

Recent Changes in VPK Eligibility

Background: A new law extends VPK eligibility for 4-year-olds with birthdays from Feb. 2 through Sept. 1 in a calendar year. Parents can enroll their child in the state’s free, voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) education program that year or wait until the following year when their child is 5.

This allows parents of younger 4-year-olds to postpone the year their child begins VPK, enabling the child to begin kindergarten and start first grade as a slightly older, more mature student. Children in Florida are not required to attend either the state’s prekindergarten or kindergarten programs, but are required to attend school the year they turn 6 by Feb. 1.

The new law takes effect July 1. Four-year-old children with birthdays from Feb. 2 through Sept. 1 will be eligible to enroll in VPK that year or postpone it to the next. The law does not affect 4-year-olds with birthdays from Sept. 2 through Feb. 1.

Questions and Answers

Q. How do I know what year or years my child may be eligible for?

A. It is based on your child’s birthdate.

 4 Years Old	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
2/2/15 thru 9/1/15		Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible
9/2/15 thru 2/1/16		Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible
2/2/16 thru 9/1/16 *			Not eligible	Not eligible
9/2/16 thru 2/1/17	Not eligible		Not eligible	Not eligible
2/2/17 thru 9/1/17 *	Not eligible			Not eligible
9/2/17 thru 2/1/18	Not eligible	Not eligible		Not eligible
2/2/18 thru 9/1/18 *	Not eligible	Not eligible		

* Two years of eligibility

Q. Can my child attend VPK for two years?

A. No. Each child is eligible for one student voucher. Some families will have a choice to send their child to VPK in one year or another based on the child’s birthdate.

Q. Why can’t all parents have the option to choose the year their child attends VPK?

A. Florida law requires children to attend school the year the child is 6 by Feb. 1. Not all children would be able to go to VPK a year later because they would turn 6 by Feb. 1.

Q. How do I defer my child’s eligibility for 2017-18?

A. The online system where families enroll for VPK (called the [Family Portal](#)) will be updated July 1, 2016, when the new law takes effect.

Q. When can I begin VPK registration for 2017-18?

A. Jan. 1, 2017, in the Family Portal.

Q. What happens if my child is already enrolled for the 2016-17 program year and I want to send my child to the 2017-18 program instead?

A. You may reapply for the 2017-18 program beginning Jan. 1, 2017, as long as you did not use your voucher for the 2016-17 program.

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- Q. My son turned 4 in March 2015 and didn't attend VPK last fall. I enrolled him in summer VPK this year, but would rather send him to the 2016-17 school-year VPK program this fall. What do I need to do?**
- A.** As long as you did not use his voucher for the 2015-16 school-year or summer program, you can log back in to your account in the Family Portal after July 1, 2016, and get a new voucher for the 2016-17 program.

You will find more information about VPK at www.floridaearlylearning.com.