

# Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County



## Voluntary Prekindergarten 2024/2025 Contract Briefing

# **EFS Modernization**

## **Provider Portal – Contracting Prerequisites**

- **You are eligible for a School Readiness or VPK contract for the 2024-2025 contract year because you have registered in the Provider Portal, completed a provider profile and submitted a contract application.**
- **A contract cannot be granted to any Provider until their contract application, provider profile, and VPK APP in the portal have been approved.**
- **Payments are calculated from EFS MOD.**
  - **However, paper copies of attendance verification (daily sign-in/sign-out or equivalent) are still required.**

# Statutory/Rule Changes

- ✓ **Beginning with the 2024-2025 program year, test administrators must annually complete professional learning designed to ensure the proper administration of FAST Star Early Literacy.**
- ✓ **The required training now includes an overview of the Test Administration and Security Agreement and Test Administrator Prohibited Activities Agreement.**
- ✓ **Test administrators must sign both documents (with physical signature, electronic signatures will not be accepted) agreeing to follow all test administration and security procedures of the FAST Star Early Literacy assessment.**
- ✓ **Providers must submit the required documentation below by uploading the documents to the Document Library in the Provider Portal within the 24/25 FAST Test Administrators folder.**

# Statutory/Rule Changes Cont.

## ❖ VPK rates for FY 2024-2025:

- School-Year increased to \$2,959.20 = \$5.48 per hour
- Summer increased to \$2,529.00 = \$8.43 per hour

# VPK Enrollments

- **Online mandatory for all VPK enrollments**
- **All Parents must register at**  
<https://familyservices2.floridaearlylearning.com>
- **Must upload two documents or cannot submit:**
  - **Proof of residence, bills, leases, etc.**
  - **Birth certificate, shot record, passport, etc.**
- **Parents print COE once approved**
- **Can be done anywhere: home, library, Provider, Coalition**

# VPK Enrollments cont.

- **No pre-pay program participants**
- **During August phone calls will only be returned once daily**
- **Child transfers: only one allowed even if child attends only one day.**
- **COE/Enrollment must be entered into EFS MOD prior to ANY payment for attendance. No back dating allowed.**
- **Providers must retain copy of signed COE in child file.**
- **Prior to termination of a child, please contact Hope.**
- **Hope Wilson: 850-607-8556, hwilson@elcescambia.org**

# Child Assessments – Coordinated Screening & Progress Monitoring STAR Early Literacy

- ✓ **Mandatory Progress Monitoring (PM 1, 2, 3) will be completed 3 times annually, for all VPK children. This takes the place of what we of old Assessment Program (AP 1, 2, 3).**
  - ✓ **Progress Monitoring is now an online only assessment therefore it is automatically input into the system. There is no paper copy of this assessment.**
  - ✓ **Must make due dates, or noncompliance notification will be issued**

## **School Year VPK Program Assessment Periods are as follows:**

- ✓ **PM1 administered the first 30 instructional days of your VPK class beginning**
- ✓ **PM2 administered after 40% of the instructional hours have been completed**
- ✓ **PM3 administered during the last 30 instructional days of your VPK class ending**

**Note: New Rule 6M-8.620 governs this program.**



# Child Assessments – Coordinated Screening & Progress Monitoring STAR Early Literacy

**Summer VPK Program Assessment Periods are as follows:**

- ✓ **PM1** administered the first 10 instructional days of your VPK class beginning
- ✓ **PM2 is not required**
- ✓ **PM3** administered during the last 10 instructional days of your VPK class ending
- ✓ **ELC offers technical assistance on assessment administration and entering data to the DOE website.**

