

*For more information contact:*

**Early Learning Coalition of Broward County**

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**Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)**

**FACT SHEET**

**Who Established Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten:** Florida voters who passed a constitutional amendment in 2002 that requires a voluntary pre-kindergarten program in our state for all four-year-old children by fall, 2005. VPK is being administered by the government-mandated, not-for-profit Early Learning Coalition of Broward County.

**What VPK is:** VPK is designed to help prepare children for kindergarten and build the foundation for their educational success. The program allows a parent to enroll his or her eligible child (four years old by September 1 and residing in Florida) in a free VPK program. The program is voluntary for children and providers.

**When VPK will be offered:** Beginning in the 2005 school year, parents have the option of enrolling their children in a school-year VPK program consisting of 540 instructional hours, or in a summer program beginning in the summer of 2006, consisting of 300 instructional hours.

**Why was VPK established:** To encourage school readiness, nurture a love of learning and create a brighter future for Florida's children. VPK enhances existing school readiness programs that had been established in 1999 with the Florida Legislature's passing of the School Readiness Act. This Act created the Florida Partnership for School Readiness and called for the creation of local school readiness coalitions. In Broward, the original coalition was called the Broward School Readiness Coalition. With the additional responsibilities of administering VPK, the coalition has become The Early Learning Coalition of Broward County.

**What is the difference between VPK and School Readiness:** VPK is a voluntary program available to all Florida residents, regardless of income. School readiness services mainly target lower income families, and focus on helping families find affordable, quality childcare.

**Where VPK will be offered:** Private childcare providers, parochial schools and public schools throughout Florida that meet the state's requirements for eligibility to offer VPK.

**Where can I find out who will offer VPK:** You can visit the Early Learning Coalition of Broward County website ([www.elcbroward.org](http://www.elcbroward.org)) to get a complete list of providers. Keep in mind that this is a living document and will be updated throughout the year.

**Who is eligible for VPK:** VPK is offered free to Florida residents who have children who are age four by September 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year beginning in 2005. We are projecting approximately 16,000 4 year-olds in Broward County will participate in the program.

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