



Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida

SUBJECT: Voluntary Prekindergarten Provider Eligibility and Enrollment		
Policy #: ELCSWF-VPK0017-08	Category: VPK – Provider Eligibility	Reference #: OEL-VPK-508
Approval: 9/27/08	Effective Date: Sept. 27, 2008	Replaces (policy # and date): ELCSWF-VPK0017-06 7/1/06

- I. **PURPOSE:** To establish specific procedures for determining the eligibility of prospective Voluntary PreKindergarten Providers serving VPK children, in Lee, Collier, Hendry and Glades counties.
- II. **REVIEW HISTORY:** This policy supports the December 2004 Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Education Program legislation and supersedes any former monitoring practices.
- III. **CONTACT:** Chief Executive Officer.
- IV. **PERSONS AFFECTED:** VPK Education and Eligibility Staff; and all Early Learning Providers serving VPK children, including licensed, license-exempt and family child care providers.
- V. **POLICY:** This policy sets requirements for the eligibility of all Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Providers serving VPK children.
- VI. **RATIONALE:** To provide consistency in the manner and method a provider's eligibility is determined.
- VII. **CROSS REFERENCES:** Chapters 402.301 – 402.319 and Chapter 1002.51-79 of the Florida Statutes; Rule 60BB-8.100-300, Florida Administrative Code, the "State of Florida Voluntary PreKindergarten Education Program Statewide Provider Agreement", and all policies issued by the Agency for Workforce Innovations on the VPK program.
- VIII. **DEFINITIONS:**

"Coalition" refers to the Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida, Inc. (ELC-SWF) which is responsible for Collier, Hendry, Glades and Lee counties.

"Contractor" refers to "Community Coordinated Care for Children (4C)4C, the agency contracted by the Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida, to carry out the daily responsibilities for families and providers served by the Early Learning Coalition.

“DCF” refers to the Florida Department of Children and Families, and more specifically the local child care licensing office.

“**Good Moral Character**” is verified through the Affidavit of Good Moral Character, a form which must be signed and notarized annually.

“**Prekindergarten director**” means an onsite person ultimately responsible for the overall operation of a private prekindergarten provider or, alternatively, of the provider's prekindergarten program, regardless of whether the person is the owner of the provider.

“**Prekindergarten instructor**” means a teacher or child care personnel as defined in s. [402.302](#) who provide instruction to students in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.

“**Private prekindergarten provider**” means a provider other than a public school which is eligible to deliver the school-year prekindergarten program under s. [1002.55](#) or the summer prekindergarten program under s. [1002.61](#).

“**Provider**” means the individual or facility responsible for the provision of Voluntary PreKindergarten services.

“**VPK**” means Voluntary PreKindergarten Education Program pursuant to Chapter 1002, Part V, Florida Statutes

IX. **PROCEDURE:**

GENERAL

1. A private child care, public (including charter schools) or non-public school provider interested in delivering the VPK program must complete application form **AWI-VPK 10 “Statewide Registration Application”** and **AWI-VPK 11 “Class Registration Application.”** The provider may obtain these documents from the AWI website at <http://www.floridajobs.org/VPK/index.html>, or request copies from the contracted central agencies. The applications must be completed annually.
2. The provider must mail or hand deliver the completed application Form **AWI-VPK 10** and **Form AWI-VPK 11** to Community Coordinated Care for ChildrenCommunity Coordinated Care for Children, along with the supporting documentation which included the following:
 - Copy of facility license or religious exempt accreditation
 - Copy of higher accreditation or gold seal verification, if applicable
 - CDA or Higher Education verification for each primary teacher
 - Emergent Literacy for each primary teacher
 - Copy of Director’s Credential
 - Background screening documents for all required staff (director, VPK teachers, and assistants) which include:
 - FBI (every 5 years)
 - FDLE Local Law Check (every 5 years),
 - Affidavit of Good Moral Character (annually)
3. Current or former public school teachers must annually establish that their teaching certificate has not been suspended or revoked. If a former public school teacher is identified by a provider to teach a class, the provider must submit one of the following:

- a. a copy of the teachers information on the DOE website www.fldoe.org/edcert/public.asp; or
 - b. documentation of a telephone conversation with an identified DOE representatives (1-800-445-6739) verifying the teacher in question has not had their certificate revoked or suspended, or
 - c. "Verification of Teacher Certification" form (attachment to policy) or equivalent developed by provider.
4. In addition to annual receipt of the VPK 10 and 11, and other required materials verifying eligibility, the Contractor shall obtain copies of the provider's discipline policy, attendance policy and VPK daily schedule.
 5. Applicants must annually meet the requirement as specified in ss1002.55 (3) (b) Florida Statutes, which states:

"(3) To be eligible to deliver the prekindergarten program, a private prekindergarten provider must meet each of the following requirements:

(a) The private prekindergarten provider must be a child care facility licensed under s. [402.305](#), family day care home licensed under s. [402.313](#), large family child care home licensed under s. [402.3131](#), nonpublic school exempt from licensure under s. [402.3025](#)(2), or faith-based child care provider exempt from licensure under s. [402.316](#).