**Note: New Rule 6M-8.620 governs this program.**





# Child Assessments – Continued

## Coordinated Screening & Progress Monitoring

### STAR Early Literacy

- ✓ **New assessments are being referred to as Florida's Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) using Star Early Literacy.**
- ✓ **You are no longer required to complete these assessments on a touchscreen device. Device must be seven (7) inches or larger with audio capabilities.**
- ✓ **Each teacher/assessor will be required **annually** to complete training tailored to the administration of the assessment in order to sign a VPK contract.**
- ✓ **You must submit documentation of completed progress monitoring training and signed copies of the Test Administration and Security Agreement and Test Administrator Prohibited Activities Agreement to the VPK provider for uploading via the Provider Portal.**
- ✓ **The Coalition will monitor to ensure the training has been completed.**
  
- ✓ **Note: New Rule 6M-8.620 governs this program.**



# Program Assessments

- ✓ **Every VPK class will have a program assessment annually (VPKPA).**
- ✓ **Program Assessments will not begin until after the 15<sup>th</sup> day of class beginning.**
- ✓ **The Contract Minimum Threshold to be eligible to participate in the VPK program is 4.00.**
- ✓ **If a provider falls below a 4.00, they may request a second observation at their expense.**
- ✓ **If a second assessment is not requested, the provider will be allowed to complete the VPK school year, however, they will not be eligible to contract the following year.**
- ✓ **Provider may request an assessment the following year for contract eligibility in the next fiscal year contract.**
- ✓ **Providers receive one free assessment annually for contracting.**
  
- ✓ **Note: New Rule 6M-8.621 governs this program.**

# VPK Program Requirements

- **Provider must have an Attendance Policy**
  - **Must provide parents copy of policy**
  - **Must require parents to verify attendance**
- **Cannot charge anything for VPK.**
  - **No school Enrollments Fees**
  - **No supplemental services as a condition of enrollment**
  - **No breaks in class, with mandatory fees, no field trip charges**
- **Parents are not responsible for financial consequences**



# VPK Program Requirements

- **For a VPK Director endorsement must have:**
  - (a) **Implementing the Florida Standards in Preschool Classrooms: 3 Years Old to Kindergarten (instructor-led or online);**
  - (b) **Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors (online);**
  - (c) **Mathematical Thinking for Early Learners (online);**
  - (d) **Language and Vocabulary in the VPK Classroom (online);**
  - (e) **VPK Director Credential course (online);**
- **Lead Instructors must have the 5-hour Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors – 2021 Course**
- **Lead instructors must complete a 5-hour emergent literacy training every 5 years.**
- **Directors and lead instructors must complete “Implementing the Florida Standards in Preschool Classrooms: 3 Years Old to Kindergarten (instructor-led or online)”**
- **Keep qualifications, including background screenings, current. Put on DOE website whenever possible.**



# VPK Program Requirements

- Rosters need to be submitted as soon as possible. Please update regularly.
- **Maintain your declared hours**
- Lesson plans are mandatory
- Lead teacher must be in class, including outdoors
- Outdoor activities are allowed but must be productive. Activities must be planned and on your Lesson Plans.



# Prohibited Forms of Discipline

- Standards in s. 1002.88(1)(i), F.S. and s. 402.305(12), F.S.
- No discipline that is severe, humiliating or frightening.
- Discipline may not be associated with food, rest or toileting.
- Spanking of other forms of physical punishment is prohibited.
- May not deny active play as a consequence of misbehavior.
- Must have documented Discipline policy per contract and monitoring tool.



# Workers and Unemployment Comp

- **Provider must obtain and maintain any required workers compensation insurance under Chapter 440, F.S. and unemployment compensation coverage under Chapter 443, F.S.**
- **Provider must have evidence of coverage, waiver or exception.**
- **Must provide proof on site as part of monitoring.**



# E-Verify Requirements

- **Providers must use the I-9 and E-Verify system for all new employees effective January 1, 2021.**
- **Provider must provide evidence of using E-Verify.**
  - ❖ This will be part of the SR contract documents each year.
- **Providers shall also be required to attest that all employees hired before January 1, 2021, are cleared to work in the United States.**
  - ❖ An attestation form is provided.





# Information Changes

- Coalition must receive updates on all changes in business information, such as changes in owner, director, teachers, business name, banking info, or phone number, within 14 calendar days.

