe each picture. Just walking in a park with your child provides opportunities to learn about early literacy, math and science concepts. Give your child a bag and ask them to collect pine cones or feathers. Compare the feathers and ask your child which are bigger and which are smaller.

- **Make sure your child is developmentally on track.**

The Division of Early Learning's website has a link to the [Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards](#) (FELDS). FELDS provides information on the progression of learning and development from birth to age five and suggested activities that encourage your child to use all five senses to explore the world around them. Observe your child's learning and play at home. If you are concerned that your child is not reaching developmental milestones, consult their pediatrician and contact your [local early learning coalition](#) to learn more about developmental screenings. A developmental screening can help identify if there are delays in your child's development and can assist with appropriate referrals to support your child's learning. In addition, [Help Me Grow Florida](#) can provide information about age-appropriate development, the screening process and the importance of early detection and support.

- **Get your child excited about starting VPK or Kindergarten!**

Your parental involvement is vital during this transitional period. As your child prepares to transition to VPK or kindergarten, read your child stories about classrooms, learning and making new friends. Begin creating a daily routine around their upcoming schedule to find what works for your family. A routine should be reasonable and predictable. Set a routine for getting ready in the morning, when you get home in the afternoon and a bedtime routine that you and your child will follow for the new school year. Lastly, check with the new school to see if Open House is offered and take your child to visit their teacher and classroom.



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## Florida VPK

### You did it! What's Next?

Congratulations, Summer VPK graduates! A special thank you to families and teachers for supporting our youngest learners. Keep up the learning with the following resources:

- [Prekindergarten Family Guide](#)
- [Families Transition to Kindergarten](#)
- [Parent Guide for Kindergarten](#)

The Division of Early Learning wishes you and our VPK graduates well as they transition to kindergarten. See our May 2024 issue of Parents' Pages for tips on how to register for kindergarten.

### Register now for VPK!

Children in Florida turning four on or before September 1 are eligible to attend VPK. VPK is a free, high-quality education program designed to prepare four-year-olds for kindergarten and build a foundation for their educational success. Data collected by the Florida Department of Education shows that children who participate in VPK are much more ready for kindergarten than children who do not participate in VPK.

Apply for VPK in the [Family Portal](#) and contact your [local early learning coalition](#) to locate a VPK provider that meets your family's needs.

### 2024 Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday!



Floridians will pay no sales tax for diaper bags, backpacks, clothing and footwear costing \$100 or less, school supplies costing \$50 or less, learning aids costing \$30 or less and personal computers or computer-related accessories, including non-recreational software, costing \$1,500 or less. You can find more information and a list of exempt items at [Florida Department of Revenue](#).

**Families and providers can save from July 29 through August 11, 2024.**



## Moving and Need Child Care? CCR&R Can Help

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) is a statewide program that provides free resources and support to families with questions about child care and child care providers. The Division of Early Learning's CCR&R State Network partners with 30 early learning coalitions (ELC) that provide CCR&R services at the local level. When you make the decision to relocate, your local ELC has a CCR&R team ready to help you find a new, quality child care program.

## How to transfer your current Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) certificate from your current provider to another?

Log on to the [Family Portal](#) website and complete a VPK re-enrollment application. Once submitted, your local ELC will determine the number of VPK hours used at your current provider. If you and your child meet the eligibility criteria, you will receive a re-enrollment certificate with the remaining hours available. For more information, contact your local ELC.

## How to transfer your current School Readiness (SR) certificate from your current provider to another?

To transfer your SR services from your current provider to a new provider, contact your local ELC and request to have your Family Portal account placed in "pending update" status. You must have no co-payment balance or establish a plan to pay any owed balance before a transfer is approved.

Contact your [local early learning coalition](#) if you have questions about the SR and VPK program requirements. Be sure to log on to the Family Portal website for status updates if you request changes to your services.