

# Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Heartland, Inc.

## Policy Snapshot: VPK Provider Eligibility and Provider Files

The purpose of this policy is to outline the required documentation that will be used by the Coalition to determine eligibility of prospective VPK providers. The following must be submitted:

1. Completed forms AWI-VPK 10 and AWI-VPK 11
2. Supporting documentation
3. Teacher Verification form, if applicable
4. Signed VPK Statewide Provider Agreement

Subject: VPK Provider Eligibility and Provider Files Attachment 1.8.1		Procedure # VPK-03	
Page: 1 of 6		Adoption Date: 12-20-06	Revision Date:
Approved by: ELCFH Board		Title: Andrew Bible, Chair	
Approved by:		Title:	

Distribution: All Client Services Policy/Procedure Manuals
Authority References: ELCFH Board, Federal and State Statutes

- I. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to establish specific procedures for determining eligibility of prospective Voluntary PreKindergarten Providers serving VPK children in Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee and Highland counties.
- II. **REVIEW HISTORY:** This policy supports the December 2004 Voluntary PreKindergarten Education Program legislation and supersedes any former practices in any of the four counties.
- III. **CONTACT:** Anne Bouhebent, Executive Director.
- IV. **PERSONS AFFECTED:** VPK Education and Eligibility Staff, all VPK approved providers.
- V. **POLICY:** This policy sets the process for the eligibility of all Voluntary PreKindergarten providers serving VPK children.
- VI. **RATIONALE:** To provide consistency in the manner and method a provider's eligibility for the VPK program is determined.
- VII. **CROSS REFERENCE:** Chapters 402.301-402.319 and Chapter 1002.51-79 of the Florida Statutes; Rule 60BB-8.000-300, Florida Administrative Code, the "State of Florida Voluntary PreKindergarten Education Program Statewide Provider Agreement" and all policies issued by the Agency for Workforce Innovation of the

VPK program.

## VIII. **DEFINITIONS:**

**“Coalition”** refers to **“Early Learning Coalition of Florida’s Heartland” Inc.** (ELCFH), a coalition created under s 411.01, F.S. and serving Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee and Highland counties.

**“DCF”** refers to the Florida Department of Children and Families, and more specifically to the local child care licensing office/agency.

**“Good Moral Character”** is verified through the Affidavit of Good Moral Character, a form which must be signed and notarized annually.

**“PreKindergarten Director”** means an onsite person ultimately responsible for the overall operation of a private prekindergarten provider, or alternatively, of the provider’s prekindergarten program, regardless of whether the person is the owner of the program.

**“PreKindergarten Instructor”** means a teacher or child care personnel as defined in s. 402-302 who provide instruction to students in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program.

**“Private PreKindergarten provider”** means a provider other than a public school which is eligible to deliver the school-year prekindergarten program under s. 1002.55 or the summer prekindergarten program under s. 1002.61.

**“Provider”** means the individual or facility responsible for the provision of Voluntary PreKindergarten services.

**“VPK”** means Voluntary PreKindergarten Education Program pursuant to Chapter 1002, Part V, Florida Statutes

## IX. **PROCEDURES:**

### **General**

1. A private child care, public (including charter schools) or non-public school provider, interested in delivering the VPK program must complete application form AWI-VPK 10 “Statewide Registration Application” and AWI-VPK 11 “Class Registration Application”. The provider may obtain these documents from the AWI website at <http://www.floridajobs.org/VPK/index.html> or request the forms from the ELCFH offices within the four counties. The Application must be completed with each new VPK program.
2. The provider must mail or hand deliver the completed application form AWI-VPK 10 and form AWI-VPK 11 to the local ELCFH office, along with the supporting documentation which includes the following:
  - Copy of facility license or religious exempt accreditation
  - Copy of higher accreditation or gold seal verification, if applicable
  - CDA or Higher Education verification for each primary teacher
  - Emergent Literacy for each primary teacher
  - Copy of the Director’s Credential

- Background screening documents for all required staff (VPK teachers, Substitutes) which include:
  - FBI (every 5 years)
  - FDLE (every 5 years)
  - Local law check (every 5 years)
  - Affidavit of Good Morals ( annually)

3. Current or former school teachers must annually establish that their teaching certificate has not been suspended or revoked. If a former public school teacher is identified by a provider to teach a class, the provider must submit one of the following:

a. a copy of the teacher's information on the DOE website

([www.fldoe.org/edcert/public.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/public.asp))

or

b. documentation of telephone conversation with an identified DOE representative (800-445-6739-verifying the teacher in question has not had their certificate revoked or suspended or

c. "Verification of Teacher Certification" form (attachment to policy) or equivalent developed by the provider.

