



FAMILY PORTAL GUIDE

How to Register for VPK and School Readiness

8/2021



Contact Us

(866) 752 9770



DIVISION OF
Early Learning
LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.



Online

www.elcgateway.org

Email

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1104 SW Main Blvd

Lake City, FL 32025





Voluntary Prekindergarten

The Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program -- or VPK -- prepares early learners for success in kindergarten and beyond. VPK helps build a strong foundation for school using educational material corresponding to various stages in a child's development.

Since the program began in 2005-06, more than 2.3 million children have benefited from VPK. Data collected by the Department of Education show that children who participate in VPK are much more ready for kindergarten than children who do not participate in VPK.

Eligibility

Child must

- Live in Florida
- Be 4 years old on or before
September 1 of the current
School year*

**Parents whose children are born between February 2 and September 1 can postpone enrolling their 4 year old until the following year.*

Interested? Follow the next steps to apply...



Email Account

You need access to a valid email account.

To set up a free Gmail account head to [google.com/gmail](https://www.google.com/gmail)

Eligibility

Parent or Caregiver must be a **Florida Resident**

Child must turn **4 years old** on or before September 1st of the current school year

Required Documents

Proof of Child's Age

- Birth certificate OR
- Unexpired shot record

Proof of Residence

- Driver's license OR
- Full first page of utility bill OR
- Current lease or mortgage document

****The address on the document must match the application****

Prekindergarten Matters!

Research shows children who participate in high-quality prekindergarten programs:

- Perform better on standardized tests.
- Have better school attendance rates.
- Develop lifelong social and emotional skills.
- Are less likely to drop out of school.



DEL Family Portal

Click “**Parent Portal Login**” at elcgateway.org

New Users - Register for an account

Returning Users - Enter your username (email address) and password

Select “**Create a New VPK Application**” and follow the steps to submit

Certificate

It may take up to **10 days** for your submission to be processed.

You will receive an update with a status of

Approved - access your parent portal and print your new VPK certificate
OR

Rejected - access your parent portal to edit the application, correcting any errors, and resubmit

Enroll

Take your enrollment certificate to the VPK Provider of your choice.

Parents can choose from different educational settings and different program options.

Private child care centers, public schools, and specialized instructional providers offer VPK.

For free, unbiased listings of VPK providers contact ELC Gateway today!



School Readiness

Even before children attend prekindergarten, they gain from experiences that help them be ready for school.

That is why school readiness is such an important part of early learning. The Florida Legislature recognized that when they passed the School Readiness Act to help children from low-income families get the support they need to be successful in school. While helping children prepare for school, the program provides child care so a parent can work or attend a training or education program.

The program is funded primarily by a federal Child Care and Development Fund Block Grant. DEL administers the program at the state level.

Eligibility

Parent or Caregiver must

- Work at least 20 hours per week OR
- Attend school full time OR
- Attend school AND work for a total of at least 20 hours per week OR
- Be unable to work due to disability

Child must

- Be a U.S. citizen or legally admitted immigrant
- Be under 13 years of age

Interested? Follow the next steps to apply...



Email Account

You need access to a valid email account-

This will be used as your username and will also be the email any updates will be sent to.

To set up a free Gmail account head to **google.com/gmail**

Required Documents

- Most recent paycheck stub
 - *must include hours worked, gross pay amount, name of employee
- Detailed school schedule
- Social Security Award Letter or Physician's statement

If you are unsure how to document your unique situation please contact our office
Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Gateway, Inc.
Office: (386) 752-9770 Toll Free: (866) 752-9770
1104 SW Main Blvd Lake City, FL 32025

DEL Family Portal

Click “**Parent Portal Login**” at elcgateway.org

New Users - Register for an account

Returning Users - Enter your username (email address) and password

Select “**Create a New School Readiness Application**” and follow the steps to submit

School Readiness Facts

- About 11 percent of children under the age of 6 in Florida are in the School Readiness Program.
- In 2019-2020, 221,711 children received school readiness services from 6,932 providers.

Waiting List

It may take up to **10 days** for your submission to be processed.

