

Office of Early Learning

Approved Staff Development Plan for VPK Providers on Probation

Pursuant to 1002.67(4)(c)2., Florida Statutes, the Department of Education has approved the following for VPK providers on probation who choose to use the staff development plan to strengthen instruction in language development and phonological awareness. The staff development plan includes both required and recommended trainings and activities. All required trainings and activities must be completed and documented appropriately to maintain compliance. The Staff Development Plan's use will be monitored by the local Early Learning Coalition.

REQUIRED STAFF DEVELOPMENT TRAININGS

Recommended documentation: For all required staff trainings, the required documentation is a printed DCF Child Care Training Transcript (or CEU tab, as applicable) for each staff member, with appropriate trainings highlighted.

Prior to offering the VPK program*, each site director/supervisor, VPK teacher, and VPK assistant teacher must complete:

- Standards for Four-Year-Olds (instructor led or online)**
 - Participants will have an overview of the Standards for Four-Year-Olds and will know where to find the language development and phonological awareness standards and benchmarks.
- How to Administer the Florida VPK Assessment (instructor led)**
 - Participants will understand the proper way to assess their students and input data online using the VPK Assessment.
 - Participants will understand the difference between assessment and instruction of young children, and how assessment should inform future instruction.
- Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors (online)**
 - Participants will understand the language development and phonological awareness standards and benchmarks in more depth, including examples of how to introduce these skills, scaffold children's learning, and provide support for young children's learning.
- Language and Vocabulary in the VPK Classroom (online)**
 - Participants will be introduced to four research-based instructional strategies (Language Scaffolding, Book Embedded Vocabulary Instruction, Dialogic Reading, and Think, Show, Tell, Talk) that can be used to enhance the learning of children in their classroom.

*If new staff members are hired after the VPK program has begun, these trainings must be completed within two months of hire.

Prior to one of a program's classes completing 50% of its instructional hours*, each site director/supervisor, VPK teacher, and VPK assistant teacher must complete:

- Integrating the Standards: Phonological Awareness (instructor led)**
 - Participants will learn about children's development of phonological awareness skills along a continuum and identify activities and teaching strategies that can enhance children's learning in this area.
- VPK Assessment Instructional Implications (instructor led)**
 - Using their own data from VPK Assessment, providers will begin to link the results of assessment to planning instruction for their class, as well as individual children within the class.

*If new staff members are hired after the VPK program has begun, these trainings must be completed within three months of hire.

REQUIRED STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Prior to the beginning of the program year:

- Purchase and/or print the Standards for Four-Year-Olds for use in lesson planning and instruction. (To purchase: www.flstandardsfouryearolds.com; To print: Standards for Four-Year-Olds)
Required documentation: 1: Standards for Four-Year-Olds manual available in each VPK classroom. 2: Documentation of language development and phonological awareness standards/benchmarks on a written/typed classroom lesson plan.
 - Participants will use the Standards for Four-Year-Olds in lesson planning and to guide instruction, paying particular attention to language development and phonological awareness.
- Review and print out applicable Sample Lesson Plans related to language development and phonological awareness (domain of IV. Language, Communication, and Emergent Literacy), provided by the Florida Department of Education. (To view and/or print: Sample Lesson Plans)
Required: 1: Printed Sample Lesson Plans. 2: Typed/written weekly lesson plans that include sample lesson plans, as appropriate.
 - Participants will review and print out for use applicable sample lesson plans.
 - Participants will include applicable lessons in weekly lesson plans.
- Determine the appropriate schedule for administering the VPK Assessment. School year programs scheduled for more than 4 months must administer Assessment Periods 1, 2, and 3 (AP1, AP2, and AP3).

Bi-weekly:

- Site director/supervisor observes all teaching staff bi-weekly to see if they are incorporating information gained through staff development, taking written notes.
Recommended documentation: 1: Calendar showing when class(es) are observed. 2: Dated, written/typed notes documenting each observation.
 - **Language Development:** The following types of interactions/teaching strategies should be noted.
 - Interactions: Individual conversations with children daily. Small group interactions that focus on building vocabulary daily. Interactions should build on children's prior knowledge and interests.
 - Strategies: Language Scaffolding, Book Embedded Vocabulary Instruction, Dialogic Reading, and Think, Show, Tell, Talk.
 - **Phonological Awareness:** The following types of interactions/teaching strategies should be noted.
 - Interactions: Based on children's knowledge, small groups should focus on particular phonological awareness skills along a continuum (benchmarks). Interactions should be fun and engaging for children, and utilize time throughout the day (e.g., small group, transitions, center time).
 - Strategies: Print must not be used when teaching and practicing phonological awareness skills (phonological awareness is not a visual skill, it is a listening skill (aural)). Focus for each benchmark should include blending before elision (take away). Props, such as examples from training, should be used if they benefit children's understanding. Throughout the year, the teacher should intentionally introduce children to easiest phonological awareness skills first beginning with easiest skills (Benchmark a.), advancing to more challenging (Benchmark f.).

Monthly:

- Site director/supervisor meets monthly with teaching staff to provide individualized feedback, reflect, discuss next steps, and record meeting notes in written plan. This monthly meeting must be about topics covered in the Staff Development Plan ONLY (e.g., phonological awareness, language and vocabulary development, teaching strategies for these areas, children's assessment scores for these areas).
Required: 1: Calendar indicating monthly meetings with each staff member/class team. 2: Dated, written/typed notes documenting each meeting and outcome of meeting ("Next Steps").
 - Participants have the opportunity to reflect on teaching strategies and planning related to language development and phonological awareness.
 - Participants plan next steps, ensuring that classroom interactions and teaching strategies are translating to children's learning in the areas of language development and phonological awareness.

Within 30 days of administering AP1, AP2 (full school year programs), and AP3 of the VPK

Assessment:

- Site director/supervisor meets with teaching staff at least once to discuss results of VPK Assessment by class. Cooperatively-written lesson plans should be developed to link VPK assessment plans with further instruction, particularly in the areas of phonological awareness and language development/vocabulary. Children's individualized needs should be addressed by the plan for at least the two areas mentioned.
Required: 1: Calendar indicating meeting(s). 2: Printed child and classroom-level reports for the appropriate assessment period. 3: Lesson plans that reflect "next steps" for teaching based upon the class' VPK Assessment data.
 - Participants discuss what the language/vocabulary and phonological awareness results of the VPK Assessment mean for each child and each classroom.
 - Participants will refer to the Standards for Four-Year-Olds, Sample Lesson Plans, and other appropriate curriculum materials in developing lesson plans.
 - Small group plans and individual child attention should be based on VPK Assessment results.

To enhance your opportunities for success, the Department of Education also recommends the following:

RECOMMENDED STAFF DEVELOPMENT TRAININGS

- English Language Learners in the VPK Classroom (online)
- Attend phonological awareness and language development sessions at local, regional, and state early childhood conferences.
- Other DOE-developed trainings
- Other VPK Regional Facilitator-developed trainings
- Other early learning coalition-developed trainings

RECOMMENDED STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

- Attend meetings for Providers on Probation led by the VPK Regional Facilitator or Early Learning Coalition.
- Determine if there is another VPK program that would provide mentoring.
- Take part in any available supports through VPK Regional Facilitator.
- Take part in any available supports through the local Early Learning Coalition.
- Read professional journal articles to enhance knowledge and practice. Discuss as a group.
- Determine if staff would benefit from membership in local early childhood professional organizations or groups within the community.