***NOTE: If you change your FEIN number, this will require a whole new profile and a new contract. Please consult with the Contracts Administrator before make this change.***

- Temporary emergency closings reported by the close of business the first day that the closing occurs.
- Closing permanently, changing location or ownership must be reported at least 30 days prior to changes.



# VPK Monitoring

- The Provider agrees the Coalition has the right to monitor the Provider's compliance with the contract, statutes and regulations and Coalition policies.
- Provider agrees to allow open access to its' facilities and records upon request, and cooperation with the Coalition for all monitoring's or audits.
- ALL VPK Providers shall be monitored EVERY year.
- Daily sign-in/out is critical for payment verification. No sign-in/out sheet, = no payment.
- Every child required to have a Certificate of Eligibility prior to any payment authorization. Back dating is not allowed.
- Monitoring may result in less disallowed payments, but more CAPs. However, multiple CAPs may result in contract termination.
- Use [PIU@elcescambia.org](mailto:PIU@elcescambia.org) for CAP responses, incident reporting, parent and provider complaints, and dispute resolution correspondence.
  - Dispute requests must be by letter, but can attach to an email.

# Readiness Rate

- **Progress Monitoring began FY22/23**
- **New VPK Provider Accountability scores will be determined by a combination of the Program Assessment score, Progress Monitoring score, and child gains.**
- **New VPK Provider Accountability will be applied at the end of the 2024-25 VPK program year.**
- **The new rates for 2024/2025 will not have consequences, except for providers currently designated as a Low Performance Provider (LPP/POP).**
  - **Those currently on Probation will remain on probation until they reach the minimum designation on the performance metric system. Provider will receive their performance designation within 45 days after the conclusion of the VPK 24/25 program year.**
  - **Rates for the prior year will remain published on ELC website.**

# Staying Funded and Contracted

- **Provider Year-End Reimbursement Reconciliation Verification Letter must be done.**
- **VPK contracts for the new VPK year will be issued but they can be terminated for failure to submit the Reconciliation letter before classes start.**
- **Coalition Contracting Eligibility Policy addresses statutory changes regarding Class 1 DCF violations.**



# Compliance – Failure to Comply

- **Provider agrees the Coalition may require corrective action, withhold funds, or terminate this Contract if the Provider fails to comply with the requirements of federal, state, and local laws, federal regulations, Agency rules, regulations and policies, or this Contract.**
- **“If a private prekindergarten provider or public school fails or refuses to comply with this part, or if a provider or school engages in misconduct, the office shall require the early learning coalition to remove the provider and require the school district to remove the school from eligibility to deliver the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program and receive state funds under this part for a period of 5 years.” s. 1002.67.(4)(b)**
- **Corrective Action Plans (CAPs)**
  - Fewer disallowed payments, more probation and rechecks.
  - Two CAP limit. Third non-compliance expect contract termination.
- **Suspected of fraud or being under governmental investigation may be cause for termination.**



# Due Process

- The Provider may request a review of determinations made by the Coalition using procedures detailed in Exhibit 2.
- While a review for termination is being examined a Provider may not offer services.
- Exhibit 2 has detailed steps to follow and starts with a request in writing for a review hearing.
  - Request must be within 5 business days of receipt of notice.
  - Name and contact information individual authorized by Provider.
  - Specific action by Coalition that Provider disputes and specific reasons.
  - Whether Provider will be represented by an attorney.
  - Include supporting documentation.
- Dispute requests must be by signed letter but can attach to email. Use [PIU@elcescambia.org](mailto:PIU@elcescambia.org) for dispute resolution correspondence.
- Decision of Review Hearing Committee is final.



# Unusual Incidents

- **All** unusual incidents are to be reported to the Coalition by close of business next business day and a written report is to be submitted within 3 business days.
- Anything illness related that is considered an outbreak is a reportable incident.
- Use [PIU@elcescambia.org](mailto:PIU@elcescambia.org) or call 850-595-5400 for incident reporting.