4. Applicants must annually meet the requirement as specified in ss1002.55 (3) (b) Florida Statutes, which states:

*"(3) To be eligible to deliver the prekindergarten program, a private prekindergarten provider must meet each of the following requirements:*

*(a) The private prekindergarten provider must be a child care facility licensed under s. 402.305, family day care home licensed under s. 402.313, large family child care home licensed under s. 402.3131, nonpublic school exempt from licensure under s. 402.3025(2), or faith-based child care provider exempt from licensure under s. 402.316.*

*(b) The private prekindergarten provider must:*

*1. Be accredited by an accrediting association that is a member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation, the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation, or the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools;*

*2. Hold a current Gold Seal Quality Care designation under s. 402.281; or*

*3. Be licensed under s. 402.305, s. 402.313, or s. 402.3131 and demonstrate, before delivering the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, as verified by the early learning coalition, that the provider meets each of the requirements of the program under this part, including, but not limited to, the requirements for credentials and background screenings of prekindergarten instructors under paragraphs (c) and (d), minimum and maximum class sizes under paragraph (e), prekindergarten director credentials under paragraph (f), and a developmentally appropriate curriculum under s. 1002.67(2)(b)."*

5. To validate the provider's eligibility, the Coalition shall annually verify the legal status of the provider. The Coalition will first determine if the child care provider is licensed with the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). If licensed, a copy of the verification will be placed in the provider's file.
6. If the provider does not meet the above category, the Coalition will contact the local DCF child care licensing office, to verify if the provider is legally exempt from child care licensure either as a public/non-public school, or religiously exempt facility. Written verification of the provider's status will be secured from DCF and placed in the provider file. Written verification will include either copies of licenses, printed information from the child care licensing or Department of Education's websites, or email verification from the licensing office.
7. The accreditation status of each applicant must be established. Licensed child care programs with Gold seal accreditation can be validated through the Department of Children and Families website at [myflorida.com/childcare](http://myflorida.com/childcare) or by the provider with proof of a valid certificate issued by DCF.
8. For religious exempt facilities, each applicant must establish that they are not only a member of a recognized accrediting organization pursuant to ss402.316, F.S., but have also met the accreditation standards of an agency specified in Section 1002.55 (3) (b) F.S. which identifies "*the National Council for Private School Accreditation, the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation, or the Florida Association of Academic Nonpublic Schools.*" Applicants who do not meet these requirements may not provide VPK services.
9. If the applicant is licensed, but has not achieved accreditation or gold seal status, the provider must demonstrate that they meet all the requirements as to education, background screening of required staff, class size, director's credential and developmentally appropriate curriculum under ss.1002.67 (2) (b), Florida Statutes.
10. For any applicants who appear to meet the legal eligibility, the Coalition must continue to validate the provider's eligibility by verification that the staff meets the educational qualifications. Qualifications must be validated by copies of appropriate certification and for validation on the DCF training website.
11. Background screening information may be validated by the Coalition through the DCF website if available online, or documented through the local DCF screening office. If not otherwise available, hard copies must be obtained.
12. The Coalition shall ensure that all certificates, licenses and accreditation shall be current and non-expired.
13. Once the Coalition has established that the applicant has met all the requirements for approval as a VPK provider, the Coalition shall send the State of Florida Voluntary PreKindergarten Education Program Statewide Provider Agreement to the provider.
14. The prospective VPK Provider is advised to sign and return the signed Agreement to the Coalition.
15. Once the Coalition receives the signed State of Florida Voluntary PreKindergarten

Education Program Statewide Provider Agreement, the Coalition Executive Director will sign the agreement and provide a fully signed copy to the provider.

16. Once the Provider Agreement is signed, the Coalition will enter the provider's information into the EFS system and the DCF website within 5 business days. An IRS W-9 form will be obtained from the provider unless it is already on file. No payment may be made to any VPK provider until a fully executed VPK Provider Agreement is received.

17. The approval applies to the fiscal year VPK program, including the school year and summer. The approval takes effect on the date set forth in the first paragraph of the signed Provider Agreement and expires upon completion of all of the providers VPK programs (i.e. school-year, summer or both) or August 31 following the end of the fiscal year, whichever occurs first.

18. Resource and Referral Staff, and other designated staff, will provide information to families regarding centers and family child care homes who are offering Voluntary PreKindergarten classes. Resource and Referral is responsible for keeping all information updated in the EFS system annually and to accurately capture only the VPK providers who have met all requirements for the existing fiscal year.

19. Child care providers who provide Voluntary Prekindergarten services are subject to the requirements of Ch. 1002.51-79 of the Florida Statutes and will be monitored by the Coalition ELCFH Policy # VPK-02.

20. This policy automatically incorporates any future legislative or legal changes as applicable.

21. The process of VPK provider eligibility approval is subject to annual determinations and is not automatic. Every time a new VPK classroom or program is initiated by the VPK provider this process is repeated.

X. **EXHIBITS:**

Form AWI-VPK 10, (See AWI website)

Form AWI-VPK 11, (See AWI website)

Teacher Verification Form

# Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Heartland, Inc.

## TEACHER VERIFICATION FORM

Each staff person holding a bachelors degree or higher must complete this form.  
Verification may be obtained at: [www.fldoe.org/edcert/public.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/public.asp)

Center Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever held a teacher certificate in any state or country? Yes No

Has it ever been suspended or revoked? Yes No

If yes, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**By signing this statement, I am verifying that I have never had a teaching certificate suspended or revoked.**

Signature of Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Director: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**

Owner/Principal: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_