(b) The private prekindergarten provider must:

1. Be accredited by an accrediting association that is a member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation, the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation, or the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools; and have written accreditation standards that meet or exceed the state's licensing requirements under s.402.305, s.402.313, or s.402.3131 and require at least one on-site visit to the provider or school before accreditation is granted;

1. Be accredited by an accrediting association that is a member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation, the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation, or the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools;

2. Hold a current Gold Seal Quality Care designation under s. [402.281](#); or

3. Be licensed under s. [402.305](#), s. [402.313](#), or s. [402.3131](#) and demonstrate, before delivering the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, as verified by the early learning coalition, that the provider meets each of the requirements of the program under this part, including, but not limited to, the requirements for

credentials and background screenings of prekindergarten instructors under paragraphs (c) and (d), minimum and maximum class sizes under paragraph (e), prekindergarten director credentials under paragraph (f), and a developmentally appropriate curriculum under s. [1002.67\(2\)\(b\)](#).”

6. To validate the provider's eligibility, the Contractor shall annually verify the legal status of the provider.
7. The contractor will first determine if the child care provider is licensed with the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). If licensed, a copy of the verification will be placed in the provider's file
8. If the provider does not meet the above category, the Contractor will contact the local DCF child care licensing office, to verify if the provider is legally exempt from child care licensure either as a public/non-public school, or religiously exempt facility.
9. Written verification of the provider's status will be secured from DCF and placed in the provider file.
10. Written verification will include either copies of licenses, printed information from the child care licensing or Department of Education's websites, or email verification from the licensing office.
11. The accreditation status of each applicant must be established.
12. Licensed child care programs with Gold seal accreditation can be validated through the Department of Children and Families website at myflorida.com/childcare or by the provider with proof of a valid certificate issued by DCF.
13. For religious exempt facilities, each applicant must establish that they are not only a member of a recognized accrediting organization pursuant to ss402.316, F.S., but have also met the accreditation standards of an agency specified in Section 1002.55 (3) (b) F.S. which identifies “*the National Council for Private School Accreditation, the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation, or the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools.*” Applicants who do not meet these requirements may not provide VPK services.
14. If the applicant is licensed, but has not achieved accreditation or gold seal status, the provider must demonstrate that they meet all the requirements as to education, background screening of required staff, class size, director's credential and developmentally appropriate curriculum under ss.1002.67 (2) (b), Florida Statutes.
15. For any applicants who appear to meet the legal eligibility, the Contractor must continue to validate the provider's eligibility by verification that the staff meet the educational qualifications.
16. Qualifications must be validated by copies of appropriate certification and for validation on the DCF training website.
17. Background screening information may be validated by the Contractor through the DCF website if available online, or documented through the local DCF screening office. If not otherwise available, hard copies must be obtained.

18. Contractor shall ensure that all certificates, licenses and accreditation shall be current and non-expired.
19. Once the Contractor has established that the applicant has met all the requirements for approval as a VPK provider, the Contractor shall send a State of Florida Voluntary PreKindergarten Education Program Statewide Provider Agreement to the provider with a return self-addressed envelope to the Contractor.
20. The prospective VPK Provider is advised to sign and return the signed agreement in the enclosed envelope back to the Contractor. Once the Contractor receives the signed copy, it is logged in and forwarded to the Early Learning Coalition for processing.
21. Once the Coalition receives the signed State of Florida Voluntary PreKindergarten Education Program Statewide Provider Agreement, the Coalition Chief Executive Officer or designee will sign the agreement and provide a fully signed copy to the provider, along with a "Certified VPK Provider" certificate.
22. A final copy of the document is also provided to the Contractor.
23. Once the Contractor is notified the Provider Agreement is signed, the Contractor will enter the provider's information into the EFS system and the DCF website within 5 business days. An IRS W-9 form will be obtained from the provider unless already it is on file. No payment may be made to any VPK provider until a fully executed VPK Provider Agreement is received.
24. The approval applies to the fiscal year VPK program, including the school year and summer.
25. The approval takes effect on the date set forth in the first paragraph of the signed Provider Agreement and expires upon completion of all of the providers VPK programs (i.e. school-year, summer or both) or August 31 following the end of the fiscal year, whichever occurs first.
26. Resource & Referral Staff, and other designated staff, will provide information to families regarding centers and family child care homes who are offering Voluntary PreKindergarten classes.
27. Resource and Referral is responsible for keeping all information updated in the EFS system annually and to accurately capture only the VPK providers who have met all requirements for the existing fiscal year.
28. Child care providers who provide Voluntary Prekindergarten services are subject to the requirements of Ch. 1002.51-79 of the Florida Statutes and will be monitored pursuant to ELCSWF Policy # VPK0016-06.
29. This policy automatically incorporates any future legislative or legal changes as applicable.
30. The process of VPK provider eligibility approval is subject to annual determinations and is not automatic.

X. **EXHIBITS:**

Teacher Verification Form



TEACHER VERIFICATION FORM

Each staff person holding a bachelors degree or higher must complete this form.
Verification may be obtained at: www.fldoe.org/edcert/public.asp

Center Name: _____

Teacher Name: _____

Have you ever held a teacher certificate in any state or country? Yes No

Has it ever been suspended or revoked? Yes No

If yes, please explain. _____

By signing this statement, I am verifying that I have never had a teaching certificate suspended or revoked.

Signature of Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Director: _____ Date: _____

OR

Owner/Principal: _____ Date: _____