



VPK Program



SDOC

VPK Program

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) is a program that is funded by the Department of Early Learning at the Florida Department of Education. The School District of Osceola County offers the VPK program free of charge to families as either a 540- instructional hour school year program or a 300-instructional hour summer program. Families may select either the school year or the summer programs but not both.



VPK Program Models

VPK Plus Den:

- VPK Plus Den provides a seamless seven-hour day. After VPK hours parents can choose to have their child stay until the end of the school day. The program is a fee-based program.

VPK Plus Title I:

- VPK Plus Title I provides a seamless seven-hour day. This federally funded program is offered at no cost to families; however, families must live within a Title I attendance zone.

Dual Language Program:

- Dual Language provides children the opportunity to learn Spanish in a formal setting. Children spend half the day learning in English and half the day learning in Spanish. Children in this program apply for the K-5 dual language program at their school.

VPK/ Early Learning Labs (at select High Schools):

- Provides 3 hours of free VPK plus the option of an additional 3 hours of instruction supported by student fee. High school students enrolled in the Early Childhood program at the high school - work directly with the VPK students throughout the day.

Curriculum:

The School District of Osceola County's VPK curriculum is framed by The Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: 4 Years Old to Kindergarten (2017). The standards describe the developing skills four-year olds should know and be able to do by the end of their prekindergarten year. The curriculum is designed so that students are developing toward these standards-based outcomes with individualized support within a collaborative setting. The curriculum encompasses development in eight essential areas: physical development, approaches to learning, social and emotional, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific inquiry, social studies, and creative expression through the arts. Within the framework of standardized learning outcomes, the curriculum includes a scope-and-sequence for teaching and learning over the school year with opportunities for teachers and partnering paraprofessionals to support children according to their individual learning needs.

Our Personnel

Every classroom follows a state approved VPK curriculum. The VPK Program staffs each class with a Child Development Associate (CDA) or higher and a classroom assistant. All employees meet qualifications as required by the State of Florida. The student/teacher ratio is 11:1 or 20:2

DAILY ROUTINE

The teacher will provide a pictorial daily schedule of activities. This will help children learn time concepts and skills for planning and predicting.

- **Large Group (Circle Time):** Daily, the entire class will gather for group activities that encourage relationship building, turn taking, music, storytelling and other activities that address the Four-Year Old Standards in order to prepare children for success in kindergarten.
- **Small Group Time:** Children will spend time with an adult and a few other students learning new skills in early literacy, math, science, problem-solving, and social emotional area.
- **Learning Centers:** Each classroom will have areas set up where children can go individually or in small groups. They will be able to read books, build with blocks, pretend play, listen to music, work creatively with art materials, and fill, pour, measure, and explore at the sensory table. Children are encouraged to make choices, play together, solve problems, practice small and large muscle skills, and learn new words and ideas.
- **Developmentally Appropriate Practices:** Worksheets are not part of the VPK curriculum, and instead, students work with manipulatives and other real materials for building literacy, math, and science skills. Reading daily to your preschooler is a recommended homework practice.



Personal Care and Toileting Issues:

Children may use the bathroom as needed during the day.

All children who participate in VPK must be able to attend to their own toileting needs. Due to health and safety concerns, staff members will not be responsible for changing a child should a toileting accident occur. Students will be sent to the clinic to change. Please make sure your child has a change of clothing daily, including socks. Parents may be contacted if they are needed to help their child change his/her clothing. Please give your child's teacher your most current phone number in case you need to be notified.

Transportation

Transportation is not provided for students in the VPK program.

Therefore, parents must ensure that their children arrive at school and are picked up on time. However, to assist parents, every elementary and K-8 school offers before and after school care.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR AND VPK DISCIPLINE POLICY

"Our program goal is to create supportive classroom environments for optimal child development."

VPK teachers are responsible for designing classroom environments that promote healthy social, emotional, and cognitive growth.

Collaborating with both teachers and paraprofessionals, the Early Childhood Learning Center places a strong emphasis on student behavior, focusing on self-regulation, appropriate emotional expression, relationship development, and independence.

****However, it's important to note that if a child's behavior becomes excessively disruptive, jeopardizing the safety and learning of others, the child's placement within the VPK program may be reconsidered. This could involve shortening the child's daily schedule or even withdrawing them from the program altogether.**

Attendance Policy

Daily attendance in the VPK program is necessary for optimal learning, however, you will be allowed (3) absences per month. Any absences beyond those require appropriate documentation from the parent for one of the following reasons:

- Illness or injury of the child or the child's immediate family member which requires hospitalization or bed rest;
- Physician or dentist appointment;
- Infectious disease or parasitic infestation;
- Compliance with a court order (e.g. visitation, subpoena)
- Special education or related services for the child's disability;
- Observance of religious holiday;
- Family vacation, not to exceed 5 excused absences during 180-day instructional period.

Tardiness

School Policy on Tardiness

To ensure that all students have a productive day, we begin our instructional day promptly at the school's start time. The school keeps track of tardiness, as it can disrupt the group in session and cause difficulties for the tardy student. Although we understand that unforeseen circumstances do occur, arriving late to school more than three times in a month is unacceptable and may result in termination from our VPK program.



Late Pick-Up

Late Pick-Up Policy for Students
Please note that it is expected for parents to pick up their children promptly at the end of the instructional day. In the event that a parent is delayed in picking up their child after dismissal, a late pick-up fee of \$10 will be charged. Moreover, for every additional 15 minutes the child is still in attendance, an extra \$10 fee will be assessed. Repetitive late pick-ups may result in the student being withdrawn from the program.

PLEASE NOTE!

Please Note: A student may be withdrawn for not abiding by the Attendance Policy or if the student has 10 consecutive unexcused absences it will be considered a withdrawal from the VPK program. Withdrawals from the VPK program will not be eligible for re-enrollment. The school will allow one documented 5-day absence during the 180-day instructional period. Documentation must be submitted in advance, explaining the reason for the 5-day absence and be dated and signed by the child's legal parent/guardian. Students missing 10 days, in a 90-day period will receive a warning letter and may be removed from the program if absences continue.

Verifying your child's attendance and absences



Confirming Your Child's Attendance and Payment for VPK Program

At the end of every month, your child's teacher will request that you verify and approve your child's recorded attendance for that month. By signing the Verification of Attendance Form, you are confirming the attendance and directing the Early Learning Coalition of Osceola County to process the payment for the month's VPK program. Additionally, you are indicating that you have chosen their school to provide your child's VPK program for the upcoming month.

PARENT PAY FEE GUIDELINES

Payment Guidelines for Florida School Districts

As per Florida state law, school districts are not authorized to extend credit, which means that all services must be paid for in full before they are rendered. Please review the following guidelines for payment:

1. The first payment will be due on July 15th, and subsequent payments are due on the 1st and 15th of each month.
2. If payment is not received on time, a \$20.00 late fee will be added to the outstanding balance.
3. Late payments will result in the student's schedule being changed to the 3-hour VPK AM program. A notice of the schedule change will be sent home, and consistent late payment can result in dismissal from the program.
4. Credits will not be issued for student absences, and the full monthly fee must be paid even when a student is absent.
5. Payment can be made via money order, personal or cashier's check at our office, credit card by phone at 407-518-2989, or online using My School Bucks.

Contact Us:

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING CENTER
1200 VERMONT AVENUE
ST. CLOUD, FL 34769
PHONE: 407-870-4911
FAX: 407-870-4971
OFFICE HOURS 7:30AM - 4:30PM

www.osceolaschools.net/upk



William Hennessy
EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION CENTER