



## OPTIONS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR VPK PROGRAM

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### OF INTEREST TO

The Office of Early Learning (OEL, the Office), Early Learning Coalitions, and public and private providers implementing the state requirements related to the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program.

### SUMMARY

This program guidance defines the flexible, innovative instructional options for delivering the 2020-2021 School Year VPK Program by public and private providers that meet the requirements below. This is an added feature to in-person instruction, but not a replacement. This flexibility will ensure that:

- VPK programs are open to enable learning to continue and allow parents able to rejoin the workforce.
- Choices for VPK parents that mirror those choices that K-12 parents now have via approved Plans for Reopening.
- Structure safeguards that will encourage and shift families to in-person learning.

### AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES

[Governor DeSantis' Executive Order EO 20-52](#) which declared a state of emergency due to COVID-19.

[Florida Department of Education's Order 2020-EO-01](#), Section 3, provided that strict compliance with Chapter 1002 and rules are waived to the "extent that such waiver is required to fully fund all" VPK and other programs. Section 12 provides that Early Learning Coalitions are authorized to mitigate financial impact to providers by paying for child absences while providers are open.

[Florida Department of Education's Order 2020-EO-06](#) which provided guidance to school districts on reopening their schools which may begin in a nontraditional setting or other innovative ways and later return to the classroom.

[Approved K-12 District Reopening Plans](#) designed and submitted by school districts that work best for the communities they serve. Plans are approved by the Department of Education for the Fall 2020 semester ONLY.

[Sections 1002.51 – 1002.79](#), Florida Statutes and Chapter 6M-8, Florida Administrative Code.

### PROGRAM GUIDANCE

Public and private VPK providers may be approved to offer a flexible, innovative delivery option consistent with the requirements below. This option is an added feature to in-person instruction and not a replacement. The flexible option is available only through December 31, 2020, for qualified providers

and may not exceed a total of 270 hours of the required 540 hour program.

To be eligible, providers must be open and also offer a face-to-face option for their families and ensure there is space available to allow students attending the VPK Flex model to return to the face-to-face delivery model for the remainder of the school year program.

Public and private VPK providers are required to complete and submit the Assurances (see Attachments I and II), as described below for review and approval.

#### Providers in Phase 1 Counties

1. Approved Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach public schools and private VPK providers may deliver their VPK Flex program consistent with their school district's approved K-12 reopening plans. Meaning, if the district's approved plan includes a flexible, innovative delivery option, public and private providers may offer a similar option.
2. Given the current Department of Health directives, approved Monroe public schools and private VPK providers may also deliver their VPK Flex program consistent with their school district's approved K-12 reopening plans.
3. All flexible, innovation options must meet the existing statutory and regulatory requirements (e.g., hours of instruction, alignment of curriculum, qualifications of the instructor, etc.) outlined in the Statewide VPK Provider Contract.

#### Providers in Phase 2 Counties

1. For all remaining counties, in-person instruction is preferable. However, approved public school and private VPK providers may deliver a VPK Flex program consistent with their school district's approved K-12 reopening plans.
2. All flexible, innovative options must meet the existing statutory and regulatory requirements (e.g., hours of instruction, alignment of curriculum, qualifications of the instructor, etc.) outlined in the Statewide VPK Provider Contract.

### **PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY**

Providers must:

- Be in good standing with the Statewide VPK Provider Contract and have no Class 1 Violations within the last two years.
- Offer a face-to-face VPK program option.
- Ensure there is space available to allow students attending the VPK Flex model to return to the face-to-face delivery model for the remainder of the school year program.
- Please Note: Providers on Probation (POPs) are not excluded from eligibility and may apply to offer the flexible, innovative delivery model.

### **SUBMISSION OF ASSURANCES AND IDENTIFICATION OF CLASSES**

Private providers will submit an application and their signed assurances to ELCs and OEL via the Enhanced Field System Modernization (EFS Mod) portal within the prescribed timeline for review and approval.

ELCs will review the application to ensure the flexible option maintains compliance with the VPK Statewide Provider Contract and aligns with the school district's approved re-opening plan. Disapproval

of a provider's flexible option plan is not subject to Exhibit X. Due Process Procedures of the VPK Statewide Provider Contract.

School district and public charter school providers will submit their signed assurances, with the requested additional information, to OEL for review and approval.

All approved providers will designate the specific VPK classes implementing the approved program in EFS Mod within the prescribed timelines.

### **ATTENDANCE AND PROVIDER PAYMENT**

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All approved providers will submit student attendance through EFS Mod and providers will be paid the base student allocation (BSA) based on student attendance. Providers will be reimbursed for student absences for up to 20% of the instructional hours per [Rule 6M-8.204 F.A.C.](#) (Note that Governor DeSantis' March 9, 2020 [Executive Order 20-52](#) and the Department of Education's March 23, [2020 Executive Order EO-2020-01](#) authorized OEL/coalitions to reimbursement SR providers for children enrolled in the SR Program for all scheduled days during March through August 2020, regardless of the child's daily attendance.)

Families with students participating in the flexible, innovative delivery model are required to certify their child's attendance monthly on the Child Attendance and Parental Choice Certificate Long or Short Form accordingly per Rule 6M-8.305 F.A.C

### **MONITORING OF FLEXIBLE, INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS**

Public and private providers must agree to provide ELC and OEL staff with access to their innovative learning program for monitoring purposes. ELC and OEL will periodically review the provider's program to determine its compliance with the information described in the Assurances.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Rubric for ELC Review and Approval of Private Provider Assurances

Attachment 2: Private Provider Innovative Delivery Plan

Attachment 3: District VPK Addendum to Reopening Plan

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 10, 2020.

### **HISTORY:**

Issued September 10, 2020.