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# Early Learning Parents' Pages

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DIVISION OF EARLY LEARNING

## We are Learning **FAST!**

If your child is enrolled in Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program, you have or will soon be hearing about the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) Star Early Literacy progress monitoring. Students who are enrolled in the VPK program take FAST Star Early Literacy at least three times, with the first typically taking place in the first 30 days of the VPK program. FAST Star Early Literacy gives both parents and teachers information about each child's learning progression in emergent literacy and math skills. The following overview of FAST Star Early Literacy will give you a foundation for discussing your child's progress with their teacher.

### What is FAST Star Early Literacy?

FAST Star Early Literacy is a statewide, computer-adaptive progress monitoring system. Computer-adaptive means that questions get easier or more difficult depending on how the student responds. The progress monitoring uses audio in which a narrator reads questions designed to measure emergent literacy skills and math skills.

### Why does my child take FAST Star Early Literacy?

The Florida Legislature has required this progress monitoring for all private and public school students participating in a VPK program to ensure that teachers and parents have information that can help them track and respond to the learning needs of students.

### How many times do students complete the FAST Star Early Literacy?

At minimum, the progress monitoring will be administered by a qualified test administrator employed by your VPK provider at the beginning, middle and end of the VPK program to monitor student progress.

### How does FAST Star Early Literacy help my child?

Your child's score will identify their learning progression in emergent literacy and math and help their teacher know what your child may be ready to learn next.

### How can I help my child prepare for FAST Star Early Literacy?

Spend time communicating with your child that this progress monitoring will help their teacher know how to help them learn. Encourage them to do their best.

### How long does it take to complete FAST Star Early Literacy?

The progress monitoring takes, on average, 15-20 minutes for students to complete.

### Where do I go if I have additional questions?

To learn more about FAST Star Early Literacy visit our [Family Resources](#) for more information.

## Florida's Early Learning and Developmental Standards

Would you like to know more about what your child should be learning? The [Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards](#) will help you support your child's learning and development from birth to age 5.

The standards reflect the knowledge and skills that a child on a typical developmental progression should know and be able to do at the end of an age-related timeframe.



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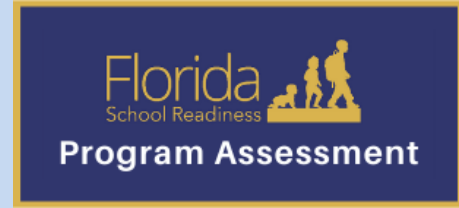
## October is Head Start Awareness Month

### 5 Things to Know about Florida's Head Start Programs



- 1** Helps children and families thrive, enrolling over 42,000 children ages 0-5 and pregnant women each year.
- 2** Uses research-based curricula and assessments so each child makes progress in language/literacy, math, science and physical development.
- 3** Coordinates comprehensive services so children and families have the community resources they need.
- 4** Evaluates, identifies and serves children with special needs and facilitates early intervention services.
- 5** Supports at-home learning and healthy habits from parent-child reading and regular bedtimes to positive parenting.

To learn more and locate a program near you, call 866-357-3239.



## What is CLASS®?

As a parent of a child in the School Readiness or Voluntary Prekindergarten program, you will at some point hear about the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®). Below is a brief overview of what CLASS® is and how it impacts your child's learning.

CLASS® is an evidence-based observational tool used to assess the effectiveness of teacher-child interactions in School Readiness and VPK classrooms. CLASS® is **not** an instructional assessment, and no data is collected on students. Instead, observers look at the interactions between the adults and students in the classroom.

Why is this assessment important? Research supports that quality interactions between adults and children promote children's social and cognitive development, helping them thrive in their learning environments. Classrooms that have received high CLASS® scores are proven to support greater learning gains in language, math and early literacy development.



Use trips to the grocery store as a time to introduce new words and talk with your child about the World around you!