



**Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida, Inc.**

<b><u>Subject:</u> VPK Child Eligibility and Enrollment</b>		
<b><u>Policy #: 504.1</u></b> ELCSWF-VPK0022-09	<b><u>Category:</u></b> Child Eligibility	<b><u>Reference #</u></b> OEL-VPK-504
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**POLICY**

**General**

1. The VPK program is an entitlement offered by the State of Florida, at no cost, to any parent whose child meets all the eligibility requirements.
2. Eligibility is determined by age, residency and whether they have been previously enrolled.
3. There is no limit to the number of eligible children who can participate.
4. Parents registering his or her child for the VPK program must either:
  - (a) Register online at [www.vpkflorida.org](http://www.vpkflorida.org); or
  - (b) Complete Form AWI-VPK 01 Parent Application.

**Child Age Eligibility Requirements**

5. Children must attain the age of 4 years on or before September 1 of the school year considered. Eligibility continues until the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible to enter kindergarten in the public school, or until the child is admitted to kindergarten, whichever occurs first.
6. This age requirement may not be waived for any reason, including a child's disability or circumstance.
7. As a part of the application process, the Coalition will collect and retain in the child's file, a photocopy of at least one of the following documents for purposes of verifying age:
  - (a) A duly attested transcript of the child's birth record filed according to law with a public officer charged with the duty of recording births;
  - (b) A duly attested transcript of a certificate of baptism showing the date of birth and place of baptism of the child, accompanied by an affidavit sworn to by the parent;

- (c) An insurance policy on the child's life that has been in force for at least two years, which reflects the child's birth date;
- (d) A bona fide contemporary religious record of the child's birth accompanied by an affidavit sworn to by the parent;
- (e) A passport or certificate of arrival in the United States showing the birth date of the child;
- (f) A transcript of record of age shown in the child's school record from at least four (4) years prior to application, stating date of birth;
- (g) An immunization record indicating the date of birth, signed by a public health officer or by a licensed practicing physician;
- (h) A valid military dependent identification card showing the date of birth; or
- (i) If none of the evidential documents listed above can be produced, an affidavit of age sworn to by the parent, accompanied by a certificate of age reflecting the child's birth date, signed by a public health officer or by a licensed practicing physician which states that the physician has examined the child and believes that the age as stated in the affidavit is substantially correct.

### **Residence Eligibility Requirements**

8. To be eligible for the VPK program, the 4-year-old child must reside in the State of Florida. Families who have not established Florida as their legal residence, but are residing for an extended period of time, are qualified to receive services (e.g., work and education visas or immigrants).
9. Verification of the child's residency must be established through at least one document which contains the name of the parent of the child and the address of the parent as submitted on Form AWI-VPK 01 Parent Application. Post office boxes are not sufficient to determine residency. Consistent with Rule 60BB-8.200, (2) (b). FAC, the following are acceptable documents to establish where a child resides:
  - a) Utility bill;
  - b) Pay stub;
  - c) Residential rental agreement or receipt from rental payment;
  - d) Government-issued document (e.g., Florida driver's license, Florida identification card, property tax assessment showing a homestead exemption); or
  - e) Military order showing that the child's parent is a service member in the United States Armed Forces and is assigned to duty in Florida when the child attends the VPK program (e.g., permanent change of station).

- f) If no supporting documents listed in subparagraphs (2)(b)1.-5. above are available, a coalition may accept an affidavit sworn to or affirmed by the child's parent accompanied by a letter from a landlord or property owner which confirms that the child resides at the address shown in the affidavit.
  - g) If no supporting documents listed in subparagraphs (2)(b)1.-6. above are available for a homeless child as defined in Section 1003.01, F.S., a coalition shall document residency based on other supporting documents showing that the child is homeless and resides in Florida (e.g., letter from a homeless shelter or affidavit sworn to or affirmed by the child's parent)."
10. A homeless child, as defined in s. 1003.01, F.S., must have access to the VPK program. Eligibility may be determined by a letter from the homeless shelter or sworn affidavit from parent. (Note: A child who is imprisoned, detained, or in the custody of the state pursuant to a state or federal law is not considered a homeless child).
11. Parents must be provided with a choice of providers approved by the Coalition to provide voluntary pre-kindergarten services, and profiles of the VPK providers, {in accordance with ss1002.53 (5) F.S.} that includes the provider's services, curriculum, instructor credentials and instructor-to-student ratio, and kindergarten school readiness rate.
12. Parents must be advised of their rights and responsibilities as a VPK participating parent.
13. A parent may enroll the child in one of the following programs:
- (a) A school-year prekindergarten program delivered by a VPK provider 540 hour program under s. 1002.55, F.S. and approved by the Coalition; or
  - (b) A 300 hour summer prekindergarten program delivered by a public school or private prekindergarten provider under s. 1002.61, F.S. and approved by the Coalition.

**Associated Documents:**

AWI-VPK 01 Parent Application

**Citation History:** Chapter 1002.55-79, F.S.; Rule 60BB-8, FAC