## Child Abuse Hotline

Comply with state child abuse and neglect reporting requirements.

All employees are required to call

**1-800-962-2873**

if child Abuse is suspected.

(F.S.S. section 39.201)



# Closures for Illnesses or Incidents

- Any type of outbreak is considered a reportable incident.
- COVID Closures no longer being recommended by the DOH.
  - COVID is being treated like all other respiratory illness.
  - May return to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, symptoms are improving overall, and fever is gone without medication.
- The current outbreak definition according to FLDOH is three or more unrelated / non-household sharing staff or attendees becoming positive within a 14 day period.
- A variety of options in response to closures.
  - **Currently no provision for an 80/20 waiver.**
  - **Calendar changes always an option.**
- Child absence days for outbreaks will be counted toward a child's absences just like all other absences.
- 80/20 Rule a concern for all closures and absences
- Use [Covid@elcescambia.org](mailto:Covid@elcescambia.org) or call 850-595-5400 for incident reporting.



# Coalition VPK Support Contacts

- **Theresa Hoang:** VPK Contracts Administrator 850-741-8390
- **Millie Fre:** VPK Reimbursement Specialist 850-741-8354
- **Hope Wilson:** VPK Eligibility Specialist 850-607-8556
- **Stephanie Richardson:** VPK Provider Support Specialists 850-755-7177
- **Linda Sewell Otto:** TS GOLD Administrator 850-741-8368
  - For Providers who use TS GOLD
  - Coalition committed to funding all participants in TS GOLD



# MarcoPolo Learning

What is MarcoPolo Learning?

**MarcoPolo**  
For Educators

+

**MarcoPolo**  
For Families

A curriculum-aligned video and resource library that simplifies planning



Content in English, Spanish, and Modified (ELL) versions to meet and respond to diverse student learning needs



Aligned to the CLASS Framework and FAST/STAR Assessment



MarcoPolo For Families supports and strengthens family engagement



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# MarcoPolo Learning cont.



Get signed up today!

"I like that the students can explore videos of their interest. They enjoy having the freedom of choice to learn about what they want."

"I find the share video aspect very nice to engage families. It is personalized and allows the children to feel special."

"I use the letter videos each week and my kids absolutely love drawing the different animals each week."

"Honestly, we were preparing a folder with each theme. On each folder, we added photos, videos and other resources to help our kids with their knowledge, concepts and skills. WE SAW IN MARCOPOLO SOMETHING AMAZING! We are going to prepare our "playlists" to keep and share good resources also with the parents."

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# Coalition Email Contacts

To ensure your email reaches the correct department for immediate assistance, please refer to the email list below. These go directly to staff working in these areas.

Absence Reporting: [absent@elcescambia.org](mailto:absent@elcescambia.org)

Ask a general question: [askelc@elcescambia.org](mailto:askelc@elcescambia.org)

Program Assessment questions: [classhelp@elcescambia.org](mailto:classhelp@elcescambia.org)

Child Care Resource & Referral: [crr@elcescambia.org](mailto:crr@elcescambia.org)

Closure reporting: [thoang@elcescambia.org](mailto:thoang@elcescambia.org)

Contract questions: [contracts@elcescambia.org](mailto:contracts@elcescambia.org)

Illness/Outbreak reporting: [covid@elcescambia.org](mailto:covid@elcescambia.org)

Inclusion/Behavior questions: [inclusion@elcescambia.org](mailto:inclusion@elcescambia.org)

Incident reporting: [piu@elcescambia.org](mailto:piu@elcescambia.org)

Submit Corrective Action Plans: [piu@elcescambia.org](mailto:piu@elcescambia.org)

VPK Child Eligibility questions: [VPKeligibility@elcescambia.org](mailto:VPKeligibility@elcescambia.org)

VPK Attendance questions: [VPKAttendance@elcescambia.org](mailto:VPKAttendance@elcescambia.org)



# Questions

[AskELC@elcescambia.org](mailto:AskELC@elcescambia.org)



# Contact

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