You will receive an update with a status of

Approved - your household has been added to the waiting list. **Keep an eye on your email for funding notification.**

OR

Rejected - access your parent portal to edit the application, correcting any errors, and resubmit.

When you receive your funding notice you will have 30 days to complete your eligibility verification process.

Family Portal FAQ

Account Access

1. I've forgotten the password for my Family Portal account.

- Click the "Forgot My Password" link under the login fields on the parent portal.
- Enter your email address on the Forgot Password page that displays and click continue.
- A temporary password will be emailed to you. You can use this to log in.

2. I keep clicking the activation link in my email but it isn't working.

Make sure you are using the same electronic device to click the activation link as you did to start registration. If the issue still persists, please contact our office for further assistance.

3. My account is locked because I entered the wrong password too many times.

You can wait 15 minutes for it to automatically unlock or you can click "Forgot My Password" to unlock your account and reset your password.

4. I forgot my username. What should I do?

Your email address is your username. If you forget it please reach out to us for help. Do not create a new account as that will not link to your current information.

5. I'm having trouble uploading documents to submit.

Make a note of any error messages you are receiving and reach out to us for help.

6. How do I transfer to a different School Readiness Child Care Provider?

- Call or email our office to request Family Portal update access and advise of the requested transfer date.
- Log in and click “Update Eligibility” then update the provider selection for each child.
- Upload your paid in full receipt to the Additional Documents section of the Family Portal and submit.
- It may take up to 10 days for your submission to be processed. Watch your email for approval or rejection.
- Once approved, log in and electronically sign for the new enrollment certificate.

7. How do I transfer to a different VPK Provider during the school year?

- If your child has already been enrolled and attended, you must submit a Reenrollment Application.*
- Log in and click “Reenrollment” then follow the steps to submit.
- It may take up to 10 days for your submission to be processed. Watch your email for approval or rejection.
- Once approved, log in and print your new Reenrollment Certificate for the new VPK Provider.

Reenrollment is only available for children who have attended fewer than 70% of the VPK program.

8. I am moving to a different county. How do I transfer my services?

Call us at (866) 752-9770 or email FamilyServices@elcgateway.org to let us know you are moving. We will be happy to go over your options and next steps!

9. My provider transfer was rejected! What should I do?

Review your rejection email for more details on the reason for rejection. Resolve the reasons if possible and re-submit. Contact our office with any questions or concerns.

10. What if I don't have proof of residence in my name?

If you currently live with someone else you can provide an approved proof of residence document in their name along with a signed, dated letter stating that you live there, from them, with their phone number.

11. I don't receive paystubs from my employer! What should I do?

New employment - (under 6 weeks) your employer may complete a Verification of Income form.

Established employment - (more than 6 weeks) your employer may write a signed, dated, on letterhead.*

**Letter must state the number of hours you work per week and the amount you are paid per hour.*

12. How do I recertify my School Readiness child care services?

- Log in to the Family Portal and click "Update Eligibility".
- Go through each section of the eligibility verification wizard, uploading new documents as you go, and submit.
- It may take up to 10 days for your submission to be processed. *Watch for approval or rejection notice emails*
- If approved, please log in to the Family Portal and click "Sign" for each eligible child.

Recertification is NOT complete until you have been approved AND electronically signed for your enrollment

13. I don't see anywhere I can upload my documents in the Eligibility Wizard!

Be sure to click "No, I need to update the information" so the "Edit" button will appear for you.

Click "Edit" and you will see the option to upload your document.

14. Can I temporarily stop my School Readiness services without losing them?

Reach out to our office directly to determine if your care can be temporarily suspended.

The Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Gateway strives to:

Promote quality Early Learning programs in the five counties.

Lafayette Hamilton Union Columbia Suwannee

Identify programs that provide young children with experiences that will help them achieve school readiness.

Provide developmental screenings for young children.

Work with public schools, private and faith based providers and family child care homes to promote quality Early Learning experiences that focus on all areas of a child's development.

Help increase the availability of quality early learning programs in the five counties by assisting new providers and recruiting providers to participate in the School Readiness and VPK programs.

Provide families with the early learning and child care support they need to help them to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

