

Intentionally Extreme Classroom Environment Makeover— Preschool Edition

By Tara Huls, Ph.D., Director of VPK Education

The physical space within a school or a classroom sends a strong message to both children and families we serve and, importantly, tells the children how they are valued by the teacher. The classroom environment serves as the “third teacher” and may be in need of a makeover. So what defines a makeover? A few dictionary definitions of a makeover include a complete transformation of something and an overall beauty treatment intended to change or improve appearance, attitude or functionality on the inside or out.

From the teacher’s eyes, here are a few questions to consider: Do I view children strong and competent or weak and incompetent? Are children capable? Are children learners **and** teachers? Do I believe that children are a part of their own learning or is it my role to provide everything to the child? Do I see the child as an active part of their learning or an empty vessel for me to fill? A great article to read to help you determine how you view children and their role in their own learning is *Your Image of the Child: Where Teaching Begins* <https://www.reggioalliance.org/downloads/malaguzzi.ccie:1994.pdf>.

Of course, no one has a pot of money to redesign the entire classroom or center, so start small and choose an area to begin with, and include children and families in the planning. Children spend as much, or more, time in the space as the teacher does. Be sure to explore values from your environment, your group of children and your community. There are many resources and groups online to assist teachers to better understand and reflect on their practices. You may want to read *Making Your Environment “The Third Teacher”* <http://www.earlylearning.prn.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Environment-as-the-3rd-teacher.pdf>.

Additionally, there may be items and decorations in your environment that may end up disrupting attention and learning in young children. An article available through Carnegie Mellon University discusses Disruptive Decorations <http://www.cmu.edu/homepage/society/2014/spring/disruptive-decorations.shtml>.



“The wider the range of possibilities we offer children, the more intense will be their motivations and the richer their experiences.” Loris Malaguzzi

RULES

Workshops and hearings that occurred this month.

8/1/2017: 6M-8.605, VPK Staff Development Plan for Providers on Probation

8/3/2017: 6M-8.610, VPK Director Credential for Private Providers

Remember to check our site regularly for a listing of proposed rules and notices.

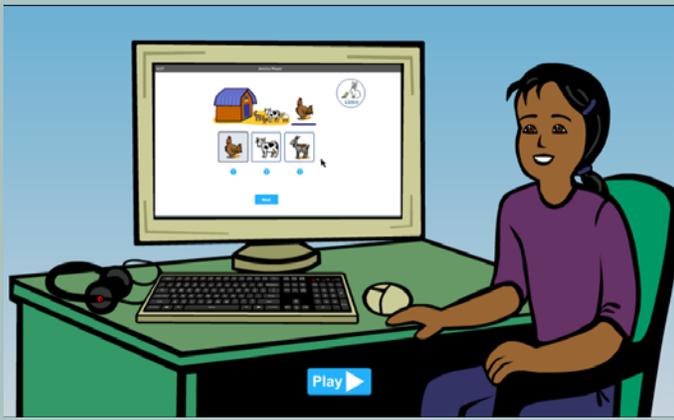
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FLKRS 2017-2018

Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener

The purpose of the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) is to gather information about a child's overall development and address each student's readiness for kindergarten based on the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds. The screener must be administered to all public school kindergarten students within the first 30 days of each school year. The FLKRS is also used to calculate VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rates, which measures how well a VPK provider prepares children to be ready for kindergarten based on the standards.

Beginning with the 2017-18 school year, the instrument used for FLKRS will be Star Early Literacy[®] which will replace the FLKRS Work Sampling System (FLKRS-WSS). The Star Early Literacy assessment is an online, adaptive instrument that students complete independently in approximately 15-20 minutes.



If you are interested in learning more about The Star Early Literacy assessment, the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) has posted information and new resources on their FLKRS web page at <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/assessments/k-12-student-assessment/flkrs>.

The Office of Early Learning (OEL) is excited to announce the First Day of VPK social media campaign to help promote Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program and provide families of 4-year-old children helpful tips as they begin their new adventure in preschool. The **#1stDayVPK** campaign began in August and will run through the beginning of September of the 2017-2018 school year.

Look for more details on how you can participate in the campaign in the upcoming weeks. Please continue to check our [website](#) or visit our social media pages updates.



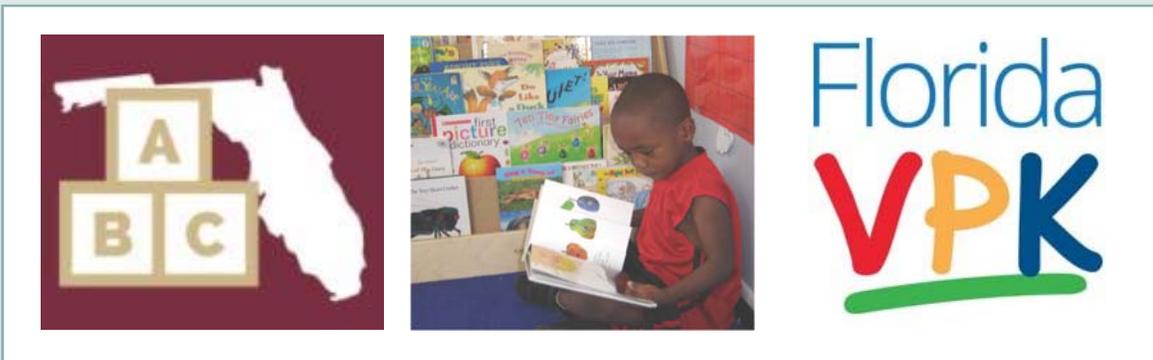
FCRR Receives Grant to Work with VPK Providers

The Florida Center for Reading Research will be exploring effective teaching practices for 4-year-olds who are Spanish-speaking English language learners in Florida’s VPK programs.

FCRR is a multidisciplinary research center at Florida State University that explores all aspects of reading research—basic research into literacy-related skills for typically developing readers and those who struggle, studies of effective prevention and intervention, and psychometric work on formative assessment.

Drs. Chris Lonigan, Beth Phillips and Chris Schatschneider will be leading this four-year grant. “We expect to use the outcomes of this study to identify specific instructional practices that promote the development of school readiness skills for preschoolers who are Spanish-speaking English learners,” said Dr. Chris Lonigan, Associate Director of FCRR.

Learn more about this important new study by going to http://fcrr.fsu.edu/news/news_lonigan_2017.html.



“There’s no such thing as a kid who hates reading. There are kids who love reading, and kids who are reading the wrong books.” ~James Patterson



VPK LEARNING CIRCLES

Be in the Loop!

VPK Learning Circles are ongoing opportunities for early childhood professionals to share strategies, research and best practices in VPK classrooms. Learning Circle activities include

- Practicing new ideas and skills.
- Professional networking.
- Sharing resources and experiences.
- Discussion and brainstorming solutions for challenges faced in the field.

Who should attend?

VPK providers, directors, teachers and administrators who would like an opportunity to network with other professionals in early childhood education.

Who do you contact for more information about Learning Circles?

Your local VPK regional facilitator organizes and facilitates the Learning Circles. You can find contact information for your regional facilitator on the OEL website at <http://bit.ly/2o6PGpW>.



	July Participants	2017-18 Total Participants
Face-to-Face	125	125
Web-based	0	0

Professional Development

Florida's Office of Early Learning in collaboration with the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) offers a variety of online and instructor-led training opportunities. To register for any of these training opportunities, please visit DCF's training website at <http://bit.ly/1oHgYPm>.

Online Courses	July Completers	2017-18 Total Completers
Standards for Four-Year-Olds	537	537
Integrating the Standards: Phonological Awareness NEW!	36	36
Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors	670	670
Language and Vocabulary in the VPK Classroom	140	140
Mathematical Thinking for Early Learners	174	174
Working to Create Positive Learning Environments: Preventive Strategies NEW!	60	60
Developing the Socially and Emotionally Competent Child NEW!	44	44
English Language Learners in the VPK Classroom	88	88
How to Administer the Florida VPK Assessment NEW!	89	89
VPK Assessment Instructional Implications NEW!	49	49
VPK Director Credential Course	178	178

Instructor-led Courses	July Classes	July Participants	2017-18 Total Participants
Standards for Four-Year-Olds	3	42	42
Integrating the Standards: Phonological Awareness	8	83	83
How to Administer the Florida VPK Assessment	11	132	132
VPK Assessment Instructional Implications	8	71	71
*EMEL: Making Sense of Sets and Numbers	6	61	61
*EMEL: Counting and Operating with Numbers	3	35	35
*EMEL: Patterns, Measurement and Data	11	154	154
*EMEL: Shapes and Spatial Relationships	5	57	57

*EMEL– Early Mathematics for Early Learners